

Not to be missed

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Free movie screening in Orinda Theatre Square "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" at 7 p.m. on Dec. 12. The Griswold family's plans for a big family Christmas predictably turn into a big disaster. Donations are appreciated, and help sustain the program and benefit the charity, the Makey Foundation.

Lamorinda Village's 5th Annual Afternoon of Gratitude will be held from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 13 at LOPC, 49 Knox Drive in Lafayette. We will gather to celebrate with our members, volunteers and community supporters another

great year of serving the older adults in our community. Refreshments, entertainment and a special Volunteer of the Year Award in Honor of Ed Stokes will be presented. For more information on Lamorinda Village please go to www.lamorindavillage.org

Friends Corner Book Shop in Lafayette is having a half-price sale from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Dec. 14. This is a wonderful opportunity to find some last-minute treasures for your holiday shopping bag! The Book Shop has a wide variety of gently used books for all ages, and half-off our already low prices is a real bargain. Proceeds benefit the Lafayette Library.

<https://www.lllcf.org/shop-for-a-used-book/>

Hospice East Bay's Tree of Lights ceremonies have offered community members a way to honor the lives of friends and loved ones. This year's last ceremony is at 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 15 at Moraga Country Club, 1600 St. Andrews Drive. For further information about these special events, visit Hospice East Bay Tree of Lights.

Graduate Student Jennifer Lehmann closes out her three-part lecture series with a discussion of the ways pop culture is saturated with themes and stories traditionally reserved for the religious adherents of

the major western religions; Including the wine shelf at Trader Joe's in Lafayette labeled "water." Part of the ongoing Sunday Morning Forum series from 10:45 to 11:45 a.m. on Dec. 15, Creekside Chapel, 1035 Carol Lane. <http://www.oslc.net/>

Winter Solstice Event at 6 p.m. on Dec. 21 at Outdoor Courtyard, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Fire Arts Performance, poetry, candlelight, original music by singer/songwriter Laura Zucker, warm drinks for adults and kids, all to mark the longest night of the year. Free to the public with donations welcome as we pause and honor the turn toward the

sun. <http://www.oslc.net/>

Toys for Tots - Partnering with the Moraga Police Department, 5A is a collection site for your donation of a new unwrapped toy or a cash through Dec. 22. 5A is located at 455 Moraga Rd. Ste. F. in Moraga

5A's "Santa's Secret Room" will be open through Dec. 24 with free wrapping paper, tape and ribbon to wrap your gifts. 5A is located at 455 Moraga Rd. Ste. F. in Moraga. (925) 643-2026.

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorinda-weekly.com

Soft and chewy chocolate cookies a perfect holiday treat



Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

Whether you are planning a Hanukkah celebration, a treat to leave for Santa Claus, or a cookie exchange this holiday season, your crowd will love these chewy, crinkly, dark chocolate cookies! The first time I ever had them I was in second or third grade. It was my turn to bring snacks for my Brownie troop and my mom sent me with these tasty morsels. We have been making them ever since, but nowadays we use dark chocolate, which makes them even

better. Because these cookies have very little flour, they are chewy and soft when they come out of the oven, so it's best to bake them on parchment paper. It makes the job of removing them from the baking sheet so much easier. Once baked and cooled, these cookies store well for several days in an airtight container. I haven't tried this yet, but I am going to add chocolate chips to the batter one of these days to make double-chocolate Brownie Drops. If you get around to trying this before I do, please let me know how it turns out!

Brownie Drops

(Makes about 2 dozen)

INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces bittersweet chocolate (I use Trader Joe's Dark Chocolate)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup finely chopped pecans and/or walnuts
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F. Place a sheet of parchment paper on top of baking sheet. Melt chocolate and butter together in a small sauce pan, stirring occasionally, until melted. Remove from heat. Meanwhile, beat eggs until very foamy. Gradually add sugar and continue to beat until very thick and shiny. Blend in cooled chocolate mixture. Add dries and mix well. Stir in nuts and vanilla. Drop by tablespoonful onto the parchment paper and bake for approximately 8-10 minutes, or until done, yet soft. Cool completely before removing from parchment. Store in an airtight container ... if you have any left over!

You can find most of the recipes published in the Lamorinda Weekly on our website. Food tab: www.lamorindaweekly.com/html2/food1.html

Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



The 6 Top Mistakes high school students make applying to college

By Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D.

With college admissions deadlines looming, the following are a list of six top mistakes high school students make when applying to college:

1. Not balancing your college list by admission probability is a recipe for disappointing results. Reach schools have low and very low admit rates; they are competitive schools where many talented students are denied admission. Limit these to a couple of schools on your college list. A solid selection of four to six target schools is vital to good admission results (targets are those colleges where your GPA and test scores fall within the mid 50% of applicants and you are on track with other admission requirements, like having a strong set of extracurricular activities). For students with weaker profiles, the list should include some anchor schools—these should be schools that you would be happy to attend where your academic profile places you in the top 25% of applicants. Some colleges offer guaranteed admission for a given GPA and test score. These are great anchors, if you qualify. Once your list is balanced you can rest easier.

2. Not setting aside enough time to complete your college applications. Manage your time so you are doing some work on your applications each week through the fall. It helps to set up an application timeline. Get your EA and ED (if you are applying early) school application completed, then move on to the next set of applications. The final set of applications may be completed after winter break.

3. Neglecting to preview (read aloud) your application before submission. This is a critical step that helps to ensure

that all your perfected essays and the carefully constructed activities section get sent to the admission staff the way you intended for them to be seen.

4. Applying to too many colleges. This may permit the college to boast record numbers of applicants but leave you feeling frazzled. Even worse, you are adding to the frenzy of college admission by making it harder for colleges to predict who will accept offers of admission. So colleges respond by trying harder to assess student interest and increasingly ask for students to list all colleges they are applying to. This leads to longer waitlists because colleges see the students' long lists and are uncertain of students' intentions. They accept those who indicate strong, consistent interest with a shorter, more cohesive set of schools on their list and may put others on the waitlist.

5. Stealth applicant is a phrase coined by college admission officers to describe students they have never heard of until the application appears. The school may regard you as having little genuine interest and reject or waitlist you. Looking at two students with similar credentials, the one who demonstrated interest is more likely to be offered admission. Although some colleges clearly state that demonstrated interest is not a factor in the admissions decision, for a large number of very popular, highly selective schools, this strategy was likely adopted to protect the admissions office from a bombardment of emails from students trying hard to show lots of interest in order to up their chances of admission. The difference is the strength and quality of the student's profile. If your profile is consistent with the qualifications of a school's accepted applicants, showing interest by visiting campus, scheduling an inter-

view, sitting in on a class, applying for additional scholarships, attending local information sessions and writing for more information that is not easily accessible on the college's website is well worth your time investment.

6. Waiting until the last minute to ask for teacher recommendations. This can backfire when the teacher must decline your request, because they have many requests and have set a limit on the numbers they will write. If they do agree to write for you, they might write a hurried recommendation. Give your teachers enough time to write a complete and thoughtful recommendation letter. Be sure to thank them for their effort on your behalf!



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD personally guides each student through each step of selecting and applying to well-matched schools for undergraduate and graduate school study. Over the past two decades, Elizabeth has placed hundreds of students in some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. The number of clients taken is limited to ensure each applicant has personalized attention. Contact Elizabeth early in the process to make a difference in your outcomes. Write elizabeth@doingcollege.com; Visit www.doingcollege.com; or Call: 925.385.0562.

Service Clubs Announcements

Lafayette Rotary Club

Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting.
Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

<p>December 12: David Gerson and Rachel Zinn Information about a proposed school board parcel tax</p>	<p>December 19: Kimberly Lam with Republic Services "Trash Talk"</p>
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www.rotarylafayette.org
www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-CA

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