

Not to be missed

OTHER ... continued

Diablo Ballet presents the second program of their 26th season, "Balanchine & Beyond" at 8 p.m. on Feb. 7 and at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Feb 8 at the Del Valle Theatre in Walnut Creek. The program features selections from five ballets. Tickets: \$15-\$48 (925) 943-7469; lesherartscenter.org, diabloballet.org

tatives for a cleaner, safer and healthier world for generations to come. Bring your questions about recycling, landfill technologies, and use of renewable energy.

The Moraga Garden Club Monthly General Meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Jan. 16 at the Holy Trinity

Not to be missed

Cultural Center, 1700 School Street. Juanita Salisbury of Landscape Architecture will be speaking about "Leveraging Biodiversity in Your Landscape." Her work is elegantly understated and is sure to get the audience inspired. General meetings are free and open to the public. www.moragagardenclub.com

Not to be missed

The Montelindo Garden Club's January meeting will be at 9:30 a.m. on Jan. 17 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's Community Hall. Presentation: Camelia Sinensis, A Plant That Changed the World by speaker Susan Leech. Susan is an expert in the growing history and enjoyment of tea. One of Mon-

telindo's own, she is the owner of the charming Orinda Village Antiques shop, where she presents teas during which she regales people with the history of the British tea experience. www.montelindogarden.com

SENIORS

Anne Randolph Physical Therapy presentation on Arthritis from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Jan. 22 at the Sequoia Room, Lafayette Community Center. Live the best life you can with arthritis! Understand the challenges and changes arthritis brings on and find practical solutions to make daily activities easier. Members: free; non-members: \$10.

GARDEN

The Lafayette Garden Club will meet at 10 a.m. (speaker at 11) on Jan. 9 in Lafayette Veteran's Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Lafayette. The guest speaker this month is Judy Thomas who will educate us on Trees and Mediterranean Plants. Judy formed her own consulting company, Bay Area Plant Consultants, in 1996, and serves as a consulting arborist and landscape adviser for attorneys, insurance companies and homeowners in tree-related cases. Free. Contact twalklet@comcast.net

The Walnut Creek Garden Club will hold its monthly meeting beginning at 10 a.m. (program at 11) on Jan. 13 at the Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, in Walnut Creek. The topic of the January presentation will be "The three cans." Kerry Rivers from Republic Services presents the company's sustainability goals and ini-

Super savory side dish or Super Bowl appetizer



Roasted Tomato-Mushroom Ricotta Bake

Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

This dish is simple and oh so delicious! It makes a wonderful side dish or a light meal, but can also be used as a topping for chicken or steak. I love it best served with grilled rustic Italian bread and if you want to use it as an appetizer, just serve it along with some toasted baguette slices. When I came up with this recipe, we had just been given a big bas-

ket of garden fresh tomatoes from a friend, but I have since made it with cherry tomatoes from our local grocer as well. Some ricotta bakes call for an egg to be beaten in with the ricotta cheese, but I really like the consistency of using just the ricotta all by itself. This dish would be fun to serve if you happen to be hosting a super bowl party this year! I will have one more recipe for Super Bowl parties in the next issue too.

Roasted Mushroom Ricotta Bake

(Serves 4 as a side dish)

- 16-ounce container of ricotta cheese
- 4 medium tomatoes, sliced, or 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 small package (10 oz.) sliced cremini mushrooms
- 2 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 425 F. Toss mushrooms in a little olive oil and lay out on a greased or sprayed baking sheet. Roast for approximately 10-12 minutes, until beginning to brown. Remove from oven.

Meanwhile, spread half the ricotta in the bottom of a greased casserole dish. Layer half the tomatoes and mushrooms on top. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt, pepper and oregano. Spread remaining ricotta over the top of the veggies, and layer the remaining tomatoes and mushrooms over the top. Again, drizzle with olive oil and season with oregano, salt and pepper.

Bake at 425 F for about 20-25 minutes, or until ricotta is bubbly and beginning to brown around the edges.

Remove from oven and allow to sit for 10 minutes to set up. Serve with meat, baguette slices or as a side dish all by itself.

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.



Family Focus

Some New Year's resolutions for parents

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

Happy New Year! Many of us take stock of our lives at this time of year and think of future goals. Parents in our community are almost uniformly loving, dedicated and conscientious. I see parents putting their children as top priorities. Even though you're probably doing a great job already, here are a few reminders of what can benefit your children.

1) Take good care of your marriage or partnership. Put your partner as a priority along with your children, not secondary. If your relationship is in jeopardy, work with a couples therapist before the damage is too entrenched to turn around. If there is physical abuse, don't hesitate to get help and find out about safe ways to leave the relationship.

2) Put yourself as a priority along with your children. Too often, parents with the best of intentions let their households revolve largely around the children and what they would like. If this is the case, you may be creating expectations for your children that their needs and desires always take priority. And you will be sacrificing your own needs in the process. In putting yourself in the mix, you may decide to leave time and energy for a relaxing soak in the bathtub instead of reading them another bedtime story. You may want to stay home instead of taking them ice skating, which they are begging you to do. The important thing is being able to put yourself first at times without feeling guilty. I often hear from moms who feel bad or guilty if they choose to do something for themselves and it means they won't be complying with their children's wishes. But I also hear from many moms who don't feel very appreciated by their children. If you are always catering to your children, they will come to expect this from you and naturally won't have a big sense of appreciation. So keep in mind that by saying no and choosing yourself at times, you will be fostering an attitude of appreciation in your children.

3) Help your children obtain the security and consistency that all children crave.

The best gift you can give them is a stable, happy home, whether it's two parents, one parent, a blended family, or relatives living together. It doesn't matter if you own a home or rent. What matters most to children is feeling protected and taken care of physically and emotionally by the adults in their lives. For that matter, take good care of all the relationships in your home. Make sure that your children are treated well by siblings and other family members. Try to foster connections so that family members share with each other instead of isolate. Even if an older sibling isn't being overtly mean, ignoring and excluding can feel hurtful to a younger child.

4) Practice kindness, generosity, and tolerance for others and others' ideas. In the current political climate it is especially important to show your children how to avoid being uncivil or thinking in extreme terms. Teach them how to stay at arm's length from people who do. Help them look for middle ground, if possible. Avoid negative confrontations with others, even when provoked. We need more role models for practicing restraint in our interactions. If you demonstrate respect for others and also self-respect, you will be a wonderful example for your children.

5) Distance yourself from anyone who persists in being too disrespectful, confrontational, or hurtful to you or your children. First it's important to try a variety of measures to encourage another person to alter his or her behavior. It's always a good idea to first make the effort to see if the relationship can be improved. But, if after all your continued attempts the person is unresponsive and persistent, you don't want continue to expose your children or yourself to words or actions of others that are damaging. This is not an easy task. You don't need to adopt an extreme approach; especially in the case of a family member, it can be hard and disruptive to cut off contact completely. But you can decide how much contact to have, under what circumstances, and how you can take more control of the relationship.

6) Show your children how it's possible not to take yourself too seriously. Laugh at some of your past and current mistakes. Admit some inadequacies and show how you can still feel good about yourself in spite of them. Walk the fine line between being a responsible, dependable person and letting less important things slide at times.

7) Along with not taking yourself too seriously, avoid putting too much pressure on yourself. If you have too many commitments and not enough time to relax, figure out ways to achieve a better balance. If you are expecting too much from yourself - a clean, organized home, perfect appearance, excellent coordination of all your personal and family activities, happy mood with others at all times - try to loosen up. Not only do you not deserve to be frequently stressed, but your children will also be affected, of course. You will be doing them a favor by showing them how setting realistic expectations for themselves can lead to greater contentment.

8) Last, remind yourself often of all your good motives and efforts. Parenting isn't a perfectly documented science - otherwise there wouldn't be thousands of parenting books on the market. Chances are your children recognize how important and valued they are to you, and how loved. Your words and actions show this in countless ways. Just like you try to concentrate on the positive with your children, focus on all that you are doing well as a parent and give yourself one of the countless high-fives you regularly give to your children.



Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a local marriage and family therapist. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com. She is the author of *Treat Your Partner Like a Dog: How to Breed a Better Relationship and Appetite for Life: Inspiring Stories of Recovery from Anorexia, Bulimia, and Compulsive Overeating*.

Service Clubs Announcements

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary

JANUARY WEEKLY MEETINGS

10: Linton Johnson, BART Chief Strategist & Spokesman
17: Michael Barrington, Your Paul Harris Dollars at Work
24: Lisa Lopez, Habits of Incredibly Happy People
31: Steve Zuk, Member Presentation

Breakfast, Friday 7:00 a.m.

The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, CA
www.lamorindasunrise.com

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.

January 9:

Nan Su

The Wisdom and Humanity from Ancient Chinese Culture

January 16:

Sharon Wood

Update of New Day for Children

www.rotarylafayette.org

www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-CA

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