

# Local author examines family's experience with mental illness

By Pippa Fisher

Lafayette Library and Learning Center is featuring Lafayette resident Mark Lukach for the May author talk. Lukach's internationally bestselling memoir "My Lovely Wife in the Psych Ward" seems particularly apt at this time – this May is the 70th year that Mental Health America has been observing Mental Health Month as a way to educate and increase public awareness.

Lukach's book chronicles the unexpected onset of a bipolar diagnosis for his wife, Giulia, her three hospitalizations with psychosis, her lengthy bouts with suicidal depression, and his attempts to support her as a caregiver.

The book starts with their love story – a seemingly perfect young romance, meeting in college, aged 18, marriage at 24 and their dream life in San Francisco.

Following his wife's diagnosis at age 27 and ongoing battle with mental illness, Lukach looks at the question, "How do we care for the people we love?"

In his book Lukach focuses on how mental illness is a shared experience. He has spoken about his family's experience at schools, hospitals, businesses and to mental health organizations across the country and has been in-

terviewed on TV and radio.

The New York Times Book Review wrote that Lukach's "rare combination of tenderness and ruthlessness is what makes this book more interesting than your typical illness narrative."

Adult Services Librarian Chris Gray says this promises to be a touching and very relevant program.

Lukach is the ninth-grade dean and a history teacher at The Athenian School. He lives with his wife and their two sons in Lafayette.

The talk will be held at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 23 in the Don Tatzin Community Hall at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

Copies of "My Lovely Wife in the Psych Ward" will be available for purchase at the event, courtesy of Orinda Books.



To sign up, please go to <http://ccclib.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=180935>

# The Terraces – next step: environmental review



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"The developer's draft proposed addendum with appendices runs to 1,000 pages – have you ever met a thousand-page 'minor correction'? Worse, it seeks to undo (without explanation) all of the significant and unavoidable public health and safety impacts recited in the certified final EIR approved in 2013. Seven years have passed since the data in the original EIR was collected, and there have since been substantial changes in the traffic and public safety considerations; this mandates a more rigorous subsequent document."

Several times all four city council members asked about the process and whether they could continue having public hearings with an addendum. Acting Planning Director Greg Wolff reassured them that it would be possible. Hodil agreed but noted that it is not typically done in the city of Lafayette although it is allowable under CEQA.

Council Member Steven Bliss asked if analysis from the consultant around the addendum could still trigger an SEIR and was told it could. Mayor Mike Anderson said after the meeting that nothing has really changed here. "Nothing is off the table," he said, referring to the adden-

dum versus the SEIR.

With the decision to move forward with the addendum, the city is hiring traffic consultants TJKM who worked on the original Terraces EIR. Wolff said the hire made sense because of their "long-term familiarity and knowledge on it."

It is precisely the long-term familiarity that makes Lafayette resident Scott Sommer uneasy.

"Although TJKM worked for the city in 2012, it is now working for and under contract with O'Brien Land. This taints any choice of TJKM to objectively and independently work for the city," says Sommer, adding, "Also, the idea of TJKM reviewing its own traffic memorandum is meaningless and illusory. Independent and impartial review is a key concept of CEQA and administrative law. An independent traffic consultant should be retained by the city to independently review TJKM's submission."

Wolff says that TJKM is well respected and will be taking direction from the city. Addressing any concerns about the potential for the developer to hire a consultant to become their mouthpiece, Wolff says, "That is why the city is retaining Impact Science."

The saga continues.

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