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Hip-hop dance class outside at Joy in Motion in Moraga.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Parking lots evolve into active sites during pandemic

By Sophie Braccini

Public health restrictions on indoor gyms have hurt many local big and small fitness businesses. Several have migrated to Zoom to deliver classes over the internet to compensate for the revenue loss and make sure clients stayed active. Some are taking to the streets, or to parking lots, to deliver live classes outdoors. Feeling each others' energy, getting active with the group and the instructors, some believe that there is no better way to fight the pandemic.

Joy In Motion in Moraga has a very large parking lot adjacent to its studio that is quite convenient to conduct outside classes. Justin Cole, the company co-founder with Linda Craig, started at the end of August to offer dance classes for children and adults after polling his 500 family clients on their level of comfort

with such activities. On a typical weekday evening, a maximum of 16 children or adults come, masked, to the back area. There, large squares have been delineated on the floor to maintain separation. Each participant stands in a square, while on the stage – what used to be an unloading bay for a post office – Cole and Justin Madfes lead a hip-hop class to the sound of upbeat music.

A group of young dancers observed at the beginning of September seemed to be having a blast; one could almost feel that pent-up energy was being released. Jennifer Winn, mother of one of the participants, explained that her 10-year-old daughter was not interested in doing a dance class on Zoom, but jumped at the opportunity to come and dance again with friends.

Lamorinda CrossFit in Lafayette was founded 11

years ago by Anni Guzman and the energetic business owner was not going to be taken down by a virus. Like many, she moved classes online, and went a step further by starting a landing program for her community of clients. Dumbbells, ab mats, kettle bells, boxes for jumping could be borrowed. In July it looked like the activity might start again, but with the frustration created by county orders that closed the space, Guzman and her trainers decided that they would move the classes outside to avoid another shut down.

Tom Westernoff at The Karate Fitness Place in Lafayette had the same reaction and, after "Zooming" classes, felt that the students who wanted live instructions should be indulged. His facility shares a large parking lot with other tenants and he reached out to be able to use it for classes.

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Orinda prepares for potential power shutoffs

By Sora O'Doherty

The threat of COVID-19 has caused the city of Orinda to rethink its plans for providing assistance to residents during potential upcoming Pacific Gas and Electric Co. public safety power shutoffs (PSPSs). During fire season, under certain circumstances, including red flag warnings, the presence of gusty high winds, low humidity and hot weather, PG&E will schedule PSPSs in order to reduce the risk of fires starting by PG&E transmission equipment.

Last year Orinda staff provided services, including cooling and charging for electronic devices, in Room 8 of the Community Center. This year, with the threat of transmission of the novel coronavirus, public works thinks it will be safer to provide such services in the library parking lot and on the library terrace. With little going on at the library, the parking lot is little used and can be closed off to provide

a shaded place with good ventilation and plenty of space for social distancing.

City engineer Jason Chen explained Orinda's plans to the city council at its Sept. 1 meeting.

Chen told the council that PG&E plans to reduce the time needed for visual inspection of power lines, cutting the time needed to restore power in half. PG&E has also promised to notify customers of upcoming PSPSs two days before the outage, one day before, just before, during the actual outage and once after power has been restored. In addition, customers can view the seven-day potential for a PSPS on the PG&E website.

During a PSPS, the city will operate out of the Sarge Littlehale Conference Room. Residents using the community resources center will be required to wear masks and to provide basic contact information in case contact tracing is required later. Staff agreed to a request by Vice Mayor Amy Worth to

provide small bottles of water. Portable toilets will be provided and will be cleaned frequently. In the event that smoke becomes too much of an issue, the CRC will be moved to the Founders Auditorium and Room 8 of the Community Center.

Owing to reduced staffing, no temporary stop signs will be provided during a PSPS, but people should remember that in the event of a power outage, intersections normally controlled by traffic signals should be treated as four-way stops. The expected cost to prepare for an upcoming PSPS is about \$5,000, including \$3,000 for temporary toilets and \$2,000 for other supplies. It is expected that total costs for PSPSs will not exceed \$10,000.

Further information about PSPSs can be found on PG&E's website: https://www.pge.com/en_US/safety/emergency-preparedness/natural-disaster/wildfires/pssp-weather-map.page?WT.mc_id=Vanity_weather

Lamorinda steps up to aid LNU Complex fire victims

By Nick Marnell

A director from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, an Orinda business owner and a young Lafayette girl responded to the aftermath of the LNU Lightning

Complex Fire in a big way by donating time and energy, food and even hair to raise money for Vacaville fire victims.

The complex of fires charred more than 363,000 acres in the hills around Napa, Fairfield and Vacaville, de-

stroying nearly 1,500 structures and killing five. The fires began early in the morning of Aug. 17 after a barrage of lightning strikes in the area.


Michael Donner of MOFD, who spent 31 years with the Oakland Fire Department, said

he distributed \$50,000 that he collected from donors to victims of the Paradise Fire in 2018. He wanted to do something similar for the Vacaville fire victims.

Through his fire network, Donner got in touch with Eli

Held, a firefighter-paramedic with the Folsom Fire Department. Held, owner of Muertos Coffee in Vacaville, helped save his parents' home in the middle of the night during the LNU Complex fire.

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