

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 15 Issue 2 Wednesday, March 17, 2021



Lamorinda Home Sales

... read on Page D2

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Top of the Morning!



The beautiful blooms of the purple plum trees at Moraga Commons Park. Photos Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

*“May your thoughts be as glad as the
shamrocks
May your heart be as light as a song.
May each day bring you bright
Happy hours that stay with you all the year
long.” ~ Irish blessing*
My first introduction to the Emerald Isles

arrived when I was 7. First grade was the beginning of my education since preschool and kindergarten did not exist in our neck of the woods. A new school had been constructed with young teachers dressed from head to toe in black with white collars who arrived from a faraway land called Ireland. These exotic nuns told the most marvelous tales of a land where mischievous little people known as leprechauns lived in

tiny houses, worked as shoemakers, and hid their gold in pots at the end of the rainbow. Magical green shamrocks blanketed the fields and dales that were used by the legendary St. Patrick in the 4th century to explain the Holy Trinity to those he wanted to convert to Christianity. Best of all, we learned he had driven out the snakes.

Rattlesnakes were everywhere on our ranch so the thought of being able to run barefoot through a field of clover sounded spectacular. By the age of 9, letters were flying across the pond to my pen pal in Dublin and, finally when I was 18, I visited her in this mythical landscape to become an adopted Irishwoman. Since then, I've spent many days traversing the island, soaking up the hospitality of the people and the beauty of the stones, seascapes, landscapes, cottages, and shamrocks. Most charming are the tiny doors built at the base of trees where the leprechauns live.

... continued on Page D16



A tree full of camellias

Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	14	\$965,000	\$5,250,000
MORAGA	11	\$494,000	\$2,950,000
ORINDA	7	\$1,300,000	\$3,100,000

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

- 1 Foothill Park Terrace, \$1,370,000, 6 Bdrms, 2806 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 02-05-21
 101 Greenbank Drive, \$2,918,500, 6 Bdrms, 7066 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 02-01-21,
 Previous Sale: \$710,000, 03-30-98
 1787 Ivanhoe Avenue, \$1,000,000, 2 Bdrms, 1338 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 01-26-21
 3408 La Caminita, \$5,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 5034 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 01-20-21
 3611 Lincoln Way, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 1634 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 01-20-21
 3878 Los Arabis Drive, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 3626 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 02-03-21,
 Previous Sale: \$1,700,000, 08-06-09
 3477 Monroe Avenue, \$2,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 3351 SqFt, 1906 YrBlt, 02-03-21
 3615 Mosswood Drive #3617, \$1,320,000, 4 Bdrms, 1950 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 01-26-21,
 Previous Sale: \$1,139,500, 05-19-16
 3976 South Peardale Drive, \$2,625,000, 5 Bdrms, 2128 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 01-27-21,
 Previous Sale: \$1,035,000, 12-07-09
 44 Prado Way, \$3,850,000, 5018 SqFt, 2014 YrBlt, 01-26-21,
 Previous Sale: \$525,000, 10-21-11
 364 Read Drive, \$2,525,000, 5 Bdrms, 4134 SqFt, 1999 YrBlt, 01-29-21
 1076 Serrano Court, \$1,425,000, 3 Bdrms, 1844 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 01-26-21,
 Previous Sale: \$1,446,500, 10-14-19
 1470 Sunset Loop, \$1,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 2523 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 02-01-21,
 Previous Sale: \$265,000, 03-01-92
 1003 Woodbury Road #208, \$965,000, 2 Bdrms, 1110 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt, 01-26-21

MORAGA

- 2051 Ascot Drive #104, \$494,000, 2 Bdrms, 1180 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 02-04-21
 1 Barnes Court, \$2,950,000, 4 Bdrms, 3907 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 01-27-21,
 Previous Sale: \$2,700,000, 06-25-20
 793 Country Club Drive, \$1,172,000, 3 Bdrms, 1953 SqFt, 2019 YrBlt, 02-02-21
 149 Cypress Point Way, \$1,150,000, 2 Bdrms, 1444 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 01-22-21
 124 Greenbriar, \$1,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 2486 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 01-29-21,
 Previous Sale: \$490,000, 06-08-99
 27 Indian Wells Street, \$1,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 2828 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 02-01-21,
 Previous Sale: \$419,000, 08-01-88
 2 Julianna Court, \$2,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 4324 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 01-29-21,
 Previous Sale: \$1,725,000, 06-23-11
 231 Los Santos Court, \$2,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 3318 SqFt, 2018 YrBlt, 02-03-21,
 Previous Sale: \$2,110,000, 11-12-19
 25 Merrill Circle, \$2,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 4155 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 01-29-21,
 Previous Sale: \$1,810,000, 08-01-13
 1926 Saint Andrews Drive, \$950,000, 2 Bdrms, 1889 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 01-22-21
 29 Winslow Place, \$2,035,000, 4 Bdrms, 2287 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 01-29-21,
 Previous Sale: \$1,300,000, 03-13-15

ORINDA

- 128 Catherine Court, \$3,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 4501 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 02-05-21
 38 Crestview Drive, \$1,375,000, 3 Bdrms, 1875 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 01-26-21,
 Previous Sale: \$1,275,000, 06-18-16
 32 Heather Lane, \$1,575,000, 6 Bdrms, 4048 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 02-01-21
 683 Ironbark Circle, \$1,868,000, 5 Bdrms, 4256 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 01-22-21,
 Previous Sale: \$567,500, 05-28-98
 10 Kittiwake Road, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 4436 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 01-25-21,
 Previous Sale: \$168,500, 04-01-88
 10 Orchard Court, \$1,526,000, 3 Bdrms, 2195 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 01-22-21,
 Previous Sale: \$1,125,000, 11-19-15
 226 Overhill Road, \$1,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 1306 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 01-29-21



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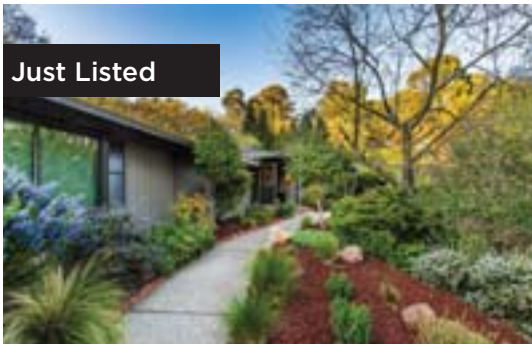
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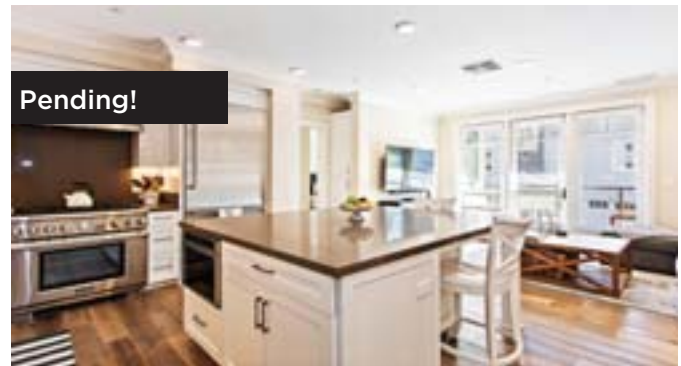
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Local landscape consultant focuses on tree health

By John T. Miller

The lion's share of longtime Orinda resident Michael Baefsky's work for private clients is tree consulting. "The trees of Lamorinda and the greater Bay Area have a strong hold on me," says Baefsky, who owns the landscape consulting firm, Trees, Bugs, Dirt. "It's satisfying to work with the people here who love their trees as much as I do."

Recently, his work has been addressing concerns about bark beetles devastating the Monterey pine trees and sudden oak death

killing local species of homeowners' oak trees. "People don't realize that the presence of the pests isn't the only part of the problem. They are there and thriving because of other environmental factors, like insufficient water and excessive heat for the pine trees and excessive moisture, like fog or irrigation, in the oaks."

Another statewide problem, especially in many school districts, is ground squirrels undermining sidewalks and other structures. Using poisons to eliminate the pest can lead to secondary and tertiary poisoning, according



Michael Baefsky

Photo provided

to Baefsky. "The question became how can you design a landscape to avoid pests in the first place?" The correct type of fence can prevent or reduce the problem.

Baefsky was recently awarded the California Department of Pesticide Regulation first ever Lifetime Integrated Pest Management Achievement Award. He was given the award for his "ongoing dedication to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) implementation through professional, advisory and teaching endeavors [which] has enriched and will continue to benefit the people of California," according to the DPR.

... continued on Page D12



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56 Camino del Diablo
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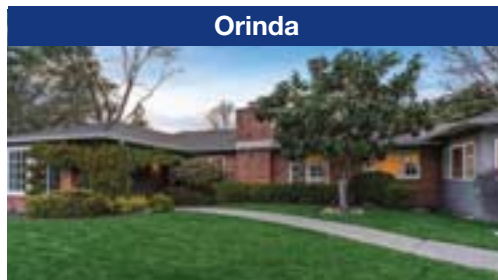


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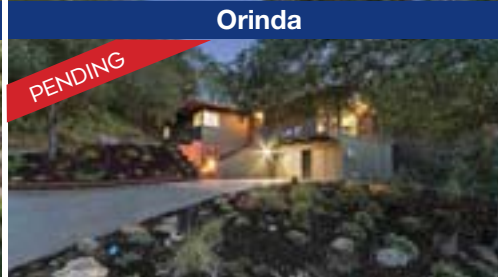


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Village
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Local landscape consultant focuses on tree health

... continued from Page D4

IPM began in the 1950s out of discontent over a purely insecticidal approach to insect control, which came to prominence with Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring."

Baefsky formed his landscaping and consulting firm in Orinda after receiving a degree in Pest Management from UC Berkeley in 1985. He provides professional tree, pest and soil consulting to both public and private clients. Baefsky advises and consults with clients encouraging sustainable practices in the landscape that include re-using materials on sites as mulches, minimizing wasteful irrigation practices by monitoring soil moisture and watering as needed, eliminating pesticide use when alternatives exist, and using materials and methods that match specific sites.

He has held tree and IPM related advisory positions in the Bay Area and helped develop many IPM publications, most recently working with Dr. Chris Geiger of the San Francisco

Department of the Environment to coauthor "Pest Prevention by Design – Landscapes" which focuses on elements of design to prevent pest invasion.

Shortly after the California Healthy Schools Act (HSA) was passed in 2000, Baefsky traveled up and down the state working with districts on mandatory IPM training and providing information about pesticide use at public schools. He has also taught classes on Insects and IPM Pest Management at Merritt College, and on trees, pests, diseases and soil at Diablo Valley College.

"Teaching is my favorite tool," says Baefsky. He recalls an "Aha" moment when giving a workshop for the city of San Francisco a few years back: "There were about 120 participants at the Hall of Flowers who were used to more passive types of learning through PowerPoint presentations with the lights out. I gave them all a worksheet and turned it into a problem-solving treasure hunt with tables and exhibits filling the

rooms. Everyone got excited and involved."

Ever since, Baefsky discovers the joy of hands-on interactive workshops, going beyond the lecture format to present stimulating learning situations. He is a strong proponent of organic gardening, but not an absolute purist. "If an approach is environmentally sound, I'm willing to use it. I'm also a firm believer in following university research," he says.

COVID-19 has affected face-to-face contact for Baefsky, but he observes that people's increased involvement with their homes during the pandemic may have led to even more calls. His current protocol is to phone the client on arrival to their property, take a look at whatever the problem is, and then call back with his observations and suggestions, while often following up in writing.

People interested in Baefsky's work may contact him at treesbugsdirt@gmail.com, or call (925) 254-7950.

Andrea

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Garage door troubleshooting



There are two sensors on both sides of the garage door to check for spiders, leaves or dirt.

By Jim Hurley

Long ago, everyone enjoyed stopping in the driveway, getting out of their car, manually opening the garage door, and getting back in their car to drive into the garage, because they had no choice. (Unless, like my dad, you had children to assign to the task.) Thank goodness, the automatic garage door is a reliable feature of our homes that we take for granted – unless it stops working.

Garage door styles have come full circle, in a manner of speaking. Originally “carriage house” doors were double wide panels, with big tee-strap hinges on each side, that opened out manually. Over time, carriage house doors were replaced by single panel tilt-up doors which were then replaced by roll-up doors. Now, new roll-up doors are made to look like the old-fashioned carriage house doors. Everything old is new again.

When your opener stops working, your first goal is probably to get the car out of the garage since you were leaving for some reason. The solution is to open the door manually. At the front of the door, near the top of the bar that connects the door to the opener, there is a clip with a pull cord attached. Pull down on the cord and the clip should click into a downward position. This releases the door from the opener’s drive shaft. You should now be able to lift and roll the door open easily. If the door does not open easily, there is more trouble than just the opener not working. We will get to that below. For now, take care of your errand, but when you close the garage door be careful to bring it

down gently (do not let it drop!)

When you get back it is time to start debugging the opener’s problem. First check to see that the opener can work. If the motor does not try to run or even make a sound when you push the button, there may be a problem with the outlet that it is plugged into. Get a step ladder, unplug the opener from the outlet and plug the opener into a heavy duty, (16 gauge), extension cord. Plug the extension cord into an outlet that you know is working and see if the garage door opener runs. Remember that you disconnected the drive from the door when you pulled the clip down, so the motor may run without the door going up.

If the opener runs, your next step is to restore power to the ceiling outlet. Check the circuit breaker panel for a tripped breaker. If the breakers are all on, then it is possible the ceiling outlet is wired into a CGFI outlet somewhere. Check each of the CGFI outlets, (I sense another article coming), to make sure they are working. If you find one to reset, check back on your opener’s outlet. If you cannot get the outlet back on, you can leave the opener plugged into the extension cord and still use the door until your handyman or electrician comes to fix the outlet.

If the opener refuses to run, it is time to call the garage door repairman. There might be a sticker by the opener button on the wall of your garage of the company that installed the unit, or you can search Garage Door Repair online. A specialist will have the right parts, the experience to adjust the new opener if needed, and get the job done with little inconvenience to you.

Was the door heavy and difficult to lift when you disconnected it from the drive earlier? The springs on your garage door counterbalance the weight of the door. When a spring breaks, the door becomes too heavy for the power opener to lift and the motor will start acting sketchy, like starting to open and stopping, or pulling with a loud racket. When this happens, unless you’re in the Super Handy Do-It-Yourselfer category, it’s best to call the garage door repairman.

One other problem that may occur is that the door goes up but will not come down. There is an electric sensor near the ground on either side of the door. These are a safety feature that prevents the door from closing if anything (like your car or a child) is in the way. Check to see if something was placed or fell in front of the sensors, or they might become misaligned. Once, we had a spider build her nest in the sensor and block the beam with a leaf. The sensors have a red and green light.

If the path is clear and they can “see” each other, the lights will be lit. If there is something blocking the path, the lights will either not light or blink. Check the sensors, clear the path, or adjust the alignment to make the lights stay on, this should fix the closing problem.

Jim Hurley is an independent handyman with over 25 years of experience in residential repairs. Hopefully this free advice is helpful to someone attempting Do-It-Yourself home repairs. The information presented is intended for informational purposes and for use by persons having appropriate technical skill, at their own discretion and risk.





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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian **Top of the Morning!**



The yellow flowers of the shamrock, also known as oxalis.

... continued from Page D1

Shamrocks grow in my garden in the colors of pink and yellow. There are over 500 species of Oxalis, known as sorrel or shamrock. Many people consider them a weed because they do multiply. Because I love the Irish lore, I love my spreading shamrocks. They grow from a small bulb and in March sprout mounds of beautiful green clover-shaped leaves with flowers that open

at the top of the morning and close at the end of the day. I started my collection by growing shamrocks indoors in a pot and eventually moved the plants outdoors. When the foliage turns yellow and begins to die, cut the leaves to let the plant sleep. Next season, the shamrocks will burst forth again. The tiny bulbs or tubers can easily be moved or transplanted elsewhere. Be aware that shamrocks can become invasive. If you have a small yard, it may be best to keep them in a container. Or designate one area of your

garden for the shamrocks and don't allow them to escape.

Wear green on March 17 and celebrate St. Patrick's Day with a pot of shamrocks on your table. They may not bring you a pot of gold, but shamrocks are a reminder that once we can travel again, visiting the land of leprechauns is at the end of the rainbow.

Happy St. Patrick's Day. Erin go Bragh!

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March

Since I've been writing this column since 2008, I often mistakenly assume that readers understand that I encourage the use of organic and safe garden practices for feeding, fertilizing, spraying, or eliminating pests. There are always ways to create a beautiful garden without the use of toxic chemicals, insecticides, herbicides, and pesticides. Keeping our children, pets, and wildlife safe and healthy is of the utmost importance. Whether I specify an organic method or not, please always use eco-friendly products. By doing so, we'll also heal our planet.

ELIMINATE SNAILS: Non-toxic to children, chickens, and other pets, Sluggo and Natria are two organic baits containing iron phosphate which naturally occurs in soil. Non-ingested bait degrades and becomes part of the soil.

Other ways to purge snails and slugs include:

- a. Handpicking them. I often go out at night with a flashlight and a bucket. If you have chickens, ducks, or geese, they'll feast on escargot. Otherwise, at the risk of sounding cruel, you must kill them. We do the snail stomp. Put on boots and dance around. Other ways include drowning them in a bucket of water.
- b. Trapping them. Snails like to hide in damp, dark refuges under flowerpots, boards or plants. Gather them in the morning after their nightly raid.
- c. Beer bowls. Snails are attracted to the fermenting yeast of beers. If you put out saucers or shallow bowls of beer, they will fall in. They don't get drunk. They drown in the beer.
- d. Copper barriers. Copper bands or strips are probably the most effective barrier to keep snails and slugs out of pots and plants. It is work-intensive and more expensive, but especially useful around trees.
- e. Decollate snails: These predatory snails have been used in Southern California to control young small brown snails in citrus groves. However, they cannot be used in Northern California as they would endanger other mollusk species.

Once you have killed your snails, you can add them to your compost pile where their moist bodies will decompose quickly. The shells will take a bit longer but will add nutrients as they compost.

UPGRADE your outdoor living to be a place that encourages peacefulness and solitude. Create an area where you can work and listen to the sounds of nature.

SUPPORT National Farmworkers Awareness Week March 25-31 by purchasing produce from socially responsible vendors.



Stone wall at the site of the 7th Century Seven Churches of the Aran Islands ("Na Seacht Teampall" in the Gaelic) with lawn daisies growing.

... continued on Page D22

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March



Herbs in a Galway Garden



Irish ivy on an Irish stone wall.

... continued from Page D21

TRY a solar-powered sonic mole deterrent that emits vibrations through the ground to keep these velvety creatures at bay. Moles do produce unsightly molehills and undermine plants with their shallow tunnels which can cause roots to dry out. They also do positive chores by feeding on slugs.

STORE garbage cans out of reach of scavengers. Don't feed wildlife. Skunks, racoons, and coyotes have become frequent neighborhood visitors and can be dangerous.

FEED your lawns. Healthy soil grows healthy strong grass. Top your lawn with ¼ inch of compost or use a slow-release organic fertilizer that disseminates their nutrients through animal, plant, and mineral matter. It is best to fertilize before rainfall.

TURN on lawn sprinklers to check the heads have not been covered by new growing grass.

DESTROY weeds and poison oak without toxic chemicals.

For weeds in sidewalk cracks, borders, and areas where lawns, flowers, and

other plants won't be affected, mix one tablespoon Dawn dishwashing detergent, a cup of salt, and a gallon of regular white vinegar in a pail. Pour into a spray bottle and spray on the weeds on a sunny day. The sunlight works the magic. Be careful where you spray as this solution is harmful to grass and plants. It will kill your weeds.

For poison oak or super-tough weeds, buy a gallon of 30% white vinegar and put it in a spray tank undiluted. Spray poison oak as it emerges in spring and do it on a warm, sunny day. The 30% white vinegar is very potent and will kill everything it touches. It is the safe and effective alternative to using Round Up for a similar amount of money. It also is useful for cleaning brick and stone patios, driveways, greenhouses, and hothouses. It will dissolve calcium, mineral, and lime buildup.

SPRING for spring on March 20. Enjoy the rebirth of our gardens and start digging deeper.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Spring!



The trinity of leaves of the shamrock.



Cynthia Brian sitting in an Irish garden under a full moon.

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.

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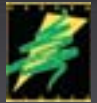
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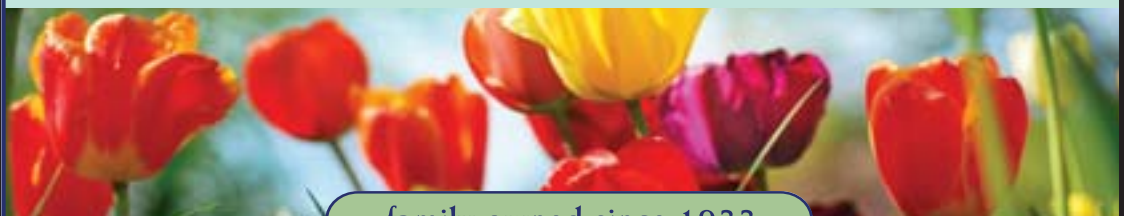
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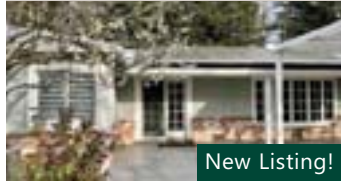


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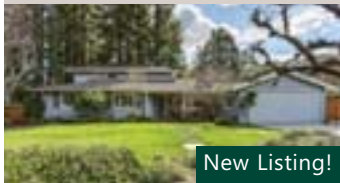
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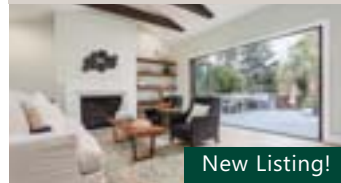
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