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Egg hunters at the Moraga Commons Park last Saturday

Photo Andy Schreck

# Sunny skies for Spring Egg Hunt

By Vera Kochan

A big topic among the adults at the April 13 Spring Egg Hunt was the weather. Everyone remembered last year's rainy event and were grateful for the pause in the current rainy season.

The Moraga Junior Women's Club organized the festivities held at the spacious Moraga Commons Park. Club members filled over 7,000 plastic, multi-colored eggs with stickers, small toys and bracelets. A handful of eggs had a ticket with the word "winner" written on it. These special eggs could be redeemed for a basket filled with a stuffed animal and flavored bags of popcorn.

This year, the participants were asked to help recycle the plastic eggs for next year's hunt by plac-

ing the emptied eggs in specially marked receptacles.

There was plenty to keep the revelers busy before the big egg hunt. The Moraga Police Department and Moraga-Orinda Fire District came in their respective vehicles for a close-up look. The Easter Bunny was on hand to take photos with the kids. A huge bounce house and rock climbing wall were available for the more adventurous in the crowd.

Game booths featured Plinko, a bean bag toss, a fishing game, ring toss and pick-a-lucky- lollipop. An arts and crafts section provided face painting, assembling bunny faces out of paper plates and coloring pictures of bunnies.

The snack bar added Starbucks' coffee to the menu and local businesses had giveaways for young and old alike. Elena Hood Real Estate Group offered

magic picture painting options and bubble blowing wands; Axelrode Orthodontics gave away toothbrushes and multi-flavored lip balm along with "winner" ticket baskets filled with picture books and stuffed animals; Green Leaf Psychology offered fidget stars, pens and Magna Tiles; Nurtury PreSchool at MVPC provided all of the decorative balloons around the park as well as for the kids, along with colorful wrist bands; and Lamorinda Tooth Buds had a spin-the-wheel game offering lip balm, pencils and grand prize bags of goodies.

When 5-year-old Vanessa, who was celebrating her birthday, was asked how many eggs she expected to collect, she shyly held up 10 fingers. When family members questioned, "That's all?" Vanessa countered with, "A hundred."

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# Cam Burks steps down as Lafayette mayor



Photo Pippa Fisher

**Mayor Cam Burks will continue to serve on the city council after he steps down as mayor April 20.**

By Pippa Fisher

Mayor Cam Burks is stepping down from the mayoral role as of April 20. He will continue to serve out his term on the council.

Burks, who is four months into his first term as mayor, made the announcement at the end of the April 8 Lafayette City Council meeting, explaining that he has taken a new professional op-

portunity that he described as a "tremendous opportunity in my private life" that will demand his time.

"Starting this endeavor successfully, along with my primary commitment of being an actively present and supportive dad and husband (the most important value in my life), are absolutely huge," he explained, continuing, "Our mayor should be able to commit to the position 100-plus percent (of which my

past mayor colleagues have done so ably), and I just won't be able to do this given these circumstances."

Burks expressed appreciation to city staff and to his colleagues on the council. "I'm profoundly thankful to my council colleagues, city staff and community for the unbelievable support (and fun). I intend to remain fully engaged and will complete my term as a council member through 2020."

Burks spoke of the honor and privilege it has been for him to serve Lafayette. "Certainly the most rewarding four months I've had in public service," he said referring to all the residents he has met at the many coffee mornings, reservoir walks and business visits he has taken part in. Replacing Burks as mayor will be on the agenda for the next council meeting.

**Civic News A1-A14**

5G discussed in three Lamorinda communities - Pages A2, A4, A6

**Fire Districts A8**

Fire Station 16 reopening delayed - Page A8

**Life in Lamorinda B1-B8**

Community Music Festival planned in Lafayette at THT - Page B1



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The secrets to Lamorinda water polo success - Page C1



**Our Homes D1-D20**

Two Moraga homes featured in Bringing Back the Natives Tour -- page D1







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# 5G – It's coming, like it or not



Photo Pippa Fisher

Council members study a slide at a presentation on 5G at the April 8 city council meeting.

**By Pippa Fisher**

The next generation of wireless is arriving in California and there is very little local government can do about it, thanks to Federal Communication Commission orders and federal laws that place procedural and substantive limitations on local authorities. Lafayette city council members expressed concern over their lack of control, but rolled up their sleeves to make whatever modifications they could to deal with the situation at their April 8 meeting.

The city council spent several

hours listening to a report from Best, Best and Krieger lawyer Gail Karish and discussing their options for the rollout of 5G or next generation wireless in Lafayette. They were under the gun to adopt an emergency ordinance before April 15 in order to retain some say in aesthetics, the only area left for the council with any room for manoeuver.

Karish, who works entirely on telecommunication issues with local governments, gave a presentation on what the council can and cannot weigh in on when these new wireless facilities, which are to be placed in public rights-of-way, arrive.

This small cell technology differs from previous facilities, which were often placed on high towers located more remotely, in that they are typically smaller and cover only a short area, necessitating the need for many more antennas closer to users.

On private roads, while not exempt from the FCC order where an easement exists, such antennas would be easier to deny noted Karish.

They are being introduced as a way to upgrade the wireless network, speeding up downloads and supporting technology beyond just cell phone use to enable such things as auto-driving cars.

Karish reminded the council and those in attendance that the FCC is the sole authority setting safety standards for radio frequency exposure.

Questions came at Karish from all council members. Vice Mayor Mike Anderson sought assurance that they would be able to change Lafayette's ordinance should litigation elsewhere be successful, which Karish gave.

Council Member Steven Bliss asked if the spacing of poles could be changed under the guise of "aesthetics." Karish agreed it could but pointed out that aesthetics are by nature subjective. "It has to be 'reasonable' and based on substantial evidence," she said.

Council Member Teresa Gerringer brought up the question of testing and whether they could demand it be done more frequently than every three years. Karish said that they couldn't force the carriers to do it but that they could do it themselves.

The council took public comment from five people, several of whom were members of the group East Bay Neighborhoods for Responsible Tech-

nology. All were very concerned about the health implication of 5G, but understanding that safety of RF's was not on the table, they argued for creative ways to push back. Jodie Nelson, a Walnut Creek resident urged the council to look at the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and its impact.

Lafayette resident and Environmental Task Force Member Nancy Hu urged the council to look at spacing out poles and keeping antennas away from schools and residential areas and Lafayette resident Katelyn McCormack suggested the council avoid so-called "stealth" design (when antennas are camouflaged and hidden) saying people need to know that they are there.

With modifications of some conditions as prepared in the staff version in the areas of minimum pole spacing, making reviews annually and language around ADA, the council unanimously adopted the urgency ordinance and the resolution as amended. They voted unanimously to continue the matter of the traditional ordinance to June 24 with Council Member Susan Candell and Anderson forming a subcommittee to work with the BBK attorney in the meantime.

Mayor Cam Burks said after the meeting that he was proud of the council for its detailed and thoughtful deliberations.

"While we had to do the best we could on Monday night with the 'urgency' actions (based on the FCC's deadline of April 15), I can tell you that this isn't the last of the 5G debate," said Burks. "We intend to deliberate in the same vigorous manner when the primary ordinance returns for introduction in June."

# Lafayette Earth Day Festival focuses on sustainable youth

**By Pippa Fisher**

The 14th Annual Earth Day Festival will be taking place from

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, April 28 along Golden Gate Way behind the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. This year's theme is "Taking Action."

Hosted by the City of Lafayette and the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce along with local nonprofit Sustainable Lafayette, the festival will



Earth Day Festival 2018

Photo Pippa Fisher

showcase local groups and exhibitors aiming to inspire and create awareness to help make the local community more sustainable and offer opportunities for involvement.

The event this year plans to prominently feature youth groups.

As in previous years, Lamorinda 4-H will have a petting zoo featuring their livestock

projects. Fifth-grader Julian Jackl of Burton Valley Elementary will showcase the school's new reusable utensil program (see related story on Page A3), and a number of local Girl Scout troops will display and demonstrate projects including how to make reusable lunch bags and how to help monarch butterflies by planting milkweed. ... continued on Page A3

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**Lafayette Public Meetings**

**City Council**

Monday, April 22, 6:15 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**School Board Meetings**

**Acalanes Union High School District**  
Wednesday, April 17, 7 p.m.  
AUHSD Board Room  
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette  
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

**Planning Commission**

Monday, May 6, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**Design Review**

Monday, April 22, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Arts & Science Discovery Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**Lafayette School District**

Wednesday, May 22, 7 p.m.  
Regular Board Meeting  
District Office Board Room  
3477 School St., Lafayette  
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us



# Burton Valley student pushes school to go green this Earth Day



Photo Pippa Fisher

**Fifth-grader Julian Jackl shows off the new silverware that will be used in the Burton Valley Elementary School lunchroom.**

## By Pippa Fisher

Burton Valley Elementary School is ditching the use of plastic utensils in the lunchroom starting April 22, appropriately enough on Earth Day. As impactful as that is, it is all the more remarkable for being introduced by an environmentally conscious fifth-grader who, following his passion, has made it his mission to effect change in the community, replacing plastic utensils with reusable metal flatware.

Julian Jackl is no ordinary fifth-grader. As part of the school's "green team" – made up of fourth-grade students who are tasked with sorting through the aftermath of lunches, putting food scraps in the compostable bin and sorting the recyclables from trash – Jackl became concerned last year that the plastic utensils were being placed in trash. "Surely that's a mistake?" he asked and was discouraged to learn that since the utensils had food on

them, they did indeed end up in landfill.

From there he went down what he describes as "a rabbit hole," researching where the trash goes, contacting Republic Services for confirmation, researching what types of plastic was being used, even finding a case study – a school in Minnesota that made the switch to reusable utensils. Jackl looked at using compostable materials as an alternative, which turned out to be an expensive option.

In the fall of 2018 Jackl ran for student government on his sustainability platform. He watched the documentary "A Plastic Ocean" while preparing his speech and learned that even some recyclable plastic ends up in the ocean.

He did not get elected. "At first I felt defeated," reflects Jackl, but says that his parents reminded him that he didn't need to be elected to create change.

... continued on Page A13

# Lafayette Earth Day Festival focuses on sustainable youth

... continued from Page A2

As before, Lafayette Community Garden will be there with their chickens and vegetable starts. Urban farmers will be showing the fruits of their community harvest and the folks from Imperfect Produce will be available to talk about food waste and to encourage purchasing of "cosmetically challenged" produce.

Residents can stroll along the booths to the sounds of live music and performances by local youth groups. The Center for Community Arts will host a

community art project.

And, of course, attendees can plan on lunch. This year Berkeley pizzeria owners of Lucia's will be bringing their portable pizza oven to create wood-fired regular, vegan and gluten-free pizzas. Other sustainable food options include Humphry Slocombe artisanal ice cream.

Parking at Stanley Middle School is being encouraged and for those choosing the greener option of biking to the festival, there will be a free bicycle valet hosted by a local Cub Scout troop.

Further information on Sustainable Lafayette is available at [www.sustainablelafayette.org](http://www.sustainablelafayette.org).

# Bunny to oversee Annual Candy Scramble



Picking candy off the ground

Photo Andy Schreck

## By Pippa Fisher

It really must be spring – The Lafayette Rotary Club is gearing up for its Annual Candy Scramble on the Lafayette Plaza Park on the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road.

Sugar-seeking children have been marking their calendars for 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 20 when the park lawn will be covered in candy for kids ages 2 years old

through second grade to collect in their baskets. The Easter Bunny will be watching the proceedings and will be available for photos, along with members of the police and fire departments.

The youngest candy-seekers are given extra time to get their share.

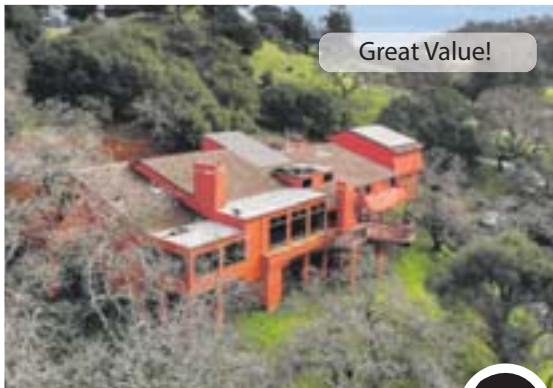
And then things get really serious. Following the candy scramble, the parents leap into action in the Jonny's Donut Dive for adults only.

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## Latest Rheem sinkhole update

By Vera Kochan

The current Rheem Boulevard/Center Street land movement which occurred during the last week of March, on private property, has undergone a video inspection. The town's concern was any possible impacts on a storm drain system that runs underneath the intersection where a remaining approximately 500-foot, 96-inch in circumference, cor-



Cordoned off area of sinkhole

Photos Vera Kochan

rugated metal pipe carries water from Laguna Creek. The surface damage is roughly 10 feet long by 3 feet wide, while the actual hole stands at 5 feet by 2 feet and is located roughly 75-feet across the street from the 2016 sinkhole. Moraga's Public Works Director Edric Kwan said the

video inspection revealed the area is in bad shape and needs immediate attention. However, PG&E along with the East Bay Municipal Utility District confirmed to the town that the damage did not involve their utilities. In referring to the shopping center, Kwan stated, "What happens next will affect a lot of

people. Timing is truly of the essence. If that pipe were to collapse, it's a game changer." Kwan admitted that no one knows the cause of the failure at this point. However, along with experts, he will advise the property owner what steps need to be taken to rectify the situation.

## Small cell wireless facilities – the future is coming to Moraga

By Vera Kochan

The term 5G (5th Generation) is the latest term for the next generation of cellular mobile communication. It targets high data rate, reduced latency, energy savings, cost reductions, higher system capacity and massive device connectivity.

During the April 10 Moraga Town Council meeting, Planning Director Derek Farmer gave a presentation regarding the Small Cell Wireless Facilities Ordinance in compliance with the Carr Order adopted in September 2018 by the Federal Communications Commission.

The Carr Order preempts a city's control over permitting small cell facilities by requiring cities and towns to allow its own facilities, such as street lights and traffic signals, to be used by wireless carriers to attach their new 5G antennas. The only aspect of control a

town has over these antennas is for aesthetic purposes.

The town will implement strict aesthetic standards: antennas and other equipment must be concealed with materials resembling the supporting structure; all cables must be concealed; all other equipment must be located in underground vaults when feasible; all venting for underground equipment must be concealed; above-ground equipment must be covered with landscaping and any paving/landscaping disturbed by installation of a facility must be repaired or replaced.

Farmer stated, "The rollout of this technology is not even hitting bigger cities at this point. This is a new emerging technology and the way the Carr Order reads is that this is designed to address this sort of emerging technology."

... continued on Page A13



Sinkhole damage



## Moraga town council declines to donate towards Painted Rock fund; JMLT not giving up hope

By Vera Kochan

John Muir Land Trust has been working to raise funds to acquire the 84-acre property known as Painted Rock, named so because of the decades-old tradition of painting the huge rock that faces down onto the Rheem Shopping Center. JMLT Executive Director Linus Eukel addressed the Moraga Town Council on March 27, and as of the April 10 town

council meeting, JMLT had raised \$1.7 million of its \$2 million goal. JMLT was looking to raise an additional \$100,000 by May 1 to secure a \$350,000 matching grant. The final deadline for the \$2 million is May 31.

JMLT turned to the town council, requesting the town make a donation to assist in acquiring Painted Rock as open space in perpetuity, according to the staff report. Future visions

for the property are to preserve the open space for multi-use trails, ponds, streams, grasslands and wildlife.

The council received an outpouring of support for funding of the Painted Rock property through 40 letters submitted from the community, with many residents staying at the meeting until nearly midnight to voice their support. While all members of the town council ex-

pressed their support of the acquisition during the April 10 meeting, the donation was declined by a vote of 3-2 (Vice Mayor Kymberleigh Korpus, Council Members Renata Sos and Steve Woehleke voting no; Mayor Roger Wykle and Council Member Mike McCluer voting yes).

Korpus, Sos and Woehleke emphasized the financial challenges and hardships that

Moraga has recently faced and could potentially face in the near future as the town's infrastructure continues to be in need of maintenance and repair.

Wykle and McCluer challenged that funds received from the Palos Colorados development could be used because of a partial compensation for the deletion of the golf course. ... continued on Page A12

**Town Council**  
Wednesday, April 24, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

**Planning Commission**  
Monday, May 6, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

**Park and Recreation Commission**  
Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

**Moraga School District Board Meetings**  
Tuesday, May 14, 7 p.m.  
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www.moraga.k12.ca.us  
See also AUHSD meeting page A2



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## Let there be light! (in Moraga Shopping Center)



A few of the dozens of burned out lights in Moraga Safeway parking lot

By Vera Kochan

At about 8 p.m., during the first week of April, this reporter made an out of the norm, evening trip to Safeway in the Moraga Center. Struck by how dark the parking lot was, it became clear that dozens of overhead lights had burned out.

A tour of the parking lot revealed that 23 lights were out in the Safeway lot alone. A further sweep around the block that is Moraga Center counted 31 additional light failures. Looking across the street to the former OSH parking lot showed even more lights unlit.

Danny Llavata, Safe-

way's night manager, was informed of the situation. Llavata stated that it was the property owner's responsibility to maintain the parking lot lights.

Just to cover all bases, Moraga's Public Works Director Edric Kwan was notified of the situation and explained that the Moraga Shopping Center was on private property and the town was not responsible for the lighting.

Having recently become acquainted with Moraga Center's property owner, Joan Bruzzone, this reporter decided to contact her personally regarding the unsafe atmosphere.

Bruzzone was

emailed of the circumstances and replied expeditiously with a very heartfelt response. "I do appreciate your concern, and the desire to rectify what needs to be done, and I will certainly get in touch with both Safeway again for the part of the center that is their responsibility as well as what we are responsible for." Bruzzone added, "In the past we had our own truck and personnel to do what we were responsible for, but have had problems with that truck as well and will have to make other arrangements, immediately."

During a follow-up phone conversation with

Bruzzone, it became evident that she has taken the welfare of Moraga's citizens personally and will do her utmost to help keep the community safe. Since the situation was brought to Bruzzone's attention, she has been hard at work. "Seems getting things done always takes time," she said in an email, "but yes indeed, I have been very busy trying to make things 'brighter' again for all of us, and Safeway is very involved also. Just let your readers know that we are working very diligently toward a brighter evening for all of us."

## Town council approves a joint Moraga-Lafayette pavement surface seal project

By Vera Kochan

The town of Moraga and the city of Lafayette will partner to save costs by combining their efforts in the latest 2019 pavement surface seal project. The joint project will reduce duplicate administrative costs and increase quantities to reduce bid prices.

Moraga Public Works Director Edric Kwan is excited at the prospect of getting the job done while saving the town money. It was discovered that Lafayette was planning a surface seal project much like Moraga's.

According to Kwan, "Each agency would be responsible for its own design, engineering, administration, inspec-

tion, materials and testing costs. The town will provide the town's portion of contract drawings and construction bid quantities to Lafayette for incorporation into the contract documents. Lafayette will bid out the joint project and upon bid opening, both agencies will review the bids received and timely notify each other if there is dissatis-

faction with the bid results and exercise the right to withdraw from the project."

Additionally, "If both agencies accept the bid results, Lafayette will approve the joint construction contract. The town will reimburse Lafayette for its fair share cost of improvements."

Funding for the project is included in Moraga's Capital

Improvement Program for the fiscal year of 2018-19 and 2019-20 Annual Pavement Management Program. This includes \$1.4 million in construction plus a 15 percent contingency, design, administrative and construction management cost.

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# Opinions vary on small cell 5G safety, but Orinda garners praise for handling

By Sora O'Doherty

Public opinions differ on the safety of small cell technology, known as fifth generation or 5G, but there was a broad consensus among speakers that Orinda is dealing with the situation as well as is possible. The Federal Communications Commission has ordered that local governments cannot deny any reasonable application for a small cell installation, but the federal order leaves localities some discretion with regard to the aesthetics of 5G equipment.

Orinda hired outside counsel Telecom Law Firm to help draft an ordinance on small cell applications for Orinda. The law firm had previously drafted rules for Danville and Mill Valley, among other localities. Under the FCC rules, localities have until April 15 to put local regulations in place. If they don't, they would have no say at all on any proposed 5G installation. Orinda decided to adopt their rules by means of a resolution, rather than an ordinance, with attached aesthetics guidelines. Resolutions can be changed more easily than ordinances, according to the staff report. On April 9 the city council adopted Resolution No. 16-19 and Policy No. 16-19. The resolution and policy become effective immediately.

The policy covers small wireless facilities and other infrastructure deployments within the public rights-of-way. One point that is clarified in the policy document is that a private road is deemed a public right-of-way. A right-of-way use permit is required for all small wireless facilities and other infrastructure deployments located in

whole or in part within the public right-of way, with limited exceptions. No permit is required for facilities owned and operated by the city for its use, for over-the-air reception devices, or for wireless facilities or infrastructure deployments already covered by a valid franchise, pole license or other encroachment agreement between the applicant and the city. Also exempted are applications to collocate, replace or remove transmission equipment at an existing wireless tower or base station.

Neighbors within 300 feet of a proposed installation will be given notice of any application. The approval of applications is governed by FCC's "shot clock," a term utilized by the FCC to indicate that applications must be approved on a very short time scale. Because the applications will be for installation of the 5G equipment in the public right-of-way, the responsibility for approval will fall to the Director of Public Works Larry Theis, but he will work closely with the Director of Planning Drummond Buckley in evaluating the applications. Mayor Inga Miller expressed a preference for black or dark green as the color of the installations, because that will make them less noticeable.

Over 20 members of the public came out to speak about the small cell agenda item at the well-attended April 9 council meeting. The staff report on the small cell resolution was presented by Orinda Senior Planner Mayank Patel, and the main presentation was by Robert "Trip" May of Telecom Law Firm. May explained that al-

though many local jurisdictions are challenging the FCC order, petitions for judicial review do not stay the effectiveness of the order. Vice Mayor Darlene Gee quipped, "I have a feeling we'll all wish we'd gone to law school before we're done with this!" She wondered about other jurisdictions, that appear to be defying the FCC order. May explained that while it may appear that their rules prohibit 5G installations in residential districts, they generally have an exception that says, "except where exempted by federal law."

Council Member Dennis Fay echoed public concern about installations close to schools and nursing homes in residential areas. Council Member Amy Worth thanked the public for coming out to express their opinions and acknowledged that it is frustrating when the federal government preempts local control.

Different opinions were expressed about whether or not sensitivity to radio frequencies is a disability recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Alice Lee came from Alamo to urge the council to exercise its power and require annual checks of equipment. However, attorney May stated that regular checks have not been upheld by the courts. Checks can only be performed, he said, when there is a reason to suspect that the installation is out of compliance with the federal standards.

Cancer survivor Christine Firstenberg praised the council for drafting the best rule. She said she had met with the mayor and that everything she asked for was included. On the other hand, Dan Miller, an electrical engineer educated at Cornell

and Stanford Universities, assured the council that "radio waves are radiation, like light is radiation. It is non-ionizing, it doesn't give you cancer." He explained that small cell is "like wifi, low power, as safe as shining a flashlight in your face." Nora Paymer also spoke in favor of 5G, saying, "I hope that Orinda will grow with modern technology." She added, "I want our city not to fall behind in technology."

A speaker who works for Verizon Wireless assured the council of the safety of small cells, and said, "we're keeping up with capacity, not driving it." He suggested that small cell technology is necessary to meet people's expectations that when they call 911 or text a police department that it will work.

Several speakers suggested fiber optic as an alternative, although Fay questioned whether fiber optic can provide wireless service, and May explained that small cell installations require fiber optic, while other speakers opined that cell service in Orinda is wonderful, and that there is no need for 5G. Valerie Benkman wondered if Orinda could simply declare that it was not a market for 5G, but May said that would not be possible.

Gee concluded that Orinda staff and their consultant have done a good job and come up with the best and most restrictive rules possible right now. She moved to adopt the resolution with one slight amendment, and the council voted unanimously to do so. The city will continue to monitor efforts to overturn the FCC order, and can amend the resolution as the law evolves.

## Quick thinking OUSD facilities director uses goats to save the day



Photo Sora O'Doherty

By Sora O'Doherty

Last December a group of residents from Ivy Drive attended a meeting of the Orinda Union

School District board to complain that the district was not doing enough to guarantee that the creek bed they share with Orinda Intermediate School

was fire safe. The district took their complaints to heart, and asked OUSD Facilities Director Stuart House to investigate how the situation could be alleviated. He sought bids from tree service companies, but the bids were very high.

House has explained, "We received two informal bids from tree service companies, one was for \$105,000 and the other for \$120,000. We did not seek a third bid because it was clearly too much money to spend from the Orinda Union School District's precious General Fund dollars. Although some residents believed we could spend (not yet disbursed) Bond funds for this project, Bond dollars were not allocated for such maintenance projects in the Master Plan." He believed that the reason for the very high estimates was, in

part, owing to the presence of poison oak in the creek bed.

Not having the funds on hand for such a large project, House tried to find another solution. "We decided to contact Goats R Us, an Orinda-based small business owned by Terri Oyarzun, to get a bid," House said recently. He explained that Oyarzun's son Zephyr, who supervised the project, attended Orinda Intermediate School a few years ago.

The cost for the seven days (Saturday, March 30 to Friday, April 5) for the 150 Goats R Us goats to clear underbrush and poison oak on the Orinda Intermediate School side of the creek banks was \$7,200. The area is approximately two acres from the school bus turn-in on Ivy Drive to Coral Drive (about 50 feet wide by 1,800 feet long equal to 90,000 square

feet or about 2 acres). The property line runs, for the most part, down the center of the creek.

The district plans to also get rid of the remaining dead branches that litter the creek and is gathering bids for this minor work now that it sees what the goats have substantially cleared. OUSD will also be working to clear some of the branches and dead trees.

House added that OUSD is entertaining the idea of having volunteers or Boy Scouts help do this work now that the poison oak has been completely eaten by the goats. For general safety and liability reasons, over the past five years numerous Monterey pines have been removed along the creek that had fallen or were threatening to fall.

... continued on Page A12

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## Wagner Ranch Nature Area Wildlife Festival offers public a glimpse of rare resource

By Sora O'Doherty

The public will once again have an opportunity to visit the Wagner Ranch Nature Area from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, April 28, for the 2019 Wildlife Festival. The nature area is located near Wagner Ranch Elementary School at 350 Camino Pablo in Orinda. The free event is family-friendly, but according

to school district policy, dogs are not allowed in the Nature Area.

The historic ranch and 18-acre nature preserve is rarely open to the public. There will be a variety of activities for all ages, especially kids. Wildlife fun at the Frog Pond will feature red-legged frogs and resident western pond turtle, Mr. T. There will be animals to visit in the garden, including

friendly goats and beautiful parrots. In addition, visitors will be able to try hands-on nature arts and crafts, science magic, earth day games, or get a temporary nature tattoo from Coyote Brush. A tour will take in the meadows, woodland, ponds and streams, as well as the historic home site of Theodore Wagner, California's first surveyor general.

... continued on Page A12



### City Council

Tuesday, April 23. 7 p.m. Regular Meeting  
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way

### Orinda Public Meetings

#### Planning Commission

Tuesday, April 30, 7 p.m.  
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way

#### Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, May 8, 6:30 p.m.  
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,  
22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

#### Orinda Union High School District Board Meetings

Monday, May 13, 6 p.m.  
Regular Board Meeting  
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda, www.orindaschools.org  
See also AUHSD meeting page A2



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Avg Sale\$/List\$	103%	101%	- 2%
Avg Days on Mkt	28	35	+25%
#Homes Listed	223	226	+ 1%
#Homes Sold	120	107	- 10%

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## Wilder Art and Garden Center up and running, or at least walking



Photo Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce held the first social event at Wilder Art and Garden Center, a mixer for local business people.

By Sora O'Doherty

Decades in the planning, the Art and Garden Center at

Wilder in Orinda finally became a reality, opening its doors to the public this month. A number of events

have already been held in the new facility, including a self-defense class, the Mayor's Liaison Meeting, and a Cham-

ber of Commerce mixer from 5 to 6 p.m. April 4.

The acoustics were a problem at the mixer and at the mayor's liaison meeting, where it was difficult to hear the representatives of Orinda's organizations as they updated the mayor on their events and plans. However, it was explained that work was already in the planning stages as to how to improve the acoustics. Currently the center has hard floors and a ceiling open to the roof, with visible rafters and heating ducts that give the center a modern, industrial look, but also allow sound to bounce around, creating echoes. Director of Parks and Recreation Todd Trimble indicated that they are considering sound absorption options and, should such options be pursued, funding has not yet been identified.

Attendees at the liaison meeting were also among the first to view the newly installed artwork, a very large wood sculptural mural depicting a natural landscape that fills one wall of the foyer. The city was approached by

Lynda, daughter of the artist Stan Dann, who passed away at least five years ago. Dann started out as sign painter in the '70s, moved into carved wood signs, and eventually into art pieces. His work is notable for its very low relief. Ted Urban, founding member of the Art in Public Places Committee, explained that Dann would take an image of a landscape, either urban or rural, and mimic it almost photographically with different colors and carvings of wood. The large sculpture, which is 5 feet by 10 feet, and very heavy, weighing between 600 and 700 pounds, is now on loan to the city for two years.

"We chose it particularly for that location because the building is pretty stark," Urban said. The piece, he said, really helps the synergy of the space in the foyer.

Access to the Art and Garden center was one of several topics considered at a meeting of the city council's Wilder subcommittee on April 11, which was attended by approximately 20 Wilder residents.

... continued on Page A12

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# ConFire financial picture stable for 2019-20

By Nick Marnell

Fire Chief Lewis Broschard ushered in the new regime at the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District by putting his stamp on the 2019-20 fiscal year recommended budget, which he presented to his board of directors at the April 9 district meeting.

ConFire projects \$147.9 million in revenue for the upcoming fiscal year, of which \$130 million will be derived from property tax, forecast to jump 5 percent over 2018-19. Expenses eat up nearly all of the budgeted revenue, with a \$16.3 million payment for the district pension obligation bonds one of the largest district costs. That expense will disappear in 2022, when the

bonds are paid off in full.

The district will end 2018-19 with a general fund balance of more than \$35 million, well above the policy of 10 percent of district expenditures. ConFire plans to create a capital expenditure fund with a \$10 million transfer out of the general fund balance in 2019-20 to help pay for deferred maintenance and future fire station construction.

The financial picture for the Alliance, the ConFire ambulance transport program operated with subcontractor American Medical Response, continues to improve, with \$47.1 million of expenses against \$52.2 million in revenue for 2019-20. The surplus will add to the \$17 million Alliance fund balance projected

for this year. "At the current rate of payer mix, collection rate and contract expenses, the system is financially sustainable," Broschard said, addressing the biggest concern of many - including the district board - when the county awarded the ambulance contract to the fire district in 2015.

Though the finances appear to be solid, Broschard told the board that both the fire district and the Alliance face a major challenge. "It's becoming a statewide staffing issue to find qualified paramedics in the private sector as well as the public space that we recruit for," Broschard said. The chief partly blamed the booming economy for the labor shortage, and also the certification

expense a recruit must incur to become a paramedic.

One of the areas where the fire district concedes it can improve is in providing accessible financial information to the public. Financial performance is discussed at public meetings during annual budget preparations and when being reviewed by fire commissioners, but the only finance links on the ConFire website take the public to the Contra Costa County budget documents, which most private citizens have no chance of deciphering, let alone finding ConFire information in the first place.

Easier access to district information is a goal for fire district public information officer Steve Hill, who noted that ConFire recently made -

and will continue to make - numerous changes to its website designed to make it more useful and informative for the public, as well as more interesting and interactive. Hill explained that the homepage now includes real-time information about the district, the ConFire Twitter feed with incident-response information, and a button leading to the district updated significant incident reporting system.

"In the coming weeks and months, we plan to add pages addressing the district's financials, fire service career and recruiting information, and more detailed operational response statistics," Hill said.

# Lafayette Fire Station 16 reopening delayed until June



The new ConFire Engine 16 Company - with nowhere to call home

Photo ConFire

By Nick Marnell

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District placed Engine 16 into service in early April, which is the month the district expected to reopen Fire Station 16 in Lafayette. But between the rainy weather and a construction site problem with the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, the station will likely not reopen until June.

According to Assistant Fire Chief Aaron McAlister, the utility signed off on an agreement permitting placement of an electric meter inside the new Lafayette fire station. But earlier this year,

company officials inspected the station and said that the meter had to be placed outside. The chief told his board of directors April 9 that he tried to negotiate with the utility, as the fix PG&E demanded would be expensive and time consuming, but that PG&E had been unresponsive, promising a resolution but with no follow-through.

"We'd get different answers depending on whom we're dealing with and what day of the week it is," McAlister said.

Section 5.3.1 of the PG&E Green Book, a listing of electrical and gas service requirements, lists five basic requirements for the installation of an electrical meter, in-

cluding nonportable illumination on an unobstructed path to the meter and full access to the metering facilities by company personnel "whether the facilities are located indoors or outdoors."

"We're not looking for anything that we don't have in our other new stations," McAlister said to the board. Stations 85 and 84 in Pitts-

burg were completed in 2009 and 2010, and the electrical meter is inside both facilities. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District is nearing completion of Fire Station 43 in north Orinda, and its electrical meter is also inside the building.

"For a meter reader not to be able to walk inside the bay to read the meter is ridiculous," said County Supervisor Candace Andersen, speaking as a ConFire director. "I am very frustrated."

As was McAlister, who attributed three weeks of the delayed station completion to PG&E, and said that claims from the general contractor are mounting. "PG&E does not recognize the need to get a fire station up and running," McAlister said.

The utility explained the rationale for its actions. "We apologize for the confusion over where the metering equipment at Fire (Station) 16 can be installed. Upon initial review, PG&E believed we could accommodate the request of the fire (district) and place the metering equipment

inside. However upon further review, it was determined that installing the meter on the outside wall was the safest possible location," said company spokeswoman Tamar Sarkissian. "The preferred location for metering equipment is always outside. For safety reason, the equipment must be located in a PG&E-approved cabinet or closet. Meters can only be installed indoors, in an approved electric meter room with a door that leads directly outside."

Two days after McAlister went public over the issues with the utility, Wilmer Clark, PG&E service planning supervisor, sent ConFire written approval to place the electric meter inside the new Lafayette fire station. His approval included six conditions, including "24 hour access via lock box or key pad."

Until Fire Station 16 is completed, Engine Company 16 will operate out of Lafayette Station 15 on Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

## Fire District Public Meetings

**Moraga-Orinda Fire District**  
Board of Directors  
Wednesday, April 17, 7 p.m.  
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas.  
Visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)



**ConFire**  
Board of Directors  
Tuesday, May 21, 1:30 p.m.  
Board Chamber Room 107,  
Administration Building  
651 Pine St., Martinez.  
For meeting times and agendas, visit [www.cccfpd.org](http://www.cccfpd.org)



## Public Safety

**Emergency response:**  
Emergency: 24 Hours 911  
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours 925-284-5010  
Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or go to [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com)

**Lafayette Police Department:**  
3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd. 925-283-3680  
Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt 925-299-3221  
Police Department Tip Line 94549Tip@gmail.com  
Police Department Traffic Issues 94549Traffic@gmail.com

**Moraga Police Department:**  
329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055  
Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049  
**Orinda Police Department:**  
22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820  
Chief of Police, Mark Nagel 925-254-6820  
Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

**Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report**  
**March 24 - April 6**  
Alarms 61  
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 21  
Traffic 115  
Suspicious Circumstances 7  
Suspicious Subject 24  
Suspicious Vehicle 31  
Service to Citizen 39  
Patrol Request/ Security Check 33  
Vacation House Check 107  
Supplemental Report 16  
Welfare Check 15  
**Vehicle violations**  
Auto Burglary  
3200 Block Silverado Ct.  
900 Block Moraga Rd.  
DUI Misdemeanor  
St. Marys Rd./Glenside Dr.  
Hit And Run Misdemeanor  
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Moraga Rd./Brook St.  
900 Block Moraga Rd.  
1000 Block 2Nd St.  
Reckless Driving  
1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.  
Reliez Valley Rd./Silver Dell Rd.  
St. Marys Rd./Florence Dr.  
Reliez Valley Rd./Withers Ave.  
**Other criminal activity**  
Fraud False Pretenses  
100 Block Bacon Ct.  
1100 Block Via Roble  
Police Department  
Identity Theft  
Police Department  
1000 Block Carol Ln.  
Misc Burglary  
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)  
Petty Theft  
3400 Block Golden Gate Way  
3200 Block Sweet Dr.  
Shoplift  
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (6)  
Threats  
3300 Block Mildred Ln.  
3300 Block Kincheloe Ct.



3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
1100 Block Sierra Vista Way  
Police Department  
**Nuisance to the Community**  
Loud Music  
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Public Nuisance  
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
1000 Block Dewing Ave. (2)  
1000 Block Los Arabis Ln.  
3500 Block Brook St.  
Mountain View Dr./Brook St.  
Vandalism  
1400 Block Rancho View Dr.  
3400 Block Black Hawk Rd.  
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
**Other**  
Battery  
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Dependent Child  
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Disturbance-Domestic  
1000 Block Oak Hill Rd.  
3700 Block Meadow Ln.  
Harassment  
2Nd St./Golden Gate Way  
1100 Block Hillcrest Dr.  
Loitering  
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
900 Block S Thompson Rd.  
Ordinance Violation  
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Brown Ave.  
900 Block Reliez Station Rd. (2)  
Unwanted Guest  
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
900 Block Moraga Rd.

Security Check 26  
Supplemental Report 20  
Vacation House Check 18  
Welfare Check 8  
**Vehicle violations**  
Auto Burglary  
2100 Block Donald Dr.  
200 Block Paseo Bernal  
Not Available  
2100 Block Ascot Dr.  
Excessive Speed  
Donald Dr./Moraga Rd.  
Moraga Rd./Corliss Dr.  
Moraga Way/Eastwood Dr. (2)  
Moraga Way/Ivy Dr. (5)  
Rheem Blvd./Park St.  
Moraga Way/St. Andrews Dr.  
Station 41/Moraga Way  
Moraga Rd./St. Marys Rd. (2)  
Moraga Way/Miramonte Dr.  
Moraga Way/St Andrews Dr.  
Hit And Run Misdemeanor  
Rheem Valley Shopping Center  
Reckless Driving  
Moraga Rd./Canyon Rd.  
Moraga Rd./Corliss Dr.  
Traffic Hazard  
Donald Dr./Laird Dr.  
Campolindo Dr./Moraga Rd.  
**Other criminal activity**  
Burglary  
600 Block Moraga Rd.  
Grand Theft  
Not Available  
Identity Theft  
400 Block Kingsford Dr.  
Petty Theft  
1400 Block Moraga Way  
500 Block Moraga Rd.  
2100 Block Ascot Dr.  
Homegoods  
Petty Theft From Veh  
2000 Block Donald Dr.  
Warrant Arrest  
Moraga Rd./Moraga Way  
**Nuisance to the Community**  
Disturbance-Domestic  
200 Block Scofield Dr.  
Disturbance-Fight  
St. Marys College  
Disturbing The Peace  
100 Block Ascot Ct.  
Loud Music  
300 Block Rheem Blvd.  
Loud Party

200 Block Paseo Bernal  
2000 Block Ascot Dr.  
Public Assembly Check  
Rheem Valley Shopping Center  
Vandalism  
Cvs  
**Other**  
Accident Property  
St. Marys Rd./Rheem Blvd.  
Battery  
St. Marys College  
Litter  
2000 Block Ascot Dr.  
Mentally Ill Commit  
40 Block Williams Dr. (2)  
Taco Bell  
Ordinance Violation  
10 Block Buckingham Dr.



**Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report**  
**March 24 - April 6**  
Alarms 60  
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 1  
Traffic 124  
Suspicious Circumstances 6  
Suspicious Subject 16  
Suspicious Vehicle 9  
Service to Citizen 65  
Patrol Request/ Security Check 19  
Vacation House Check 32  
Supplemental Report 10  
Welfare Check 6  
**Vehicle violations**  
Auto Burglary  
Safeway  
10 Block Fallen Leaf Terrace  
Reckless Driving  
Wilder Rd/Wb Sr 24  
Moraga Via/Glorietta Blvd. (2)  
Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante  
Camino Pablo/Ardilla Rd.  
Moraga Way/Valley View Dr.  
Moraga Way/Orchard Rd.  
Camino Pablo/Monte Vista Rd.

**Other criminal activity**  
Assault W/ Deadly Weapon  
Beverages And More  
Grand Theft  
200 Block Glorietta Blvd.  
Identity Theft  
30 Block La Noria  
40 Block Sleepy Hollow Ln.  
Petty Theft  
10 Block Valley Dr.  
Shoplift  
CVS  
Warrant Advise  
Camino Pablo/Wildcat Canyon Rd.  
Warrant Arrest  
60 Block Moraga Via  
Shell Gas  
Beverages And More  
**Nuisance to the Community**  
Loud Music  
70 Block Brookwood Rd.  
Public Assembly Check  
Wagner Ranch Elementary  
Sleepy Hollow School  
10 Block Camino Sobrante  
School Assembly Check  
Miramonte High School  
Vandalism  
Theatre Square  
10 Block La Noria  
100 Block Orinda Way  
30 Block Heather Ln.  
Wilder Sports Fields  
50 Block Barbara Rd.  
CVS  
**Other**  
Accident Property  
400 Block Moraga Way  
Camino Pablo/Wb Sr 24  
Camino Pablo/Bear Creek Rd.  
Battery  
100 Block Ravenhill Rd.  
Disturbance-Domestic  
50 Block Davis Rd.  
Evading Officer  
Wb Sr 24 At Wilder Rd.  
H&S/Poss Narcotic Sale  
St Stephens Dr./Tahos Rd.  
Ordinance Violation  
10 Block Sally Ann Rd.  
Suicide Attempt  
500 Block Miner Rd.





# Local congressman attempts to boost quality journalism through legislation



Photo courtesy Office of Rep. Mark DeSaulnier

**By Nick Marnell**

Feeling that quality local journalism is crucial to a strong democracy, Rep. Mark DeSaulnier introduced a House Resolution April 3 that would allow local news outlets to band together to negotiate terms of product distribution and compensation with major online platforms like Facebook and Google. The Democrat, whose 11th District includes Lamorinda, said that using social media is not the way to learn about democracy and he stressed that newspapers fill an important role in the furtherance of democracy – especially with their coverage of local news.

“I worked in Contra Costa County and I raised my kids in Contra Costa County,” DeSaulnier said. “When I was first elected to the Concord City Council, there were local reporters there every day. The sexual harassment of one of my colleagues was uncovered by a local newspaper reporter.”

How times have changed. According to the Pew Research Center, Facebook outstrips all other social media sites as a source for news, and Facebook and Google control the vast majority of online referrals for news and the bulk of digital advertising revenue, while revenue for news publishers has plummeted by \$31 billion since 2006. Over the past 15 years, 1,800 local papers have closed or merged, and in the Bay Area alone, newspapers have seen a drop from about 1,500 journalists to fewer than 300. Public officials are enjoying freedom from the press, not exactly what James Madison had in mind.

“Companies bought the papers, sold the iconic buildings, outsourced the printing and laid off the journalists,” DeSaulnier said. “The papers

that have survived have very little local news content.” He recognized the San Francisco Chronicle as one of the few major market newspapers that has not abandoned its local news efforts.

“We promote and inspire civic discourse and we are here to make sure there is an informed electorate and to keep those in power accountable. The local politicians, police, city officials – those are the people who are most directly affecting our lives,” said Audrey Cooper, San Francisco Chronicle editor in chief. “I think there is a lot of great journalism happening in the (Bay Area), including in Lamorinda. But people need to support it with their eyeballs, attention and money, because nothing else is going to keep our democracy strong.”

Publishers have long complained that online platforms like Facebook and Google love the newspapers for their content, but the platforms contribute nothing to the cost of gathering the content. And while publishers agree that the platforms are necessary for content distribution, there is no way to meaningfully negotiate policies and practices to help local news organizations. “In this digital world, where content is being shared for free on social media while the platform makes a profit, it’s only fair to let news organizations share in ad revenues,” DeSaulnier said.

Not everyone believes the congressman’s actions are purely altruistic. “Newspapers generally have lost the public trust. They did it all by themselves. They are a business like any other now,” said Moraga attorney Larry Pines, who has been critical of this newspaper, especially its 2018 Moraga storm drain fee measure coverage, which he felt was biased in favor of the town’s position in promoting its annual property tax measure. “The congressman’s proposed special protection amounts to a waiver or exemption from well-established antitrust laws. It amounts to shameless pandering to the same biased protectorate that routinely feathers his bed in his local communities.”

DeSaulnier responded by again stressing the need for strong local news. “America relies on a free and open press to serve as a watchdog for our communities and the country. Thanks to a robust press America learned Richard Nixon was a crook

and that the Bush Administration failed to adequately respond after Hurricane Katrina,” DeSaulnier said. “Local and national newspapers

shine light on the truth and protect our democracy.”

The congressman’s bill – the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act – awaits

a hearing in the House Judiciary Committee before advancing to the House Floor for a vote.

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## Gehling named MOFD battalion chief



Steve Gehling Lamorinda archive


The Moraga-Orinda Fire District rounded out its roster of chief officers in April with the elevation of Steve Gehling to battalion chief, training division. Gehling and battalion chiefs Matt Nichols, operations and communications, and Jerry

Lee, emergency medical and support services, report directly to Fire Chief Dave Winnacker.

Gehling, a 10-year MOFD veteran, will supervise all training programs for the district, including the record keeping, certification qualifications and the coordination of multi-company training drills. “I want to improve the frequency and consistency of our training program, so our personnel have the skill sets to handle whatever is thrown at them on a daily basis,” Gehling said.

“We’re excited to have a youthful and energetic battalion chief who is passionate about training as the primary way we prepare for emergencies,” Winnacker said.


— N. Marnell




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## Downtown businesses - comings and goings



Photo Pippa Fisher

**Esin will be coming to the old Yankee Pier spot.**

### By Pippa Fisher

Even as residents comment on empty storefronts in Lafayette's downtown area, new businesses are starting to move in.

Going from east to west,

here are a few of the changes residents can watch out for:

The Danville-based gift shop selling baby and home-oriented gifts, Lemon, is replacing A Runner's Mind just along from Sideboard.

Joe and the Juice will be

coming in on the corner replacing the old Squirrels.

The Shade Store is opening in La Fiesta Square.

The owners of the Silk Road restaurant in Walnut Creek are planning on opening a restaurant in the old Rustic Tavern space.

A new children's boutique Myara has opened in the Clocktower, facing Postino. The small space is designed to be a welcoming space with a play structure for children while parents shop the original clothes and connect with one another.

And just along the way where Yankee Pier was until quite recently, Curtis deCarion, owner of Esin and Revel Kitchen and Bar in Danville, will be opening a second Esin.

Keep reading Lamorinda Weekly for more details in future issues.

## Time to hit the trails – it's a springtime challenge!



Photo Pippa Fisher

**From left: Donica Katayanagi, Jeff Gillett, Jonathan Katayanagi, Todd Trimble, Breyana Brandt, Cz Czerner (and front) Penny Katayanagi, Rocky Katayanagi pose in their Lamorinda Trails Challenge T-shirts on the trail by the Lafayette Community Center.**

### By Pippa Fisher

It's spring in Lamorinda and the three Parks and Recreation Departments of Moraga, Orinda and Lafayette want nothing more than to see residents out enjoying the area's beautiful trails. For this reason they are offering a challenge – the first-ever Lamorinda Trails Challenge, to be precise. Kickoff events are planned in all three communities May 4.

The May 4 kickoff events, with representatives at the trailheads handing out free T-shirts, maps, and guides to promote the challenge, will take place in Lafayette at the Reservoir, in Orinda at the open space on Donald Drive and in Moraga at the Moraga Commons Park from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Starting May 1, there are two ways to complete the Lamorinda Trails Challenge. Residents can opt for either the "Go the Distance" or the "Complete the Objectives" challenges.

Participants choosing to go the distance must hike 26.2 miles – marathon distance – which can be done in one hike or many hikes. Participants will track their distance and turn in the log sheet from the Trails Challenge Guide that can be downloaded or picked up at recreation offices. The guide recommends using the free AllTrails smartphone app to make tracking distance fun and easy.

Completing the objectives challenge requires completing five out of eight objectives outlined in the guide, such as hiking a neighborhood trail, hiking a regional trail, picking up litter, identifying wildflowers and becoming familiar with possible evacuation

routes.

Completion must be logged and submitted to one of the recreation departments by Nov. 1. Success will earn participants a 2019 commemorative pin.

There is no cost to participate and, even better, while supplies last, participants can pick up a free Trails Challenge T-shirt, made possible by a donation from Coldwell Banker, which is sponsoring the challenge.

It has taken the hard work of a number of people to bring this about. Orinda Parks and Recreation Director Todd Trimble, Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt and Lafayette Parks, Trails and Recreation Director Jonathan Katayanagi worked with Orinda Parks and Recreation Commissioner CZ Czerner and Coldwell Banker Managing Broker Jeff Gillett.

The three department heads, working together, identified the three cities' trails. Katayanagi explains that, inspired by Lafayette's AllTrails maps, Orinda and Moraga developed AllTrails maps that capture all the city trails, East Bay Regional Park District trails and East Bay Municipal Utility District trails.

"With all three cities' AllTrails Maps completed, the departments worked together to develop a self-guided trails challenge modeled after the EBRPD's Trails Challenge and the National Park Service's Junior Ranger Program," says Katayanagi.

Czerner, who has worked tirelessly to help bring this to fruition, is a lifelong walker/runner. Explaining how important it is to get out and walk as a healthy way to cope with stress, she recalls starting walking at a very

young age.

"When I was 5 my father died of a heart attack," says Czerner. "My mother had to go to work and I was left with no father and effectively no mother." She explains that she dealt with her grief by walking and running. "This was in the 1940s," she says. "No one did that then. But it helped with my stress."

Since then, even during Czerner's high-pressure career as a lawyer, wherever she has been in the world she has always set aside an hour a day to walk or run. "It has kept me healthy," she says.

It's personal for Katayanagi too, whose daughter, then 6 years old, completed the EBRPD Trails Challenge in one day.

"I took her out on a hike and told her about the pin and she didn't want to stop until she had completed the challenge and earned her pin. Five parks and over 15 miles later she completed the challenge in one day," said Katayanagi.

"It was the pin that got her on the trails but after she had her pin she wanted to take her 4-year-old brother out to do the challenge one hike at a time," says Katayanagi, adding, "She will probably be a lifelong hiker and all because the Park District offered this wonderful program."

Starting May 1 those interested in participating in the Lamorinda Trails Challenge will be able to download the guide and digitized trail maps at

www.lovelafayette.org/trails. For more information or to pick up printed copies, residents should contact the Parks and Recreation offices in Moraga, Orinda or Lafayette.

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# Letters to the editor

## Bean Counters 3, Visionaries 2

By a 3 to 2 vote last week the Moraga Town Council embarrassed the entire community and brought shame on local government by refusing to contribute a single dime to the John Muir Land Trust campaign to acquire the Painted Rock property.

JMLT has raised nearly \$1.75 million—all private donations—toward a \$2 million goal to purchase the 84-acre property for inclusion as the anchor of a 500-plus acre public hiking and nature preserve near the Rheem Shopping Center. JMLT was hoping the Town would contribute to partially close the funding gap—MUCH less than what Lafayette and Walnut Creek have contributed to JMLT for their open space acquisitions. But ANYTHING was too much for timid little Moraga.

Despite impassioned arguments by Mayor Roger Wykle and Council Member Mike McCluer favoring a contribution, the three nay-sayers: Kymberleigh Korpus and newcomers Steve Woehleke and Renata Sos, said no. They based their objections on fiscal uncertainties, mainly due to a new sinkhole on private property in the Rheem Center. Woehleke went so far as to propose an alternative “Walk-the-Talk” campaign to garner private contributions door-to-door; Sos offered to help. JMLT doesn’t need council members knocking on doors, hat in hand, on its behalf; it needs council members with the courage to make a small investment now for the long-term legacy of Moraga, even if it means taking a little heat in the short term.

The absurdity of all this is

almost indescribable. Painted Rock is Moraga’s most visible landmark—an icon for as long as anyone can remember. The fact that it can be acquired NOW instead of going on the market for development is almost miraculous. That the Moraga council would turn its back completely on helping make this acquisition is shameful. The funds to do this are NOT taxpayer money. They come from the yet-to-be built Palos Colordos housing development as compensation for an abandoned golf course. Previous council members who secured these monies envisioned them, in part, for recreational uses and open space acquisition.

At the Council meeting I challenged council members to choose between bean counting and vision. The bean counters won.

Richard Immel  
Moraga

### “Time is Running out”

Dear Lamorinda Neighbors  
A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to secure a world-class outdoor recreation site in our neighborhood is at our doorstep, but time is running out. The John Muir Land Trust has been offered the 84-acre Painted Rock parcel at the corner of Rheem Blvd and Moraga Road for purchase. This site has panoramic views of Mt Diablo and the East Bay with abundant wildlife and spectacular wildflowers; if acquired, the Painted Rock property will anchor a large 505-acre public open space. This would be a stunning new recreational resource providing miles of new trails and sweeping views for the community, and be a pro-

ected haven for wildlife. Once acquired, JMLT will provide maintenance of the property IN PERPETUITY and, with additional funding, have the opportunity to build a range of hiking trails and designated special areas (such as equestrian trails and bicycle trails), picnic areas, and bathrooms. Painted Rock was once offered for sale as a development site for \$15 million. JMLT’s project cost is \$2 Million but this offer will expire May 31. JMLT has a \$350,000 matching gift for new donations but this offer will expire May 1.

Community members, Community social organizations and Garden Clubs, local Foundations and Businesses have all come forward to fund \$1.73Million of the purchase price thus far, but we need one last push from the Lamorinda community to get to the finish line. While my hard-core hiking days are over, I look forward to sitting on a bench and watching the swooping hawks and eagles, and savoring the superbloom of wildflowers; and I relish the idea that the grandchildren of MY grandchildren will be able to do the same. But if we don’t act NOW, this precious parcel will slip through our collective fingers. The Town Council has decided they cannot allocate funds to this purchase, so it is time for all of us to pull together and make it happen. I ask you to do two things:

1. If it moves you as much as it does me and you see the advantage of having easy access to open space (and understand that your property value is enhanced by its existence, and that our local sales tax will be enhanced by the revenue brought in by hikers buying

lunch!) consider donating to the purchase, no matter how modest, by going to [jmlt.org](http://jmlt.org) and earmarking your donation to Painted Rock. Every dollar counts now  
2. Tell your friends, social network, and workplace! Many employers will provide

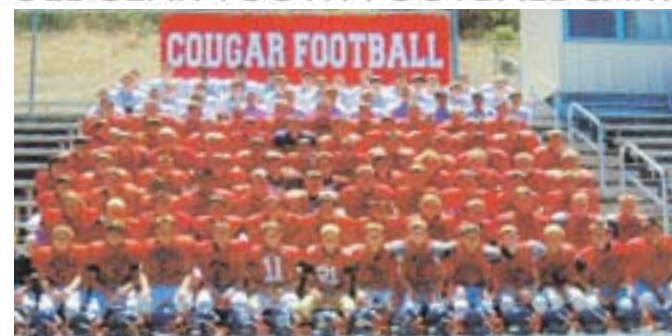
matching funds for charitable donations.

We can make this happen, friends.

Respectfully,  
Bobbie Preston  
Moraga

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 must be factually accurate and be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) for submission guidelines. Email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

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# Proclamation honors State Champs – Campolindo High School Boys Basketball Team



Photo Vera Kochan

## Campolindo High School Boys Basketball State Champs

### By Vera Kochan

Moraga Mayor Roger Wykle issued a proclamation designating April 10, as “2018-2019 Campolindo Boys Varsity Basketball Team Day,” in recognition of the team’s Division II State Championship honors.

The presentation was made during the town council meeting with the entire team and their coaches in attendance. Team members David Ahazie, Cade Bennett, Chase Bennett, Emmanuel Callas, Jake Chan, Rex Curtiss, Ryan Jeter, Aidan Mahaney, Carter Mahaney, Peter O’Donnell, Matt Radell, Peter Schmitz, Tyler Smith and Maxwell Weaver were guided to victory by head coach Steven Dyer and assistant coaches Drew McDonald and Chris Dyer.

During the championship game, Campo battled a heavily favored Colony High School from Ontario, California, in the grand setting of Sacramento’s Golden 1 Center. Colony typically averaged 71.8 points per game, but the Cougars man-

aged to disrupt their offense and rebound Colony 37-28, thereby soundly thrashing the southern California team 55-40.

During the proclamation presentation, a modest Steven Dyer was asked to say a few words to the crowd of proud parents and well-wishers: “I really think that this group did a good job of bonding throughout the year. Obviously, as the playoffs progressed we were playing our best basketball, so we really appreciate this honor.”

Much has been made of the fact that the Cougars are a basically very young team, losing only four seniors to graduation. They have been referred to as “the baby cougars.” However, if youth comes with this caliber of fitness, camaraderie, grit and determination to bring home a first-ever in the school’s 57-year history basketball state championship trophy to Moraga, then Campolindo had better make more room in the trophy case.

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This seminar, led by Jim Brommers Bergquist, a parent of two teenage daughters, and a career-long youth and family mentor who has worked with hundreds of families, could be called: **“I wish I would’ve known this when my kids were young: lessons from my adventures in parenting.”** Tanuka Gordon, Founder and Executive Director of Mindful Littles will also present a section on “Mindful Parenting.”

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

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## Moraga town council declines to donate towards Painted Rock fund; JMLT not giving up hope



South side of the property above Rheem Blvd.

Photo Andy Scheck

... continued from Page A4

The town of Moraga made a \$10,000 donation toward the John Muir Land Trust acquisition of the 600-acre Carr Ranch open space property in 2016. This funding was available, however, because a local developer had cut down a buckeye tree that was intended to remain and negoti-

ated a \$10,000 fine for their actions.

At a Jan. 9 council meeting, Administrative Services Director Norm Veloso provided a PowerPoint presentation and overview of the Palos Colorados Funds – Fund 100, outlining specifics of the Settlement Agreements and financial implications as well as a General Plan fee installment schedule, and a summary of the revenue in-

cluding past decisions made by the town council as to the use of the funds. At the time it was noted by Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg that there were no constraints identified in the Settlement Agreement or in the legal documents as to how the funds could be used by the town.

Korpus stated at that meeting that she had been persuaded the town council was not morally or legally obligated to spend the funds in any particular way, although based on the way the funds had originated, she would like to use them for recreational or economic development purposes if possible, and agreed at the time that "it would be nice to use the funds for open space acquisition." She added that she was grateful there was nothing to stop the town council from using the funds for infrastructure purposes but her vision was that the funds be used conservatively, and suggested the town's greatest need was a reserve account.

Suzanne Jones of Preserve Lamorinda Open Space noted during the Jan. 9 meeting that the 1999 Palos Colorados Settlement Agreement outlined that while a portion of the funds were intended to mitigate traffic and cover other development impacts, other funds were envisioned to provide

recreation and open space benefits to the town.

Former mayor Dave Trotter commented that while Palos Colorados funds were unrestricted, the history of the Settlement Agreement had motivated prior town councils to spend the funds on items which had a recreational nexus.

Although Woehleke and Sos voted against the town donating funds to support the purchase of the Painted Rock property, they have volunteered to walk through Moraga's neighborhoods to solicit citizen donations. According to Woehleke, "The objective is to ensure that as many homes in Moraga are visited as possible to ensure all residents know the importance of the Painted Rock acquisition campaign." He added, "A number of town leaders and citizens have already proactively contacted me to walk."

Woehleke said he plans the walk to begin as soon as possible and will continue through April and into May. Anyone interested in walking can contact him at [spwoehleke@comcast.net](mailto:spwoehleke@comcast.net).

For more information or to donate toward the campaign, visit <https://jmlt.org/index.html>.

## Quick thinking OUSD facilities director uses goats to save the day

... continued from Page A6

Before the goats were released, House went door to door along Ivy Drive to deliver a leaflet announcing the plan to release goats. He also spoke directly with a number of homeowners to alert them.

"During and afterwards," House said, "I received numerous emails from the residents who were pleased and entertained watching the goats."

Some of the emails lamented, "The goats are gone ... and we all miss them. I made friends with a lot of

them, and they kept calling me: Daa ... aaa ... aad!" Others said, "This is the best! Makes my day! The goats are 'adorable'! Thanks for sharing!" and noted how it was "really wonderful to know that the District (the OUSD Board of Trustees) is serious about acting on this issue.

Given the proximity of OIS to the creek vegetation and tall trees, it is in everyone's interest to address this (fire) hazard." One resident noted how it was clever scheduling to bring in the goats during spring break. "Now, if only the District could collect and sell the milk," they wrote.

Others offered continued support: "Now we are eagerly awaiting the cleanup crew to cut out all that brushy stuff to Cal Fire standards. Please keep me abreast of developments, and let me know if you need volunteers. I can organize our neighbors to help."

## Wagner Ranch Nature Area wildlife festival gives the public a glimpse of rare resource

... continued from Page A6

Tours of the historic ranch will be given every half hour starting at noon. Tours start from the Tour Table with Professors Emeritus Reg Barrett, John Helms, and others. Visitors can also meet solar oven specialist, Wendy Helms; Master Gardeners, and Doc Hale, mountain lion whisperer and environmentalist.

Guests are welcome to bring their own picnic lunch or visit the four food trucks

on site including: El Gran Taco Loco, Guys Tri Tip, Mini Street Burger, and Izzy A's frozen desserts. All trucks offer a vegetarian option. The trucks will be located near the entrance to the festival, with seating just inside the gates.

There will be musical performances by Orinda Intermediate School Strings and Jazz Band, and ALMA Music. Children can pick up wildlife passports and get them stamped at the stations for a

free honey stick at the Friends of the Nature Area Station. Also near the entrance adults can check out the native plants for donations.

Toy bug hunts will take place in the garden at 1 and 3 p.m. Children kindergarten age and younger can take home toy critters. Free timed tickets will be available for pond explorations, which will take place every 30 minutes starting at 11:30 a.m.

Activities in the Central

Area will feature Native American Singers and Drummers, Cynthia Brian, author and actor, environmentalist Jim (Doc) Hale, Aeroponic Gardens with Gwen O'Neill, Girl Scout and Boy Scout Project Demonstrations; Wildlife Columnist, Joan Morris; Wildlife Tattoos by Coyote Brush Studios; face painting by Orinda Juniors; Sustainable Contra Costa; OIS Green Team hands-on activities; Orinda Historical Society; Friends of the Moraga Adobe;

and the Old Yellow House – net-zero historic home on Moraga Way. There will also be nature fun by the East Bay Municipal Utility District, tile painting, and nature art. Daniel Phillips will present Chemistry Magic and Steve Gentry will present Buzzing with Honey Bees. Friends of Orinda Creeks, Friends of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area, and Plein Air Artists will also be present.

## Wilder Art and Garden Center up and running, or at least walking

... continued from Page A7

Council members Amy Worth and Nick Kosla were in attendance, along with attorney Fran Layton, Bruce Yamamoto

representing the developer, Madelyn Mallory, a Wilder resident, City Manager Steve Salomon, Director of Public Works Larry Theis, Associate Planner Jason Chen, and Trimble. The other topics on the

agenda were parking enforcement, and extension of the Wilder Subdivision improvement agreement.

Since the opening of play fields four and five, it seems that Wilder has been experiencing parking in areas where parking is not permitted, and the residents, the developer, OGLLC, and the Wilder Homeowners Association have reached out to the city, asking that it take on parking enforcement, even on Wilder's private streets, because of the impact of the city amenities.

Residents who attended the subcommittee meeting expressed frustration at not being able to park at the Wilder mail kiosks and concern about the safety of traffic around the play fields. They complained about illegal parking on Wilder Road and on Bigleaf Road.

HOA president Greg Schwartz thanked the city, noting that the enforcement efforts that have already been put in place by the city have been a tremendous help and the problem has been mitigated "a ton." One resident complained that the Holy Names lacrosse team routinely unloads their players on Wilder Road, and the players then climb over the fence into the play field. Theis noted that if users of the play fields are observed repeatedly violating the traffic and parking regulations, they could lose their deposits, or even their right to use the play fields. Worth noted that the city values the shared facilities and places a high priority on not inconveniencing the Wilder residents. The subcommittee agreed with the enforcement plan which



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Large wood sculpture by Stan Dann on loan to City of Orinda hangs in Art and Garden Center Foyer.

will appear before the full council on April 23.

The subcommittee also discussed the possibility of an access easement over a portion of Bigleaf Road to enable better access to the Art and Garden Center. Although the developer, OGLLC, has offered the city an easement over a parcel which covers the portion of Bigleaf Road up to Paintbrush Lane necessary to access the back driveway of the Center, residents objected on the grounds that the parcel will come into the ownership of the Wilder HOA when the homes are all sold, and they believe that they should have a say in the fate of the parcel.

The topic of the easement is complicated, in part because of the current parking issues along Bigleaf Road and the city's avowed desire to develop a further parking lot close to the back of the Art and Garden Center. This parking lot could be visible to the homes on Coffee Berry Lane. An additional concern, pointed out by some of the residents at the meeting, is that if the parking lot has 25

spaces, and one ADA compliant space, it could induce hundreds of cars to drive up Bigleaf Road to investigate if parking were available. Other concerns included people congregating or partying in the parking lot.

The residents seemed to agree that they were not opposed to the easement in principal, but they did want several things in return. Schwartz said that the HOA had concerns in four areas: financial, liability, landscaping and restrictions on use. Madelyn Mallory said that the residents wanted to control the maintenance of the road, but wanted the city to contribute proportionally to the amount of public use. She also said that residents might be more comfortable with a temporary easement, to see how things go, before considering a permanent easement. Steve Salomon noted that the idea of the additional parking lot was still in the planning stages, and would not even be a consideration for some years in the future.

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# Celebrate Independent Bookstore Day with free events and giveaways



Photo provided

Storytime at Bel and Bunna's Books in Lafayette.

## By Kara Navolio

Orinda Books and Bel and Bunna's Books will be participating in Independent Bookstore Day on Saturday, April 27, a national one-day party taking place at most independent book

stores across the country. This is the fifth year of the event, which was started by the Northern California Independent Booksellers Association.

Ten years ago it seemed that independent bookstores were slowly becoming a thing of the past, but since

2009 there has been a yearly increase in the number of stores despite the growth of online book retailers. There are now over 1,700 independent book stores nationally, which have reshaped the concept of a book store. In addition to selling carefully selected books, successful book stores have become community gathering places and now host many events throughout the year. Orinda Books has been in business since 1976. In addition to author events, owner Maria Roden hosts book clubs, workshops, and story times. She also makes space for local artists to display their work and hosts Artist's Opening Receptions. Bel and Bunna's Books, which focuses on children's books, sponsors events such as a "Making Connections" class for new parents and their babies to learn how to connect through touch and feel, led by a children's physical therapist.

This year's Independent Bookstore Day will include a Bookstore Passport Game. Book lovers can pick up their passports now at any inde-

pendent book store and begin collecting stamps from stores they visit through April 27. Stamped passports can then be turned in on that day for a chance to win prizes, including gift certificates.

Orinda Books plans to have local children's authors Michael Slack and Lindy Novak reading their books from 10:15 a.m. to noon. Also at 11 a.m., two publishers from Penguin Random House and Macmillan will present their favorite new books for summer, and at 3 p.m. Vilunya Diskin, a founding author of "Our Bodies Ourselves," will discuss the 50th anniversary of the book. There will also be live music, refreshments and giveaways throughout the day.

Bel and Bunna's Books, which has been at 3581 C Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette since 2016, will have story times at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., and throughout the day will offer crafts, giveaways, signed copies of books and other events.

**For more information:** [www.indiebookstoreday.org](http://www.indiebookstoreday.org), [www.orindabooks.com](http://www.orindabooks.com), [www.belandbunnasbooks.com](http://www.belandbunnasbooks.com).

## Lynn's Top Five

# Quarterbacking this year's tax season – what now?

## By Lynn Ballou, CFP®

None of my friends who are tax advisors had time to chat with me when I sat down to write this column – shocking, right? However, since we share clients, you can imagine I've had a lot of interaction with those in the tax trenches this year. I think I heard the word "Epic" used more than once regarding the experience. So a relief to move on, right? However, before you put away those returns with a big "whew!" here are some takeaways for you to think about in getting ready for next year (oops, I mean this year).

**1) Check your withholding!** While the theory was good, i.e. most of us should enjoy lower taxes under the new law, that wasn't the case for all of us. Lower withholding in 2018 has resulted in many owing taxes for last year. Armed with your vision of next tax season, now is the time to revisit your W-4s and recalculate what you should be withholding and take into account that we are already more than a fourth of the way through the year. For those with income sources that lack withholding options, work through the possible need of

paying estimated taxes, how much, and when.

**2) California does NOT conform to the new Federal Tax law!** Keep tracking all your property taxes as well as your miscellaneous itemized deductions such as investment expenses because you may still be able to deduct these on your 2019 California returns.

**3) Pay off your mortgage?**

The new tax laws may have you scratching your head about why you even have a mortgage anymore since so many of us are now taking the standard deduction on our federal returns. However, don't just pay off your mortgage without running some numbers as there might be good reasons to hold on to that loan. In addition to giving up liquid assets to pay off your mortgage, another aspect to review is if you still benefit from the interest deduction on your state return. Or perhaps the rate of interest on your mortgage even without any tax benefit is attractive compared to your rate of return on your investment portfolio. And if you'll create taxable income to free up the funds to pay off the mortgage, that might make this decision too expensive. This is where it really pays to run the numbers

and consult a tax professional.

**4) Charitable deductions might be best made from your RMD.** If you are 70-1/2 or older it's time to take a close look at your opportunity to gift up to \$100,000 to qualified charities through your IRAs using your required minimum distributions. This method allows you to lower your AGI and can be a better option than gifting low basis assets which you may no longer be able to deduct on Schedule A if you aren't itemizing anymore. Work with your trusted advisors to be sure you qualify and to be sure this is done correctly on your behalf.

**5) One light in the tunnel – fewer taxpayers owe Federal AMT.** This brings up my last point, which is "start your 2019 tax planning now!" Not only do you want to grapple with issues such as those referenced above, you might have another unique opportunity. With newer, high Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) exemption thresholds in place due to the new tax law (\$71,700 for Individuals and \$111,700 for those Married Filing Jointly), maybe this is the year you think about selling real estate or other assets with sizable capital gains. Before you take the leap, run the num-

bers with your pros and again pay attention to the differences between state and federal tax laws along with other pertinent issues.

No time to rest on your tax season "been there done that!" laurels! Spend some time now thinking about the current year and what proactive steps might benefit you and your family. Working with your team of tax pros alongside your financial planner will allow you to review your whole financial picture in the framework of the new tax laws and all your financial goals.

*The review, assessment, and/or opinion expressed in this column are limited to and in association with general financial planning subjects. They are intended to introduce the reader to a general financial planning topics. This column should serve as a tool that should assist readers in the development of subsequent discussions with a financial planning professional. Always consult an accountant and/or attorney to assess your individual situation prior to implementing any financial planning strategy, including any strategy directly or indirectly referenced in this column.*



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# Lamorinda area job faire coming to Moraga Country Club

## By Vera Kochan

Dust off and update your old resumes. The first, and hopefully annual, job faire for Lamorinda area residents takes place on Monday, April

29 from noon to 6 p.m. at the Moraga Country Club, 1600 St. Andrews Drive, Moraga. Sponsored by the Moraga Country Club and the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, the event will be held in the dining room area. Participating

businesses from Lamorinda are hoping to fill numerous positions in the fields of retail, office work and restaurant employment, to name a few. The job openings are for full-time employment only.

The Moraga Chamber of

Commerce anticipates 100-200 job seekers to visit the faire. According to Executive Director Kathe Nelson, "The idea is to provide local people with local employment, and to save on commute time and save on gas." Light refresh-

ments will be provided to attendees. For more information contact [kathe@moragachamber.org](mailto:kathe@moragachamber.org) or phone (925) 323-6524.

# Burton Valley student pushes school to go green this Earth Day

... continued from Page A3

Jackl got to work sending emails to the school principal and vice principal, copying the Parent Association president since the PTA oversees the hot lunch program.

PTA President Neda Wilson says that Julian was so passionate that he pursued his goal by pushing the issue with both her and the school administration. "He scheduled meetings in the most professional way, came armed with stats, case studies, and a financial model," she says.

"It took him to come in and open my eyes," says Wilson. She notes that in a school of Burton Valley's size, with 800 students, the amount of plastic being saved from the landfill is huge. Roughly 300 meals are served daily which means that, with the use of reusable metal flatware, 45,000 plastic utensils annually will be saved from landfill.

Wilson helped Jackl work with the hot lunch program company Sodexo to implement the changes. Through their contact at Sodexo, another school in the area – Wagner

Ranch in Orinda – heard about the initiative and has decided to make the switch as well.

And that is Jackl's goal. "I am very proud and excited that this can help," he says, noting that his aim is to reach out to other schools in the area, across the state and across the U.S., to share the BVE story to make a global change for the benefit of the environment.

Jackl is spreading his message. He presented his initiative to the April 16 Lafayette School Board meeting. He is scheduled to appear in the mayor's weekly video on April 19 and will have

a table at Lafayette's Earth Day celebration April 28.

Jackl's parents are understandably very proud of their son. His father, Jay Jackl, describes him as a very empathetic person.

"He's very persistent," explains his mother, Chastity Schults. "He always does research and comes up with a persuasive argument."

He is certainly persistent. BVE Principal Meredith Dolley explains that Jackl knew and understood that getting rid of plastic utensils and using silverware for hot lunch would be

a big undertaking. "That didn't stop him. Julian persisted, researched and engaged not only our administration, but also our PTA."

Dolley continues, "Julian's goal and mission was to help Burton Valley become more green and more sustainable. However, the outcome has far surpassed what he set out to do. He is a strong example for all the children and adults at Burton Valley and beyond, that when you persist and you stay true to your passions, you really can make a difference."

# Small cell wireless facilities – the future is coming to Moraga

... continued from Page A4

He added, "This is designed to keep the U.S. technologically at the forefront and competitive."

Vice Mayor Kimberleigh Korpus pointed out that several cities are attempting to dispute the Carr Order. If Moraga attempted to do so and were taken to court by a wireless carrier, the town doesn't have the funds to fight

the lawsuit. Mayor Roger Wykle felt that additional research into state laws and the public's rights was essential and suggested that Moraga and Orinda legal counsels meet to discuss options.

Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg said, "I'd like to recommend that we don't rush back in a month or two. That we actually observe what's happening with the

lawsuits that are underway, as well as the changes and modifications that other people are making, and when things seem to have stabilized, then we can bring back something that's been vetted so that we don't have to come back multiple times."

Staff's recommendation to the town council was to review the proposed Muni Code amendments and Planning commission suggestions and

either adopt the two proposed ordinances or identify additional desired amendments while remaining consistent with the limitations of the Carr Order. The first ordinance is an urgency ordinance that would go into effect immediately upon adoption. The second is a standard ordinance that would go into effect 30 days after a second reading and adoption, but remain in effect even if a court

found that urgency ordinance standards were not met by the town for any reason.

The council unanimously voted to adopt the first ordinance as amended and, with regards to the second ordinance, unanimously waived the first reading and introduced the ordinance as amended.





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### Sunny skies for Spring Egg Hunt



Birthday girl Vanessa, 5 (center).

Photo Andy Schreck

... continued from Page A1

At the appointed hour, an estimated total of 300-400 egg hunters with baskets in hand waited behind barriers ready for the signal to rush onto the

field of scattered eggs. The hunting was done in shifts of three age groups. Counting down from 10 to 1, each group sprinted onto the field quicker than thoroughbreds at The Kentucky Derby.

Amid the flurry of arms,

legs, baskets and picture-taking parents, all of the eggs were scooped up in no time at all leaving nothing but smiling faces.

### Looking for more egg or candy hunting opportunities?

Take a free photo with the Easter Bunny from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 20 at Moraga's Rheem Valley Shopping Center in the suite between Dover Saddlery and Nations Giant Hamburgers.

The Lafayette Rotary Club "Annual Candy Scramble" will be held at 10 a.m. on April 20 at Lafayette Plaza (corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road). This event is open to all children ages 2-through second grade (see story on Page A3).

And don't miss the Spring Egg Hunt at Orinda Community Center Park from 10:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 20, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Orinda. Toddlers, kindergartners, first and second-graders can participate in finding prize-filled eggs and treats. Light snacks will be served at this free event.

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# ~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

## Lafayette's own come together for an evening of music at Community Music Festival



Music performers on the Town Hall Theatre stage

Photo provided

### By Pippa Fisher

Once a year the Town Hall Theatre hosts a real treat for music-lovers – an evening when local musicians come together to play, donating their talents in a significant fundraiser for the theater. This year the Ninth Annual Community Music Festival will take place Saturday, April 27.

And this year's community festival is more local than ever. All musicians have Lafayette origins and connections.

Lafayette singer Kiki Stack, whose brainchild this concert was back in 2011, says that unlike the past few years when the concert featured five or six acts doing half-hour sets, this year there will be just two bands.

"The Big Jangle Band, a popular local Tom Petty tribute band, will be playing the hits with a little twist perhaps, and B-sides for the deeper Tom Petty fan, combining acoustic and electric favorites," says Stack. "I add a female angle on Tom Petty songs and of course cover Stevie Nicks duets with Paul Cotruvo, the band's leader."

Cotruvo, well known locally, is Lafayette-born and raised. "He will be playing with the second band, too," Stack says, explaining that the other band is an "All Star" band made up of Lafayette native sons.

The idea behind this band comes from guitar player/producer Jeff Tamelier, best known for playing with Tower of Power. Tamelier tells of growing up in Lafayette looking up to older kids playing music at the local schools.

One such kid was Mark

Stanley, another local musician who will be playing at the festival.

"Mark Stanley was the reason I got into music," remembers Tamelier.

"For me it all started at Burton School, as it was back then, in fourth grade in 1968. I was allowed to hang out, watch and listen to Del Valle High School students' band, Rock Island," says Tamelier, adding that back then he wasn't allowed to join in. "I was too young."

Stack describes Stanley as a talented songwriter with a buttery-smooth voice. He has played at previous LCMFs.

Dave Martin will be playing. Stack explains Martin has played with local favorites, The Buzztones, with whom Stanley also played early on, and Lloyds, an original new wave band in the '80s. Martin now has his own band, Dave Martin's House Party, a successful Bay Area dance band.

"They plan on playing duets, trios, and all jamming together on some '60s favorites, somewhat chronologically, I believe," says Stack. "Jeff's invited me to join them for a couple of songs. A highlight of the evening should be a reunion of Lafayette's own '70s rock band, Rock Island."

The evening, while masterminded by Kiki Stack, comes to fruition also because of THT board of directors Vice President Tom Stack, who produces the event and will be the Emcee for the evening, keeping things flowing smoothly.

He says it is his favorite musical event of the year. "People come back every year for this event. Once they come, they're hooked," says Tom Stack. "This is not a cover band experience," he

says. "The evening has a beautiful musical flow – very cohesive, full of surprises and spontaneity. It is a chance to play to an appreciative and

receptive audience."

All proceeds from the evening support THT. The event takes place April 27. Doors open at 7 p.m. The

show starts at 8 p.m. There will be a full bar and drinks may be taken into the theater to enjoy with the show.

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## Orinda students deliver peace kits to Paradise students impacted by Camp Fire



Students are led through mindful yoga poses.

Photos Jenn Freedman

By Jenn Freedman

Local nonprofit Mindful Littles and the Orinda Union School District, under the OrindaCares program, offered a unique type of relief for students in Paradise, California, who were affected by the Camp Fire this past November. Mindful Littles led over 1,600 Orinda students in creating "peace kits" for Paradise students at Ponderosa Elementary School to help overcome the emotional trauma that lingers from the fire.

In mid-March, Orinda students across all four elementary schools built the peace kits. Jointly funded by the Orinda and Paradise Rotary clubs, the kits were filled with items to help students practice mindfulness, including breathing buddies to help students relax, gratitude journals, mindfulness books, weighted eye pillows and many other practical and useful tools. Other sponsors for the peace kits project included Lamorinda Tooth Buds, Michelle Groft Real Estate and Andrew Jordan Nance and Parallax Press.

Tuesday, April 9 was the "Day of Peace," when OUSD students, staff, volunteers, and Mindful Littles leaders delivered 300 peace kits to the students in Paradise. They spent the day teaching the kids how to use the mindfulness and compassion tools in their kits.

Tanuka Gordon, founder and executive director of Mindful Littles, describes the experience: "The Day of Peace was an unforgettable experience with tears, laughter and heartfelt moments all around. To be able to empower Paradise students with practical and tangible tools to help them have inner peace and resilience after such a devastating natural disaster was deeply meaningful to all those that have been part of our OrindaCares program. Even more incredible was watching our OUSD students on the trip teach their friends in Paradise how to practice these tools. We saw the ripple effect of our compassion work in full effect and we are grateful for the opportunity to spread some peace to so many kids and families in need."

The experience was powerful for all those involved, and enthusiasm around Mindful Littles service learning model for schools is spreading: discussions are underway to continue mindful service learning programs at

Paradise and other local Bay Area school districts. If you are aware of other schools who may be interested in these programs, you can reach out at [info@mindfullittles.org](mailto:info@mindfullittles.org).



Bubble wands are used for a Mindful Bubble Breath practice. In order to blow more bubbles, we can practice a mindful slow and deep breath.



Lacrosse balls are used for myofascial release and can be used to release tension in the body.

## Orinda Concert Series season finale features Brett Barrett



Brett Barrett Photo provided

Submitted by Michael Williams

If you haven't experienced the Live at the Orinda concert series at the Orinda Theatre yet, you don't want to miss the one year anniversary season finale at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 2, with Broadway and West End leading man, Brett Barrett, in his Bay Area concert debut.

Barrett received an Olivier Award nomination (the British Tony Awards) for his starring role in the London premier of the Tony-winning Broadway revival of "Kiss Me

Kate" (also recorded for broadcast on PBS and DVD). Barrett also received raves when he co-starred with Reba McEntire in the smash Broadway revival of "Annie Get Your Gun." Other shows include "Phantom of the Opera," "Grand Hotel," "West Side Story" and "Chicago" (LA Drama Critics Award). Film and television roles include "The Producers," "Hercules," "Longtime Companion" and "All My Children." Barrett has recorded three solo albums, including a duet with film icon Lauren Bacall.

For tickets and information, visit [www.OrindaMovies.com](http://www.OrindaMovies.com)

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# Habitat Gardening at Camino Pablo Elementary



Photo provided

By Jenn Freedman

As commercial and residential developments spread into wilderness areas, they infringe on the habitats that would otherwise supply the food, water, and shelter that wildlife species need to survive. Habitat gardening incorporates these resources into landscapes to attract and support birds, butterflies, bees, and other creatures as their native habitats disappear.

Habitat gardens are generally characterized by a more natural aesthetic with a wide variety of plants that specifically add positive benefits to the environment. Native plants provide an unrivaled habitat because native flora and fauna have co-evolved over thousands of years.

Laura Osteen, Moraga resident and owner of Secret Garden Landscapes, incorporates habitat gardening into all of her designs. She especially enjoys educating her clients about the importance of habitat creation for wildlife like pollinators. "By promoting pollinators' needs for habitat, we are supporting our own need for food and diversity in the natural world," Osteen says. By creating habitats for pollinators, we enable them to fertilize plants. Only then can the plants produce fruits, nuts, or seeds that humans need for a healthy diet.

One prominent example of her habitat gardening design is at Camino Pablo Elementary School in Moraga. Back in 2016, landscape improvements were already un-

derway at the school. A group of parents, lead by Shweta Srivastava and Tammy Roake, had created a beautiful mural across the entire front wall of the school, capturing the beauty of the surrounding Moraga hills. "It felt like a shame to leave the front circle as-is with its overgrown juniper and chain-linked fence," they said. And so the gardening project launched to complement the mural, extending the natural habitat into the landscape.

The habitat garden was installed on Earth Day 2017, with the help of the Camino Pablo community. Parents and students (including a handful of Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops) worked together to dig holes, level soil, lay gold fine dust, stack moss rock and mulch.

The new Camino Pablo front circle is focused on pollinator plants like California poppies, verbena, salvia, rudbeckia, and California lilac. As people drive by at different times throughout the year, the garden is constantly evolving. While in winter many of the flowers are dormant, the plants are still providing places for wildlife to forage. And plants like manzanita bloom in late winter, providing food for hummingbirds.

As the seasons change, various plants provide pollination, food for birds and butterfly larvae, material for birds' nests, spaces for butterflies to lay eggs, and places for wildlife to hide. Osteen also planted a California Native Oak in the circle, which aids wildlife in many

ways, like providing food (acorns), shade, and habitat. In addition, since Oaks are slow-growing, she thought the Camino Pablo graduates would enjoy coming back years later and seeing the change in the tree's size. "It helps provide a symbol associated with their own growth from childhood," she explains.

In summer 2018, the wooden "Camino Pablo Elementary" sign was installed by Boy Scout Troop 246, led by Kellen Clancy, who gained his Eagle Scout rank from creation and installation of the sign. The wood sign blends in with the aesthetic of the native landscape and mural as well.

As spring approaches and residents contemplate new home outdoor landscaping, consider supporting wildlife by bringing back some of their native resources in your home garden. "When a landscape becomes 'alive' it is so much more enjoyable. Plus, it teaches children to value our natural environment around us," Osteen highlights. When she designs home gardens, her goal is to create beautiful, sustainable, and functional landscapes that meets her clients' unique styles.

# Buy Nothing groups offer random acts of kindness

By Diane Claytor

An unused designer wallet, discovered in the back of a drawer, was handed over – for free – to a mom whose college-age daughter had been coveting one, but couldn't afford it. A PBK rocking horse, well-loved by three grandkids who had outgrown it, was given, at no cost, to a grandmother whose grandson was just reaching the age to ride it enthusiastically. An abundance of lemons was shared with a mom whose daughter really wanted to open a lemonade stand. Used books, games, furniture and clothing, half-used packages of diapers, light bulbs, costume jewelry and candles all found new homes with neighbors, thanks to the popular Facebook group, Buy Nothing.

It's true what they say: "one person's junk is another person's treasure." And that's what Buy Nothing counts on; their model is to give you the opportunity to offer your neighbors something you no longer need or ask for something you do – at no cost to anyone.

Started in 2013 by two friends who created what they called an experimental hyper-local gift economy in their Washington state neighborhood, from that humble beginning, Buy Nothing has

grown into a worldwide social movement with more than 500,000 members in 30 nations. As their website states, Buy Nothing rules are simple: "Post anything you'd like to give away, lend or share amongst neighbors. Ask for anything you'd like to borrow or receive for free. Keep it legal. Keep it civil." There is no buying or selling, no trading or bartering because "we're not a community bulletin board or charity, we're strictly a hyper-local gift economy," their website explains.

Buy Nothing groups are, as noted above, hyper-local and intentionally kept reasonably sized. This makes it easier to build a community of neighbors who get to know each other by giving or asking – and then not having to drive 25 miles to receive their "gift." There are approximately 100 Bay Area Buy Nothing groups and three of those are in Lamorinda, one in each of the towns. Each group has its own administrator to help foster community, remind people how Buy Nothing is different than other social networking groups and encourage members to tell stories about what they're gifting or requesting.

A recent offer of pink and purple yarn prompted a response from a mom who said she'd love these "for our finger knitting crazy kid."

... continued on Page B8

THE OSLC CONCERT SERIES PRESENTS



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**Matt Zebley  
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4:00 PM  
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Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
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## Scout installs barn owl nesting boxes to earn Scouting's Hornaday Award



From left: Justin and Sam Higgins, with EBMUD Ranger Gerald Sylvester Photo provided

### Submitted by Tyler Higgins

Last October, Sam Higgins led Scouts from Lafayette's Troop 219 to install five nesting boxes for barn owls at the Lafayette Reservoir.

Similar to his older brother Justin's wood duck nesting box service project at the Lafayette Reservoir in 2012, Higgins' service project not only satisfied his service hour requirements for his Eagle rank, but also offered him a chance to earn the coveted Hornaday Award – Scouting's highest conservation award. In order to satisfy the Hornaday Badge requirements, Higgins selected a project category focused on fish and wildlife management that would help barn owls flourish at the Lafayette Reservoir.

The Lafayette Reservoir is a terrific recreational element of our community, attracting thousands of people annually. Unfortunately, many visitors leave food and trash behind, consequently increasing the rodent population. Helping barn owls flourish in the community is a natural way to reduce rodents, keeping wildlife balanced at the reservoir.

"Barn owls are a very beautiful raptor, and as someone who loves all birds and wants to help conserve habitat for them to thrive, I wanted to make sure that barn owls would have a secure place to hatch their young at the Lafayette Reservoir," said Higgins.

In conjunction with Scouting's Mt. Diablo Silverado Council's Hornaday advisor, Lillian Remer, Higgins worked with East Bay Municipal Utility District Ranger and Wildlife Biologist Gerald Sylvester to select sites for the barn owl nesting

boxes around the Lafayette Reservoir.

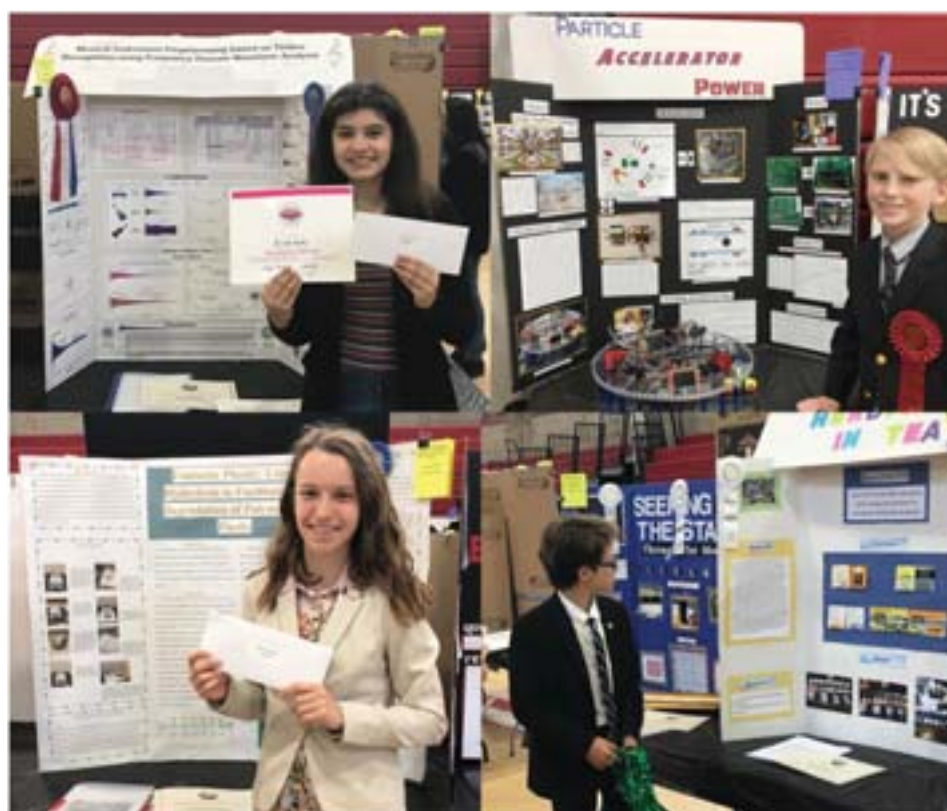
"My nesting box project was focused on helping increase the barn owl population as they are the resident owl species that do the most to keep rodent populations in check," added Higgins.

Visitors looking to locate the barn owl nesting boxes will see them in various locations surrounding the Lafayette Reservoir – both in lower elevations around picnic areas as well as upper elevations along the Rim Trail. Onlookers should be sure to keep their distance from the nesting boxes and not disturb the areas.

"At a young age, my family taught me about the importance of wildlife management. I am proud of my service project, give thanks to the Scouts that helped me, and hope that it raises awareness of the barn owl's important role in the ecosystem at the Lafayette Reservoir," added Higgins.

"The William T. Hornaday Award is rarely earned because it requires a significant contribution to one or more areas of conservation. The Mt. Diablo Silverado Council serves over 10,000 youth each year, and yet Sam Higgins is one of only a few Scouts in our Council to apply for the Hornaday Badge in the last several years. Sam did an excellent job of learning about the important role barn owls play in the ecosystem, and building nesting boxes for them to flourish is a natural way to help curb the rodent population at the Lafayette Reservoir," said Lillian Remer, the outdoor ethics advocate of the Mt. Diablo Silverado Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

## Top honors awarded to Lamorinda teens at Contra Costa Science Fair



Contra Costa Science Fair winners

Photo provided

### Submitted by Isabelle Katz

At the Contra Costa Science Fair this spring the Jaguars of Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School were well represented with winners in the physical sciences and engineering categories. Seventh-grader Henry Johnson won second place for his project: "Particle Accelerator Power" in the seventh-grade engineering category and Daniel Berkes won third place in physical sciences eighth-grade for his project investigating the "Presence of Dangerous Herbicides Atrazine and Simazine in Popular Tea Brands." Isabelle Katz, a JM eighth-grader, won first place in physical science (eighth-grade) for her project "Characterizing Musical In-

struments using Signal Analysis," and she also won the middle school Junior Sweepstakes, which is awarded to the top three middle school projects at the fair. Isabelle was chosen to represent Contra Costa County at the California State Science Fair at the end of April along with Campolindo High School Freshman, Cathy Kenderski, who won first place at the county science fair in physical science (ninth-grade) for her work on "Fantastic Plastic: Using Hydrolysis to Facilitate the Degradation of Polymers in Plastic." Good luck to Isabelle and Cathy at the State Science Fair, which is being held April 29-30 in Los Angeles at the California Science Center.

## Kindness 'rocks' at St. Perpetua Parish



A few third-grade students with their "kindness rocks."

Photo provided

### Submitted by Domini Tarman

For St. Perpetua's third-grade students recently, kindness came full circle.

On Feb. 23, these children placed colorful, handwritten "kindness notes" throughout the St. Perpetua church pews, with messages such as "Be kind," "You are awesome," and "You are bright as sunshine."

"The children wanted to sprinkle the pews with kindness, like confetti," explained Kristine Kvochak, director of St. Perpetua's Faith Formation Program. And they certainly did.

The children's notes so delighted and impressed a small group of St. Perpetua's parishioners (composed of Helen McKinnon, Betty Delisio, Mary K. Drennan and Domini Tarman) that they began a localized version of "the kindness rock project," which began in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. This endeavor involves painting rocks with

kind, positive messages, and leaving the rocks randomly throughout the community. The parishioners painted rocks with bright, vivid colors and added uplifting sayings of kindness on them, such as "Spread sunshine," "Hope" and "Trust in God."

These same parishioners wanted to ensure the St. Perpetua's third-graders, who had so generously given kindness to others, could now receive kindness back. So the four women presented a personal, kindness rock to each of the children, and encouraged them "to pass on the kindness" by sharing their rock with a friend or family member, or leaving it randomly in the Lamorinda community to be discovered by another.

"The children certainly taught us all that kindness is catching," shared Domini Tarman, one of the four St. Perpetua's rock-painters. "We are so grateful to them for planting the seeds of kindness in our community – see how they grew!"

**Community Service:** We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

### Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

## In Memory

### Donn L. Black (1930 – 2019)



Donn L. Black died peacefully on March 10, 2019 at the age of 88.

Donn was born on July 12, 1930 in Baker City, Oregon. He lived with his parents Ren and Flora Black at separate times in Ogden, Utah and Fairbanks, Alaska and graduated high school back in Baker, Oregon where he served as student body president his senior year, class of 1948. He attended Oregon State University where he completed a double major in Business and Industrial Arts and was elected student body president (1951-52). Donn attended law school at New York University in 1956. He was married

to Arlene Marie Stone in 1954 in France while serving his ROTC active duty commitment at the U.S. airbase in Dreux as a Judge Advocate General (JAG). Donn joined the law firm of Orr, Heuring & Wendel in 1959 where his primary client was the East Bay Regional Park District, spanning nearly 40 years. Donn and Arlene raised three children in Lafayette, California. The first mayor of Lafayette, Donn and a dream team of other council members accomplished Lafayette's incorporation in 1968. Donn served as a city councilmember for many years afterwards. Donn was a decades-long Rotarian, serving as president of the Oakland Club (1981-82). Donn moved to St. Helena upon his marriage to Antonia Allegra in 1996. In his retirement he continued to be a committed and contributing member of the St. Helena Rotary Club, Rianda House Senior Center, and founded the Franklin Society, where friends met to discuss the issues of the day.

Donn is survived by his wife Antonia Allegra, children Katherine Black, Jenny Black Zogg and Alex Black, Toni's children, John Griffin, Deanna Griffin and Paul Griffin, grandchildren Madeline Goldberg Black, Alex Goldberg Black and Ethan Zogg, as well as Toni's three grandchildren.

There will be a small family memorial service.

A devoted husband, loving father, and grandfather and faithful friend. He will be missed.



# Campo's Academic Decathlon team takes fifth at state finals



Photo John T. Miller

Campo teacher Paul Verbanszky with co-captain Maddie House stand in front of nine year's worth of trophies.

By John T. Miller

The Campolindo Academic Decathlon team won first place in their regional competition for the ninth year in a row, qualifying for the state

finals where they finished fifth against 28 other schools in their division.

The Aca Deca Club, as it is known, has 30 members, with a core of nine who represented the school in the state

finals.

Students were asked to research and study the 1960s – this year's theme – and be proficient in many different categories, including art, econ, math, music, science, and social science. In addition, they needed to present both a prepared and extemporaneous speech, write an essay on an impromptu topic, and conduct a personal interview.

Maddie House, a junior co-captain along with senior Lilli Heutmaker, said, "The state meet was so exciting with the energy and the enthusiasm. It was great to meet all the people from the different schools."

She added that the experience helped make the topic applicable to her classroom studies. "I would go into a class and find something I learned about already in Aca Deca – like the feminist movement. We didn't just learn about the '60s, our packet including everything that happened in the previous decades that led up to these events."

Paul Verbanszky, the club's advisor and a teacher at Campolindo, said that one of the difficulties in fielding a competitive team is that they must have representation from all academic achievement levels. At the state competition, three of the competitors have a GPA of 3.75 and above (Honors), three are between 3.0 and 3.75 (Scholastic

and three are at 2.99 or below (Varsity).

"The challenge is finding members with lower GPAs," says Verbanszky. "People think that Aca Deca is just for the honors students, but that's not the case. Often, the more average student can both improve their performance in school – adding to their chances of getting into a college that exceeds their expectations – while also helping the team's performance at the competitions."

All 30 members of the club competed on the regional team, while Heutmaker and House were joined on the state team by sophomores Zoe Heidersbach, Jessica Long, and Alexander Sastokas; juniors Santiago Milano, Jordan Jackson and Christopher Lobron; and senior Stephen Chilimidos.

Verbanszky gave special mention to Milano, who received multiple medals, and to Heutmaker, the team's highest scorer. Additionally, four of the nine members medaled in the music category.

The team also placed third in the Super Quiz category. Each round featured 14 questions in the pressure-filled event in front of a thousand spectators at the Sacramento Convention Center.

The state meet was held in Sacramento in March and featured three intensive days of preparation and competition,

concluding with a dance on Saturday night and an awards ceremony Sunday. Four of the nine CHS students received medals.

While it might have been nice to reach the national finals at the end of April, Verbanszky pointed out there was some pretty stiff competition: "Scoring 60 percent out of the thousand points possible is a fairly respectable score, but El Camino Real Charter School from Los Angeles scored 99 percent and will once again represent California in Bloomington, Minnesota, at Nationals.

The Campolindo club raised funds for attending the competitions by holding their first-ever Trivia Night where they sold baked goods and raffle tickets for prizes donated by local businesses and families.

Verbanszky, who was recently named the Acalanes Union High School District Teacher of the Year and in the running for the county award, also teaches AP European History and is advisor for the school yearbook (see story in the April 3 issue). He said, "The Aca Deca club is a very strong program here that facilitates student leadership and helps lead to success."

Next year's theme, as announced by the U.S. Academic Decathlon, will be: In Sickness and in Health: An Exploration of Illness and Wellness.

# Acalanes alumna plans to spend summer studying animals in Madagascar



Morgan Orsolini at work with animals.

Photo provided

Submitted by Suzanne Roady

Local resident and Acalanes High School alumna Morgan Orsolini is preparing for anything but an ordinary summer. Combining her passions for nature and animals, Orsolini has accepted a 10-week internship with SEED Madagascar (Sustainable Environment, Education and Development in Madagascar) based in Fort Dauphin, Madagascar. Starting in July, she will be living in "the bush" to work directly with the Malagasy people and local researchers.

Orsolini has spent the last few years as an animal science

major at Cal Poly SLO, and her main goal is to help captive breeding programs and understanding of reproduction so that she can help keep endangered animals from becoming extinct. She has been an intern at the Oakland Zoo and Charles Paddock Zoo assisting with animal care, animal training, public education and more in an effort to gain hands on experience in her chosen field. She also created educational videos for the Charles Paddock Zoo. During this past summer, Orsolini conducted a research project as a part of her fellowship with the San Diego Zoo's Institute for Conservation Research

to learn about how a rhinoceros diet affects reproduction. She has worked with lemurs and rhinoceroses along with many other animals at the zoos. She has also been involved in dog agility training since the age of 10, which has greatly helped her understanding of animal behavior.

This summer, Orsolini will be spending 10 weeks living in a tent in Madagascar in order to further her understanding of the wildlife and nature, lemur populations included, in the area. She will also be working with locals to help them establish a sustainable relationship with their environment. Hundreds of species, including the iconic lemur, are only native to Madagascar and they have lost about 80 percent of their original habitat. There are approximately 50 different kinds of lemur; over half of the populations are critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable. Orsolini hopes her work will help protect lemur species as well as the other plants and animals living on the island.

In order to support SEED Madagascar and all of the work being done in the Fort Dauphin community, Orsolini has started a fundraiser. All proceeds will be donated directly to SEED, of which 92 percent will be going straight to their on-site projects in Madagascar.



In order to support Orsolini's fundraiser for SEED Madagascar, please follow the following link to her GoFundMe page: <https://www.gofundme.com/seed-madagascar>. For more information: <https://madagascar.co.uk/>

# THT's staged reading of Thomas Gibbons' 'Uncanny Valley,' April 29

Submitted by Susan Evans

Town Hall Theatre will present a one-night only reading of "Uncanny Valley" – a riveting new play about artificial intelligence and ethical quandaries by Thomas Gibbons, directed by Lana Palmer – as part of its staged reading series "In the Wings."

Set 30 years in the future, "Uncanny Valley" dissects the intense relationship between Claire, a neuroscientist, and her creation, Julian, a nonbiological human. As the play unfolds, we see Julian through various developmental stages, first just a head, neck and

shoulders, next an armless torso, then with one arm, and another arm, and finally completed, as Claire mentors him through the process of becoming as human as possible. Claire is working to combat the uncanny valley phenomenon, by which people become creeped out by robots when they look too lifelike, almost – but not quite – human.

And then the scientist must reveal to Julian the specific purpose for which he has been designed: as a receptacle for the consciousness of a very wealthy man dying of pancreatic cancer, who has purchased the right to be im-

mortal. After the man's identity file is downloaded, "Uncanny Valley" takes off in a different direction, and poses many provocative questions, such as how are we redefining what it is to be human in the 21st century?

The staged reading of "Uncanny Valley" will be at 8 p.m. Monday, April 29 at Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette. Tickets are \$10 general admission and free to subscribers, and are available through the Box Office at (925) 283-1557 or online at [www.TownHallTheatre.com](http://www.TownHallTheatre.com).



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

ART

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art (SMC | MoA) is pleased to present two Spring Exhibitions, "Foad Satterfield: THINGS KNOWN" and "David Otis Johnson: NOCTAMBULANT." These exhibitions open with a free public reception from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 28 and continue through June 9. For more information on programs and events, please visit www.stmarys-ca.edu/museum.

The Moraga Art Gallery announces the opening of "Into the Wood(s)" - an homage to trees. Watercolor landscapes by Moraga's George Ehrenhaft, the show's featured guest artist, capture the arboreal splendor of Lamorinda and beyond - from the Pacific shore to peaks of the Sierra. The show's featured guest artist, Duke Herrero of Orinda, has created museum-quality wooden objects - utensils, table-top boxes, footstools, cutting boards, and more - all hewn and lovingly shaped from a variety of trees from everyday walnut and

cherry to exotic ipe and cocobolo. The show runs through June 1. The current show "A Sense of Place" is running through March 16. For more information, visit www.moragaartgallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

Lamorinda Art Alliance featured artist Zarmine Aghazarian through May 31 at Dr. Samadian's Center for Reconstruction and Implant, 23 Orinda Way suite 301, Orinda. There will be a reception from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on April 19. Dr. Amin Samadian is proud to have affiliated with

the Lamorinda Arts Alliance for the opportunity to showcase the artwork of the organization's artists and to celebrate the integration of Art, Science and Technology.

Valley Art Gallery Announces "SPLASH," a new exhibition for Spring running through May 11. Nothing refreshes an interior like a splash of original art. With that in mind the Gallery has assembled more than 300 fresh pieces for this 70th annual spring show that are sure to create a Splash! From abstracts to

zoomorphics to everything in between, the work represents the best of the best by East Bay artists - with all works available for sale or rent.

The Green Gaels Club of Saint Mary's College is putting on the Eco Art Show at the college's Museum of Art from 5 to 7 p.m. on April 25. The show is designed to bring community together to explore the role of environmental artwork in today's critical climate by listening to the voices of students. The artwork will be for sale in a silent auction; all proceeds go to the Green Gaels Club which is propelling the environmental movement at SMC.

Art exhibit at the art gallery at the Orinda library features photography of birds in flight by Barbara Brady smith, landscape photography of Yosemite and the Bay Area by Wenda Pyman, and etchings and wood block prints by Moose Wesler. The exhibit runs through the end of April.

MUSIC

Clerestory presents Songbook II: More from the Great American Songbook from 4 to 5:30 p.m. on May 12 at David Brower Center, 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley. Clerestory returns to its popular series of Americana concert series with African American spirituals, barbershop, folk songs, and jazz styles. Cost: \$5-30. For more info see www.eventbrite.com/e/songbook-ii-more-from-the-great-american-songbook-tickets-49925539633 or email info@clerestory.org.

An Afternoon of Jazz featuring Matt Zebley and His Oversize Quartet. OSLC Concert Series, at 4 p.m. on April 28 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane in Lafayette. Free admission; freewill offering.

By and By Cantare Con Vivo Chamber Ensemble at 4 p.m. on May 5 at the Lafayette Christian Church, 584 Glenside Dr., Lafayette. The Cantare Con Vivo Chamber Ensemble presents an intimate concert featuring 10 eclectic selections, including Poulenc's exquisite a cappella Mass in G Major, Also included are Brahms' Three Gypsy Songs, two spirituals: By and By, and Let Us Cheer the Weary Traveler, two popular classics from the 1930s: I Get Along Without You Very Well and Ain't Misbehavin', and other works by Pearsall, Hawley, Barber, and Whitacre. Tickets: General \$22, Student \$10. Ticket link: https://cantareconvivo.secure.force.com/ticket#sections\_a0F0B00000J5pM9UAJ. https://www.cantareconvivo.org/upcoming-events

Drum, Relax and Learn at the monthly Lamorinda Drum Circle from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Monday May 6. Enjoy learning to drum in a fun small-group environment. Drums are provided. Lamorinda Music, 81 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. We meet at this time and place on the first Monday of each month. Suggested donation \$10-\$20.

Voci Women's Vocal Ensemble presents "Northern Lights," a concert featuring rich and rarely performed works by 20th and 21st century Baltic and Scandinavian composers, including recent works from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Latvia and Estonia. Marked by long, cold winters and short but highly celebrated summers, these countries' landscapes are reflected in their music and poetry, with themes of darkness and light, winter, night, and stars in the sky. Showtimes at 7 p.m. on May 5 at St. Mary Magdalen Church, 2005 Berryman Street, Berkeley and on May 11 at St. Perpetua Catholic Church, 3454 Hamlin Road, Lafayette. Tickets: \$25 suggested donation at the door, \$20 advance, \$15 students, free for children between 6-12. Available at the door; or online from brownpapertickets.com or www.vocisings.org

... continued on next Page

Lamorinda's Religious Services



Lafayette United Methodist Church

955 Moraga Road 925.284.4765 thelumc.org Sunday 10am Worship and Faith Formation for all ages

Holy Week

Maunder Thursday - April 18:

5:30 p.m. Service with Communion, Foot Washing and Light Meal Provided

Good Friday - April 19

6:30 p.m. Tenebrae Service

Easter Worship - April 21

Worship Services: 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

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Easter Sunrise Service

April 21, 7:30 am in the Olive Grove

Easter Celebration Worship

10:00 am in the Sanctuary

Children's Easter Egg Hunt after the service

WORSHIP WITH US

Sundays, 9:30 am & 5 pm Easter, April 21, 9 & 10:30 am



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

**MUSIC ... continued**

**Pacific Chamber Orchestra**, under the direction of Conductor Lawrence Kohl, performs Beethoven's Symphony #3 "Eroica" Coriolanus Overture and "Triple" Concerto with Trio Foss as soloists. Concerts are at 7:30 p.m. on May 18 at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church 24 Knox, Lafayette and at 3 p.m. on May 19 at Bankhead Theatre, 2400 First Street in Livermore. Tickets may be purchased online at [www.pacific-chamberorchestra.org](http://www.pacific-chamberorchestra.org) and additionally for the Livermore performance by calling or visiting the Bankhead box office (925) 373-6800 located at 2400 First Street, Livermore or [www.bankheadtheater.org](http://www.bankheadtheater.org).

**THEATER**

**Orinda Intermediate School Bulldog Theater** stages "Foot-loose," April 25-27 at Orinda Intermediate School, 80 Ivy Drive. "Kick off your Sunday shoes!" One of the most explosive movie musicals in recent memory bursts onto the live stage with exhilarating results. Tickets are \$3-\$10. Visit [www.showtix4u.com](http://www.showtix4u.com) for show times and tickets. Tickets are also available at the door.

**Acalanes DramaDons** present "Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery" by Ken Ludwig at 7 p.m. April 24-27. Get your deer-stalker cap on — the play's afoot! From the award-winning mastermind of mayhem, comes a fast-paced comedy about everyone's favorite detective solving his most notorious case. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson must crack the mystery of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" before a family curse dooms its newest heir. Tickets and information at [www.ahsperformingarts.org](http://www.ahsperformingarts.org)

**Town Hall Theatre Company** presents "Uncanny Valley" — Town Hall Theatre's staged reading series In the Wings is a one-night only reading of Uncanny Valley, a riveting new play about artificial intelligence and ethical quandaries by Thomas Gibbons, directed by Lana Palmer at 8 p.m. on April 29 at the Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, Lafayette. Tickets are \$10 general admission and free to subscribers, and are available through the Box Office at (925) 283-1557 or online at [www.TownHallTheatre.com](http://www.TownHallTheatre.com).

**Diablo Ballet** closes its landmark 25th season with Celebrated Masters, at 8 p.m. on May 3 and at 2 p.m. on May 4, at the Del Valle Theatre in Walnut Creek. Diablo Ballet will feature an encore presentation of Swan Lake Suite, the romantic Tryst by Val Caniparoli, and Walk before Talk by KT Nelson. Immediately following each performance, ticket holders are invited to a dessert and coffee reception where you can meet and mingle with the dancers. Single tickets are \$15-\$47. For tickets, call (925) 943-SHOW (7469) or visit [www.lesherartscenter.org](http://www.lesherartscenter.org). For more information, visit [www.diabloballet.org](http://www.diabloballet.org).

**LECTURE & LITERATURE**

**Wine and Tapas Speaker Series** presents The Poetics of the Ecosphere; a multimedia presentation by artist, poet, and author Deborah Kennedy from 5 to 6 p.m. on April 27 at 1035 Carol Lane, Lounge. Recognized with several national book and poetry awards, Kennedy combines visual arts and poetry to expresses the range of emotions and moments that bind us to the natural world. Bring a bottle of wine or finger food to share.

**Lit Lamorinda at 7 p.m.** on April 27 at the Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery. Join Poet Laureate Amy Glynn for an upbeat trifecta of the senses. Enjoy wines from Lamorinda boutique wineries paired with five Bay Area poets set against the SF based Jazz trio Rob Evans Trio. \$25. Tickets at [jgattthebank.com](http://jgattthebank.com)

**Please join Friends of Hospice** Orinda for coffee and refreshments followed by a presentation of the widely popular book "Beneath the Scarlet Sky" from 9:30 a.m. to noon on May 3 at Friends of Hospice, Orinda. The author is Mark Sullivan who gathered authentic material from the son of the protagonist, Pino Lella. His son, Michael Lella, will deliver a fascinating view of his father during WWII in Italy. He will bring slides and comments about his father, Pino, who is still living, at 92 years of age, on Lake Como, Italy. Reservations are available for \$50 per person. Please make a check out to Friends of Hospice, Orinda Mail to Diane Hill, 41 Charles Hill Rd. Orinda, CA 94563.

**A book launch** to celebrate local author Heidi Eliason's "Confessions of a Middle-Aged Runaway: An RV Travel Adventure" will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 4 at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, Orinda. Come and enjoy refreshments, book signings, and a prize drawing. Free.

**KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS**

Free photo with the Bunny 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 20 at Moraga's Rheem Valley Shopping Center in the suite between Dover Saddlery and Nations Giant Hamburgers.

**The Lafayette Rotary Club** "Annual Candy Scramble" will be held at 10 a.m. on April 20 at Lafayette Plaza (corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Moraga Rd). This event is open to all children ages 2-through second grade. The park lawn will be covered with candy for the kids to put in their baskets. The youngest are always given extra time to get their share! The Bunny along with the Police and Fire Departments will be there to take pictures with the kids. And don't miss the Jonny's Donut Dive (for adults only).

**Lamorinda Arts Council (LAC)** will host auditions for their 14th annual Lamorinda Idol singing competition May 9-11 at the Orinda Intermediate School (80 Ivy Drive, Orinda). Registration for solo and group auditions is open through April 30. The singing competition is for anyone in kindergarten through 12th grade who is living or attending school in Orinda, Lafayette or Moraga. Singers outside of the Lamorinda area can participate in a group, providing the group has at least one member from Lamorinda. To learn more about LAC's Lamorinda Idol 2019 and register go to [www.lamorindaarts.org/](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/)

**OTHER**

**Health Care for All in California** - Join us for a viewing of "Fix it," a 38-minute documentary that takes an in-depth look at our dysfunctional health care system from 7 to 9 p.m. on April 18 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church Sanctuary 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. This system is unaffordable for a third of our citizens, discourages health care professionals and suffocates our businesses. The viewing will be preceded by a short presentation, followed by a panel discussion and question and answer period. Free event but RSVP is requested: <https://tinyurl.com/HCAFixit>

**Join the National Park Service (NPS)** and the John Muir Association in celebrating John Muir's 181st birthday and Earth Day, during its annual Birthday - Earth Day event from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 20 at the John Muir National Historic Site (NHS) in Martinez. The celebration, held rain or shine, features family-oriented activities, food for sale, live music including a bagpipe band, song performances by original cast members of the play "Mountain Days," and exhibits by national parks and local environmental organizations. Parking and admission are free. For directions,

please visit [www.nps.gov/jomu/plany-ourvisit/directions.htm](http://www.nps.gov/jomu/plany-ourvisit/directions.htm). For additional information, please visit [www.johnmuirassociation.org](http://www.johnmuirassociation.org) or [www.MuirEarthDay.org](http://www.MuirEarthDay.org).

**Many Faces of Skin Cancer** from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on April 23 in the Lafayette Library-Community Room, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Join an engaging panel of medical experts including as they offer insights into the latest information on prevention, risk factors, new treatment options, and explore the unique issues of skin cancer survivors. Reservations recommended, call (925) 677-5041, ext. 272.

**The giant spring book sale** sponsored by the Friends of the Moraga Library will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 27 at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road. Books, CDs and DVDs of every category will be sold at prices ranging from 25 cents to \$3. Beginning at 1 p.m. a bag can be purchased for \$5 and filled with all the books it will hold. Proceeds from the sale go to fund library materials and programs, in addition to paying for staffing of the library's Sunday hours.

**The Farm to Table movement** gets local at this upcoming tasting of products from four local farmers and producers that deliver organic, seasonal, and sustainable foods each week to the Lafayette Community Supported Agriculture Project drop site. Stop by and sample breads, fruit, vegetable, and some Real Good Fish at this year's Earth Day event from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 28 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

**Bluegrass Music, projects** for the kids, poetry of the ecosphere, meditation pods, and handmade mimosas kick off the celebration of Earth Day from 10 to 11 a.m. on Sunday, April 28 at 1035 Carol Lane, Outside Courtyard. Experiences to move you more fully into a healthy relationship to the planet designed and presented by The Lafayette Order of the Sacred Earth.

**Gait and Balance Affecting Your Daily Life** with Valerie Watase, PT at 7 p.m. on April 30 at Lafayette Physical Therapy, 3468 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite B110 in Lafayette. This is a free event, but space is limited, so please sign up at [lafayettept.com/events](http://lafayettept.com/events) or call (925) 284-6150.

**The 2019 Moraga Community Faire** and Car Show will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 11 at the town's Rheem Valley Shopping Center - offering a wonderful opportunity for a family fun day! \$5 unlimited Kid's Zone activities include pony rides, bounce house and mazes, Bot Bash Party and Bay Area Ball Players. Food trucks, live music, wine & beer, over 70 classic cars and booths to meet local artists, business and organizations. Area residents who own classic cars are invited to participate in the car show. The \$35 registration fee includes an entry ribbon, lunch for two, a commemorative photo, and a chance for owners to display their restoration work to the public. Prizes will be awarded. The registration deadline is April 30. For more information, visit [www.moraagachamber.org/faire](http://www.moraagachamber.org/faire).

**15th Annual JF Kapnek 5/K Fun Run** at 9 a.m. on May 5 at Miramonte High School. Along with a 5K run and a 1K children's run or walk, event participants will enjoy music, arts and crafts, food and prizes for the top finishers including certificates from Dick's Sporting Goods, and Sports Basement. All participants will receive a commemorative T-shirt. Strollers welcome! The event supports early childhood education, nutrition and AIDS treatment and prevention programs for children and families in Zimbabwe. Visit [www.kapnektrustusa.org](http://www.kapnektrustusa.org) for more information and to register go to <http://jfkapnekusafun->

[run.eventbrite.com](http://run.eventbrite.com). Onsite day of registration is also available.

**Bay Area Book Festival** from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on May 4 and 5, at Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, 2151 Martin Luther King Jr Way, Berkeley. Meet national book award winners, NY Times top 10 authors, international writers, YA and children's book legends, and a diverse literary community. Cost: Free to \$15. For more info see <https://www.baybookfest.org> or email [info@baybookfest.org](mailto:info@baybookfest.org).

**Taste of Lafayette - Lafayette's Favorite Dinner Party!** from 5:30 to 8 p.m. on May 14 in downtown Lafayette. The Taste of Lafayette stroll begins when ticket holders head out at their own pace to stop at any or all of the participating restaurants for sampling. Evening includes music throughout the stroll and a raffle supporting the Lafayette Community Foundation. Drawing for the raffle will be held at 7:45 p.m. at [JPG@TheBank](mailto:JPG@TheBank).

**John Muir National Historic Site** (John Muir NHS) will launch its second annual series of Stewardship Saturdays. Join the National Park Service for these free, Ranger-led land stewardship programs at the Martinez, California site. The programs begin at 9 a.m. at the Strentzel Creek meadow area of Mt. Wanda. This area recently came under NPS management and is currently only open to visitation with an NPS chaperone. The stewardship project will entail

removing invasive plant species from the sensitive creek and surrounding meadow. All training and tools required for this project will be provided. The three 2019 Stewardship Saturday events will be on March 23, April 27, and May 18. Find more information and register at: <https://jomu.eventbrite.com/>

**GARDEN**

**The Montelindo Garden Club's** April meeting will be at 9:30 a.m. on April 19 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's Community Hall. Presentation: Edible Plants and Fruit Trees; Speaker: Katie Wong, who has been a Master Gardner and a board member for the Rare Fruit Growers and the Western Horticultural Society. She will share her passion for unusual fruits from around the world which can be grown successfully in the Bay Area.

**Registration for the 15th Annual** Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour, which will take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 5 is now open. This award-winning, self-drive tour features 37 Alameda and Contra Costa county gardens that are pesticide-free, water conserving, provide habitat for wildlife, and contain 60 percent or more native plants. Two of these gardens are located in Moraga. Pre-registration for the Tour is required. Cost: \$10 to purchase the garden guide; donations requested. [www.BringingBacktheNatives.net](http://www.BringingBacktheNatives.net), (510) 236-9558.

**Please submit:**  
**Events:** [calendar@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:calendar@lamorindaweekly.com)  
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**Opinion:** [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com)

**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.

<b>April 18:</b> <b>Peter de Laveaga CPA and Rotary member talking on the new Tax Law</b>	<b>April 25:</b> <b>Niroop Srivatsa, Interim City Manager of Lafayette</b>
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[www.rotarylafayette.org](http://www.rotarylafayette.org)  
[www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-CA](https://www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-CA)



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## Chili Corn Hash hot off the grill



Chili Corn Hash

Photos Susie Iventosch

### By Susie Iventosch

Grilled peppers and barbecued corn are two family favorites in our household. One day last week when my parents were in town, we had half the amount of each of these veggies we needed to serve as a side dish with tacos. In order to make our supply stretch for the number of people, I decided to mix them together along with some sautéed onion and melted cheese. The outcome

was outstanding. We enjoyed the dish so much, we proceeded to make it again the following two nights! Corn season is just around the corner and this is a fun way to combine these amazing flavors.



Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com).

This recipe can be found on our website:

[www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://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.

### Chili Corn Hash

(Serves 6 as a side dish)

#### INGREDIENTS

6 ears of fresh corn  
3 large poblano peppers, seeded, stems removed and cut in half lengthwise  
¼ cup olive oil, divided  
2-3 teaspoons Cajun seasoning  
2-3 teaspoons Trader Joe's Lime Seasoning Blend (or similar)  
1 large yellow onion, coarsely chopped  
¾ cup grated mixed Mexican cheese  
Salt and pepper to taste  
6 lime wedges for garnish  
¼ cup cilantro leaves, snipped into small pieces with herb scissors or kitchen shears

#### DIRECTIONS

##### Prepare Veggies:

1. Brush corn with olive oil and season all the way around with Cajun spice. (Can substitute chili lime seasoning if you don't like Cajun.)
2. Brush poblano pepper halves with olive oil and season with salt and pepper and place on a piece of foil.
3. Peel and coarsely chop onion.

##### Pre-cook the Veggies:

Heat barbecue to medium. Place corn cobs directly on the grill and cook for about 2 minutes per side, rotating four times to nicely brown all the way around. Remove from grill and cool. Once cooled enough to handle, cut corn off the cobs and set aside in a bowl.

Place the foil with the prepared peppers on the grill and cook until al dente, about 5-6 minutes. No need to turn the peppers. Remove from grill and cool. Once cooled, coarsely chop peppers and set aside.

Cook the onions in 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat for about 10-15 minutes, until translucent and beginning to caramelize. Add chopped peppers and corn and cook over medium heat until all is hot. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle cheese over the top and continue to cook until cheese is melted. Garnish with lime wedges and snipped cilantro.

\*Note—we grill on a gas Weber, which runs hotter than some barbecues. Just be aware that cooking times can vary depending upon the barbecue you have.



## Buy Nothing groups offer random acts of kindness

... continued from Page B3

Pink and purple happen to be her favorite colors." Or a post offering cumin and soy sauce was accompanied by an admission: "I don't even remember why I bought these. Tell me what you'll cook with them."

Leah Riggins and Carly Power Staublin started Moraga's Buy Nothing group last July. Riggins recruited Nancy Hu to be the admin for Buy Nothing Lafayette and Erin Brindley to administer the Buy Nothing Orinda group. There are currently about 300 members in both the Moraga and Lafayette groups and approximately 225 in the Orinda group. Riggins also is a regional administrator, where she serves as a resource and support for other Bay Area Buy Nothing administrators.

Hu took on the admin duties for Buy Nothing Lafayette because this group "combines two things I love: building community and reducing waste. It encourages face-to-face contact between the gifter and recipient. And," she

added, "there's nothing more satisfying than giving away something that's no longer useful in your life" and knowing it will find a new home with someone else who needs and wants it.

"I especially like that people ask for little things," Riggins said. "It's not just the bigger items like a used crib or kids' shoes. It's the request for one shoe lace because one was lost, or a single binder clip needed for one purpose because, after all, who wants to buy a package of 10 if only one is needed."

Of course, the Buy Nothing groups are also about reducing trash and the ever-growing landfills needed to accommodate all that garbage. As the Buy Nothing website proclaims, "There truly is no 'away' when you throw things away. It all goes somewhere. Let's buy less, throw away less and share more."

To join your local Buy Nothing group, go on Facebook and search for Buy Nothing (your city/town name).

### An Earth Day push

Nancy Hu has taken her interest in both building community and reducing waste considerably further than simply serving as the administrator for Buy Nothing Lafayette and encouraging neighbors to recycle items they no longer need or want.

A strong proponent of zero waste, Hu, a dentist at the Department of Veterans Affairs, laughingly said that "during the day I save teeth, at night I try to save the world." Recycling, climate change, and environmental issues have always been important to Hu, but having her own children strengthened her passion and made her realize she wanted to do more.

"I love using Buy Nothing as a platform to promote more zero waste practices," she said. And that's what she'll be doing during Lafayette's 14th annual Earth Day Festival on Sunday, April 28 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Lafayette Library.

Joining forces with TerraCycle, an organization that's "eliminating the idea of waste by recycling the non-recyclable," Hu will be collecting a variety of hard-to-recycle items, including toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes, electric toothbrushes/cords/heads, personal cosmetic packaging, baby food smoothie pouches, plastic bread-bag tags and even cigarette butts. She'll also be answering questions and offering suggestions on how we can all reduce waste.

For more information on items Hu will be collecting or for ideas on how you can do your part to practice zero waste, email Hu at [nchsu514@gmail.com](mailto:nchsu514@gmail.com).



Photo provided

Nancy Hu, administrator for Buy Nothing Lafayette, with some of the hard-to-recycle items she'll continue collecting at Lafayette's Earth Day Festival on Apr. 28.

## A day filled with promise for 200 middle school girls



Photo Lynda Leonard

A participant listens intently to a discussion about architecture at the 2019 AAUW-OML STEAM Conference hosted by Saint Mary's College during the workshop "Architecture: Drawings to Three Dimension Models."

### Submitted by Lynda Leonard

The morning began with speaker Danielle Feinberg, the director of pho-

tography for lighting on Disney-Pixar's Academy Award-winning films "WALL•E," "Brave," and "Coco" who spoke to 200 middle school girls about

opportunities for them in STEAM-related careers (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) during the March 23 American Association of University Women Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch's annual STEAM Conference at Saint Mary's College. Feinberg's love of combining computers and art began when she was 8 years old and first programmed a Logo turtle to create images. This eventually led her to a degree in computer science at Harvard. The event was hosted by Saint Mary's College and its School of Science.

After listening to the keynote speaker, each girl then attended three hands-on workshops, which they chose from a list of 19 topics ranging from Affordable Housing for Gummy Bears to Veterinary Medicine, the Buzz About Bees, FBI CSI, Creative Coding, and Disassembling and Rebuilding a Computer, among others. The middle school girls, who come from all over the East Bay, encountered many role models – women working in STEAM fields, some representing careers the girls never heard of before.

The element of art was obvious in the workshop "Architecture: Drawings to 3D Models." Architect Kelli Franz of atelier-KS was the presenter. Twelve

girls arrived, led by a junior monitor, a high school volunteer – in this case, a junior from Acalanes. The girls were presented with a problem. Given a base and 10 LEGOs they were to create a sculpture. That was easy and fast. The next step took a bit more time. Using a piece of architectural grid paper, they were asked to create elevation drawings of each of the four sides, plus the plan – the view from the top. The room became quiet as each girl focused on visualizing a three-dimensional object and translating it into a two-dimensional rendering on a piece of paper. Once that was completed accurately, they were given colored pencils to replicate the color of each LEGO block on the drawings.

The girls were then encouraged to write notes to the "contractor" on the "plans" to help clarify the drawings, providing additional information about the trickier parts of the design. Then they were asked to disassemble their sculpture and pass the pieces and drawings to the "contractor" (another girl) who was then to reassemble the pieces. It was not always easy, but eventually it was a success for everyone!



# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## The secrets to success of Lamorinda water polo



Grace Tehaney (2017)



Kari Jensen (2016)



Brook Preston (2013)

Photos Gint Federas

### By Jon Kingdon

On Saturday, April 6, the No. 1 ranked USC women's water polo team came to Berkeley and defeated the No. 5 ranked California Golden Bears by a score of 8-3. Each team had three Lamorinda players on their roster: USC – Grace Tehaney (Miramonte), Kari Jensen (Campolindo) and Brook Preston (Campolindo); California – Madison Tagg (Campolindo), Rachel Lewin (Campolindo) and Carson Broad (Miramonte).

Over the past two seasons, the Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte boys and girls water polo teams have had a combined won-lost record of 227-82. With such consistent success, it should not be surprising to learn that there are currently 48 men and women players from Lamorinda playing on 21 different college water polo teams, from the Pac 12 to the Ivy League, from the Big 10 to the Big West Coast Conference. UC Santa Barbara (6), California (5) and Santa Clara (5) have the highest representation from the area.

USC head coach Casey Moon explains the large number of players simply: "Aquatics in Lamorinda is incredible. Everyone up here plays water polo and the pool of players is so immense and we're glad that we can steal some of those players to come to USC."

California head coach Coralie Simmons appreciates the talent in the area, having coached players going back to when she was the head coach at Sonoma State: "Part of it is the history and the culture of the sport in the area along with the access that the kids have is exponential in the pools and rec leagues that is unmatched in the nation."

Misha Buchel, the head coach of the Acalanes girls water polo team that was undefeated last season, sees two key factors for the number of talented players in the area: "First, the region has an incredible rec swim culture which provides a base of very talented swimmers. Kids then come out for water polo already knowing how to swim really well. As a result, they enjoy it a lot more because it's not as hard when they first start. Second, a lot of folks who played at Cal have never left the area so there is a lot of second-generation water polo families which means a lot of former players and now parents (mostly fathers because women's water polo is still relatively young) were available to coach. In the late '80s and early '90s, very few water polo players started before high school. Now kids can come out as early as 6-7 years old."

A freshman, Grace Tehaney, followed in her families' footsteps into water polo: "My stepfather, John Felix (who is in the U.S. Water Polo Hall of Fame) said I should try it and I loved it more than anything. My stepbrother played at Cal and my twin

brother Sean plays at Santa Clara."

Carson Broad, also a freshman, was a product of the swimming program: "I started swimming at the Meadow Swim Club at 2 years old. When I was 8, I discovered water polo. It was something new and exciting."

Rachel Lewin, a senior and aspiring sports psychologist, learned her water polo skills in a unique way: "I was originally a synchronized swimmer so I had the background in the techniques you use to stay afloat. My father played and coached water polo so I was on the pool deck all the time and I fell in love with the sport. There are so many different elements that make the game exciting."

Brian Snyder, the 18 and under boys water polo coach for the 680 Club, gets his players from the youth swimming programs: "The swimmers see water polo as a combination of sports infused with swimming. Some fall in love with the sport and some don't."

Learning the basics and fundamentals are crucial to understand at the start, says Snyder: "From 10 to 14, we want the players to develop good habits. It's crucial to learn and understand balance in the water and the fundamental skills of the sport prior to high school as the more tactical aspects of the game become more important there."

It's not just the physical tools that are critical to the game, says Snyder: "To become a top water polo player, it takes a high water polo IQ, knowing what is going on in the game at all times, knowing where the ball is, your defender, your area and two meters (the center position). This can be more important than the talent that the player possesses."

Adjusting to college academics is hard enough. When you compete on a Division I team, it's that much harder, says Coach Simmons: "You have to multiply everything by 10. The game is a lot more aggressive than in high school. The speed of the game and the shots coming at you is much faster. The players soon realize that everyone's a hot shot on the team. The student-athletes have to find that balance, studying and getting the job done in the pool and in the classroom."

Broad felt well prepared for college: "Miramonte was a tough school but that is what helped me to transition to Cal. Balancing athletics and academics is what I've grown up doing. I learned how to balance my time, staying ahead of my classes and it has never been an issue for me."

The competition was a revelation for the players: "It was a huge adjustment just going to college, living in a new area and being out of the house," says Tehaney. "It's way more intense than high school. It's super competitive and fun at the same time."

Broad saw the competi-

tion as a positive: "The players are faster, stronger, more dynamic and pool smart and playing against higher competition is making me better."

Simmons spoke very highly about her Lamorindans: "Madison Tagg, our goalie, really wanted to take the next stride this year and has been a powerhouse in the back. She controls things, making big saves and makes our defense operate at a high level. Rachel Lewin has been our workhorse. She took on a new role every year and has filled in at all positions. She has flourished in her ability as a chameleon. Carson has progressed well and has been getting more minutes. She works hard and loves the game and should become a big part of the next culture shift with our team."

Moon was equally complimentary about his players: "Grace is a water polo junkie who has contributed immediately for us. She comes from good water polo pedigree. Her ceiling is incredible. She had a great foundation coming in playing for Miramonte. Kari is a great teammate and works incredibly hard to be the best player she can be. Though Brooke has been injured, she's been a very fine player; she is still a great part of our team."

Moon is already anticipating the arrival next year of Acalanes senior Alex Fellner: "Alex is a tough as nails player with a very high ceiling. Her make up is as a hard-working player which is the kind of player that we look for."

Tehaney had many coaches that were responsible

for her development, but she singled out Miramonte coach Lance Morrison "who really helped me by being very encouraging and wanting what was the best for the team, encouraging all the players to be better and getting everyone into a mindset to win."

Lewin spoke highly of her coach at Campolindo, Kim Everist: "Kim was great. She pushed us to levels we didn't think we could achieve, building our confidence in and out of the pool. It was not a rigid structure. It made me a better player and gave me the ability to have free range to put my own twist on things to learn how to defend things my way."

Simmons appreciates the area as more than just a source of water polo athletes: "The area produces athletes every year across the board. It's not exclusive to water polo. It's an area that takes a lot of pride and joy in staying active and competing."

It's the quality of the individuals that come to his club teams which stands out to Snyder: "We find that for the most part, our players are the nicer and more hard-working kids. They want to be the best version of themselves and will sacrifice for the team and that seems to carry over with the kids from Lamorinda."



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# Lamorinda boys volleyball roundup



Colin Kirbach



Ben Blakely



Christian Roy

Photos Gint Federas

### By Jon Kingdon

Since Mason Mulvaney took over as the head coach at **Acalanes** in 2016 and took a 2-16 team in 2015 to a 13-13 record, the Dons have improved on their won-lost record each season and currently are 18-4 this season. How did he turn the program around so quickly? It's simple yet not so simple, says Mulvaney: "We've gotten a lot of kids to buy in to the program and we've established a big JV team. I'm getting more players to want to play volleyball and for members of the team also to play club volleyball."

After winning the North Coast Section championship last season, the Dons are finally being acknowledged, says Mulvaney: "We did not get a lot of respect last year being the fifth seed in the NCS tournament which forced us to win every playoff game on the road. We're not sneaking up on anyone this year. We're in a tough, great league. It's a challenge every week. I'd rather play tough teams and lose a couple of matches rather than walking over easy opponents. We're excited to defend our championship."

Acalanes started off the season with a 9-1 record prior to league play. "We've gotten really good progression from our younger guys," says Mul-

vaney. "Our seniors have stepped up with good leadership."

Senior Colin Kirbach, who was chosen Most Valuable Player in the Valley Division last season, has been very effective as the team's setter and as a blocker. Sophomore outside hitter Austin Kinnear, the team's leading scorer and senior middle blocker Alex Franke were both named first team all league last season as well. Junior Nikolai Heffernan who only began playing volleyball last season has been a real force, says Mulvaney: "As a lefty opposite, he is a matchup nightmare for the other teams."

Senior Lane Altbaum, the team's libero, was named second team all-league last season and, according to Mulvaney, "has drastically improved his game." Kirkback and Franke, the team's co-captain, have been key factors in the team's success, says Mulvaney: "They have provided great leadership on and off the court."

Mulvaney still sees ways for the team to keep improving this year: "We have to have more communication on the court and we're still looking for more depth in our lineup."

#### Campolindo

Campolindo head coach David Chen has led the team

to a 21-6 record so far this year and is third in the league behind Northgate and Acalanes. It's been a work in process for Chen and the Cougars: "The players are starting to be very coachable, following game plans and trying to adapt to what other teams are doing."

Sophomore Ben Blakely, second team all league last season, and freshman Josh Ewert have been real forces on the front line, says Chen: "They have been a real luxury for us. They have been very open to moving along the front line and not just on the outside and that has been helpful to us. Still we are looking to diversify and not just make it a two man show."

The Campolindo defense is still trying to find its identity, says Chen: "We're evolving on what other teams have, matching up against our opponent's strength and weaknesses. We're always trying to figure it out and constantly evolving."

Sophomore Justin Lineweaver, as the team's libero, has been learning more and improving as the season has progressed. Freshman middle blocker, Patrick Volk, has stepped up and contributed as well.

Chen sees this as a team of individuals that takes a lot of responsibility: "We don't have

one leader and we do not have captains so it distributes the responsibility to everyone; whether it's one-on-one with their teammates or leading by example. It's a matter of everyone playing to their strengths. It seems to be working."

Still, Chen is looking for more from his team: "I want the team to have passion and emotion on the court, putting value in everything they do. I need tough players, not just when times are tough. We have the skills and I want us to work on competing and showing more emotion. Some players think that emotion can be a weakness, showing vulnerability. I want our team to have great toughness, passion and to be emotionally ready. That's what we're looking for."

#### Miramonte

After two seasons in which they won a total of three games, Miramonte looked within to find the right man to turn the program around. That person was the girls volleyball coach, Peter Chao, who led the girls to the NCS championship game and to the third round in the state championship last fall. Chao took an optimistic perspective about the last two seasons: "We have nowhere else to go but up."

With five wins so far this

season, playing in the Diablo Valley League, Chao is positive about the team's short and long-term expectations:

"We've got it pointed in the right direction. We have a lot of kids that have a huge thirst to learn and get better. They just did not have the proper training before but they are very eager to improve. We are getting better, having ironed out the technical stuff, so we can just focus more on playing which is giving us more hope."

The offense is led by two senior middle blockers, Evan Barrie-Kivell and Daniel Lucas, and junior co-captain outside hitter Christian Roy. Another senior, co-captain Michael Ishizu has been very effective as the team's setter. Junior co-captain Ethan Luckenbach has been doing a solid job as the team's libero.

Freshman Nicolai Bell has moved over from the basketball team and has stepped up as the team's right-side hitter and should be a force in the future.

Chao is also coaching the boys JV team: "so I get to groom them for the varsity as well. They are undefeated in league play which gives us great optimism for the future and something to look forward to."

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# Weather creates soggy start to boys golf



Photos Gint Federas

## By Jon Kingdon

Once again the weather has proven to be a distraction to a set of teams in Lamorinda. In this case, it's the golfers who have had to adjust to the wet playing conditions, with rain forcing the schools to reschedule some matches and the players having to accept that their shots won't travel as far on a soggy fairway.

### Acalanes

Acalanes coach Tim Scott has a solid base of five players that he has been able to consistently count on while rotating who will be the sixth player in each match. With such a foundation, Scott is able to appreciate the character of his team: "My players are all pulling for each other. It's nice to see the camaraderie among them. It's been fun listening to them all getting along as I drive them in the van to the matches."

The co-captains of the team are both juniors, Will Condy and Mike O'Donnell. Says Scott: "Will and Mike do a good job in getting the team pumped up for the matches."

The team has a lot of power but also brings a real intelligence to their matches, according to Scott: "Basically they all can hit the ball a mile. Even with all of the rain, they hit the ball so far, it doesn't matter if they don't get much roll. They also know how to play for position on a hole and, when needed, are able to use a hybrid club or long iron off the tees."

Ryan Reilley, Joe Evans and Tucker Gannon round out the first five players on the team. Gannon, who was second

team all-league last season, has grown a good deal taller from last season and Scott understates it simply: "He's going to be a good one."

There is a core of five to six freshmen who are all vying for playing time and should be factors in the not too distant future.

Even with a 6-2 record so far this season, Scott wants the players to keep their perspective: "It's only a game and I want them to enjoy themselves. I want them to love this game and know that they can enjoy golf for their entire life."

### Miramonte

Miramonte head coach Jack Schramm has both talent and youth going for his team this year: "We are an awfully young team with only one senior." The senior, Conner Steward, is clearly the most talented player on the team. Last season, Steward was first team all-league, won the league championship by shooting a 67 and was only being beaten out by Ryan Burnett for Most Valuable Player. Juniors Joe Henderson and Ben Duncan were both chosen second team all-league last year as well. All three players have taken on the reins of leadership.

Filling out the starting roster is junior John Ricksen and two freshmen, Nathan Rigsby and Robert Lagomarsino. It's the depth of the team that is going to be the difference in the end for Miramonte, says Schramm: "Our first three can give us a lead and the next three need to finish out the matches for us. With a 7-2 record so far, Schramm's strategy has been

holding up.

Schramm appreciates the advantage of playing at the Orinda Country Club as their home course: "We get a 2-3 stroke edge each match because we really know the course."

As the head coach of the Matadors football team as well, Schramm understands how close it can be between winning and losing: "We're in a very even league. I want my players to just keep grinding and to know that every shot matters and to not get down on themselves after a bad hole. We lost to Liberty by one stroke after a few three putts on the 18th hole. There are small differences in winning and losing and I just want my players to keep doing their best."

### Campolindo

When you graduate two seniors that go on to play for Division I golf teams (Nicholas Klock-Navy and Ryan Burnett-North Carolina), it's hard to deny you're in a bit of a rebuilding year. Campolindo head coach Gary O'Neill has more depth than power: "For the most part, potential is the word that I would use."

The Cougars have a 3-1 league record and the team is led by sophomores Baron Szeto, who was honorable mention all league as a freshman, and sophomore John Lagomarsino, both of whom have been leading the team in their matches, says O'Neill: "Baron had a very good off season and is playing some national tournaments. He has great prospects to play at the next level."

Depth is not a problem for O'Neill: "I have about a dozen guys that are all

close in ability to each other. The majority of them are capable of going low at any given time. We just need to see who can do it more consistently."

The football team has provided a lot of power to the team. Sophomores Joey Schmitt and Austin Walker are players that O'Neill is counting on to step up: "Joey and Austin are both very strong. They can hit the ball a mile. I hope to see them put it all together prior to the end of the season."

Ryan Brown, Joe Marinai and Jacob Ryerson have all put in a great deal of work and shown the ability to be part of the starting group, says O'Neill: "Ryan is on the verge of playing even better and just needs to be a tad more consistent. Joe has worked very hard and has been very consistent and has scored a lot of points for us and Jacob is a great kid and hard worker that can really contribute."

With such a young team, the leadership set by co-captains Szeto and Justin Feldman has been an asset as the team has had to confront the rain, wind and cold weather. That along with the support of their home course, the Moraga Country Club, have been strong factors in their success, says O'Neill.

Though golf is an individual sport, O'Neill wants his players to take more than that from the sport: "I want them to understand that playing on the team and representing Campolindo is a privilege and a lot of fun. Besides being competitive, I want them to have fun and pick up a skill that they will enjoy the rest of their lives."

# Accolades keep coming for the Campolindo boys basketball team



Steven Dyer

Photos Gint Federas

## By Jon Kingdon

To the victors belong the spoils.

The town of Moraga and Mayor Roger Wykle declared April 10 as "2018-2019 Campolindo Boys Varsity Basketball Team Day" (see story on Page A11). Head coach Steven Dyer appreciated the recognition by the town: "It was a great event to be honored by the town. It was a very positive experience for the guys to be in that city hall environment."

There were also individual honors for members of the team. Aiden Ma-

haney was named Cal Hi Sports Freshman Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Dyer was not surprised with the choice: "Aiden totally earned the award. He made the big shots and really picked things up defensively. His future is bright."

David Ahazie was named second team All-State for Division III by MaxPreps. "David really deserved it," said Dyer. "He was our leader on the court and he brought it every day in practice. He would guard the other team's best players and was our leading scorer and even fought through a hip

injury during the playoffs."

MaxPreps also named Coach Dyer as the California Coach of the Year. Dyer appreciated what the award meant: "It's a real honor because

there are so many talented coaches out there. I have to credit our players because if you don't win, none of these awards happen."



Aiden Mahaney



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# Lamorinda

# OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 13 Issue 4 Wednesday, April 17, 2019



*Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian*

*... read on Page D16*

## When native plants share space with a mini-farm



Ed McAlpine and Anne Chambers in their Moraga garden.

Photo Sophie Braccini

### By Sophie Braccini

Anne Chambers and her husband, Ed McAlpine, view the utility of a garden with different eyes. For Chambers it is a place where the local flora is nurtured for the pleasure of the eyes and to reminisce the many hikes she loves to go on in the area; while for McAlpine, a garden is a place where useful production is conducted, where food is grown, where tree branches become furni-

ture, and where food waste is turned into compost. Like any marriage, theirs is made of compromise, up to the garden, where both of their visions mix harmoniously to create an arbor of useful peace and beauty.

This year, the Chambers-McAlpine Moraga garden near Campolindo will be part of the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour on May 5. The tour creator Kathy Kramer always said that gardens featured on the tour had to be at least 60 percent or more natives, but

that food does not count. She says she is very happy with this latest addition to the tour where so many fruit trees and edible plants live side by side with the valley oak, coast siltassel, toyon, manzanita, ceanothus, salvias, Monkey flowers, coral bells, coffee berries, native roses and so many more. This is the first year for the Chambers-McAlpine's garden on the tour, one of the 35 gardens featured in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

Approaching the house, a beautiful apple tree graces the front yard with its many pink blossoms. The garden boasts 26 varieties of fruit trees, including Violette de Bordeaux fig, Lamb Abbey Pearmain and Spitzenburg apples, and Clergeau and Comice pears, among others. McAlpine's philosophy about pruning the fruit trees appears immediately: the footprint is reduced and all the fruits are easily within reach. McAlpine is now retired and spends quite a great deal of time in the quarter-acre garden. It is a family tradition for him, coming straight from his mother, who already in the '50s and '60s had an organic garden where he, the older child, was often in charge of the weeding, necessary for good production.

*... continued on Page D4*





## Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	4	\$1,385,000	\$2,505,000
MORAGA	4	\$555,000	\$1,120,000
ORINDA	7	\$1,310,000	\$2,200,000

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

- 1064 Oak Hill Road, \$1,385,000, 2 Bdrms, 1638 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 03-08-19,  
Previous Sale: \$745,000, 09-11-12
- 3875 Quail Ridge Road, \$2,225,000, 6 Bdrms, 3830 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 03-08-19,  
Previous Sale: \$1,614,000, 04-08-16
- 3717 Rose Court, \$2,505,000, 4 Bdrms, 2859 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 02-27-19
- 65 Silverwood Drive, \$1,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 3055 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 02-28-19,  
Previous Sale: \$1,460,000, 01-06-17

### MORAGA

- 104 Alta Mesa Court, \$1,120,000, 3 Bdrms, 1954 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 02-26-19,  
Previous Sale: \$760,000, 06-22-04
- 116 Alta Mesa Court, \$850,000, 2 Bdrms, 1698 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 03-06-19,  
Previous Sale: \$696,500, 03-23-15
- 1954 Ascot Drive, \$555,000, 2 Bdrms, 1234 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 03-08-19
- 740 Country Club Drive, \$935,000, 2 Bdrms, 1464 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 03-04-19,  
Previous Sale: \$650,000, 04-27-15

### ORINDA

- 2 Charles Hill Lane, \$2,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 2848 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 03-06-19,  
Previous Sale: \$2,011,000, 05-18-18
- 64 El Gavilan Road, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 3164 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 02-27-19
- 59 La Espiral, \$1,310,000, 3 Bdrms, 2564 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 03-07-19,  
Previous Sale: \$1,345,000, 01-24-17
- 10 Lost Valley Drive, \$1,355,000, 4 Bdrms, 1689 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 02-28-19,  
Previous Sale: \$1,030,000, 10-06-16
- 19 Moraga Viax, \$1,475,000, 4 Bdrms, 2881 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 03-04-19,  
Previous Sale: \$1,150,000, 12-02-13
- 4 Oak Flat Road, \$1,950,000, 4 Bdrms, 3007 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 02-28-19
- 26 Parklane Drive, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 1806 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 03-05-19,  
Previous Sale: \$1,075,000, 06-29-07



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# When native plants share space with a mini-farm

... continued from Page D1

In his Oakland home, and now for 10 years in his Moraga home, McAlpine continues to view his property as a place to grow food for his family. He has organic compost delivered to break down the clay soil, and on all sides of the house he has set beds for his winter, then the summer crops of vegetables. The rest of the property was designed as a native garden by Four Dimensions Landscape Company, and the fruit trees are growing happily in their midst.

Chambers explains that she and her husband have been going to the Bringing Back the Natives tour for years and got some of their inspiration there. She cites Al Kytes' garden, also in Moraga and also on the tour again this year, that has a water feature that inspired both of them to add one to their property. The pleasant watery gurgle adds to the serenity of a garden, which though it is not very large, has been conceived as a peace haven for them.

Under the rustic wooden veranda stands some of the furniture made by McAlpine with wood coming from the property. Birch branches have been turned into tables, and an old cherry tree provided boards to create benches. Chambers says with a smile that she has to protect her non-fruit trees so her husband does not turn all of them into something useful, like furniture.

The tour is a great source of inspiration for those interested in local plants set in the gardens of ordinary but creative and passionate people. The theme this year is Music and Art in the Garden, and the Chambers-McAlpine's will host Stanley Middle School's Jazz Messengers. McAlpine will give a talk and share secrets for a successful orchard. One of them is their backyard cat, a semiferal but friendly feline that lives outside and keeps the rodents and squirrels at bay, so the Chambers-McAlpine can really enjoy their fruit.

... continued on Page D6



**Lemons**



**Figs**





**LAFAYETTE - Walk to Trails and Town**  
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**LAFAYETTE - 1.36 Acres in Burton Valley**  
Modern ranch style home showcases a spacious interior, premium lot and located just minutes from Lafayette's charming downtown. There are plans from the Talon Group to expand the residence to 3,655 sq. feet. 4BD, 2BA, \$1,595,000



**LAFAYETTE - 3 Acres Estate with Panoramic Views**  
Single-level Mediterranean villa, tastefully and brilliantly updated, stretches out to more than 6,600 sq. ft. of living space on a single level. Breathtaking sunrises and star-studded night skies are enjoyed from this exclusive gated estate. 6BD, 7.5BA, \$5,295,000



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# When native plants share space with a mini-farm

... continued from Page D4

Registration is necessary for the free tour at <https://www.bringing-backthenatives.net/>. The tour includes a free Garden Art and Native Plant Extravaganza from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, May 4 and 5, at various native plant nurseries in the East Bay. A percentage of the proceeds from the sale of plants at these nurseries will be donated to the Bring Back the Natives Garden Tour.



Al Kyte's Moraga garden is a popular stop on the Tour.

Photo Kathy Kramer



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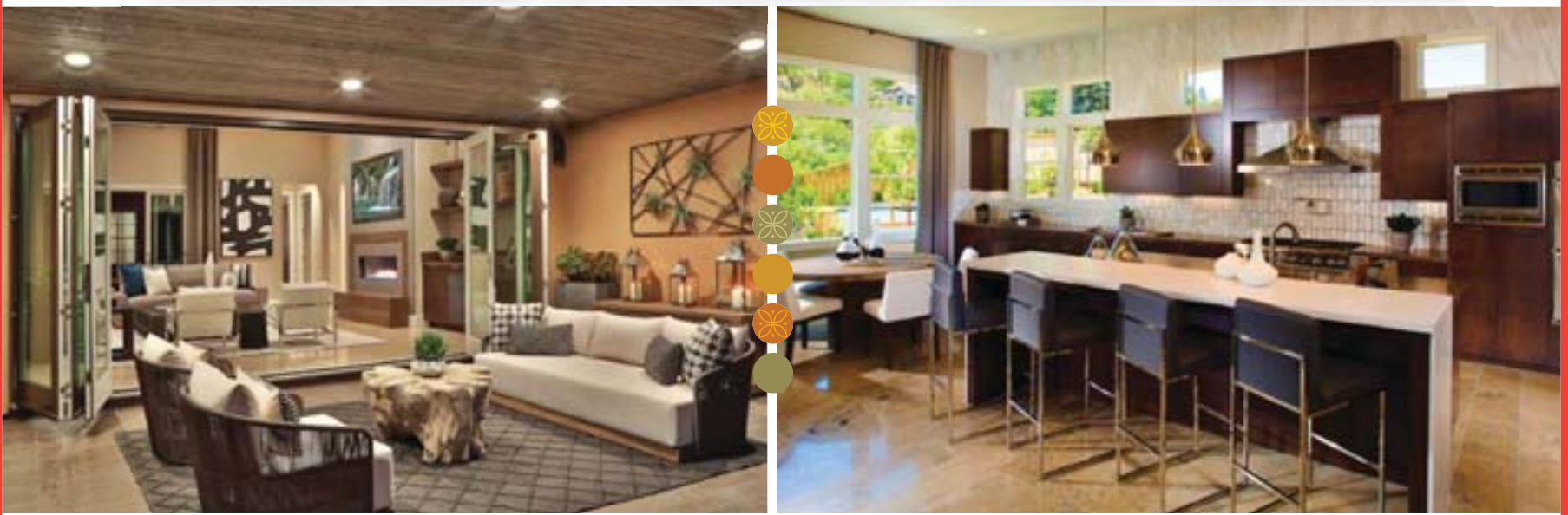
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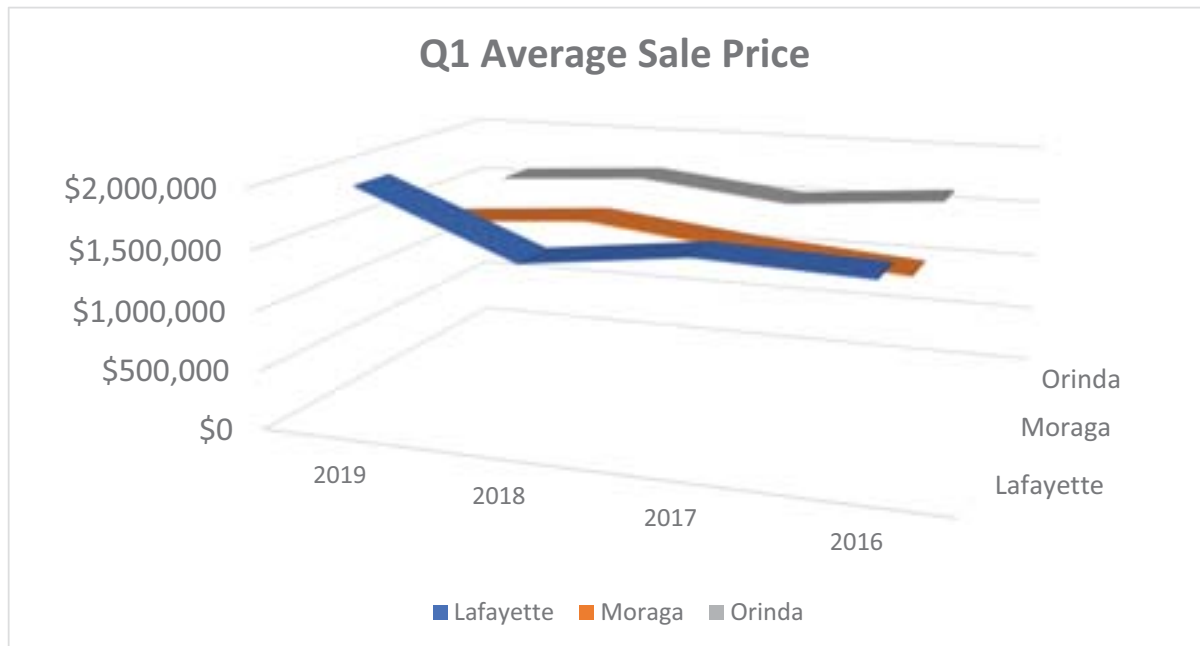
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# The Real Estate Quarter in Review



## By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS-T; Licensed Real Estate Broker

The first quarter of 2019 showed a continued fast pace in activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate. Supply remains low, so the resulting sales quantities remain low. The average sales price continues to increase in Lafayette versus a year ago, while in Moraga and Orinda it eased; in the first quarter of 2018 it was the opposite. The days on market remain short, however, and the homes that have multiple offers are increasing.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from Jan. 1 through March 31, 40 single-family homes closed in Lafayette down from the 48 that closed in the same quarter in 2018. Thirty-four closed in the first quarter of 2017. Sales prices ranged from \$995,000 to \$3.848 million, with an average of 24 days on the market. The average sales price was \$1,984,125, far exceeding the \$1,469,744 in the year ago period. In 2017 first quarter it was \$1,622,848 and in 2016, \$1,570,712. This change in percentage with a small sample size is due to very few homes selling at the low end of the range and more

at the high range.

The median sales price was \$1,855,000.

In Moraga there were 15 single-family closings ... again down from the year ago period when 26 closed. Twenty-eight closed in Q1 2017 and 20 in the first quarter of 2016. Prices so far this year have ranged from \$980,000 to \$2.225 million. The average sale price was \$1,436,733 down from a year ago when it was \$1,534,007. In 2017 it was \$1,381,452, and in Q1 2016 it was \$1,278,575. The average marketing time was 23 days, versus 16 days a year ago.

In Orinda, there were 49 single-family closings, versus 40 in 2018 and 28 in 2017. Sales prices ranged from \$570,000 to \$2.525 million with an average price of \$1,587,598. This was a drop from the \$1,673,088 in 2018. In 2017 it was \$1,523,767. In the 2016 first quarter it was \$1,634,327. It took an average of 40 days on the market to sell a home in Orinda versus 43 days on the market a year ago.

In the first quarter of 2018, Lafayette homes sold at an average of \$690.74, close to the \$683.73 per square foot in Q1 2018 and the \$645.43 per square foot up in 2017. Moraga came in at \$599.38. Orinda was consistent at \$617.12 – almost identical to the

year ago quarter of \$616.89 compared with \$625.23 in the first quarter of 2017.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had four closings reported to the MLS and all were resales. They ranged from \$619,000 to \$795,000. Moraga had 12 ranging from \$390,000 to \$1.120 million with the highest one being on Alta Mesa. Orinda had one—on Ravenhill Road that sold at \$1.1 million.

As of April 7, there were 76 homes under contract per the MLS in the three combined communities (a year ago and in 2017 they were both at 95) with asking prices of \$749,000 to \$3.995 million.

Inventory is at 103, consistent with the 95 as of April 9, 2018, and 96 on the same date in 2017.

There are 42 Lafayette properties currently on the market versus 34 properties on the market in April 2018. Asking prices in Lafayette currently range from \$599,000 to \$13.5 million. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of 21 homes, up from 18 homes at this time in 2018. The price range is \$875,000 to \$1.39 million.

In Orinda there are 40 homes on the market. A year ago there were 43. The list prices range from \$649,000 to \$3.75 million.

There is only one Lamorinda distressed (bank-owned or a short sale) sale available, located in Lafayette.

As is the case nearly every quarter, the most active price range is in the more “affordable” price ranges. At the high end, 27 homes sold above \$2 million in the three communities combined, versus 21 a year ago and 13 in 2017. There are 39 currently available above this amount in Lamorinda.

Interest rates have dropped slightly and the “news” that several large local companies are having IPOs (like Lyft) and the “instant millionaires” will be buying high-end homes have put a continued positive spin on home prices continuing to rise. And this has increased the migration of families to the area. Lamorinda continues to be attractive with BART access and highly rated schools.

... continued on Page D12



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# The Real Estate Quarter in Review

... continued from Page D10

The real estate markets in San Francisco, the peninsula, and the other side of the hill in Oakland, Berkeley and Piedmont have been even more active so there has been some spillover effect where buyers are willing to make longer commutes in order to find more “affordable housing.” Of course, Lamorinda and affordable housing are seldom mentioned in the same breath.

Lastly, it is important to look at what homes are selling for versus their list prices. Often homes come on the market at unrealistic prices and they do not sell. We also are seeing more homes listed well below

true values so that it may encourage bidding wars that sellers hope might generate a higher overall sales price. In the first quarter of this year many homes have had multiple offers and have sold at or above the list price.

Of the 40 single-family home sales that closed in Lafayette in the first quarter of 2019, 28 sold at or above the list price. In Moraga, nine of the 15 sales were at or above the asking price and in Orinda, 29 of the 49 sold at or above the final listing price. This will typically happen when a house goes pending in the first two weeks on the market. Of the 76 currently pending sales in the three Lamorinda communities combined, 48 went pending in 21 days or less. The actual

average days on the market would be markedly lower but many agents are setting up marketing plans where they hold the home open to the public and to brokers and follow with an offer date in a week or so after exposing the property to the market – pointing to a high likelihood of a continued trend in homes selling above the asking price.

In the detached home category in the first quarter of 2019, the average sale price in Lafayette was 102.5 percent of the asking price. In Moraga it was 101.2 percent and in Orinda it was 100.1 percent of the final asking price.

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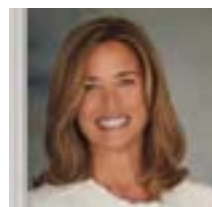


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## Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian for April

# Nature's Natives

*"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better."* – Albert Einstein



A broadleaf weed, cut leaf geranium needs to be pulled before it seeds.

### By Cynthia Brian

Witnessed from outer space this spring, a pageant of splendor burst into bloom on hillsides, in fields, chaparrals, and desert environs. The "super blooms" of Southern California captivated hearts and cameras. Northern California is exhibiting a bountiful season of blue lupines, orange poppies, and gardens filled with flowers, just not to the degree of our neighbors to the south.

Although weeds are described as plants growing where we don't want them, weeds are in proliferation after our continual wet days. Wild cut leaf geranium resembles a ground cover when small with tiny pink petals, yet it is a weed that needs to be pulled before it scatters seeds. Hand removal of invasive grasses is also necessary as they create fire danger while outcompeting native flora for light, water, space and food.

More than 18,000 plant species are native to the United States and approximately 6,000 species are endemic to California. To be considered a true California native, the plants must have grown here before the late 18th century when the Europeans arrived. Our state flower, the California poppy, as well as lupines, fuchsias, and other "natives" were actually first cultivated in the gardens of Europe, yet we have adopted them as our own. We are blessed to grow numerous flora inhabitants from the Mediterranean that have acclimated to our mild four seasons and adapted to our clay soil. I have termed these friends, such as lavender and acanthus, "the new natives" as I like to include them in my garden designs.

Natives are drought tolerant after they have been established, al-

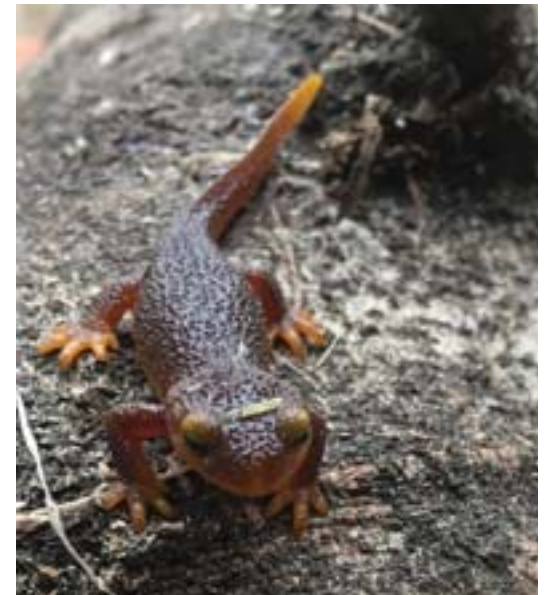


Spreading by underground runners, the Matilija fried egg poppy grows to 8 feet.

Photos Cynthia Brian

though they will require water if the weather has been exceptionally dry. They are wildlife attractors bringing songbirds, lizards, salamanders, butterflies, frogs, hummingbirds, bees, and other pollinators into the landscape. Minimal maintenance is required without dependence on pesticides or fertilizers. Top dressing all plants with mulch to maintain a constant temperature while reducing erosion and temperature fluctuations is advantageous.

For year-round interest, select a variety of natives that bloom during each of the 12 months. Wildflowers are fussy as transplants therefore for a spring show, sow seeds in the fall to allow the winter water to promote a strong root system. Plants with tiny seeds can live dormant in the underground seed bank for 80 years or more depending on the optimum conditions to coax them above ground to flower, fruit, and set seed. ... continued on next Page



Nicknamed a water dog, a juvenile salamander rests on a log.



## *Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian for April*

# Nature's Natives

... continued from Page D16

### A Sampling of Favorite California Natives

Trees, Grasses	Shrubs, Plants, Flowers	Native Perennials to the United States
Oak	Manzanita	Milkweed
Western Red Bud	Ceanothus (California Lilac)	Echinacea
Redwood	Sage	Black-eyed Susan
Sequoia	Currant	Butterfly Weed
Pine	Fern	Aster
Cypress	Lupine	Creeping Phlox
Cedar	Columbine	Bee Balm
Fir	California poppy	Bluebells
Yew	Heuchera	Lobelia
Willow	Dicentra	Hydrangea
Alder	Brodiaeas	Acanthus
Aspen	Blue Dicks	Gaillardia
Sycamore	Morning glory	Trillium
Blue-eyed grass	Clarkia	Coreopsis
Sedges	Wild rose	Bluestem Grass
Rushes	Wild grape	Honeysuckle
Fescue	Clematis	Switchgrass
Reed grass	Wood Strawberry	Blazing Star
Wild Rye	Matilija Fried Egg Plant	Dogwood
		Iris
		Gaura
		Trumpet vine
		Elderberry



**A majestic California oak.**



**A field of blue lupines multiplies after a rain-filled winter.**

These are just a few of the thousands of natives you can discover at your nursery. A large variety of succulents and cacti are also available. It is important to remember that every plant is native to someplace. When choosing a species, you want to make sure it will grow well in your microclimate.

Because natives have adapted to our land, they won't struggle for survival. They are strong players requiring less work, water and food as they work in harmony with our ecosystem. Natives are an advantageous addition to any garden as they support bees, butterflies and birds, bringing beneficial insects and pollinators to our landscapes.



## Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Gardening Guide



**Not to be confused with Virginia bluebells, wood hyacinths are spreading bulbs that are stellar as spring showstoppers.**

**BEWARE** the tick. Ticks are attacking and they are not just on the deer. Keep your lawns mowed and the brush cleared. Rid your yard of Japanese barberry as this invasive species is a haven for ticks.

**KEEP** deer from nibbling your new sprouts by installing a 9 to 12-foot deer fence. Unfortunately, all of the natural remedies including soap, hair, sprinklers, whirlybirds, lights and noise are not effective long term.

**REPOT** orchids in spring if they are root bound or the planting medium has broken down. Most orchids need to be repotted every two to three years. If you notice green root tips on plump white roots, it is time to divide. Repot in lightly packed fir bark or sphagnum moss using a container large enough to allow for two more years of growth.

**DIMINISH** spring allergies by always removing your shoes before entering your home. Change your clothes, shower before bedtime to keep the pollen from gathering on your sheets. Ramp up your house cleaning efforts by dusting, vacuuming, and mopping often.

**SHARPEN** lawnmower blades for a cleaner cut. Stay off the grass if it has been raining as walking on wet grass damages the blades and the roots.

**SNIP** the flowers off bolting arugula kale lettuces, and other leafy vegetables to prevent the plants from going to seed. Add the flowers to salads, soups, and sauces or decorate your plates.

### MARK your calendars:

April 21 is Easter. Fill baskets for garden lovers with my book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener" available with extra freebies at [www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store](http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store).

April 22 is Earth Day

April 28 is the Annual Wildlife Festival at Wagner Ranch [www.fwrna.org/annual-wildlife-festival.html](http://www.fwrna.org/annual-wildlife-festival.html)

May 11 is the Moraga Community Faire. Visit the Be the Star You Are!@ booth to celebrate nature, books, and kids. [www.bethestaryouare.org/events](http://www.bethestaryouare.org/events)

Wishing you a hippity hoppity happy Bunny Day on Easter!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing



**The mahogany colored Manzanita shines with pink spring blossoms.**



**A native of South Africa, freesias flourish in Lamorinda along with Dutch tulips.**

Photos Cynthia Brian





**Edible and fragrant, the wood strawberry is a California native.**



**California native Western Redbud tree boasts magenta flowers.**



**Acanthus is a native to the Mediterranean and thrives in the shade.**



**Meyer lemons and a tulip magnolia blooms surround Cynthia Brian in the April garden.**

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 Are1® 501 c3.

Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com).

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## ORINDA



**16 Dos Posos**  
New Price! Updated 4 Bed/3 Bath with wrap-around balcony and stunning views.

\$1,295,000

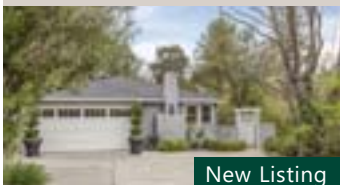
## ORINDA



**491 Moraga Way**  
Turn-key 4 Bed/3 Bath home fully remodeled. Large open kitchen, expansive patio, great location!

\$1,299,000

## ORINDA

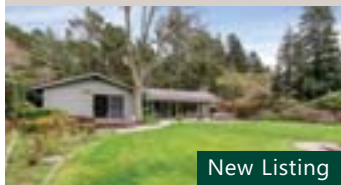


New Listing

**6 Lloyd Lane**  
Sunny, light-filled living! Charming 2 Bed/2.5 Bath + Office. Cook's kitchen, large living room, flexible floor plan.

\$1,395,000

## ORINDA



New Listing

**160 Hall Drive**  
Delightful 4 Bed/2 Bath home on incredible .52 acre lot. Natural light, floor to ceiling windows.

\$1,425,000

## ORINDA



**20 Via Callados**  
Experience a dramatic design in a beautiful .55 acre single story home with 4 Bed/2.5 Bath

\$1,450,000

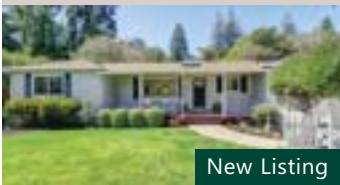
## ORINDA



**153 El Toyonal**  
Perfect close-in location! Delightful home with high ceilings, abundance of light and separate access.

\$1,675,000

## LAFAYETTE

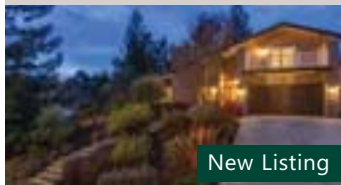


New Listing

**1087 Upper Happy Valley**  
Darling gem in desirable Happy Valley neighborhood! Single level, light-filled indoor/outdoor living.

\$1,625,000

## MORAGA



New Listing

**110 Quintas Lane**  
Desirable neighborhood, great style and design, super entertainer on picturesque private setting.

\$1,599,000

## MORAGA



**10 Brandt Drive**  
Beautifully updated 5 Bed/3.5 Bath Sanders Ranch home with captivating yard and views.

\$1,775,000

## MORAGA



New Listing

**11 Redwing Place**  
Charming updated 4 bed home in prime location, private yard with pool and views of St. Mary's.

\$1,499,000

## WALNUT CREEK



New Listing

**300 La Casa Via**  
New Construction & Best Location! 3885 Sq ft of single story living, 5 Bed/4.5 Bath on a FLAT .91 acre.

\$2,300,000

## CONCORD



New Listing

**1298 Peregrine Court**  
Updated 4 Bed/2.5 Bath corner lot in desirable Montecito community. Captivating views!

\$949,000

## CLAYTON



**5679 Pine Hollow Road**  
New! Only 2 Left! Beautiful New Construction Single Story Homes w/ 4 Beds + office on .35-.41 acre lots

\$1,175,000

## CLAYTON



**5669 Pine Hollow Road**  
New! Only 2 Left! Beautiful New Construction Single Story Homes w/ 4 Beds + office on .35-.41 acre lots

\$1,210,000

## The Village Associates:

Ashley Battersby  
Patricia Battersby  
Shannon Conner  
Meara Dunsmore

Linda Ehrich  
Emily Estrada

Joan Evans  
Linda Friedman  
Dexter Honens II

Anne Knight  
Susan Layng

Charles Levine  
April Matthews  
Hillary Murphy

Karen Murphy  
John Nash

Altie Schmitt  
Judy Schoenrock  
Ann Sharf

Amy Rose Smith  
Molly Smith  
Jeff Snell

Lynda Snell  
Steve Stahle

Clark Thompson  
Angie Evans Traxinger  
Ignacio Vega

Ann Ward  
Jenny Lyons Wilhite

Margaret Zucker

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Village  
ASSOCIATES

It's Village. Of Course.

DRE#01301392