

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Photo provided

Photo Diane Claytor

This scary monster will be greeting visitors in Moraga.

Jessie and Jake Seitler and their creepy friends are ready for Halloween .

Locals find spooky, socially distanced ways to celebrate Halloween

By Diane Claytor

Creepy black spiders crawling up windows and walls, weaving their webs through bushes and doorways. Well manicured lawns turned into graveyards. Skeletons, witches and ghosts swaying from trees. Pumpkins of varying shapes and sizes adorning doorways. It's Halloween in Lamorinda. And while this year's holiday may be different from previous years (it's

2020, after all), it will, nevertheless, be filled with fun and candy – lots and lots of candy. The Lamorinda communities are asking residents to follow the CDC and state guidelines which discourage trick-or-treating and large parties. But that's not stopping the determination and creativity of Lamorinda parents to create the best Halloween possible. "Our kids have already had school, activities, trips, sports and performances canceled," said Lafayette

mom Heather Cousins. "There has to be a way we can do Halloween safely." Turns out there are many ways. Families are planning backyard candy and scavenger hunts, pumpkin carving and painting, cookie and haunted house decorating, scary movie nights, pinatas, neighborhood costume parades and outdoor parties within small, already-established "bubbles." And even some limited trick-or-treating. ... continued on Page A10

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ConFire Engine Company returns from Glass Fire with a message

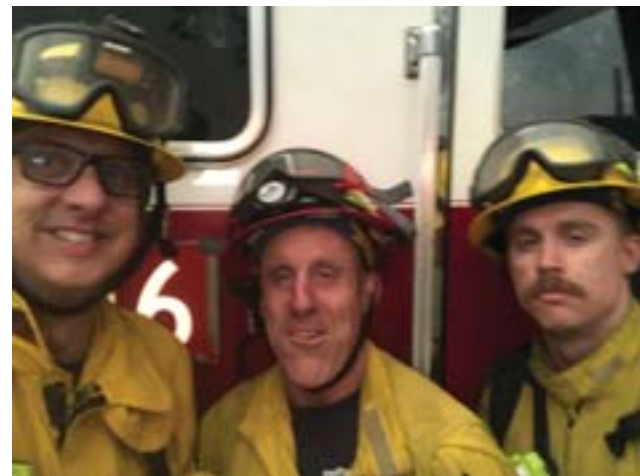


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ConFire Engine Company 16, at Glass Fire. From left, engineer Keld Laustsen, Capt. Casey Lyons and firefighter-paramedic James Myres.

By Nick Marnell

Just after midnight Sept. 28, Capt. Casey Lyons, engineer Keld Laustsen and firefighter-paramedic James

Myres received an order to head to the North Bay. The crew from the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District had 10 minutes to hit the road, as they were needed immediately for the initial attack against a wildfire that began that night in the Deer Park community of Napa County. "It was an extremely chaotic scene. The amount of fire we encountered is more than I've seen in all my years," said Lyons, an 11-year ConFire veteran. "Homes were on fire. Trees were on fire. Power lines were on fire. People were scrambling to leave. "I now have a thorough understanding of the term 'firestorm.'" The crew, technically a task force, was stationed at Base Camp at the Santa Rosa Safeway. As they did at Lafayette Station 16, the crew worked together, but unlike in Lafayette, where they pull 48-hour shifts, they worked 24 hours on, 24 hours off. The task force remained in the North Bay for one week. The Glass Fire, named after its proximity to Glass Mountain Road, eventually burned 67,000 acres and destroyed or damaged 1,800 structures, including numerous wineries and restaurants. Despite the enormity of the situation, amidst the firestorm and all of the chaos, the firefighters on scene persevere against the odds. "You just do your own as-

signment. I focus on my own task and try not to think of the big picture," Lyons said. "My orders were to pick a house you can defend and try to defend it." The fire headed downhill along Spring Mountain toward the Stony Hill Winery, a 60-year-old North Bay institution. That fire attack gave the crew an opportunity to experience a positive outcome in an occupation often bereft of positive outcomes. "We saved the winery and the vines," Lyons said. "The owner brought us food the next day and invited us to have dinner at his restaurant." But the crew had no time to enjoy a meal at a winery restaurant. Lyons returned home with a plea to Lamorinda residents. "If you get a warning to evacuate, please heed that warning. Be prepared to leave in a hurry. I understand people lose a lot of things, but you do not want to lose your life," he said. The captain also urged residents to surround their homes with defensible space, which he called the difference between returning to a house intact and a house burned down. As Lyons looked out his Lafayette Station 16 window, he saw a suburban landscape dominated by oak trees and private residences. "There is potential here for a horrific wildfire," he said.

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