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From left: Jamie, Scout and Finn Renton are working hard to bring in restrictions on gas-powered leaf blowers.

Photo Pippa Fisher

## Young activists push to pull plug on gas leaf blowers

By Pippa Fisher

Three young Lafayette residents are fed up with noisy, polluting gas-powered leaf blowers. And they are doing something about it.

For 12-year-old Finn and his 10-year-old twin sisters, Scout and Jamie Renton, the tipping point came over the past months of remote learning as they struggled to hear their teachers on Zoom over

the noise from leaf blowers in the neighborhood. "We got interested in it because mostly everyone is at home because of COVID so we realized how much people use leaf blowers," explains Scout. "We decided to do some research and we found out how bad they are and decided to try and stop them from polluting the environment." They definitely did their research and sent their findings to the city council, along with a letter dated Jan. 13 asking for action.

"Would you consider letting a pickup truck idle in your driveway with its tailpipe aimed at your open windows for three hours each week?" asked the kids in the letter to council, continuing, "If a gas leaf blower is being used in your yard, that's approximately the amount of pollutants that are entering your home environment for every 15 minutes of use." ... continued on Page A10

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## Districts move quickly to enable schools to reopen ASAP



Photo Jennifer Wake

By Sora O'Doherty

Even as it protested against new requirements imposed by the governor on schools to reopen, the Orinda Union School District moved swiftly to comply. Moraga and Lafayette school districts did the

same, holding several special meetings, with superintendents completing the required COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) and the COVID-19 Prevention Plan (CPP) and submitting them prior to a Feb. 1 state deadline. District boards planned special meetings on Feb. 2 (after press time) to vote on instructional schedules. OUSD Superintendent Carolyn Seaton explained at the Jan. 28 OUSD special meeting that the first day possible for elementary schools to reopen is Feb. 9, since there is no school on Mondays. This is due to the county's requirement that there are at least five consecutive days where the adjusted case rate is 25 or fewer per 100,000 of population. On Jan. 28 the ACR in the county was 34.2 per 100,000 but was showing signs of trending downward. At its Jan. 29 special board meeting, MSD Superintendent Bruce Burns said elementary schools could reopen in early February, "but it's a remote possibility. Rates are continuing to decline," he said, "but not as quickly as needed." The OUSD board of directors on Jan. 28 discussed extensively the reopening of schools in the district, approved the letter protesting the new requirements, and adopted a resolution seeking prioritization of COVID-19 vaccinations for teachers and school staff. It was announced that new memoranda of understanding have been agreed with both

unions, the one that represents teachers and the one that represents classified employees. There was a fervent determination not to miss another opportunity to reopen Orinda schools among the board members and many public speakers. Board member Carol Brown said, "We have looked back a few times, we regretted not opening during the one week we could have opened." Some teachers, however, still object to a return to the classroom with students before being vaccinated. Orinda Intermediate School teacher Bobby Glasser said that he was prohibited from returning to the classroom if he failed a test for tuberculosis, which accounted for 542 deaths in the United States in 2018, while he is being asked to go back into the classroom without vaccination against a disease that has killed over 400,000 in the country. All speakers, board members and public, expressed the desire to have school personnel vaccinated as soon as possible. The OUSD board also heard reports of how hard teachers and staff have been working, and how complex it will be to move from fully distance learning to the hybrid model approved by the board. Bobby Bardenham, OUSD Director of Technology, said, "My team is exhausted; this is close to killing us." He added, "I have a lot of knowledge and most of this will fall on me." ... continued on Page A7

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## Downtown housing gets the go-ahead



Plans for the new Lafayette Lane development

Images provided

By Pippa Fisher

It was a tale of two city development projects before the council, with lengthy discussions pushing the meeting into the small hours of the following day. By the end of the meeting two housing projects had effectively been approved: one for 166 units at Mt. Diablo Boulevard and First Street, which is to include a large donation to the Park Theater Trust, and the other for 20 units on Hough Avenue, likely to be approved next month.

The council was under the gun at its Jan. 25 meeting to meet deadlines imposed by recent state housing legislation, which caps the number

of hearings at five meetings within a narrow timeframe. The two land use items on the one agenda meant the council was unable to get through all their other business. The council appreciated the merits of both applications, with one warmly welcomed, and the other all but approved subject to tweaks, to come back for final approval as a consent calendar item at the Feb. 8 meeting.

At the site of what is now a business/professional office complex known as Corporate Terrace, the developer proposes a new mixed-used development with 166 multi-family residential units (128 for sale condominiums, and 38 affordable for rent units

for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities) and approximately 29,200 square feet of commercial office space in five buildings of four stories over podium parking. The development, known as Lafayette Lane, is designed to have a community feel to it, with pedestrian-only areas, landscaping and communal areas.

Providing the affordable homes specifically for IDD individuals was widely praised by the council and by members of the public who recognize the need in the community. Edie Nehls, the executive director of Sunflower Hill – the nonprofit that the applicant is working with to bring and support the IDD commu-



950 Hough Avenue

nity in independent living – touted the benefit of being part of the whole community.

“I really appreciate the thought and consideration that’s gone into making this a very usable space for the community,” said Council Member Gina Dawson.

Additionally the applicant has committed to donating \$2 million to the Park Theater Trust for the acquisition and restoration of the historic Park Theater building.

The council was unanimous in its approval of the project.

The council was less enthusiastic about the project at 950 Hough Avenue, expressing concern on a number of points. The project will provide 20 for sale units, including three at below market rate, in a four-story structure that backs down to the creek.

The applicant has agreed to allow public access to a deck at the rear of the building, should an adjacent property be redeveloped and requested a waiver for the springing easement. Several members of the council expressed concern over the precedent granting a waiver would set, instead opting to

grant an exception. The applicant was requesting waivers on height, setbacks, open space, parking, landscaping and design.

In fact Mayor Susan Candell said she had never seen a project come through as aggressive on waivers. She was particularly concerned with the BMR units, which she said were clearly substantially smaller than the other units, asking for anything they could do to “make it a little more equitable, a little more green.”

Council Member Cam Burks agreed with the mayor and urged the developer to consider the layout and equity of the BMR units. “If there’s any space there for the developer to reconsider, that would be appreciated,” he said.

The council spent considerable time going over, and adjusting wording, and ultimately unanimously supported bringing the matter back to the Feb. 8 meeting with the revised resolution and conditions on consent, meaning that the item can be approved at that time with no further discussion.

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# Las Trampas anticipates grand opening this summer



Photo Pippa Fisher

Las Trampas expects the project will be complete by this summer.

## By Pippa Fisher

As the walls push up from the ground of the site of the new campus, with completion now in sight, so Las Trampas' push for the next phase of fundraising in the capital campaign intensifies too.

"Las Trampas School has been a proud feature of Lafayette for over 60 years and, as they say, it takes a community," says Capital Campaign Committee Member Kathy Merchant, who hopes the community will continue to support them as they try and reach their fundraising goal.

The "Reach Beyond" capital campaign was launched in 2016. Las Trampas is now launching the public fundraising phase to complete its \$13 million goal.

According to Merchant, its immediate challenge is to raise \$160,000 by the end of February in order to receive a \$500,000 matching grant from an East Bay foundation. She hopes the community will

"reach" out with a gift or pledge by the end of the month.

Las Trampas, an organization dedicated to supporting adults with developmental disabilities, is undertaking a huge remodel, replacing a large portion of the deteriorating 1968 building. Located next to the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail, walkers, runners, and cyclists have seen the progress from the demolition, to foundation, to framing, and now to the walls of what will be a state-of-the-art facility, since the ground-breaking in 2019.

"With so little rain as impediment, progress has been amazingly swift," says Merchant. "Now the end is within 'reach,' with an estimated mid-summer 2021 Grand Opening of a stunning new facility that will serve up to 120 individuals with developmental disabilities."

More information on the project and how to donate can be found on the website [www.lastrampas.org](http://www.lastrampas.org).

# Stanley vaccine drive-through misunderstanding cleared; all participants guaranteed second doses

## By Pippa Fisher

A partnership of doctors, nurses, community volunteers together with a local seniors organization that recently mobilized to bring COVID-19 vaccines to over 500 seniors was halted two weeks later, while the county reviewed the operation, leaving seniors confused and frustrated as they scrambled to find their second doses within the recommended timeframe. Now however, the lead doctor has been cleared of any wrongdoing and plans to continue with similar community clinics when they can access vaccine.

Dr. Rebecca Parish was exonerated late Friday, Jan. 29, according to her attorney Dan Horowitz who explained the clinic had been put on hold as a result of a misunderstanding with another doctor over county rules. The matter was brought to the attention of county officials, who stopped the operation while they reviewed the records.

This coincided with the county changing operations to open several large vaccination sites.

During that time it left many seniors with considerable anxiety about finding the correct second dose within

the recommended three-week timeframe since the follow-up drive-through clinic at Stanley Middle School has been canceled. Many spent hours on the phone trying to arrange next shots for themselves.

The county has since stated it will honor all follow-up doses and those who received their first shot at Stanley will receive emails and phone calls with more information on receiving a second dose. Those 75 and older will be contacted by John Muir to arrange follow up appointments, and those 74 and younger will be contacted by the county. Appointments will be made within the timeframe allowable for the vaccine to be effective.

Lamorinda Village Operations Manager Kathryn Ishizu says they were proud to have participated in such an uplifting community event. "We are grateful to the incredible clinicians and volunteers who gave their time and effort to this free clinic for seniors," she said, noting that there was a palpable sense of relief and a feeling of hope that permeated everyone the entire weekend. "Seniors and volunteers came away feeling as if there is a light at the end of the dark pandemic tunnel." ... continued on Page A9



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## Lafayette Public Meetings

### City Council

Regular Meeting  
Monday, Feb. 8, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

### Planning Commission Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube  
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### Design Review

Wednesday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m. Zoom  
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube  
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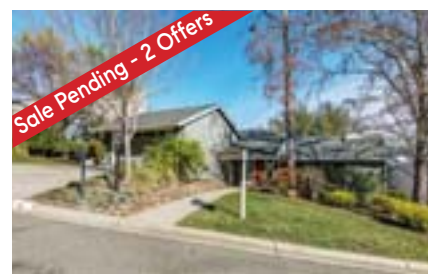
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## Mayor presents proposed town goals and priorities for 2021

By Vera Kochan

“Enhance Communication with Full Transparency” is the game plan for Moraga Mayor Mike McCluer’s set of 2021 town goals.

McCluer presented five new goals during the town council’s Jan. 27 meeting (one of which was rejected by council members as not being

cost effective). Also on his list were seven continuing goals from last year. Two additional goals were proposed by members and added, bringing the total count to 13.

The mayor’s new goals and priorities include working on a funding plan to sustain basic operations of the town, including unfunded storm drains, asset replace-

ment and pension needs, by developing and adopting a five-year Capital Improvement Program Budget Strategy.

McCluer also expects to continue to focus on traffic safety while exploring opportunities for improvement, in addition to participating with community groups to improve diversity and inclusion town-wide.

He would like to identify funding and initiate work on the 2023-31 Housing Element (Affordable Housing Plan) to satisfy the Regional Housing Needs Allocation, meet state mandates, and maintain the town’s “semi-rural” character.

Continuing the goals from 2020, McCluer wants to maintain and improve public safety through the continued provision of high quality police and emergency response services, including continued coordination with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District on fire safety and emergency preparedness. The town continues to maintain a sense of well-being and security throughout Moraga, while seeking to increase staffing to authorized levels.

McCluer expects Moraga to initiate and complete a review of the town’s three-step planned development process and adopt an ordinance to streamline the process. This

adoption is scheduled to be brought to the planning commission and town council this year.

Evaluation and implementation of viable strategies in Moraga’s Climate Action Plan to lessen the town’s impact on the environment will continue with the replacing of town lights with LED fixtures and the partnering with Sustainable Contra Costa to launch the Moraga Sustainability Challenge. The recent installation of four electric vehicle charging stations has been accomplished.

Completion of Phase I of the Canyon Road Bridge has come in on schedule, and the submittal for reimbursement of costs is expected to proceed in a timely manner. Continued construction of Phase II, the outbound lane including the multi-use pathway, is scheduled to begin in April and be completed by the end of the calendar year.

McCluer wants to begin preparation of a General Plan Amendment and Rezone of the Bollinger Canyon Special Study Area. This will entail utilizing a formal request for proposal process for selection of an environmental consultant to prepare the required environmental review for the project.

Also on the list, is the implementation of the 2021

Pavement Management Program which includes the pavement Resurfacing Project, design work for the 2022-24 “Worst First” Pavement Reconstruction Projects, and the Annual Pavement Repair Project.

The last of the continuing projects is the implementation and development of the Storm Drain System Operations and Maintenance Program with work to begin on storm drain capital improvement projects. Proactive inspections and CCTV of storm drain pipes and facilities are projected to continue.

Two additional goals proposed by council members were added to the list. Council Member David Stromberg requested a goal to work collaboratively with the Moraga Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders to improve the town’s business climate and address retail’s recovery from the pandemic.

Council Member Renata Sos requested a goal to maintain the town’s parks, open space and facilities for the benefit of the public.

This agenda item of proposed town goals and priorities will be continued to the Feb. 10 town council meeting for additional clarification and fine-tuning.



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## It’s time to show Moraga some love



Image courtesy Moraga Parks and Recreation Department

By Vera Kochan

With Valentine’s Day just around the corner, the Parks and Recreation Department is asking townfolk to show their love for Moraga.

The “I Heart Moraga” campaign is open to all ages and is meant to celebrate the people, places and things that make living here so special. Parks and Rec is accepting just about any expression of “love” – whether it’s a poem, letter, painting, drawing, photo, or anything else creative.

The inspiration for the February love fest came from Recreation Supervisor Jasmine Bateson. “I’ve had this idea for a while. Love letters are one of the simplest ways to focus on what matters most, relationships; and who doesn’t love a love letter? Some of the best relationships stem from our community with a person, place or thing.”

Bateson took into account the impact that COVID has

had on the town. “We’ve all spent some extra time at home over the last year and had time to reflect on the things that are important to us,” she explained. “Sharing this love of Moraga with the community is an opportunity for creative expression that can strengthen these connections. It felt like perfect timing to run this campaign around Valentine’s Day, because what better time to share the love?”

All entries must be 8.5 inches by 11 inches. Submit entries to the Moraga Parks and Recreation office located at 2100 Donald Dr. or email them to recdesk@moraga.ca.us by 5 p.m. Feb. 12. Physical submissions cannot be returned.

The “love letters” will be showcased on the Town of Moraga website (www.moraga.ca.us) during the month of February and at potential community events during the year.

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**Town Council** Wednesday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m.  
**Planning Commission:** Monday, Feb. 15, 7 p.m.  
**Park and Recreation Commission:** Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7 p.m.,  
**Moraga School District Board Meetings :** Special Board Meeting Tuesday, Feb. 9, 6 p.m.  
 www.moraga.k12.ca.us. See also AUHSD meeting page A2



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## Moraga Garden Club to establish Monarch Butterfly Habitat



Photos Provided

Site of future monarch butterfly waystation in Rancho Laguna Park

By Vera Kochan

The monarch butterfly population has dwindled over the last 30 years and is moving closer to extinction at an alarming rate. Typically arriving in California around early November, they spend winters in the warmer climate before migrating across country in March.

The Xerces Society, a nonprofit environmental organization, recorded approximately 29,000 monarchs in 2019. This figure is a dramatic decline from the millions that once clustered in trees along the California coast. According to researchers, Pacific Grove, known as “Butterfly Town USA,” barely recorded any sightings, while Natural Bridges State Park in Santa Cruz and Pismo State Beach Monarch Butterfly Grove saw only a few hundred monarchs this past winter.

Xerces Society Director of Endangered Species Sarina Jepsen said, “These sites normally host thousands of butterflies, and their absence this year was heartbreaking for volunteers and visitors flocking to these locales hoping to catch a glimpse of the awe-inspiring clusters of monarch butterflies.”

Scientists say the butterflies are at critically low levels in western states because of destruction to their milkweed habitat along their migratory route as housing expands into their territory and use of pesticides and herbicides increases.

Climate change and the recent wildfires throughout the western United States have added to the disruption of breeding and migration habits. A Washington State University study in 2017, estimated a monarch extinction in the next few decades if the population drops below 30,000.

The Moraga Garden Club is determined not to see the predicted extinction occur by creating the Moraga for Monarchs program. Spearheaded by MGC members and co-chairs of the endeavor, Julie Stagg and Bobbie Preston, the steps toward creating a monarch waystation have quickly come to fruition.

“This past summer, Bobbie rallied a number of local families with milkweed, or just open hearts, to rear some monarch caterpillars,” explained Stagg. “We fell in love with monarchs and were concerned about the drastic declines in native populations. I mentioned it to the MGC board, and [president] Penny Walwark requested an

article for our newsletter. I passed the journalistic opportunity to our butterfly nursery leader, Bobbie Preston, and the rest is history.

“That was only a few months ago in November 2020,” Stagg added. “The support for these amazing creatures is inspiring. We have since learned that rearing should only be done in small numbers for educational versus conservation purposes, but perhaps we will have a chance to right our wrong.”

Moraga falls within the western monarch’s critical “coastal range,” and as such it can provide a nectar and larvae host habitat. It is important to plant milkweed species that are native to California, keeping in mind that it takes one year for the plants to establish themselves and two to three years for them to bloom.

MGC is not alone in its mission to re-populate the monarchs. The club is collaborating with Saint Mary’s College, Moraga Garden Farms, the town of Moraga, Moraga Garden Center, wildlife experts and various service organizations in Moraga to educate residents and encourage appropriate monarch assistance; establish attractive public habitats; and provide plants to support fire-safe, monarch-friendly private landscaping. The Saklan School is also on board with the project with regards to it being an educational experience for its students.

“The ultimate vision is to have hillsides infused with beautiful monarch nectar-rich, native wildflowers and milkweed,” explained Preston. “Within town, we envision attractive, well-groomed monarch supportive gardens. In private yards, we encourage patches of monarch-specific plants. Working in harmony, private neighborhoods with even small yards can create inviting corridors for butterflies.”

To that end, MGC is establishing a certified monarch waystation at the Rancho Laguna Park. Utilizing the area that once contained a par course which hasn’t been in use since 2009, the habitat “will consider aesthetics, existing park usage, fire codes, the known presence of deer, water requirements as well as public and pet safety,” said Preston.

Benches will be located nearby along with stepping stones and educational signage. The planting area will be 2,600 square feet, 58 feet in diameter, 170 feet in circumference and take up only 0.6%



of park space. The waystation will be surrounded by a 6-foot-tall fence made of 2 by 2 inch wire, much like the one already located along the Camino Pablo side of the grounds, in order to have a cohesive appearance with the rest of the park. Great thought was put into the fence height, and it was determined that a fence lower than 6 feet would not prevent deer from jumping into the habitat and destroying the plants, thereby costing additional funds to repair, not to mention setting back the habitat’s growth by a year.

MGC, through its research and with its partners, has built a resource database, growing over 500 monarch supportive plants and collaborating with educators on a new pollinator conservation teaching unit. Initial planting is expected to begin in late spring or early summer.


Initial funding to begin the project has been raised by MGC members, private donors and vendors, in addition to some services being provided pro bono. The completed habitat is expected to cost between \$30,000 to \$35,000. MGC hopes to raise these funds through donor-purchased benches, stepping stones or check donations. To make a tax-deductible donation send a check to Moraga Garden Club, P.O. Box 6062, Moraga, CA 94570-6062 (please note this is not the usual Moraga zip code). Annotate checks: Moraga for Monarchs.


For more information or to volunteer email: MoragaForMonarchs@gmail.com. For more information on the Moraga Garden Club visit: www.moragagardenclub.com.

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**The Orinda Association:**  
 www.orindaassociation.org

**Orinda Public Meetings**

**City Council**

**Special Meeting:**

Tuesday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m. By Teleconference Only

**City Council**

**Regular Meeting:**

Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7 p.m. By Teleconference Only

**Planning Commission**

Tuesday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m. By Teleconference Only



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**CountryHouse memory care facility at Wilder moves one step closer to reality**



Image provided by staff report

**By Sora O'Doherty**

Despite massive opposition to the proposed CountryHouse memory care facility by 95% of all residents of Wilder, the Orinda city council on Jan. 19 denied an appeal of the planning commission's approval. The denial followed a full hearing on the appeal, which was continued from Nov. 17. The planning commission approved plans on July 14 for the memory care facility – a 38-bed congregate care facility with 24-hour non-medical care for seniors with dementia and Alzheimer's – to be located on a 1.1-acre parcel at 1 Wilder Road on a piece of land adjacent to Highway 24.

Throughout the process, there has been vociferous opposition by residents of Wilder. The appellant, Wilder Owners Association, represented by attorney Shondra Armstrong, has 90 days in which to seek judicial review of the council's decision from the courts. Armstrong gave a presentation to the city council outlining all the reasons why the appellants believe that the proposed development should not be approved.

After hours of hearings, the city council rejected all the arguments advanced by the appellants. In a resolution adopted on Jan. 19, the council found that the project is consistent with Orinda's General Plan as a congregate care

facility within the public, semipublic and utility zone. The council also found that the proposed development does not impair existing views, block access to light and air, or infringe on the privacy of neighbors. As stated in the staff report, "Because conformance with applicable general plan policies would effectively mitigate scenic impacts, the project complies with the Scenic Highways statute," and the council agreed. The city also found that the environmental impact report was thorough and sufficient.

The council also rejected the appellants concerns that the facility would present traffic and safety dangers, particularly in regard to emergency evacuation, and that the developer was unjustly benefiting from special taxes and bonds paid by Wilder residents for improvements to the area.

The tone of the debate was somewhat hostile, with Wilder residents stating that the council was pitting new Orinda residents against old Orinda residents. Eric Egan, president of the HOA but speaking as an individual, said it was offensive to suggest that Wilder residents want to discriminate against dementia patients.

Robert Finch said that kitchens that are not kitchens are contrary to common sense and to California law,

and Mark Bresnik called the kitchen issue "Russian roulette."

The kitchen issue was perhaps the most divisive topic. Because of the PS zoning, developments require use permits. One of the specifically allowed uses is as a congregate care facility. The Orinda municipal code requires congregate care facilities to include small kitchens in each individual dwelling unit. However, because dementia patients, who are the only residents of memory care facilities, are not safe around some kitchen appliances, the small kitchens at CountryHouse will be for the use of staff and guests only. The appellants found this to be both unsafe and disingenuous.

Joel Goldman, who spoke for the applicant found the views on kitchens interesting. While he said that he appreciated homeowners showing such concern for potential residents, Goldman explained that dementia is a gradual process. "Many people, hundreds if not thousands, are living in apartments with stoves or microwaves, rendered inoperable." He added, "In all my years, I cannot recall a single incidence of a fire started as a result."

In addition to the com-

ments presented at the Zoom meeting, a number of comments were submitted in writing, and several of those expressed strong support for the project. Written comments from attorney Armstrong detail the appellant's arguments.

All of the five council members had positive feelings about the proposed development. Council Member Darlene Gee complimented the architecture. "As someone licensed in traffic," she said, "I don't believe it will generate much traffic at all." She concluded that she does not believe that this facility will take away from Wilder, and stressed that she has no negative feelings about residents in Wilder.

Council Member Nick Kosla emphasized that he has voted against developments in his four years on the planning commission, but he felt that the applicant "has gone above and beyond" to create a very beautiful building. In this case, he added, the exceptions make the project better.

Vice Mayor Dennis Fay believes that the development will be an attractive addition to the area. Mayor Amy Worth stressed that Orinda does not have any place that can provide care for dementia patients. "People are in desperate need of memory care facilities," she said, and the development speaks to the need for such a facility in Orinda. "This property could be used for a lot of different things that would have greater traffic impact or other concerns," she said, but memory care will have lower impact.

**Written comments on the proposed development may be read on the city's website at <http://orindaca.igq2.com/Citizens/Board/1000-City-Council>**

**County moves Rich away from ADAPT Lamorinda**

**By Sora O'Doherty**

Jaime Rich, Environmental Prevention Program Manager at the Center for Human Development, announced at the January Mayor's Liaison Meeting in Orinda that her

work with ADAPT (Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Team) Lamorinda has ended. The work has been funded, but the funding stream has changed, with Contra Costa County moving her work to Pittsburg and Bay Point. Rich expressed her appreciation for past support. The goal of the county, she said, is to transition work to another entity, not as yet identified.

"Someone needs to be working on it," Rich said, and added that she would be happy to mentor anyone who wants to take over this issue. As there is no longer funding for ADAPT Lamorinda, it can only continue its work if volunteers come forward to take over.

In addition to her work on ADAPT Lamorinda, Rich founded Peer-to-Peer club at Miramonte High School, which she said she will continue to do on her own time. "I am passionate about it," Rich said. She spoke about the group at Miramonte, which has trained a new handful of students on abuse and misuse of marijuana and other drugs. Peer-to-Peer club representatives will soon return to classes to con-

tinue their efforts to educate students about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. Rich will also continue to work as a volunteer with the Peer-to-Peer club at Las Lomas High School.

Rich thanked everyone at the liaison meeting, adding that she will miss the meetings, which she will no longer attend. Mayor Amy Worth thanked Rich for her exemplary job. "Pittsburg is very lucky to have you," Worth said, but said she is so happy that Rich is remaining involved with the peer-to-peer groups. Noting how important it is that the county is investing in substance abuse, Worth called for volunteers to take over the work Rich has been doing in Lamorinda.

Rich later spoke with the Lamorinda Weekly, and confirmed that there are no county prevention programs in Lamorinda and therefore she will no longer be involved with Lamorinda professionally. Rich lived in Orinda for over 20 years, but now lives in Walnut Creek. She confirmed that, owing to the threat of COVID, her work in Pittsburg and Bay



**Jaime Rich** Lamorinda archives

Point will be virtual for the foreseeable future.

Talking about substance abuse during the pandemic, Rich said, "There is mixed opinion as to whether substance use has gone up during COVID amongst young people. There isn't really any good data. Most thoughts are that it may have gone down because parents are always around and young people can't go out and party. The other aspect is the use of substances to cope. Adult use has definitely gone up of both alcohol and marijuana and opioid overdose are skyrocketing."

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## Districts move quickly to enable schools to reopen ASAP

... continued from Page A1

But, he said, there is a ton of support in place, they are working on how to move students between schools in a way that is manageable and correct. They have added new platforms, he explained, and are determined to do their best. The hybrid plan will require classes to be reformulated, with some students moving to other teachers, and perhaps to teachers in different schools. Teachers will have Feb. 4 and 5 to work on preparing for the transition.

Board president Liz Daoust, who had opened the meeting with words of gratitude for all the many hours of hard work being put in by the district and as well as the community, responded that "we give each other grace."

Many members of the public who commented on the possibility of school reopening were parents, and all supported the plan to reopen, while at the same time recognizing the enormous tasks ahead.

Many speakers echoed the

words of parent Megan Baldwin, who said, "Whatever the teachers need, we are here for you: give us some marching orders and we will march."

Glorietta teacher Charlie Bulovic cited a recent study out of the UK showing that teachers are 2-3 times more likely to get COVID than any other group. "Starbucks won't help our families," Bulovic commented, "if we get COVID and pass away."

In addition to discussing reopening, the board passed a resolution calling for prioritizing education workers for receiving COVID-19 vaccinations, a measure vigorously supported by Charles Shannon, president of the Orinda Educators Association. The resolution was drafted by board president Daoust and board member Cara Hoxie. Daoust said that she believes that many boards of education in the county will also be using the resolution they drafted.

Also on the agenda was a matter discussed with the board by Carrie Nerheim, Director of Student Services. Nerheim talked about the pos-

sibility of bringing students back on campus in small, stable cohorts of under 16 students for non-educational purposes, such as for students with special needs, if schools don't reopen. And Weiner encouraged consideration of small cohorts for students in seventh and eighth grades, who will not be able to return as early as younger students owing to the greater resemblance of those students to adults in their response to COVID-19, as well as for students who continue in distance learning even after schools reopen.

Extensive plans to reopen have been in place for all the school districts since the fall, and at each of their meetings district board members expressed confidence in reopening safely.

Nicole Smith, speaking on behalf of a large group of Moraga parents at the Jan. 29 MSD special meeting, implored board members to "do right by our kids."

"We are ready," Burns said.

Jennifer Wake contributed to this story.




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# MOFD and PG&E avoid litigation, settle company lawsuit



Photo Nick Marnell

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company avoided litigation by settling a lawsuit brought by the company over safety restrictions placed upon PG&E by a 2020 fire district ordinance.

In October, MOFD enacted an ordinance requiring electric utilities to notify the district at least 48 hours in advance of deploying a safety and infrastructure protection team within MOFD jurisdiction, and banning scheduled, high risk non-emergency

work in high fire areas when the National Weather Service has issued a Red Flag Warning for the work area. The ordinance authorized fines of up to \$1,300 for each violation.

"The work could lead to an ignition and cause a wildfire to start," Fire Chief Dave Winnacker told his board in October. "If PG&E determines that this work merits deployment of an SIPT, the district believes it should be informed of that fact."

PG&E sued the fire district, seeking to invalidate the ordinance as the company

believed the district exceeded its authority by attempting to regulate matters that fall under the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission.

"These requirements interfere with PG&E's ability to respond flexibly to changing conditions in order to protect public safety," the company stated in its complaint, filed Dec. 18. The company also maintains that its SIPTs are not first responders but utility workers whose primary role is to support PG&E work activities and support fire prevention at PG&E worksites.

Neither the fire district nor the company had the appetite for litigation, and the parties negotiated acceptable modifications to the ordinance. A revised district ordinance was passed unanimously by the MOFD board and enacted Jan. 22.

The negotiated revisions include changing the requirement of a 48-hour notice for SIPT deployment to no later

than 9 a.m. on the day of deployment. The revised ordinance also changes the definition of an SIPT so that the ordinance does not apply to a company's normal utility crews, and bans only scheduled, non-emergency electrical work within the district during Red Flag warnings.

"PG&E appreciates that districts responsible for local fire response are concerned about the challenges of fire prevention and seek up-to-date information. PG&E would like to cooperate with those districts as we all have the desire and responsibility to mitigate fires," said Matt Nauman, PG&E spokesman.

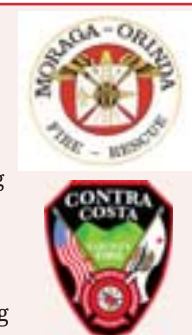
"However, PG&E also has CPUC-jurisdictional obligations to maintain the electrical grid. PG&E needs to maintain flexibility in deploying electrical crews in order to effectively and efficiently keep the power flowing across Northern and Central California. PG&E and Moraga-Orinda were able to reach agreement on notification procedures that address the fire district's desire for information while limiting restrictions on PG&E's ability to deploy electrical crews."

PG&E filed a request with Superior Court the last week of January to dismiss its lawsuit against the fire district.

**Fire District Public Meetings**

**Moraga-Orinda Fire District**  
Board of Directors  
Wednesday, Feb. 17, 6 p.m.  
For meeting times and agendas, visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)

**ConFire**  
Board of Directors  
Tuesday, Feb. 9, 1:00 p.m.  
For meeting times and agendas, visit [www.cccfpd.org](http://www.cccfpd.org)



# Local residents place high faith in the Community Warning System

By Nick Marnell

Even as they witness the bungling of millions of unemployment claims and havoc with the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, Lamorinda residents continue to place their trust in one public entity, as the area leads Contra Costa County in the number of registered users of the Community Warning System.

CWS is an all-hazard public warning system, a partnership of the Office of the Sheriff, the Health Services Department, and other government and private entities. Its purpose is to deliver

time-sensitive and potentially lifesaving information to the people of Contra Costa County.

The system is housed at the Sheriff's Office, and engages only when there is an imminent threat to human life or health, or when a community needs to undertake some sort of protective action. CWS manager Heather Tiernan summed up the typical content of the alerts: what is the emergency; where is the emergency; what you should do; why action is needed; and when the action will be done.

The system can fine tune its alerts to any relevant area in the county. "I can target

just a couple of houses, if you really want me to," Tiernan said.

To reach registered users, CWS sends emails and texts, but also communicates via social media, through its own website and by using federally managed tools if necessary, like the Emergency Alert System. The system does make phone calls to registered users, but Tiernan said that is the slowest, most time-consuming contact method.

CWS limits its social media interactions. The system does not use Nixle, and employs Nextdoor for only education and outreach.

Local residents have re-

sponded positively to the outreach of the warning system thanks to the efforts of the Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team, the fire districts and the police departments. "We have a very involved and proactive community here," said Dennis Rein, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. "You could tell by the great response to our virtual evacuation drill last year and the evacuation drills two years ago."

Statistics back up Rein's statement. The latest CWS figures show that, out of 5,800 Moraga households, 7,300 ac-

counts are registered with the system. In Orinda, there are 8,100 registered accounts in 7,100 households, and Lafayette reports 8,700 registered accounts in 9,400 households.

"These are some of our highest registration numbers," Tiernan said. "The countywide registration average is about 30% of households."

"People want to know how and when to evacuate, and CWS is the way to go," Rein said.

To register, go to the system website at [cwsalerts.com](http://cwsalerts.com)

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community. Send a letter to the editor: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com)

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Police Department Traffic Issues  
94549Traffic@gmail.com

**Moraga Police Department:**  
329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055  
Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049

**Orinda Police Department:**  
22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820  
Chief of Police, David M. Cook  
925-254-6820  
[Orindatip@cityoforinda.org](http://Orindatip@cityoforinda.org)

**Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report**  
Jan. 10 - Jan. 23



Alarms	30
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	8
Traffic	21
Suspicious Circumstances	9
Suspicious Subject	15
Suspicious Vehicle	8
Service to Citizen	43
Patrol Req./Security Check	59
Public/School Assembly Check	0
Supplemental Report	19
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	10
Ordinance Violation	0

**Vehicle violations**

Auto Burglary	3600 Block Brook St. (2)
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	1300 Block El Curtola Blvd.
	3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
	Pleasant Hill Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Reckless Driving	Reliez Station Rd./Olympic Blvd.
	Eb Sr 24 Oak Hill Rd Central Lafayette
	900 Block Moraga Rd.
	Mt. Diablo Blvd./Acalanes Rd.
	Springhill Rd./Quandt Rd.
	15t St./School St.
	Moraga Rd./St Marys Rd.
	Camino Vallecito/N Peardale Dr.
	St Marys Rd./Glenside Dr.
	Moraga Rd./Nephi Ct.
Stolen Vehicle Recovery	3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Tc - Property Damage	3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
	3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
	Mt. Diablo Blvd./Stuart St.
	Dolores Dr./Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**Other criminal activity**

Fraud False Pretenses	1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.
	3600 Block Hastings Ct.
	1200 Block Warner Ct.
Grand Theft	4000 Block Coralee Ln.
	3400 Block Golden Gate Way
Grand Theft Bicycle	1000 Block Aileen St.
Identity Theft	900 Block Mountain View Dr.
	800 Block Tanglewood Dr.
Panhandling	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Petty Theft	20 Block Brookdale Ct.
	Acalanes Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
	800 Block Moraga Rd.
	900 Block Reliez Station Rd.
Shoplift	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (4)
	3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)

**Nuisance to the Community**

Disturbance-domestic	El Nido Ranch Rd./Acalanes Rd.
	3600 Block Happy Valley Rd.
Disturbing The Peace	4000 Block El Nido Ranch Rd.
	3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)

**Public Nuisance**


	3200 Block Mt. Diablo Ct.
	3600 Block Happy Valley Ln.
	1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.
	3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
	3000 Block Camino Diablo

Almanor Ln./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	10 Block Eleven
	Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Vandalism	900 Block Moraga Rd.
	3400 Block Moraga Blvd.
	900 Block Dewing Ave.
	900 Block Moraga Rd.

**Other**

Covid19 Violation	600 Block Michael Ln.
K9 Outside Assist Request	400 Block Michele Dr., Mma
Loitering	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Ordinance Violation	800 Block Santa Maria Way
Trespass	1100 Block Cambridge Dr.
Trespass W/ Vehicle	1100 Block Cambridge Dr.
Unwanted Guest	3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Violation Custody Order	10 Block Mountain View Pl.
	1200 Block Warner Ct. (3)
Violation Restraining Order	1200 Block Warner Ct.

**Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report**  
Jan. 12 - Jan. 25



Alarms	8
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	5
Traffic	26
Suspicious Circumstances	5
Suspicious Subject	5
Suspicious Vehicle	2
Service to Citizen	34
Patrol Req./Security Check	16
Supplemental Report	5
Vacation House Check	1
Welfare Check	3
Public/School Assembly Check	5

**Vehicle violations**

Accident Property	Rheem Blvd./Elk Ct.
DUI Misd	Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.

Excessive Speed	Moraga Way/Ivy Dr. (3)
	Moraga Way/Camino Ricardo
	Moraga Way/School St.
Reckless Driving	Starbucks
	Safeway
	Camino Ricardo/Corliss Dr.
	Rheem Blvd./Moraga Rd.
	Moraga Way
Tc - Property Damage	Homegoods
Vehicle Theft	100 Block Miramonte Dr.

**Other criminal activity**


Grand Theft	St Marys College
Petty Theft	900 Block Country Club Dr.)

**Nuisance to the Community**

Disturbance-domestic	100 Block Brookline
Loud Music	Library
	80 Block Miramonte Dr.
Loud Noise	Wimpole St./Woodford Dr.
Loud Party	2100 Block Ascot Dr.

**Other**

Mentally Ill Commit	600 Block Augusta Dr. (2)
Ordinance Violation	1200 Block Rimer Dr.



**Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report**  
Jan. 12 - Jan. 25

Alarms	19
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	2
Traffic	8
Suspicious Circumstances	3
Suspicious Subject	1

Suspicious Vehicle	5
Service to Citizen	36
Patrol Req./Security Check	34
Supplemental Report	4
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	1
Public/School Assembly Check	0

**Vehicle violations**

Accident Property	St. Stephens Dr./Wb Sr 24
Petty Theft From Veh	10 Block Northwood Dr.
Reckless Driving	Rheem Blvd./Glorietta Blvd.
Vehicle Theft	40 Block La Cresta Rd.

**Other criminal activity**

Forgery	10 Block Sol Brae Way
Grand Theft From Veh	30 Block St. Stephens Dr.
	600 Block Fox Run
Petty Theft	100 Block Moraga Way
Shoplift	CVS (3)

**Nuisance to the Community**

Loud Music	Los Dedos Rd./La Espiral
Loud Party	10 Block Lavenida Dr.
	Lavenida Dr./Donna Maria Wy
	60 Block Brookwood Rd.
Public Nuisance	Theatre Square (2)
	50 Block Wilder Rd.

**Other**

Trespass	Safeway
Violation Restraining Order	500 Block Moraga Way
W&I Paper Service	Wb Sr 24



# Letters to the editor

## Leveling the playing field for all

White people sometimes say "I'm not a racist; I'm color blind!" Unfortunately, racism is more nuanced than just belonging to the KKK. Racism is failing to acknowledge that Black and Brown people have suffered greatly and continue to suffer greatly at the hands of white people in this country. Racism is failing to admit that the system is stacked against People of Color.

Which system? The justice system. People of Color routinely get harsher penalties than white people. Just ask the Stanford rapist. People of Color are also disproportionately injured and killed by police compared to white people. Just ask Rayshard Brooks, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Atatiana Jefferson, Stephon Clark, and Philando Castille.

Which system? The financial system. A recent study concluded that it will take 228 years for the average Black household to accumulate the same level of wealth as held by the average white household today.

Which system? The educational system. Poor communities have fewer resources to fund their schools; students within those schools typically have poorer outcomes in terms of getting into college, in terms of succeeding in life. People of Color are more likely to attend public schools with fewer resources.

Some may say that racism happens elsewhere but not in Lafayette; however, the prior Police Chief, Eric Christensen, stated at a public meeting in 2017 that his department often gets two or three calls per week where white people call the police on People of Color in our community, because the white folks are sure that the People of Color don't belong there – that they're up to something. Nearly all of the

time, he said, the People of Color are not the problem.

Fighting racism in this country is not a zero sum game. By recognizing the inequalities in society and then acting to eliminate these inequalities, by elevating People of Color to the same level as white people, by leveling the playing field, we can make our community and our country better for all.

Gwenyth Searer, P.E., S.E. Lafayette

## Embracing the truth of racism

Members of our committee have received many notes of support since our last editor's letter. We also received some messages questioning the need for efforts to increase belonging and inclusion in our community. Some even came in the form of aggressive messages sent from alias emails. We have work to do as a community and country to acknowledge how privilege and racism touch our daily lives.

Our children watched the storming of the nation's Capitol on Jan. 6 with bewilderment. They are asking: why did people breach the sanctuary of our government? How were they allowed to terrorize national leaders, attack and kill police, plant pipe bombs, and wave Confederate flags in the cradle of our democracy? Others wonder why rioters were unmasked, showing little regard for protecting others, while students are homebound on Zoom classes.

Nationwide, BLM protesters were marching in desperate protest for their people literally dying in the streets and in their beds. They were met with throngs of officers, rubber bullets, and tear gas. In contrast, the angry mob that marched on the Capitol was enraged that its candidate lost a free and fair election. These

insurrectionists brought guns, bombs, and tactical gear. Yet they drew a mild, tolerant response. The contrast was devastating.

We won't come closer together with denial. Exposing the wounds of racism is not divisive; it is our only path toward equality. Lamorinda families and students of color have shared their unique stories, repeatedly, in multiple venues, challenging the fantasy that Lamorinda is a utopian bubble immune to privilege and racism. We must not continuously minimize their experiences and be brave enough to embrace their truths. Contact us at [lafayettek8equity@gmail.com](mailto:lafayettek8equity@gmail.com)

Yukie Fujimoto  
Founder, LafSD DEI Committee

## Thanks to volunteers helping with vaccine distribution

I want to thank Dr. Rebecca Parish and Dr. Denise Hillard for their initiative to have vaccines delivered to our community. One of the advantages of living in the Lamorinda area is that there are so many individuals who see problems and rather than just complaining about it they seek out solutions. When their patients along with other members of the community were having a difficult time getting vaccinated, they came up with a solution and delivered it. I also want to thank all the volunteers that were involved including the CERT Organization. (Community Emergency Response Team) making the event at the Stanley Middle School so successful. "Those who say it cannot be done need to get out of the way of those that are doing it." Thank you, Dr. Parish, Dr. Hillard and all the volunteers. You are all doers.

Barry Behr  
Moraga

# ACA Strong!



There was plenty of school spirit on full display in front of Acalanes High School in the evenings from Jan. 29-31, with bright lights and music to boost spirits and community pride. The drive-through lights display, organized and put on by cohorts of class officers and liaisons, and leadership students, will be re-

peated Thursday to Friday evenings, Feb. 4-7 and Feb. 11-14, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Families are all welcome to drive through and are invited to bring peanut butter and/or boxes of cereal as donations to the Monument Crisis Center.  
- P. Fisher

# Stanley vaccine drive-through misunderstanding cleared; all participants guaranteed second doses

... continued from Page A3

Lamorinda Village received many calls and emails from grateful seniors complimenting the smoothly run operation. "If anything, the county should emulate your first dose drive through clinic," said one.

Mike Doyle and his wife, both 75 years old, attended the first clinic. "The volunteers were friendly, informed and Dr. Parish was everywhere ensuring that all went according to plan," said Doyle. "I can't imagine how a single thing could have been done better – simply outstanding."

Contra Costa Health Services spokesperson Scott Alonso says that CCHS has a special interest in providing

for the health of the most vulnerable communities and those who have been historically marginalized. "As we continue to develop infrastructure and evaluate the need for future community clinics and mass vaccine events, we will do so with a steadfast commitment to equity and service to the communities hardest hit by this pandemic."

In fact Horowitz says his client, Parish, would like to bring this community model to minority and marginalized communities in the near future.

Drive-through clinic participants can call a hotline for up-to-date information at (925) 284-0835.

The CCHS vaccine call center phone number is 833-VAX-COCO.

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence – we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters must be factually accurate and be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) for submission guidelines. Email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

# The Creative Seamstress is making life 'sew' much easier in Moraga



Photo Vera Kochan

The Creative Seamstress owner Odontuya Tserenjav, left, and sister Odma Tserenjav

## By Vera Kochan

In need of any alterations or repairs to your wardrobe? The Creative Seamstress can help you out with that and more.

Located in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center at 370 Park Street, Suite B, owner Odontuya Tserenjav and her sister Odma include tailoring, custom sewing projects, personalization, and vinyl decal/stencil cutting on their list of skills.

The sisters became adept with a needle and thread as teenagers learning how to sew from their mother and grandmother. Odontuya eventually became a fashion designer in Mongo-

lia. Both women were seamstresses in Oakland when they decided to look for a place to open their own business. They fell in love with Moraga. "We wanted to move here, because the schools are good," explained Odma, "and the hills are so green."

The Creative Seamstress is Odontuya's first foray at being a business owner, and the first time she and Odma have worked together. Besides repairs and alterations for men and women they can work on children's clothes. "We also make original clothes," stated Odma. "If you bring in a design we can work from that. We also make cushion covers and curtains."

Shop hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. They are closed on Sundays. For additional information call (925) 871-8082 or email [TheCreativeSeamstress@yahoo.com](mailto:TheCreativeSeamstress@yahoo.com).

# In Memory

## John 'Jack' Forsyth Helms

December 25, 1933 - January 22, 2021



John "Jack" Forsyth Helms passed away peacefully in Walnut Creek on Jan. 22. He was born in Oakland on Christmas Day in 1933. After initially living in Piedmont, the family moved to Fresno where Jack graduated from Fresno High School. He received an Accounting degree from the University of Washington in Seattle, after which time he served three years as a United States Naval Officer. Upon returning to the Bay Area, he earned a Master of Business Administration degree from UC Berkeley's Haas Business School.

Jack married Julie Rapalje Caulkins on Sept. 21, 1963. They moved to Moraga in 1973, where they raised two children, David and Laurie.

He worked in various information technology and financial positions, retiring from the corporate world in 1987. After his retirement, he and Julie studied Spanish and traveled extensively in Mexico and Central America. In addition, they visited various European countries and spent time at their cabin in Lake Tahoe.

One of the greatest gifts Jack shared with his family was his love of the outdoors. Backpacking and skiing were regular family activities. Jack was a 32-year member of the National Ski Patrol and former head of the Homewood Volunteer Ski Patrol. Jack enjoyed fly-fishing since his teen years, and was at his happiest when wading in a sparkling stream in the Sierras.

Jack was a longtime member and former president of the Diablo Valley Fly Fishermen, as well as a member of the Lafayette United Methodist Church. His greatest joy was his family, and he was a devoted and loving husband, father, and grandfather.

Jack is survived by his son David (Cheryl) Helms of Walnut Creek, daughter Laurie (Peter) Maxwell of Santa Barbara, and five grandchildren: Kiersten, John, Holly, Michelle, and Sarah. He also leaves his sister Susan Vildosola of Fresno. He was recently predeceased by his beloved wife Julie.

The family will gather privately to celebrate his life. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be sent to Yosemite Conservancy.

## Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

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James Burkin  
Sole Proprietor

## Young activists push to pull plug on gas leaf blowers

... continued from Page A1

The children point to the 60 cities in California that have banned or restricted use of gas-powered leaf blowers as well as research done in the city of Walnut Creek, and identify reasons they say the blowers are very bad for the environment in addition to noise and air pollution, such as harm to insects, especially bees. Instead they urge the use of rakes and electric leaf blowers, although they make the point that leaving the leaves to decompose, adding nutrients to the soil, would be better still.

The matter has come before the Environmental Task Force in the past and according to City Planning Director Greg Wolff, the issue remains on the task force's work list. Wolff says it is likely to come

up this year and notes there is a joint city council and ETF meeting scheduled in March to review accomplishments and prioritize tasks for the next year. He says leaf blowers will likely be on that list.

Wolff welcomes the kids' input. "It's great to see youth involved in what will ultimately be their government," he says.

The city is also short by three planners, so assigning a staff member to the ETF has also contributed to slow progress.

Finn, who attends Stanley Middle School, is frustrated by the lack of action. "Even though kids have good ideas for saving the environment, adults do not take us seriously," he says.

The kids have also sent a letter to Lafayette School District Superintendent Richard Whitmore asking that gas-

powered leaf blowers be banned from schools.

Jennifer Renton says she's not surprised her children are proactive for their ages since she and her husband have been environmentally conscious for a long time. Fifth-graders Scout and Jamie are members of the Environmental Club at Burton Valley Elementary School.

The children are planning on walking the neighborhood to hand out fliers they've created, educating residents about the dangers posed by gas-powered leaf blowers.

"Adults are the ones using gas leaf blowers but they do not think about the problems that they are causing and we will be the ones left when the adults have destroyed the environment," says Jamie.

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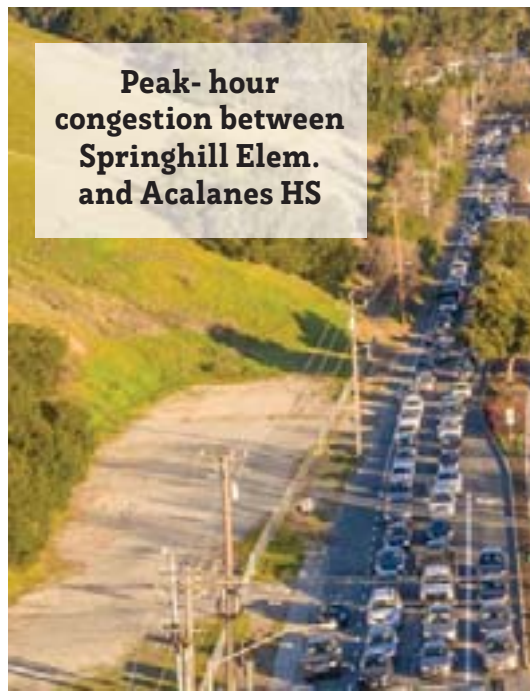
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# The Terraces - Not a Done Deal



Peak-hour congestion between Springhill Elem. and Acalanes HS



Paradise Fire



[www.SaveLafayette.org](http://www.SaveLafayette.org)

## You need to know these four facts

### 1. The City left Save Lafayette no choice but to take legal action

- In 2013 City staff recommended denial of the original Terraces proposal for multiple health and safety reasons – then reversed itself in 2020 by recommending approval of the only slightly altered proposal.
- Site is zoned for max 14 single-family residences/14 ADUs, **not** 315 apartments. Inconsistent with City's General Plan and zoning.
- Voters decisively rejected the "Homes at Deer Hill" in 2018. Save Lafayette brought and won the lawsuit that protected our constitutional right to vote on the project.

### 2. Very high fire risk location, potentially causing many deaths/injuries

- The Terraces evacuation model shows 40%+ of 550 vehicles fail to escape wildfire.
- City evacuation plan for Springhill and Acalanes students questioned by the County Connection.
- 2013 City designated site a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, with an additional high risk due to prevailing winds. Severe delays of emergency evacuations.

### 3. Lafayette needs more local businesses and jobs, NOT more housing

- Many local jobs/businesses are being replaced by residential development.
- Lafayette already has 17 downtown residential development projects in progress.
- Lafayette has exceeded 2022 quota for affordable housing. Quotas for subsequent years will be resolved by 2023.

### 4. Wrong project at the wrong location – 315 apartments, 16 buildings, 550 cars – at a very busy traffic intersection

- 3000 trips daily added to an intersection that gets an F grade from traffic experts.
- Impacts school enrollment and increases operational costs.
- 500,000 cubic yards of dirt movement would destroy scenic hillside and 22 acres of open space. It would also add to the already excessive air pollution, resulting in contaminant levels **nine times** the acceptable standard (BAAQMD).

**Thank you for your steadfast support and generosity. More donations are needed to help us meet the 2021 legal challenges head-on. We are confident that we can win this lawsuit - your donation helps win it.**

Visit our website to learn more or to find out how you can help. To donate, please send a check to: Save Lafayette, PO Box 1183, 3641 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette CA 94549

# ~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

## An experience that will last a lifetime



Orinda's Rundell family hike the Hell For Sure Challenge last year

Photos provided

### By Diane Claytor

Dreams of vacations are filling our heads. It's been almost a year that we've been staring at the same walls of our homes, walking the same nearby trails, playing in the same neighborhood parks and getting food from the same local restaurants. By now, most of us are ready to break free as soon as possible! As wonderful as a Hawaiian beach vacation sounds, most of us have been sedentary long enough. It's time to breathe fresh air, move our bodies, challenge ourselves and take in the beauty of the great outdoors.

Chris Casado has been bringing adventurous backpacking trips to hundreds of people of all ages for 10 years through his company, TSX Challenge. And in keeping with COVID and the safety concerns that are on everyone's mind, TSX is now offering private TSX Pod Challenges.

Casado, an Orinda dad of three, wasn't always a backpacker. In fact, even though he grew up in the central valley with the Sierras in his backyard, he was 14 when he took his first backpacking trip. But that first trip – one week, 75 miles across the Sierras to the top of Mt. Whitney led by Mike Murphy, a local teacher and family friend – hooked him. He knew he didn't want to stop. "It was so inspiring," Casado remembers, "and gave me the confidence to believe I could do just about anything I set my mind to."

Over the years, Casado and Murphy dreamt about providing this same unique sense of accomplishment to more people. Murphy continued teaching in Clovis. Casado went on to college, moved to San Francisco and got a job in finance, "a desk job where I was stuck in a tall tower," he notes. But the dream continued and in 2010 it became a reality when Casado and Murphy co-founded TSX Challenge.

"We started out doing three or four trips a year," Casado explains. "We wanted to keep it simple. We weren't looking to set up a typical guide business. We just wanted to do one thing really well." That one thing was the same trip Casado had taken all those years before – the 75

mile, week-long TransSierra hike to Mt. Whitney, the highest point in the lower 48 states.

Andy Wagemaker, a friend living in Arizona, introduced Casado to the Grand Canyon. "Very few places can rival the Sierras," Casado explains, "but the awe-inspiring Grand Canyon is definitely one of them." So a new backpacking challenge was added to TSX's list – a three night, four-day trip from the Grand Canyon to the Colorado River.

Casado continued working his day job while slowly growing TSX.

People started requesting additional experiences so one more backpacking journey was added: the Hell for Sure Challenge, named after the Hell for Sure lake, one of more than a dozen high Sierra lakes passed on this four-day, five-night loop.

Casado eventually left that "tall tower" and for the last five years has been organically building TSX Challenge. "We have a tight, singular focus and passion for our routes," he notes. Each of their three challenges traverse awe-inspiring terrain with a small group of backpackers and knowledgeable, passionate guides.

And TSX handles everything. As their website declares, "Don't own a backpack or tent? Not a problem. We provide backpacks, tents and sleeping pads for those who need them, at no additional charge. We also take care of all group items like pots, stoves, food, food storage, water filters, first aid and more. Your guides will do the cooking and dishes. Just show up with your boots and personal items, ready to hike!"

Casado explains that these are called challenges rather than hikes because "each trip affects people in different ways. For many participants, this is their very first backpacking experience. They face mental, physical and emotional challenges. And once they've reached the top of Mt. Whitney or the bottom of the Grand Canyon, they realize that they can do almost anything. These are very empowering trips," Casado continues, "and people feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment. For most, these are definitely trips of a lifetime."

"We take motivated people aged 11 to over 70 and band them together for an unbelievable journey. The best parts of these trips are the scenery and the people ... the opportunity to share these experiences with others is the most inspiring part of every trip," Casado says.

With COVID concerns and restrictions, Casado has created TSX Pod Challenges, a private group experience for four to 10 participants. "We're offering a life-changing adventure," Casado writes. "A chance to reconnect with friends, take an off-the-grid family vacation, a getaway with fresh air, good food and no crowds."

Murphy, who led backpackers for more than 35 years and proudly declares that he has stood on the top of Mt. Whitney 48 times, is now retired. But the experiences he and Casado developed continue to inspire adventure-seekers. "No matter your age, background or experience, if you put your mind to it, you can do just about anything," Casado states confidently.

For more information, go to <https://tsxchallenge.com>.



Chris Casado and his children, Brooks, 10, and Claire, 12, at 12,000 feet on Red Mountain, in Kings Canyon National Park last year.

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## Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

It is time that we all stand up against hate, racism and all forms of discrimination. Everyone should be treated with the greatest degree of respect, at all times and in every situation and instance.

As service organizations, actively involved in community work, we know that there is so much more that can and should be done to foster a culture of belonging for all citizens. We must all act in a way that counters marginalization and exclusiveness.

We all have the power to make a positive difference every day. Let all of us commit to creating a community that welcomes all, in order to move forward in the process of healing and reconciliation.

Silence and complacency are not options. Neither is denial. We challenge everyone to act in such a way that shows our communities are truly respectful and inclusive to all.

*Endorsed by these Lamorinda service organizations:*

- Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley**
- National Charity League, Inc., Lamorinda Chapter**
- National Charity League, Inc., Acalanes Area**
- Orinda Junior Women's Club**
- Moraga Community Foundation**
- Lamorinda Lions Club**
- The Board of Directors of Moraga Citizens Network**
- American Association of University Women of Orinda, Moraga, and Lafayette**

## Savory tidbits make a perfect Super Bowl snack



Ingredients for Olive and Cheese Nuggets Photo Susie Iventosch

### By Susie Iventosch

These savory rolls are super delicious and so easy to make. What I love about them is that they call for olive oil instead of butter and nonfat plain yogurt to bind them together. Not to mention, they are full of olive bits and grated cheese, two of our favorite foods! These tidbits are great with soups or salads, and if you make them bite-sized, they are a perfect appe-

tizer to pass. With Super Bowl just around the corner, these could be a nice addition to your menu.

Our favorite olive for this is Mt. Athos Greek green olives, but you can use any green olive you like, or even substitute Kalamata olives for a change-up. We used a combination of white and yellow cheddar, but either one works perfectly for this recipe.

### Olive & Cheese Nuggets

(Make 14-16 dinner rolls, or 24 appetizer sized rolls)

#### INGREDIENTS

2 1/2 cups self-rising flour\*  
5 oz. olive oil  
5 oz. nonfat plain yogurt  
1 cup grated sharp white or yellow cheddar cheese, divided (3/4 cup for dough and 1/4 cup for topping)  
3 oz. chopped green Greek olives

#### \*Substitution for Self-Rising Flour:

You can make your own self-rising flour by using a ratio of 1 cup flour to 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder to 1/4 teaspoon fine salt)

#### DIRECTIONS

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Preheat oven to 350 F.

Place flour and salt in a mixing bowl. Mix well with a fork or whisk. Add olive oil, yogurt, grated cheese and olives. Mix all well and gather into a ball. The dough will seem more like short bread or a scone at this point. Knead on a floured surface for just a minute or so just to make sure all of the flour is well-incorporated into the dough.

Divide dough into 14 or 16 round balls. (Make them smaller if you're planning to use these as an appetizer.)

Place dough balls on the prepared baking sheet. Press down slightly with finger tips. Evenly distribute the remaining 1/4 cup grated cheddar on the top of each dough ball.

Bake for approximately 15-20 minutes, or until rolls begin to get golden-brown on top and the cheese is melted. (Shorten the baking time if making smaller appetizer nuggets.)

Remove from the oven and let sit for 10 minutes to set up before serving. Serve warm. If you are making them in advance, store them in the refrigerator in an airtight container and reheat them in a low (200 F) oven for about 10 minutes to crisp them back up!

Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://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. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



## Pet dental health

### Love means brushing your dog's teeth



Sierra gets her teeth brushed

Photo Wendy Scheck

### By Mona Miller, DVM

February is National Pet Dental Health Month sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The AVMA webpage shows an image of an ice floe, which is a perfect picture to understand that what we see above the surface – the crown of the tooth – is only part of the structure of the tooth. Thus, it's only part of the problem when we smell stinky breath, see pus or blood at the gumline, or more commonly, have accumulation of years' worth of tartar buildup in our pet's mouth.

In the past, we as a community (veterinarians included) applied a lower standard of care and diagnostics to our pets than we apply to humans. As humans, we brush twice daily, go to the dentist twice yearly for deep cleanings, have radiographs taken every two years to examine the crown-root junctions and roots. We accept this level of care as basic.

Since its formation in 1988, the American Veterinary Dental College has sought to apply similar standards of care to our animal patients. Additionally, advanced dental care is now also available in

animals, usually through Veterinary Dental Specialists. Some examples include root canals, orthodontia for malocclusions, and prosthodontia for police dogs.

Here's a bit of historical perspective for those of us older individuals who grew up with dogs and cats, and whose parents and veterinarians spent minimal discussion on dental care. As a student at UC Davis School of Vet Med, I received about three to four hours of total instruction and laboratory to learn about oral/dental health and cleaning techniques. During spring 1990, my graduation year, I witnessed the build-out of a small room in the Teaching Hospital that would become the clinical practice Dental Suite. Nowadays, the current curriculum provides a full

three-week course with 10 hours of laboratory for all students, with additional elective hours available.

It is widely known that dental disease and bacterial infection contribute greatly to internal diseases, such as heart valve infection, kidney and liver disease, even overall blood stream infections, called sepsis.

The focus has shifted from taking care of obvious severe problems, such as abscessed loose teeth, to preventive oral health. In truth, dental disease is always occurring as a slow progression. It takes only 24 hours for the biofilm to build up on the surface of the teeth, extending down into the periodontal area, which is the key junction between crown and root. As humans, we slow down this progression with the twice-daily measure of brushing. It is reasonable to apply a standard of this type to our family pets.

Cleaning under the gumline is a key factor to slow down the progression of periodontal disease. This can best be accomplished with a thorough ultrasonic scaling cleaning. It would be ideal if dogs and cats understood what our goals are and were cooperative during the 30-60 minutes needed for a thorough cleaning, allowing us clear visualization, tolerating the equipment in their mouths, and rinsing when needed. Unfortunately, they do not. So, anesthesia is necessary for most animals in order to accomplish a thorough and complete dental cleaning and evaluation. Anesthesia is often the bulk of the expense of routine dental services.

Non-anesthetic teeth

cleaning remains a subject of controversy – both from the standpoints of high-quality medical care, and from the legal practice of veterinary medicine. Without anesthesia, cleaning is limited to scraping calculus off tooth crown surfaces, and applying a polish. It is difficult to do a deep cleaning under the gumline where periodontal disease originates, even in the most cooperative of patients. And it is almost impossible without anesthesia to do any level of thorough cleaning on the inner sides of the teeth, much less have the ability to evaluate for tooth decay or disruption. Non-anesthetic crown cleaning is best done in the hands of experienced veterinary staff, trained in proper restraint and dental cleaning. Additionally, these staff members must know when to stop – with loose teeth, excessive bleeding, pain, uncooperative patients – in order to “above all, do no harm.” I know of only a few veterinarians who have the skill set needed to train their staff in this way.

The California Veterinary Medical Board defines veterinary dentistry in part as the use of hard instruments to clean teeth. Veterinary staff are allowed to perform certain dental procedures under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian. Grooming services that offer non-anesthetic teeth cleaning and charge a fee are practicing veterinary dentistry, perhaps illegally if there is no veterinarian on the premise when this service is performed.

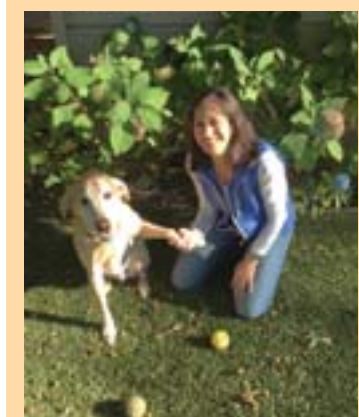
Whether it's non- or anesthetic deep cleaning, all cleaning sets the reset button to pearly whites. The most effective

method of maintaining oral and dental health is to provide regular frequent tooth brushings at home, and at a frequency that makes sense. The ideal would be to brush our pets' teeth twice daily, but most of us don't have that on our bandwidth. Brushing once weekly still provides a frequency comparable to more than 10%. I recommend to my clients that they try for three to four times weekly.

Tooth-brushing at home is most successful when the dogs and cats enjoy it, so it is worth taking some time (about 1 month) to habituate your pet slowly and gently to brushing. Make it a positive experience with lots of praise, and yummy flavorful dog/cat paste! It is worth the inexpensive investment in a pet brush or finger cap (like a thimble) for small pets, and a flavored dentifrice paste (malt, liver, chicken, etc.). American Kennel Club has a particularly good video available on YouTube, and these comments apply to cats too:

[www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=F6S50BZU1D0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=F6S50BZU1D0)

As with all health concerns, consult with your veterinarian about the specifics related to your own dog or cat!



Dr. Mona Miller lives in Lafayette with her son, two cats and yellow Labrador. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, and received her DVM from UC Davis. She has been happy to call Lafayette home since 2001. She can be reached via email at [MonaSDVM@aol.com](mailto:MonaSDVM@aol.com). She welcomes questions from readers that may get incorporated into a column.

## GCCP presents 'Russian Valentine'



Bay Area musicians, Olga and Sergey Rakitchenkov Photo provided

### Submitted by Pamela Freund-Striplen

Surprise your Valentine with a heartwarming program of music for harp and viola. Gold Coast Chamber Players presents “Russian Valentine” at 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14 and provides an intimate glimpse into the musical and romantic lives of two legendary Bay Area musicians, Olga and Sergey

Rakitchenkov.

The program offers two pieces for viola and harp by Claude Debussy, Girl with the Flaxen Hair and Romance as well as Debussy's iconic Arabesques for solo harp. Select movements from Max Reger's Suite No. 1 for solo viola as well as Reger's rarely performed Romance are included. Music written for the couple by Dmitri Smirnov called Shadow and Light and

Duo for viola and harp by local composer Shinji Eshima will complete this heartwarming program.

After the concert, the couple will be available on Zoom for audience questions and socializing. Single tickets \$20. Concerts are live-streamed via YouTube LIVE. Purchase online at [www.GCCPmusic.com](http://www.GCCPmusic.com) or by calling (925) 283-3728.

## Celebrating women through books



Photo Mary Leigh Miller

Pat Rudebusch, left, owner of Orinda Books, and Bonnie Fend, AAUW-OML, with three of the 21 books featured in the book fair benefiting scholarships for graduating senior women at the three local public high schools.

### By Bonnie Fend

The American Association of University Women Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette (AAUW-OML) Branch will hold a book fair through Feb. 28 with Orinda Books, featuring a collection of 21 titles of all genres celebrating women. The book fair will raise money for the \$2,000 scholarships OML awards each year to graduating senior women from each of our local high schools. In addition, two students from Saint Mary's College will each be awarded \$1,000 scholarships. The scholarship fund receives 20% of the sales of these books.

As part of this, the AAUW-OML Branch will host a program at 9:30 a.m. Feb. 16 which features Beverly Lane speaking on "Women Suffrage Warriors," the story of women winning the vote in California and the

country. Her presentation will provide a brief history of the U.S. women's civil rights and suffrage movements.

Lane is a Danville resident and has been active in local organizations and government for decades. She is a past Danville town council member and mayor and is currently a director on the East Bay Regional Park District board of directors. A Zoom link to the free program can be obtained at the AAUW-OML website, oml-ca.aauw.net.

At the bookstore, look for the AAUW-OML table. If you are unable to visit the store, a list of the featured titles along with a synopsis of each, is available on the AAUW-OML website: oml-ca.aauw.net. You can purchase the featured books at the store, online at orindabooks.com, or by phone at (925) 254-7606 and use the store's curbside pickup.

## Moraga Lions Crab Feed proceeds help support alternative care facility



Photo provided

### The volunteers

### Submitted by Bob Murtagh

The Moraga Lions hosted its annual Crab Feed Fundraiser Jan. 23 at Holy Trinity Serbian Church on School Street in Moraga, but this year with a twist. Due to the pandemic, the club was forced to provide meals for pickup only. This event usually attracts 230 guests, however, this year because of drive through the club prepared and delivered 440 dinners in two hours on Saturday afternoon.

The proceeds from the Crab Feed will permit the Lions to continue to

provide support to the visually impaired community and many charities in the East Bay and around the world.

In 2021, the Lions will be allocating a portion of the event's proceeds to a new Lions project in California, the Potterville Project – an alternative care facility staffed by volunteers handling overflow COVID-19 cases. The donated funds will help purchase sorely needed equipment and supplies.

For more information about the Moraga Lions and Potterville Project contact Bob Murtagh at (925) 283-1841.

## NCL recognizes holiday volunteers

Acalanes Area Chapter delivers area senior citizens holiday cheer

### Submitted by Lynn Spiegel and Jillian Esopa

National Charity League, Acalanes Area Chapter (NCL, Inc.), announced Jan. 22 that 125 member volunteers logged over 250 hours this holiday season helping local seniors by delivering holiday gifts and cards. Through their volunteerism, fundraising and donations, the Acalanes Area NCL has made a positive impact on the lives of many people in need.

This year has been challenging for everyone, but it has been particularly devastating for local senior citizens. The steep mortality rate of COVID for the higher age groups has kept them away from attending community events with friends, seeing family and sharing meals with their loved ones. Sadly, many seniors in the community spent this holiday season alone.

National Charity League, Inc.,

Acalanes Area Chapter wanted to put a smile on these local seniors' faces this holiday season. NCL, Inc., Acalanes Area Chapter, along with the Lamorinda Chapter and the Boy Scouts, decided to spread some holiday cheer by brightening the lives of these seniors through volunteerism. The "Spread Holiday Cheer for our Seniors" volunteer opportunity was well received. Volunteers bought and prepared a gift of a holiday poinsettia or plant and wrote individual kind notes of cheer, designed holiday cards or created original artwork. Plants and cards were hand-delivered (with COVID precautions observed) to area residents. To say the least, local seniors were thrilled with the holiday surprise. NCL, Inc., Acalanes Area Chapter will surely make this a yearly tradition for local seniors and continue this wonderful volunteer opportunity for members.

## NCL Lamorinda Chapter assembles cheerful tea sets for seniors



Photo provided

NCL Lamorinda Chapter ninth-graders with assembled tea set packages.

### Submitted by Jennifer Palmer

National Charity League Lamorinda Chapter ninth-graders (Class of 2024) were unable to throw their Annual Tea Party for the senior residents at Moraga Royale Assisted Living in Moraga due to COVID-19 this month. Instead they created a safe way to bring joy and cheer to the senior residents and thank their staff during this difficult time. Tea cup sets were do-

nated by the Lamorinda community through a request made on social media and assembled by the girls who worked outdoors, masked and socially distanced. Over 100 tea sets were beautifully packaged with biscotti, tea packs, flowers and handwritten notes. Also included was a video message from the girls to the seniors sending a special hello and heartfelt message. NCL Lamorinda thanks the community for helping with the donations.

## MVPC hosts 'Love From Lamorinda' service project



Photo and image provided

### Submitted by Rosalind Bassett

During the month of February, Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church is hosting a community-based at-home service project called, "Love From Lamorinda." Community members are asked to simply fill a large Ziploc bag with hygiene items for a homeless person, with these kits being collected outside the MVPC Church office located at 10 Moraga Valley Lane, Moraga. The hygiene kits could contain: a pair of socks or underwear, mask, snack, hand sanitizer, shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, toothbrush and paste, soap, tissues, adhesive bandages, lotion and a note of encouragement. If you do not want to make a kit, but would like to contribute money toward the making of one, you can donate \$20 per kit to www.mvpc.org on the "Give" page. These kits will be dropped at the Bay Area Rescue Mission in Richmond. The shelter is experiencing un-

precedented need in the community and these kits are helpful and needed for its clients. If you have any questions, please contact rbassett@mvpc-today.org. Thank you for helping and spreading the love from Lamorinda out in the world.



**Community Service:** We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

### Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

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**ART**

**"Wintermission" – a show** between shows that features selected works by Gallery Artists designed to refresh and warm even the longest, darkest winter days – runs through March 4. Reflecting a wide range of styles, prices, motifs and media, the show continues the mission of presenting the best of the best of more than 100 East Bay artists. Also on hand is a wide-ranging juried selection of locally created fine crafts and jewelry. All 2-D works are available for sale or rent through an exclusive "No Regrets" rental program. Free, open to the public. Valley Art Gallery: 1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 110, Walnut Creek, www.valleyartgallery.org; (925) 935-4311 or email us at valleyartgallery@gmail.com.

**Lamorinda Arts Alliance** announces the exhibit "Tiny But Mighty: Honoring RBG" which will feature abstract and representational 2-D artwork that is bright, bold and powerful, just like Ruth Bader Ginsburg. This show will include mixed media, collage, monotype, oil and cold wax medium, and paintings in watercolor, oil and acrylic. LAA member Ruth Stanton curated the show. Pat Calabro, a Pacheco resident, was selected as the featured artist. Her digital acrylic collages are bright bold and full of intensity – so much intensity that she must tone down areas to make places for the eye to rest. Calabro exhibits her work throughout the Bay Area and as far away as Ghent, Belgium. This free exhibit runs through Feb. 26.

**Moraga Art Gallery Announces** a new exhibit titled, "An Elegant Balance," opening Feb. 18 through

April 25. "An Elegant Balance" features the work of member artists, George Ehrenhaft and K. de Groot. The title of the exhibit describes the elegant balance between George Ehrenhaft's rich and brightly painted watercolors and K. de Groot's one-of-a-kind exotic jewelry. The gallery is open Saturdays noon to 3 p.m. and by appointment. Please email the gallery at moragaartgallery@gmail.com to make an appointment. To safeguard gallery staff and visitors, we require everyone visiting the gallery to wear a face mask and to maintain social distancing. The gallery is located at 432 Center Street, Rheem Shopping Center, in Moraga. For more information, please visit the gallery's website: https://moragaartgallery.com

943-7469 or online at lesheartsceneter.org. For additional information, visit diabloballet.org or call (925) 943-1775.

**OTHER**

**KPFA Radio 94.1 FM presents** Elizabeth Kolbert & Mark Hertsgaard: Under a White Sky on Thursday, Feb. 11, 5 to 6:30 p.m., at Online webinar, 1929 Martin Luther King Jr Way, Berkeley. Elizabeth Kolbert and Mark Hertsgaard will discuss Kolbert's new book, "Under a White Sky, The Nature of the Future," and answer audience questions. Cost: \$20 one admission, \$35 admission + book. For more info see www.eventbrite.com/e/elizabeth-kolbert-mark-hertsgaard-under-a-white-sky-nature-of-future-tickets-131627494379.

**Girls4STEM** webinar, Feb. 7 at 4 p.m., "On Becoming a Physician," Heidi Sallee, MD, FAAP, Assoc. Prof. of Pediatrics, Saint Louis Univ, School of Medicine, an AAUW-OML STEM outreach program, free, for further information and to register visit the website oml-ca.aauw.net.

**Girls4STEM** webinar, Feb 21 at 4 p.m. "Climate Change: Learn How to Make a Difference," Annie Welden, PhD candidate studying how environmental research plays a role in developing government policy, an AAUW-OML STEM outreach program, free, for further information and to register visit the website oml-ca.aauw.net.

**American Association of** University Women, Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML). General meeting Tuesday, Feb. 16, 9:30 a.m. social, 10 a.m. program via Zoom, guest speaker Beverly Lane, "Woman

Suffrage Warriors." To obtain a Zoom link, visit the AAUW-OML website at oml-ca.aauw.net.

**Prospective Member Meeting** for boys team charity btc Orinda League. Thursday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m. on ZOOM. Open to seventh through 12th grade boys. League Boundary area: members must live in the city of Orinda or attend an Orinda school. For more information and to RSVP, contact Lexi Morrissey at lpmorrissey@yahoo.com or visit btcorinda.chapterweb.net.

**Take time to view International Film Showcase** Top 10 favorites. While the International Film Showcase takes a step back until its commercial venues, like the Orinda Theatre, reopen, community members can revisit favorite films. The IFS films from the past 10 years are listed on its website, including the Efi Lubliner's and Jo Alice Canterbury's Top 10 list. Top on Lubliner's list is "Tangerines" and "Woman at War" while Canterbury's top two include "Never Look Away" and "Frantz." For a detailed list, visit www.internationalshowcase.org.

**GARDEN**

**The Montelindo Garden Club** February meeting begins Friday, Feb. 19 at 10 a.m. on Zoom. Everyone is welcome. Presentation: Edible Landscaping. Speaker: Patricia St. John, who loves to design with edibles! She has been designing residential gardens for the past 25 years, on both sides of the bay. Her work has received international design awards and been featured in Better Homes and Gardens, Sunset Magazine, S.F. Chronicle, and seven books on

garden design. She has taught in the Landscape Horticulture department at Merritt College in Oakland for the past 14 years. To request a Zoom link to attend this meeting, email: montelindogarden@aol.com.

**Lafayette Garden Club** Monthly program begins Thursday, Feb. 11, at 10 a.m. Succulents are now wildly popular in gardens and containers because of their drought tolerance and ease of care. Shawna Anderson, is a Certified Horticulturist at Orchard Nursery in Lafayette. She teaches classes and has talked at other garden clubs demonstrating her talent in planting containers with Thrillers, Fillers & Spillers. This month it is all about about Succulents in Containers. Please join us. The meeting will be online via Zoom Webinar. Join us as a guest at no charge. For details on this presentation and membership information please email MaryanneKain@comcast.net.

**Please join us for the Zoom** meeting of the Walnut Creek Garden Club on Feb. 8. Our general meeting begins at 10 a.m., with the speaker presentation at 10:30 a.m. Just in time for Valentine's Day: "A Little Love for the Garden." Jolene Adams, past president of the American Rose Society will tell us how to prepare your garden soil, what to feed your roses and more. The blooms will be worth the bother. Please contact Maureen Little, Co-President at mslittle44@gmail.com to receive your Zoom invite. More information at www.walnutcreekgardenclub.org

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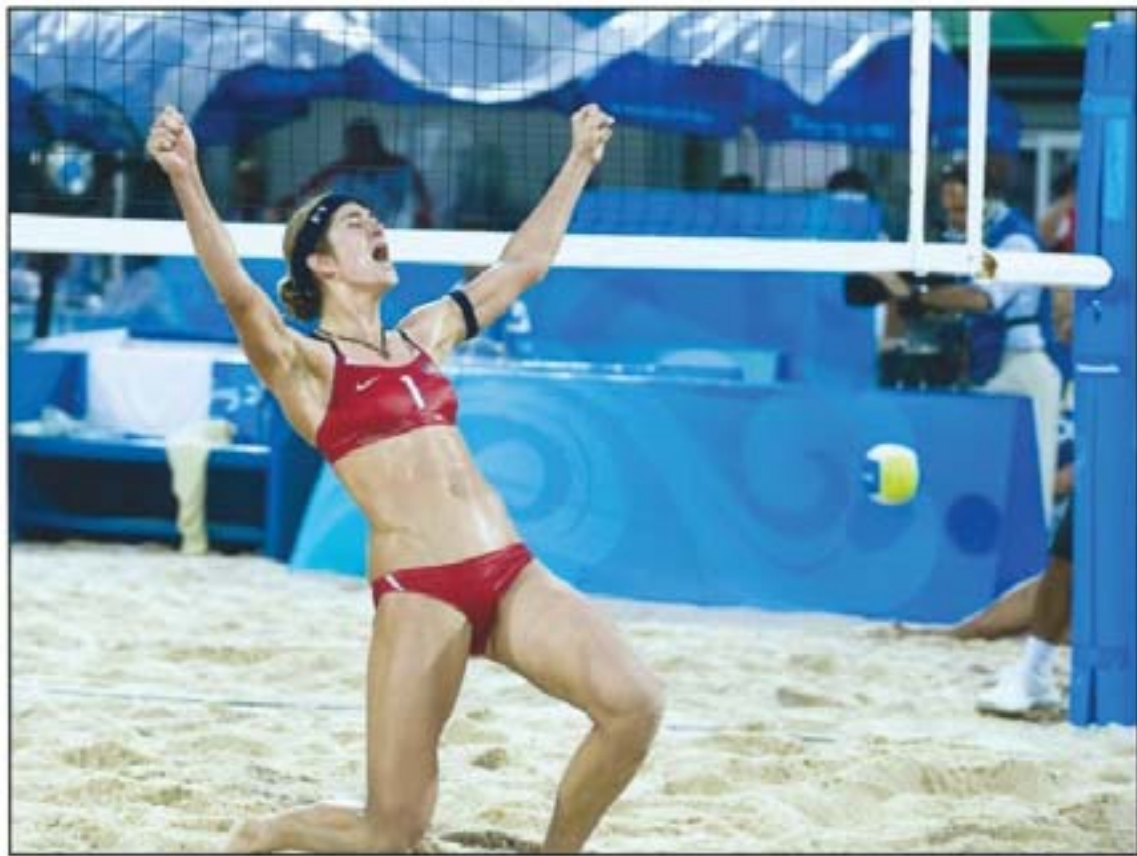
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# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Life's a beach for Nicole Branagh



Nicole Branagh at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China

Photo provided

By Jon Kingdon

Lamorinda has been blessed with many great student-athletes. There have been multi-sport athletes that have lettered in three sports. The number drops precipitously when you restrict the list to the people who have been recruited by various colleges to play any or all three sports. Nicole Branagh, who grew up in Orinda and graduated in 1997 from Miramonte High School, is one such individual.

Starting out, like most in Lamorinda, as a swimmer, Branagh also played softball and soccer. Entering high school, she played basketball, volleyball and did the high jump, triple jump, and long jump for the track team. Branagh was the league MVP in volleyball and basketball and still holds school records in the high jump and triple jump all of which ultimately led her to be inducted into the first Hall of

Fame class at Miramonte in 2017.

"I loved the whole experience of playing sports at Miramonte with the rivalries with Acalanes and Campolindo," Branagh said. "I had a lot of great memories like the road trips with the team with all of the team camaraderie and the Lamorinda community. I will not admit to painting the rock, but it was always fun to drive by the rock and see what school had done the latest painting."

Branagh chose to attend the University of Minnesota, accepting an athletic scholarship to play volleyball for the Golden Gophers. It was between basketball and volleyball as to which sport she would play. "Actually, I think that basketball was my best sport," Branagh said. "I had played it the longest, but I may have been burned out on it a little bit and I really loved volleyball and saw that there would be a lot of opportunities to continue

playing volleyball after college."

With so many colleges offering scholarships, what was it that led Branagh to choose to go to the University of Minnesota where the winters are cold and snowy, and the summers are hot and humid? It was the personal touch by head coach Mike Hebert that won Branagh over. "I had actually canceled my scheduled visit to Minnesota because I did not want to go that far from home. However, I kept getting hand-written letters from Coach Hebert and there was something about him that drove me to check him and the school out."

Hebert, considered one of the architects of modern high-competitive professional volleyball, won Branagh over when she made her recruiting trip. "After the trip, I told my family, 'That's the one. I just have a feeling about it,'" Branagh said. "I was won over by the people, the academics,

and the great support they had for the athletic programs. As for the weather, it was only going to be for four years, but I loved it there. I did grow up skiing, so snow wasn't new to me. It was just a great place to go to college."

Branagh did not totally turn her back on basketball, giving some thought to playing with the Minnesota varsity after finishing her final volleyball season. "I would usually hang around after practice and shoot with the basketball team," Branagh said. "However, playing two seasons of college sports back-to-back, and being a full-time student would have been too much."

Branagh led Minnesota in kills all four seasons and was named First Team All-Big Ten as a sophomore, junior and senior, named the Big Ten Player of the Year as a senior and was chosen All-American twice. Her 2,370 career kills remain the most in school history and remains among the top 15 in NCAA history and was inducted into the University of Minnesota Hall of Fame in 2014.

To the surprise of no one, Branagh was asked to join the U.S.A. National Team from 2001-03, winning a bronze medal at the Pan American games in 2003. She also played for the one season of the United States Professional Volleyball League with the Minnesota Chill winning the only championship for that league, and was named the Finals MVP. When the league folded, Branagh went on to play professionally in Japan from 2002-03 and in Italy from 2003-05.

While working for the family business, Branagh Inc. in 2004, Branagh got a call from a friend that led her on a new career path. "A friend invited me to come down to Southern California to play beach volleyball even though I had never played it before," Branagh said. "It is a different game from indoor volleyball (with only two players on the team) but the

basic skills are the same. Fortunately, it worked out to be a great career for me with many opportunities. I traveled all over the world and went to the 2008 Olympics which was a dream come true."

Beach Volleyball is a bit like the pro golf tour - it's all prize money and you must pay for all your expenses. So, for two years, Branagh played both indoors and beach volleyball where she had sponsorships with Under Armor and Hilton. "Once I began to win awards and do well, I got more sponsors," Branagh said, "which helped."

After being named rookie-of-the-year with American Volleyball Professionals (AVP), what led her to fully commit to beach volleyball was when she was asked by three-time Olympian Holly McPeak to be her playing partner. "This was huge," said Branagh. "It was then that I wanted to see how good I could do on the beach. I committed to training in the off-season, training with and learning from the best players."

Along with the AVP, Branagh also competed in the International Volleyball Foundation (FIVB). Competing in both leagues was taxing on the players. "We might play a final match on Sunday in California and that night we would be on a plane to Europe to start another tournament the next Wednesday," Branagh said. "Either we would come right back to the United States or stay overseas for a couple of weeks to compete in tournaments. We would play 26 to 27 tournaments in a season and with all that travel, it took a lot out of you."

Finding the right teammate is not easy and changes are often made. Branagh at various times partnered with six Olympians through her career. It was Elaine Youngs who was Branagh's partner in the 2008 Olympics where they finished in fifth place.

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# Life's a beach for Nicole Branagh

... continued from Page C1

For Branagh, competing in the Olympics was a dream fulfilled that began when she was 6 when Matt Biondi, a Campolindo graduate and 11-time Olympic medalist, came to Branagh's swim practice and gave everyone an Olympic pin. "I still have that USA pin with the Olympic ring," Branagh said. "I carried it with me throughout the Olympic qualifications and brought it to the Beijing Olympics and I still keep it in my car today."

Biondi was also in Beijing doing commentary for the swimming events. "Matt came to my match and we got to hang out and chat a little bit,"

Branagh said. "I'll never forget that first meeting with Matt Biondi and the lasting effect it had on me. It all came full circle in Beijing and it was all very special."

The travel experience for Branagh was an education itself. "I was exposed to many different countries and their people," Branagh said. "Once you learned about their cultures, it wasn't a problem for anyone. It was a great experience to go overseas but there were many times when our baggage did not show up and all I had was one bikini in my backpack and a pair of sunglasses. The worst part about all the traveling was being away from family, missing out on weddings and birthdays. When you're on the road, you

can't make it back for these important events."

Even in the Middle East, competing in Dubai, the bikini outfits were not an issue. "We weren't sure what it would be like there, but we wore our normal bikini uniforms, (which my team won), and then we had to wear a coverup for the medal ceremony. We had different colored long gowns on because the prince was coming and that was their culture. We were all fine with it."

After retiring in 2018, married with two children, 7-year-old Tegan and 4-year-old Will, Branagh began to look for a new career. Having traveled all over the world, competing in Australia, Brazil, China, Dubai, Japan, Norway,

Poland, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, and other countries would certainly have qualified her for a career as a travel agent.

However, Branagh chose to utilize her degree in public relations and advertising, pursuing a career in real estate. "I was referring a lot of my friends to Julie DeCoste who works at Remax and one day she told me that I needed to get my license since I was sending her so much business and that's what I'm working on now. I really do love helping people to find a home."

Branagh still maintains a connection with volleyball. "I've been coaching at the number one beach volleyball club team in Manhattan Beach with Holly McPeak, Barb

Fontana and Erik Fonoimoana for six years. When I started, I was still playing and it was a good way for me to give back by helping the younger generation. I am also doing TV commentating with the Pac 12 network for beach and indoor volleyball."

Still, it all comes back to family for Branagh: "Fortunately, I have a supportive family with my parents and siblings. I never felt any pressure from my parents (Tom and Diane). They always encouraged me to do what I loved and were always there to support all of us with our passions and we're very thankful for that."

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*Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ... read on Page D12*

## Feng Shui

### Year of the Female Iron Metal Ox



**By Michele Duffy**

So many of us here in the Bay area are thankful that 2020 is over! If you honored the New Year's transition with a positive intention-setting full moon practice, ringing bells, opening of all the house windows and doors for nine minutes, or creating special dishes only

served at the holidays, then you have welcomed the new year meaningfully.

If you honored your “self” in allowing a release of 2020 or what no longer serves you today, then you are on the right track to receive numerous 2021 blessings. If you didn’t engage in a meaningful ceremony of your own making, or mark the passing in some other way be patient with yourself and don’t despair ... you have another chance! The new Lunar year of the Yin (Female) Iron Metal Oxen is almost upon us and begins Feb. 12 this year and will usher in an era of honesty, greater stability and matters being creatively handled in a steady way, patience, persistence and hard work that bears fruit for us personally, but also for all the community.

Take action now!

If you still want to or need to space clear, cleanse, and release your home from the 2020 sadness, community ill-health, grief, stress, and feelings of helplessness, or isolation or the inability to travel or see loved ones, there’s no better remedy than intentional Feng Shui.

One strong and effective space clearing method includes placing nine drops of Neroli or tangerine essential oil per cup of water in a new spray bottle. Begin at the front entrance door of your home and mindfully walk counter-clockwise around your space and just follow the natural flow of Qi, so down or up stairs, into bathrooms and larger closets until you end up back at the front entrance door. As you move throughout the space spray the citrus water and visualize a detailed release of what you want to let go from 2020, and if you can include the Bagua map it’s an even stronger method.

At the same time you release stale energy, welcome a vivid visualization of 2021 protection, abundance, and possibilities for each Bagua area. Don’t get hung up on the ritual steps ... simply infuse your space with uplifting, boundless, joyful and loving Qi.

So dear reader, what will the New Year of the Yin (female) Iron Metal Oxen hold for each one of us and for society at large? Are you ready for the lunar New Year of the Ox?

In 2021 the Iron or Metal element rules the year of the Female OX. This year will encourage us to be as tough as nails (Metal) through one of the most hard-working years experienced so far. Since 2021 is a female or yin year, it will be less caustic, stressful and exhausting than 2020 despite the hard work that will be required of us all.

... continued on Page D4

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## Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	23	\$625,000	\$4,750,000
MORAGA	15	\$529,000	\$2,000,000
ORINDA	19	\$1,215,000	\$2,800,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

### LAFAYETTE

- 3199 Andreasen Drive, \$1,550,000, 4 Bdrms, 1475 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 12-07-20,  
Previous Sale: \$797,000, 06-05-10
- 3079 Camino Diablo, \$719,000, 2 Bdrms, 1253 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 12-09-20,  
Previous Sale: \$745,000, 03-11-20
- 3930 Canyon Road, \$1,750,000, 2 Bdrms, 2363 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-11-20
- 1 Dead Horse Canyon Road, \$2,150,000, 5 Bdrms, 3255 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 12-10-20
- 3 Dead Horse Canyon Road, \$2,925,000, 4 Bdrms, 4030 SqFt, 2002 YrBlt, 12-23-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,995,000, 08-17-16
- 1231 El Curtola Boulevard, \$1,120,000, 3 Bdrms, 1845 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-21-20,  
Previous Sale: \$118,000, 09-01-79
- 1136 Glen Road, \$3,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 3389 SqFt, 2018 YrBlt, 12-11-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,700,000, 02-13-17
- 3256 Greenhills Drive, \$2,025,000, 5 Bdrms, 3828 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 12-18-20,  
Previous Sale: \$145,000, 11-01-85
- 3724 Happy Valley Road, \$4,750,000, 6 Bdrms, 4995 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-21-20,  
Previous Sale: \$3,655,000, 09-09-09
- 4087 Happy Valley Road, \$3,520,000, 5 Bdrms, 3879 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 12-15-20,  
Previous Sale: \$3,150,000, 09-11-15
- 860 Hidden Pond Court, \$1,550,000, 4 Bdrms, 3188 SqFt, 1991 YrBlt, 12-08-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,070,000, 12-07-12
- 4150 Los Arabis Drive, \$2,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 2299 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 12-07-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,350,000, 08-24-12
- 3245 Marlene Drive, \$625,000, 2 Bdrms, 1160 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 12-24-20
- 3306 Moraga Boulevard, \$1,052,000, 4 Bdrms, 1568 SqFt, 1850 YrBlt, 12-14-20
- 32 Olympic Oaks Drive, \$1,790,000, 3 Bdrms, 2329 SqFt, 1996 YrBlt, 12-16-20,  
Previous Sale: \$595,000, 06-23-98
- 1121 Palomares Court, \$1,696,000, 4 Bdrms, 1963 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 12-24-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,160,000, 01-04-18
- 3357 South Lucille Lane, \$1,235,000, 3 Bdrms, 1671 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 12-09-20,  
Previous Sale: \$825,000, 06-25-13
- 858 Reliez Station Road, \$1,175,000, 3 Bdrms, 1416 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-11-20,  
Previous Sale: \$313,500, 06-01-90
- 866 Revere Road, \$1,675,000, 4 Bdrms, 2117 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 12-09-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,242,500, 05-14-20
- 618 Stage Coach Court, \$2,550,000, 4 Bdrms, 3946 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 12-07-20,  
Previous Sale: \$750,000, 09-01-91
- 3161 Stanley Boulevard, \$1,212,500, 3 Bdrms, 1239 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-07-20,  
Previous Sale: \$651,000, 11-10-10
- 3177 Teigland Road, \$1,599,000, 3 Bdrms, 2620 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 12-11-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 07-02-20
- 1215 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$3,350,000, 4 Bdrms, 2738 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-11-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,940,000, 01-14-09

... continued on Page D6



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## *Feng Shui*

# Year of the Female Iron Metal Ox



... continued from Page D1

The year 2021 will redefine determination and devotion in achieving challenging objectives before us. The energetic signature of 2021 Ox will be all about humbly, diligently, attending to our responsibilities with restored integrity, and will require a lot of staying power and strength and there will need to be a “nothing spared” attitude for delivery on promises and commitments. We will all feel a breath of fresh air that lifts us into unceasing energy and relentless drive to accomplish 2021 goals, which overall will be of a more conservative nature that highlights caution versus recklessness.

In 2021 we may be asked to be more bold, flexible, and less rigid when it comes to being team players, and this includes welcoming and listening to different perspectives. While last year set some of the changing societal agenda items, 2021 will include thoughtful conversations on Black Lives Matter, climate change, education, income inequality, and protecting the human rights of all peoples, including indigenous cultures. The new year will encourage us to set our minds toward a positive course, borrowing Oxen’s obstinacy so distraction or discouragement are kept to a minimum.

... continued on Page D10

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## Lamorinda home sales recorded

... continued from Page D2

### MORAGA

1047 Alta Mesa Drive, \$925,000, 2 Bdrms, 1700 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-15-20, Previous Sale: \$655,000, 08-18-06  
838 Augusta Drive, \$860,000, 3 Bdrms, 1743 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-23-20, Previous Sale: \$540,000, 03-06-03  
371 Calle La Montana, \$1,272,500, 3 Bdrms, 1920 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-09-20  
1862 Camino Pablo, \$1,505,000, 4 Bdrms, 1966 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 12-11-20, Previous Sale: \$1,126,000, 07-22-20  
1396 Camino Peral, \$835,000, 3 Bdrms, 1440 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-16-20, Previous Sale: \$685,000, 08-02-16  
432 Deerfield Drive, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 2236 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 12-22-20, Previous Sale: \$850,000, 05-02-11  
2121 Donald Drive #6, \$529,000, 2 Bdrms, 1224 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-15-20, Previous Sale: \$435,000, 07-25-16  
132 Greenbriar, \$1,290,000, 3 Bdrms, 2470 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 12-21-20, Previous Sale: \$722,000, 02-25-11  
1832 Joseph Drive, \$1,735,000, 5 Bdrms, 2419 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-09-20, Previous Sale: \$1,400,000, 07-02-07  
15 Kings Crown Court, \$2,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 2698 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-18-20, Previous Sale: \$1,375,000, 08-09-13  
87 Miramonte Drive, \$810,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-23-20, Previous Sale: \$685,000, 11-14-16  
122 Paseo Del Rio, \$1,510,000, 4 Bdrms, 1946 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-23-20  
1913 Saint Andrews Drive, \$1,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 1880 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-15-20, Previous Sale: \$1,059,000, 12-21-07  
212 Sheila Court, \$1,399,000, 4 Bdrms, 2050 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 12-22-20, Previous Sale: \$281,000, 09-01-87  
10 Woodford Drive, \$1,560,000, 3 Bdrms, 1927 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 12-21-20, Previous Sale: \$665,000, 08-08-12

### ORINDA

19 Camino Del Diablo, \$1,695,000, 4 Bdrms, 2676 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 12-15-20, Previous Sale: \$1,702,500, 09-12-19  
158 Camino Sobrante, \$2,100,000, 5 Bdrms, 3583 SqFt, 1926 YrBlt, 12-14-20, Previous Sale: \$702,000, 11-04-98  
10 Chelton Court, \$1,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 1874 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-16-20  
212 Crescent Drive, \$1,551,500, 2 Bdrms, 1976 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 12-16-20, Previous Sale: \$1,330,000, 06-26-15  
220 Crestview Drive, \$2,700,000, 5 Bdrms, 5966 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-11-20  
72 El Gavilan Road, \$1,425,000, 4 Bdrms, 2213 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 12-16-20  
153 El Toyonal, \$1,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 3178 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 12-18-20, Previous Sale: \$242,000, 12-01-87  
172 Glorietta Boulevard, \$1,440,000, 3 Bdrms, 2232 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 12-11-20  
360 Glorietta Boulevard, \$1,550,000, 3 Bdrms, 2291 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-18-20, Previous Sale: \$870,000, 10-20-08  
41 Hillcrest Drive, \$2,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2504 SqFt, 2018 YrBlt, 12-16-20, Previous Sale: \$1,200,000, 11-11-16  
45 Ivy Drive, \$1,860,000, 3 Bdrms, 1458 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 12-11-20, Previous Sale: \$970,000, 07-19-20  
215 Ivy Drive, \$1,215,000, 3 Bdrms, 1281 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 12-18-20, Previous Sale: \$650,000, 05-06-16  
26 Las Palomas, \$1,229,000, 4 Bdrms, 1785 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 12-11-20  
14 Lavina Court, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 2470 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt, 12-15-20, Previous Sale: \$875,000, 12-13-13  
153 Lombardy Lane, \$2,320,000, 5 Bdrms, 3601 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 12-17-20, Previous Sale: \$2,298,000, 07-12-06  
49 Oak Drive, \$1,275,000, 4 Bdrms, 2771 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-07-20  
4 Soule Road, \$1,575,000, 3 Bdrms, 1933 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-18-20, Previous Sale: \$1,175,000, 01-15-08  
51 Tomcat Way, \$2,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 4194 SqFt, 2016 YrBlt, 12-15-20  
79 Yarrow Valley Lane, \$2,090,000, 5 Bdrms, 4223 SqFt, 1992 YrBlt, 12-14-20, Previous Sale: \$2,000,000, 08-09-07



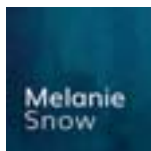
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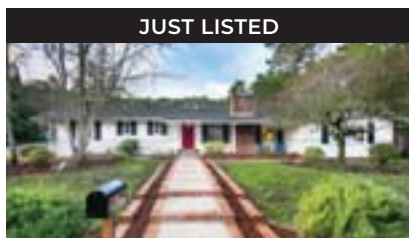


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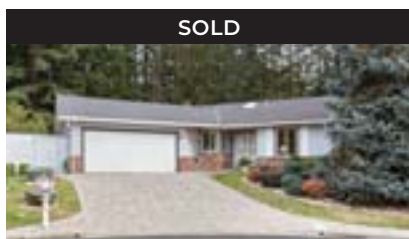
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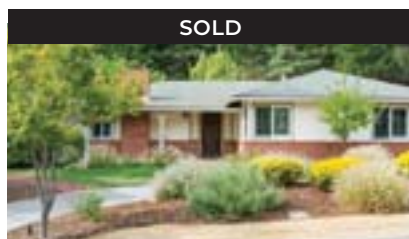
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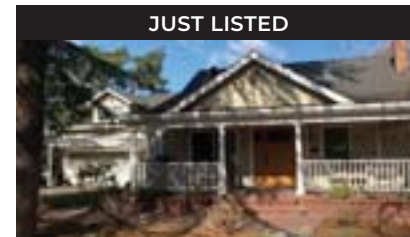
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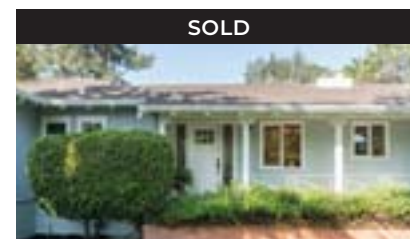
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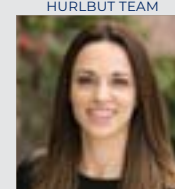
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## Feng Shui

# Year of the Female Iron Metal Ox

... continued from Page D4

Generally, our expectations will be reliant on a sense of life being more dependable and calm than it was 2020. Our 2021 ambitions are realized when we balance our focus on hard work with important family time, which functions as the antidote to work stress. This 2021 connection is a reflection of Oxens consistent and strong ties to nurturing family, traditions, faith, and the strength that hard work demands. In 2021 avoid being self-opinionated, stubborn,

unapproachable, miserly, persistent in old ways or narrow minded.

Since Oxen can be reticent communicators in 2021 we will be required to try hard to become consistently clear communicators, which includes speaking and listening to others, especially to different points of view from our own. Happy New Year of the OX and if you're curious about your personal relationship with 2021 Oxen, please reach out to me at [spaceharmony@gmail.com](mailto:spaceharmony@gmail.com) or see [mandalafengshui.com](http://mandalafengshui.com) for more details.

<b>WEALTH &amp; PROSPERITY</b> XUN Wood Southeast Purple	<b>FAME &amp; REPUTATION</b> Li Fire South Red Summer	<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b> Kun Earth Southwest Pink
<b>FAMILY</b> ZHEN Wood East Green Spring	<b>HEALTH</b> TAI JI Earth Center Orange, Yellow Brown	<b>JOY &amp; COMPLETION</b> DUI Metal West White Autumn
<b>KNOWLEDGE &amp; SELFCULTIVATION</b> GEN Earth Northeast Blue	<b>CAREER &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b> KAN Water North Black & Dark Blue Winter	<b>HELPFUL PEOPLE &amp; TRAVEL</b> QIAN Metal Northeast Grey

Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating "Space as Medicine" Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2020 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to [spaceharmony@gmail.com](mailto:spaceharmony@gmail.com).





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## *Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

### **Prune, plan, and peruse**



Nemesia and ferns are excellent bedmates.



An old Asian pear tree is pruned in winter.

#### **By Cynthia Brian**

*“A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it.” ~ George Moore*

Like most of us who have been sheltering at home for the past 11 months, traveling to foreign lands has not been part of my normal activities. At first, I was immensely disappointed to cancel my 2020 exotic trips, especially the one that would have reunited me with my European pen pal with whom I've been corresponding regularly since I was 9 years old. That's a long time to have maintained a close relationship across thousands of miles.

But, like so many, this past year has found me digging even deeper into communion with nature. I have been inspired by its majesty and motivated to respect our alliance with a stronger devotion by spending many hours outdoors in contemplation as well as work-mode.

A week ago, the hills were still golden brown but with the recent heavy rains, a lushness and verdancy have finally appeared. February nights bring increased frost and freezing temperatures. We must cover our tender plants with burlap or cloth as protection.

The most necessary garden chore this month is pruning our fruit trees. It is essential to prune your peaches, pears, prunes, plums, apples and apricots while the trees are dormant in winter. Sweet cherries are pruned in summer as they are susceptible to fungal and

bacterial diseases. All other fruiting trees need to be pruned to allow for increased sunlight to penetrate the branches which will in turn yield higher quality fruit. Pruning helps battle diseases while developing a better form for a healthier tree.

The tools you'll need are a lopper, hand pruner, pruning saw, and long-handled pruning shear. You may need a ladder if your tree is especially tall but be very careful when using any ladder. Make sure to have a second person with you to hold the ladder since the ground may not be level. Sterilize your tools with alcohol or bleach mixed with water to avoid spreading any disease from plant to plant.

By removing unnecessary limbs, you will be able to shape the tree while providing better access for any necessary spraying. The increased sunlight promotes a larger size of fruit with a uniform ripening time. Insect infestation and other diseases are reduced through pruning because after a rain shower, the limbs will dry more quickly. Pruning appropriately will provide a more beautiful canopy without topping the tree. The sugar content of the crop is increased with the airflow and sun. Harvesting is easier. Pick up a book on pruning to read about the best methods for your various trees or watch online tutorials. If you feel out of your league, hire a professional arborist. Always gather the trimmings from the ground. When dry, use as kindling, shred for mulch, or add to your green bin.

... continued on Page D13

## *Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

### **Prune, plan, and peruse**



**Roses for Valentine**

... continued from Page D12

Although this month is not the time to plant annuals and perennials, it is the perfect time to plant any bare-root specimens including roses, berries and fruit trees. Check out the selection at your favorite nursery or garden center. Follow the directions on the packaging for soaking the roots, light pruning, digging the holes, and filling. By late spring most bare-rooted plants are established and flourishing.

Besides pruning and planting bare-root, February is a terrific



time to plan for all-season enjoyment and splendor. Recently a delivery was made by someone who hadn't been to my garden since the summer before the pandemic. His first comment to me was: "Your landscape is so beautiful and colorful ... it's like falling into a chapter of 'Alice in Wonderland.'" I expressed my thanks for his sweet compliment, although in my mind I was thinking "winter is the ugliest time of the year in my garden."

I decided to look at my yard through a different lens ... fresh eyes, as if returning from a vacation. Sometimes when we rarely leave our cocoon, we fail to recognize the evolution of the cycles of attraction.

... continued on Page D14

## *Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian* **Prune, plan, and peruse**



**A sprig of purple sage.**

... continued from Page D12

As I walked around my property, I saw what he saw – a hillside covered in sweet-smelling narcissi, rows of pink Bergenia, waves of purple sage, shimmers of calendulas, bushes of azaleas, rhododendrons, and roses, trees of camellias, groves of ferns, mounds of nemesia, orchards of citrus, crocus, calla lilies, and daffodils popping, and the soaring orange plumes of birds of paradise all in full glorious bloom. Even in the middle of winter, my garden is teeming with interest and vibrancy.

Take a walk around your garden and make notes of where you need more wit and whimsy. Know where the sun rises, moves, and sets throughout your landscape. Do you need to add or extend irrigation? Do you have a favorite color palette, or do you prefer a cacophony of color authentically unique to you?

Once you understand your wants and needs, pour a cup of tea, cover yourself with a cozy throw, and peruse a multitude of garden catalogs that showcase bulbs, annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, grasses, fruits, vegetables and herbs. Research what plants will be best suited to your terrain and

micro-climate. Make a wish list noting the months to order, when to plant, and when to expect the show. By creating a calendar of flowering events, your garden will boast attractive appeal all year long. For a dramatic night environment, make sure to add outdoor lighting and lanterns to highlight trees, paths, fences, and walls.

**Here are a few catalog favorites that you can order:**

White Flower Farm:

[www.WhiteFlowerFarm.com](http://www.WhiteFlowerFarm.com)

John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds:

[www.KitchenGardenSeeds.com](http://www.KitchenGardenSeeds.com)

Plant Delight Nursery, Inc.:

[www.PlantDelights.com](http://www.PlantDelights.com)

Bluestone Perennials:

[www.BluestonePerennials.com](http://www.BluestonePerennials.com)

The Whole Seed Catalog:

[www.Rareseeds.com](http://www.Rareseeds.com)

Renee's Garden Seeds:

[www.Reneesgarden.com](http://www.Reneesgarden.com)

Proven Winners Shrubs:

[www.ProvenWinners-shrubs.com](http://www.ProvenWinners-shrubs.com)

David Austin Roses:

[www.DavidAustinRoses.com](http://www.DavidAustinRoses.com)

Your general state of happiness is connected to how much you enjoy your home. With these garden catalog treasures,

you can travel the globe without leaving the safety of your house. Prune, plan, peruse, and dream on.

Happy Gardening! Happy Growing!  
Happy Valentine's Day!



**Calendulas add sparkle to the winter, spring, and summer garden.**



**A layer of frost on a retaining wall.**

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**Cynthia Brian with the February color of purple.**

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your spring garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com).

Buy copies of her best-selling books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at [www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store](http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store). Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD.

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## ORINDA



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### 11 Sunrise Hill Road

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## ORINDA



Pending

### 28 Ivy Drive

Contemporary 6 bed/ 4 bath home centrally located in sought-after Ivy Drive neighborhood. Views of the Orinda Hills!

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## ORINDA

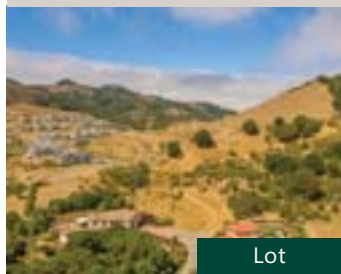


### 42 Oak Road

Spacious 4 bed + bonus room/ 3 bath 2860 sqft home on .28 acres. Close to town, BART & Hwy 24. Excellent schools!

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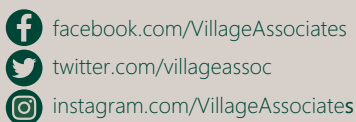
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