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One of Tim Wilbur's first excursion with his new show horse Dude was entertaining children at the Shriners Hospital in Sacramento last December dressed as a very convincing Santa Claus. Yes, that's his real beard!

Photo provided

A man and his show horse, Dude

By John T. Miller

Longtime Lafayette resident Tim Wilbur, who has owned horses since his first Shetland pony at the age of 6, recently purchased a retired show horse, originally trained by Cavalia, a world-wide traveling troop similar to Cirque du Soleil, but with horses in addition to acrobats and other performers.

The horse, Dude, is a registered Tobiano Paint

and stands 15.3 hands high (approx. 5'3") and weighs 1,300 pounds. Dude was born and raised in Quebec and was liberty trained (without a halter or lead) as a performing and trick riding horse. Bone fragments in the hock curbed his career and forced his retirement. Dude underwent surgery in 2017.

Wilbur learned of Dude's availability from a representative of a horse rescue group in Danville called Horses Healing Hearts. With a purchase price

of \$6,000 and borders with Canada closed because of COVID, Wilbur had to buy the horse fairly sight unseen.

"It was a huge gamble," says Wilbur. "Anyone who knows about buying a horse understands the risks involved." With only an iPhone video, a talk with a French-Canadian veterinarian, and trusting the word of the Cavalia go-between, Wilbur bought the horse.

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COMPASS

Lafayette Council approves Samantha Townhomes construction



Image provided

By Lou Fancher

The Lafayette City Council in an extended discussion July 26 worked to balance city approval of a new housing development, Samantha Townhomes, proposed for two vacant lots south of Highway 24 and East of Stuart Street.

The project application was considered by the Planning Commission at a public hearing on June 7 and approved 6-0 at the following meeting. An appeal by The Child Day Schools' Executive Director/Owner R. Ann Whitehead and Jeffrey Whitehead, co-owner and head of marketing and communications, was received on July 2, citing parking and traffic safety issues.

Ann Whitehead described Stuart

Street during school drop-off and pickup hours as "very chaotic." She insisted that if someone visited the site during the pandemic and looked at Stuart Street or conducted a traffic study, the situation they viewed was not realistic. During 2020, the school was only allowed 50% of typical enrollment. Whitehead said in September of 2021 up to 85 children (full enrollment) would be coming to Stuart Street. "I just can't imagine the traffic was adequately evaluated," she said.

A single-car garage is located on the first level of each proposed unit of the 12 four-level 1- and 2-bedroom townhomes on the cantilevered site. The units include living spaces on the second and third levels, and rooftop decks.

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Civic News A1-A10

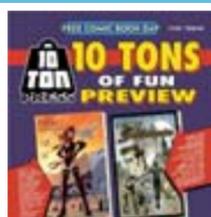
Wilder preschool, now lauded, returns for planning commission review – Page A6

Public Safety A8

Virtual evacuation drill helps folks prepare - Page A8

Life in Lamorinda B1-B5

Orinda comic book creator brings fantastical ideas to fruition - Page B1



Sports C1-C3

Coaching changes for new year of Lamorinda wrestling

- Page C1



Our Homes D1-D12

Ways to minimize watering while keeping plants alive - Page D1





See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
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Council approves ARPA funds timeline

By Lou Fancher

Lafayette city council members at the July 26 meeting heard a presentation about the American Rescue Plan Act and how the city plans to use the ARPA funds from Economic Development Manager Thomas Myers and Barry Foster of HdL/Econ Solutions. As previously reported by Myers on June 28, the city will receive a total of \$6,372,376, half of which was received the week of July 14. The second half will be distributed in July 2022. All funding must be designated by Dec. 31, 2024, and used by Dec. 31, 2026.

The funds can be applied as follows: in response to - COVID-19 public health emergencies and negative impacts; for expenditures related to essential workers employed during the pandemic; for government services rendered due to public health emergencies and re-

lated to change in revenues collected during the year prior to the emergency (Myers noted that meant the applicable cutoff date for Lafayette would be the fiscal year end in June of 2019); and for investments in sewer, water and broadband infrastructure.

Foster said a "robust community engagement process" would solicit input about needs and best use of the funds from businesses and from the broader community. A PowerPoint presentation outlining the timeline began with three initial, immediate steps: distribution of a survey to local businesses; development with input from a council ARPA subcommittee of a gift card program and a sales tax data analysis to review the impact of Covid-19 on city revenue.

The extended timeline includes returning to the council at the Sept. 13 meeting to share feedback from the business survey and sales

tax review, present gift card updates and specifications for launching the program, and gather direction from the council for conducting community surveys and workshops about spending the funds from the community. Foster said they are hoping to do Zoom and in-person public workshops and distribute the community survey to residents in mid-September. Following staff analysis of the results, summary presentations would be made the week of Oct. 25.

Myers said the gift card approach recommended by city staff and HdL/Econ Solutions would begin with a pilot program. Endorsing the overall concept of a gift card that designates use in Lafayette and can be customized with additional features, he said, "Money spent in the community stays local when our local businesses are invested in the community's future." The e-commerce card (not a physical card) can carry a graphic

design emblematic of Lafayette and be issued in a range of denominations. It can be further customized with specific hours for use, subsidies, BOGO offers and other features. Foster said the gift cards he has reviewed in other cities had "a rippling effect," and added, "It's easy to do, but you get a lot of bang for your buck."

Council members during a question period asked if nonprofits and new businesses opened during the pandemic were to be involved in the survey process. Foster said input from nonprofits would be valuable and their participation could easily be integrated into both the business and community surveys. Vice Mayor Teresa Geringer asked specifically if insurance and realty companies would be included with other professional businesses. Myers said all Lafayette businesses open at the time of the survey's distribution in August will be included.

Mayor Susan Candell asked about nonprofits located outside of the city but whose services benefit Lafayette residents and whether they would be included in the surveys. City Manager Niroop Srivatsa said the council could choose to extend parameters that currently restrict inclusion to Lafayette-based organizations if they discussed and voted to authorize extending the parameters.

Receiving no public comments, the council unanimously accepted the ARPA timeline, authorized staff to proceed with the business survey (with the addition of nonprofits and new businesses), and approved gift card plans to proceed with development by staff and the ARPA subcommittee aimed at delivering a final report/update at the Aug. 23 or Sept. 13 meeting, at which council will determine changes and vote on approval for funding the gift card program launch.

'Our light is on' – Visitors welcome to the Lafayette Historical Society



Photo Grace Gonzalves

Lafayette Historical Society is open for business to offer insight into the community's past.

By Grace Gonzalves

Walking down Mt. Diablo Boulevard, there were people on the sidewalk, a heartening sign that the library was open. Past the library, down some stairs, under soaring books and left on Golden Gate Way, the sidewalk was empty except for a sign shouting, "The History Room is OPEN."

Three individuals sat at a few seats in a clean, small room with cabinets and tables along its perimeter. The Tuesday morning crew. They greeted me warmly.

At first glance, the room looked a bit small and empty. Volunteer Patrick Kikkert of-

fered me a tour of their offerings. In drawers, artifacts spanning from parasols to pistols were revealed.

Unlike a museum, the clean, organized space does not seem sterile. The handwriting on the binders is personal, the stories handed from the mouth of the donor to the mouth of the volunteer.

We circled the room, right to left, and the immediate nature of history was available at the fingertips. As Kikkert spoke, an old brown barrel became a young boy's guilty mistake. The scars on an anvil started out as ugly breakages in the metal and transformed into a bit too

much ammunition one Fourth of July night.

"The story goes that during Fourth of July celebrations or whenever a particularly celebratory event went on, he would turn his anvil into an impromptu cannon, fill it with gunpowder and set it off. Supposedly, in 1865 when news came of Lee's surrender at Appomattox, he [the blacksmith] got carried away and put a particularly large charge in it and it broke the anvil in two."

The society has occupied this room on the ground floor of the library for 10 years, according to volunteer and recording secretary Nancy Flood. ... continued on Page A9

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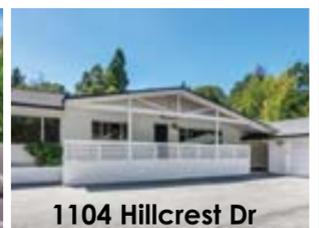
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It's Village. Of Course.

Lafayette citizen committee aims to make city more diverse, open



Photo Chris Rauber

Lynná McPhatter-Harris speaks at the July 27 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee "community conversation."

By Chris Rauber

Inspired by protest movements such as Black Lives Matter, the city of Lafayette is working to make the city – often criticized for its exclusivity – far more welcoming to a far more diverse population.

In March, Mayor Susan Candell recruited 17 volunteers to participate in a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion community committee, which started meeting May 3. The committee – separate from the city’s official task force on similar issues – is making recommendations on a rolling basis, and expects to have more in coming months.

Committee member Wei-Tai Kwok said the group’s primary goal is to “advise the city on tangible measures we can take” to make Lafayette more diverse and more equitable.

Committee members are meeting weekly and holding community events to discuss ways to address what they call longstanding systemic biases and inequities in the community.

They’re looking for additional volunteers and encouraging support from a broad cross section of the Lafayette community – businesses, religious groups, schools, government and local grassroots groups – to help create a new path forward for the city.

That outreach began with a July 27 “community conversation” at the Lafayette Public Library, held in its outside amphitheater on a blazing hot summer evening – the first in a planned series of such gatherings.

“The shift is really starting to happen in Lafayette,” event moderator Lynná McPhatter-Harris, Ed.D. told an audience of about 60 local residents and activists.

McPhatter-Harris is the Acalanes Union High School District’s newly hired director of student support, equity and inclusion.

She and other speakers emphasized the need to consider not just ways that Lafayette excludes or devalues Blacks and other groups on racial grounds but also other forms of structural and cultural bias based on age, class, gender, sexual orientation, and physical or psychological differences.

Another key area of discussion was Lafayette’s reputation for extreme exclusivity, according to several speakers, based in large part on its historic land-use commitment to single-family homes on relatively large lots.

Recent controversies over in-fill housing and the planned Terraces of Lafayette project on

Deer Hill Road exemplify the dilemma. On one side are advocates of the town’s traditional, semi-rural ambiance; on the other, those who argue that Lafayette cannot remain an unchanging island in the midst of a rapidly evolving region and world.

“In my opinion, affordable housing and DEI are connected at the hip,” said Jay Lifson, executive director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and a committee member.

“We’re still living the suburban dream,” he said, but many people who work in Lafayette can’t afford to live here.

Leaders of several business, parent and community groups spoke at the two-hour July 27 event, including representatives from the Chamber, Lafayette Partners in Education, Town Hall Theatre, Temple Isaiah, Inclusive Lafayette, and the parents’ diversity, equity and inclusion committee at Acalanes High School.

Matt Pease, a member of the Chamber’s board and chair of its DEI committee, stressed connections between greater diversity and Lafayette’s continued economic health.

Being “welcoming,” being inclusive, will help attract new jobs to the community, he said. “This is a very important issue for us” at the Chamber.

Lafayette has long been a largely white enclave amid the broader diversity of much of the Bay Area, both in its early agricultural days and more recently as a largely upscale suburb.

In 2000, nearly 87% of the city’s population was classified as white; 20 years later, in 2020, that percentage was still overwhelming, at 75.2%, and Lafayette’s Black population was still tiny (less than 1% of the total), although there were a growing number of residents of Asian or Latinx heritage (11.2% and 8.6%, respectively).

Nicole Wan, a lifelong Lafayette resident and University of Michigan student who serves on Inclusive Lafayette’s board, spoke passionately at the meeting about Lafayette’s need to become less “dismissive” of the reality of racism, and open to land-use changes that would help more people afford to live here.

Voices like Wan’s are what the committee is seeking, said Kwok.

The July 27 meeting was designed “to kick-start the conversation on what community members and groups are doing in this space,” he said. “We were very pleased to see the strong turnout and the highly thoughtful and articulate speakers share their stories.”



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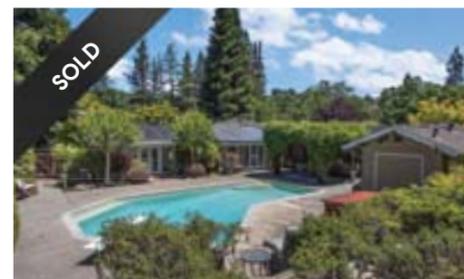
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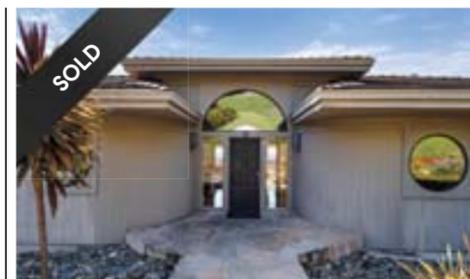


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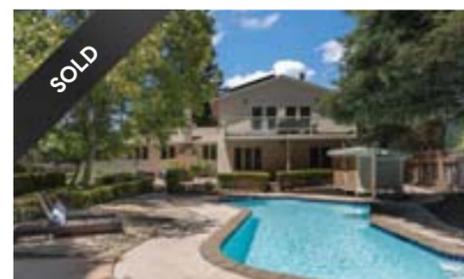


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Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Monday, Aug. 9, 7 p.m.
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:
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Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, Aug. 16, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube

Design Review

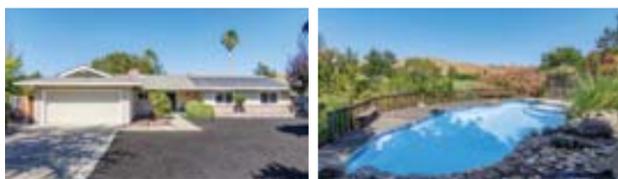
Wednesday, Aug. 11, 7 p.m. Zoom
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
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MORAGA

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Town's mayor and vice mayor conduct 'Community Engagement Tour'

By Vera Kochan

Moraga Mayor Mike McCluer and Vice Mayor Steve Woehleke conducted a survey amongst members of the town's various civic organizations in order to form a better understanding of the community's issues and concerns.

The Community Engagement Tour was the brainchild of McCluer and not in any way representative of the town council or the town of Moraga. Its goal was to "engage, discuss and listen," almost in a town hall manner, over a two month period between March and May 2021. The results were presented by the mayor and vice mayor during the town council's July 14 meeting.

Participants in the survey were members of Preserve Lamorinda Open Space, Moraga School District, Moraga Rotary, Moraga Country Club HOA, SMART Moraga, Moraga

Kiwanis, Campolindo High School, Moraga Garden Club, and Moraga Lions Club.

"We had Zoom meetings for the discussions," explained McCluer. "In advance of the meeting I would send the leader of each group the survey link (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VL2D3SV) and mention we are seeking feedback. I also mentioned the survey during the discussion. Fully optional. I also noted surveys are from Mike and Steve and not the town, as we conduct these meetings as mayor and vice mayor. These meetings were different from the typical 'mayor presents 40 slides and offers a few minutes for questions.' I think it was special to have 90% of the meeting as discussion with average meetings lasting over an hour."

The survey involved seven questions that required either a written reply or checking a box with a ratings response. The top five issues

of concern in Moraga were: retail services, financial management, development/open space, infrastructure and the retail look. Additional key issues were: safety, fire safety, traffic, diversity and lack of recreation – meaning, some type of all-purpose indoor sports facility.

As to whether the town is focused on the right issues, the overwhelming response was "sometimes," with "not sure" coming in second, "yes" at third, and "no" at fourth.

Areas that need improvement were significantly directed at retail services, with nearly equal votes coming in second for retail look. Both McCluer and Woehleke acknowledged that this response comes as no surprise. "The two centers have been adjusting over time, and will continue to do so," replied Woehleke. "The town needs to continue to focus on enhancing relationships with the center owners/operators,

working towards achieving the potential viability which can support significant refreshing." Also, financial management came second, followed by communication, and development/open space.

Woehleke added, "I was a bit surprised that while the town spends significant efforts in communicating via About Town, MCN and other means, several of the tabulated survey responses suggest there are opportunities." McCluer was disappointed that climate action didn't make an appearance in the top issues.

As to whether the town is performing up to residents' standards, the votes for "average" came in first, followed by "good," "poor," "excellent" and "failing."

When asked whether Moraga was moving in the right direction, surveyors put "neither yes/no" first, followed by a very close "some-what yes," dropping down to

"yes," "somewhat no," with "no" and "not sure" tied for last.

"I was very happy to bring 17 specific resident action items to the town council with many new items and ideas," said McCluer in regards to write-in responses from those surveyed.

"This endeavor was well worth the effort," stated Woehleke. "I strongly commend Mayor McCluer for originating and leading this effort, and essentially performing all the work. Every group we met with expressed appreciation for the direct community engagement. And, I learned much from them."

McCluer added, "Also, I can't express how much I truly enjoyed these meetings, connecting with the residents that I work for and one of the most effective actions I've taken since being a town council member."

Valle Vista (Part Two) – Moraga's all but forgotten subdivision and its residents

By Vera Kochan

Subdivision No. 3, also known as Valle Vista, came to fruition in 1914, when the Moraga Land Company began selling 98 lots to anyone interested in building homes just beyond Canyon Bridge.

The new property owners individually contracted with

local carpenters to create their dream homes, while Valle Vista's water supply was piped in from a spring that was located near the still standing Joaquin Moraga Adobe in Orinda. The water was basically rationed and restricted – and residents never knew when their particular supply might be cut off.

Children went to school at

Willow Spring School, which was built on land donated by the Moraga Company. The school served Moraga between 1917-1958. Located at 1689 School Street the building is now home to the Willow Spring Community Church. They also attended Valle Vista School, built in 1918, which was renamed Canyon School in 1921.

... continued on Page A5



Cement bench

Photo Vera Kochan

Embezzlement case sentencing hearing continued

By Sora O'Doherty

A federal public defender for Francis Robert Fritzky, known in Moraga as Bob, who has pleaded guilty to charges of embezzling over \$200,000 from the Moraga Community Foundation, told the court on July 30 that his client is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, although he had not yet received the results of a test for the disease. Fritzky, the former treasurer of the Moraga Community Foundation, was scheduled to be sentenced, a hearing that had already been postponed when Fritzky dismissed his counsel, opting to be represented by the public defender instead. His lawyer requested the continuance on the grounds that Fritzky

might not have been fully competent to gather his thoughts and address the court in the circumstances.

Fritzky lives with his daughter and his fiancé, both of whom are ill with COVID. Judge Jon S. Tigar ordered the matter continued to an in-person hearing on Aug. 27, and ordered Fritzky to present a negative COVID test prior to the start of the proceedings. Prosecutor Barbara J. Valliere and Katrina Chu of U.S. probation both agreed to the continuance and told the judge that they are available for the new hearing date. Valliere did point out that there were persons present on the Zoom call for the sentencing who were prepared to address the court, but did not contest the continuance.

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Town Council
Wednesday, Aug. 11 cancelled
Wednesday, Aug. 25, 6:30 p.m.

Planning Commission:
Tuesday, Aug. 17, 6:30 p.m.

Park and Recreation Commission:
Monday, Aug. 16, 7 p.m.

Moraga School District Board Meetings:
Special Board Meeting
Tuesday, Aug. 10, 6 p.m. www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2



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Valle Vista (Part Two) – Moraga’s all but forgotten subdivision and its residents



A home's foundation

Photo Mason Fara

... continued from Page A4

Although looking at the remote location of Valle Vista by today's standards, one might come to the conclusion that the area was strictly populated by farmers. Not so. The early residents, which numbered 58 families, held a diverse field of occupations besides farming. There were shop keepers/owners, doctors, a dentist, a nurse, a railroad engineer for Southern Pacific, a United States postal employee, a quarry worker, Pacific Gas and Electric employees, an East Bay Water Company inspector, and an auto body mechanic, just to name a few. The Moraga Company maintained several lots throughout Valle Vista in which their employees also lived.

Many residents worked outside of Moraga and often commuted to cities such as Oakland by catching the Oakland-Antioch and Eastern Railroad train at the Valle Vista Station located across the street from the subdivision. On cold, dark mornings men would build a fire near the tracks to keep the commuters warm while waiting for the 6:30 a.m. train. Anyone who worked in San Francisco caught the ferry at Oakland's station to complete their trip. Some residents owned automobiles, but when the rains set in, the roads around town became impassable, and they would instead use a horse and buggy.

People with last names

such as Arbuckle, Busch, Dickenson, Dethlefsen, Green, Hesper, Hoyt, Lansdell, McPhee, Oas, Ortett, Potter and Stair were multiple lot owners. Many of the residents in Valle Vista were Scandinavian.

A scant eight years later, East Bay Water Company, East Bay Municipal Utility District's predecessor, began buying up property in the low-lying areas of Valle Vista in order to create the Upper San Leandro Reservoir. Residents began selling off their lots in 1922 with the hopes of making a tidy profit from their initial investment of approximately \$500 per lot. The first wave of sales ended in 1925, in preparation for the overflow of the Moraga and San Leandro Creeks in 1926, thereby creating the Upper San Leandro Reservoir. The second wave of sales began in 1930, when the new EBMUD wanted to purchase additional land to maintain the reservoir's purity. Single lots began selling for approximately \$2,000 depending on acreage. By 1944, EBMUD was buying lots located on the hillsides at prices between \$5,000 to \$6,000, some even higher depending on their location.

According to letters dated 1944, sent from H.J. Wickman, an assistant land agent to J.S. Longwell, a chief engineer and general manager (possibly with EBMUD), many of the remaining homes were substantially large. They contained multiple bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, living room, bathroom, garage and even a

basement. Amenities included, linoleum floors in the kitchen, fireplaces, oak floors, electric hot water heaters, wells and electric pumps. Many properties had decorative gardens with flower beds, fruit and nut trees, even fish ponds.

Miraculously, in the midst of all of the overgrown trees, grass and weeds that have today overtaken most of Valle Vista's Subdivision No. 3, there remain remnants of a foundation – quite possibly the only one left. Located alongside one of the hiking trails, a partially toppled brick structure stands like a sentinel guarding the entrance to a treasure trove of evidence that the community of Valle Vista did indeed exist.

Armed with copies of the original subdivision lot blueprints, lists of property owners and a 1989 sketch of the foundation in question, four "investigators" – one of whom is a historical expert with EBMUD – have come to the conclusion that the mystery foundation was once part of

lots 24, 25 and 26. While the lots had gone through several owners, the last one was Charles Dickenson who was negotiating in 1944 to sell to EBMUD.

The homestead property was fronted by a low-lying brick/stone wall with a metal gate to the right (a portion of the gate was found in the shrubbery). There are cherry-plum trees on either side of the property and a two-foot tall garden pipe sticking up out of the ground (where a hose could be attached). Cement steps to the right lead up the hill while passing four cement benches on the way up to what remains of the home's brick and cement foundation. Across from the foundation lies what appears to be a very short, round well wall or a fish pond. Leaning alongside this is a discarded metal framework that might have belonged to a fireplace. A long metal pipe leads from the home's foundation back down the hill. This may have been used either to pump water to

the house or as a drain pipe.

Innumerable hikers pass this foundation on a daily basis, yet very few are aware of its existence beyond the overgrowth up the hill. Perhaps they are intimidated by the fallen trees and forest-like appearance or the idea of woodland creatures roaming and crawling around the remains. Be warned, poison oak does grow within the boundaries.

Despite Mother Nature, Father Time and the encroachment of civilization, it's nice to know that a small piece of Valle Vista still makes its mark in Moraga.

Note: Valuable information for this article was retrieved from a letter written to Wilbur Hesper from his mother, Martha Hesper, who were residents of Valle Vista between 1914-1920. Special thanks to Moraga Historical Society President Susan Sperry, Moraga Historical Society Member Sam Sperry, EBMUD Ranger Naturalist II Leatha Harris, Moraga Boy Scout Troop 212's Eagle Scout Mason Fara and Mike Kochan.



Cement stairway

Photo Vera Kochan

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 www.cityoforinda.org
 Phone (925) 253-4200
Chamber of Commerce:
 www.orindachamber.org
The Orinda Association:
 www.orindaassociation.org

Planning commission rejects bid for historic landmark designation, applicants appeal



Fully glazed window walls at the southwest corner, looking southeast.

By Sora O'Doherty

The decision on whether or not the residence at 12 Charles Hill Circle deserves to be designated as a historic landmark will now rest with the Orinda City Council, following the decision of the planning commission not to recommend to the city council that the designation be granted. The commission chose not to follow the recommendation of the Historical Landmarks Committee, which had voted to recommend the historic landmark

designation. The planning commission action on the residence was considered at its July 21 meeting, and finalized at a subsequent meeting on July 27. Following the filing of an appeal by the applicants, Jeanne Huang Li and Nathan Ogle, the matter will be considered by the city council.

The applicants seek the historic landmark designation for the residence that was built in 1951 by architect Paul Hamilton, who lived in the home and ran his business from it until 1961. The applicants claimed that

Hamilton was an architect of local significance and that the home is a well-preserved example of the Second Bay Tradition, and Orinda staff and the Historic Landmarks Committee agreed. However, the planning commission struggled to find that Hamilton was significant, finding that he only worked on five homes in Orinda, and that none of the homes he had designed anywhere had been given historic landmark recognition. The commissioners also questioned the timing of the application, wondering why the applicant brought it forward when the home is still in need of repairs.

In order to be designated as an historic landmark, a property must meet at least three conditions set forth in the city code. The planning commission found that 12 Charles Hill Circle met only one condition, and therefore did not qualify for historic landmark status. The sole condition that the commission found applicable was that the building contains elements of architectural design, detail and materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant architec-

tural innovation.

The applicants had also advanced the work of renown landscape architect Lawrence Halprin on the property, but the commissioners considered that his contribution had not been significant and that much of the landscaping was no longer present.

At the hearing before the HLC, neighbors of the applicants argued that the applicants were trying to prevent them from completing restoration of their properties on the grounds that it would affect the historic status of the applicants' home. Although staff did not dispute that the applicants had made that effort, they did repeatedly note that the historic designation would have applied solely to the applicant's property, and that it would not have influenced decisions on the neighbor's property. However, there is an outstanding issue of whether or not the applicants could force their neighbors to be subjected to more costly procedures for environmental impact reports under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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Once dubious, Wilder residents now wildly enthusiastic about preschool

By Sora O'Doherty

When somewhat over one year ago it was proposed to rent a portion of the Art & Garden Center at Wilder to a Montessori preschool, Wilder residents expressed concerns that this was another benefit for Orinda that would be a burden on the Wilder community. During an annual review by the Orinda planning commission on July 27, there was no word of opposition, only extremely happy Wilder residents saying that

the applicant, Jatinder Kaur of Montessori Impressions Academy has changed their lives for the better.

The preschool was approved in 2020 to operate in Studio 4 at the Art & Garden Center at Wilder, offering preschool education and daycare for 30 children, aged 2 to 6, Mondays through Fridays, year round, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The school was authorized to also use the public bathroom and the children's playground. The applicant is required to pack up everything every day, so that the facility is available for other uses in the evenings and on the weekends.

The applicant came before the planning commission at the first annual review to ask that the use permit for the school at 20 Orinda Fields (the Art & Garden Center) be approved permanently and that the requirement for annual reviews be dropped. In addition, Kaur sought to open an annex at The Ranch House, 10 Orinda Fields, to accommodate another 10 children. Both properties are owned by the city of Orinda and rented out.

Senior Planner Adam Foster presented the matter to the planning commission, along with Director of Planning Drummond Buckley. Given that the previous hearing on approval of the use permit for the Montessori school had met with considerable concern from Wilder residents, commissioner Brandyn Iverson asked if the city had received any opposition to the current application. Foster stated that they had not, and in fact had only received statements of support.

Buckley added that Parks and Recreation Director Todd Trimble had not received any complaints during the time that the preschool has been operative. There has been no difficulty with students being dropped off and picked up at Wilder Fields. There was a single complaint about a parent parking by the mail kiosks and walking a student to the school, but it turned



Photo Sora O'Doherty

out to be a one-off incident and the complaint was withdrawn, with the complainant noting that the school had been very responsive and a very good neighbor. Staff also reported that there has thus far been no conflict with users of the Art & Garden Center or the playfields, although it was noted that the school has thus far been operating during a pandemic year and demand for the facilities has not been high.

Kaur stated that she brought the application because the school has been tremendously successful and that she has a waiting list for placement up to two years out and that places at the school are in high demand.

Although there was no opposition to the application, speaker after speaker gave the school glowing reviews. Wilder resident Karen Do said, "My 3-year-old daughter has been a student for eight months, and she has blossomed."

Do said she was excited to find quality daycare right in her neighborhood and testified that Montessori Impressions provides education that contributes to kind next generation members of our community. Before her daughter was a student, she enjoyed co-sharing the play space, a question that had been raised by commissioner Iverson. Other parents echoed this sentiment, stating that they had used the playground before their children were enrolled and found the experience of interacting with the school children and teachers to be very beneficial.

All of the speakers were Wilder residents. Nisha Taparia called the school "a real blessing." Another speaker said, "I cannot tell you how excited we are to find quality childcare right in our neighborhood."

... continued on next Page

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN for the ORINDA CITIZEN of the YEAR 2020

Do you have a person in mind to nominate for outstanding community service in 2020 and/or over many years of lifetime service?

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- Must be someone who has given of their time, talents and energy as a community volunteer helping make Orinda better, where people want to live, work and shop
- Must be someone who models excellence and good citizenship in everything they do
- Must be someone who brings our community together making us proud and promoting community spirit

A celebration dinner will be held on Sunday evening, October 24, 2021 at the Orinda Wilder Art and Garden Center to honor the award recipient. The deadline for submitting nominations is by Friday, September 3.

Nominations can be sent to orindafoundation@gmail.com or mailed to Orinda Community Foundation, PO Box 21, Orinda CA 94563. Include your name and contact, along with the name and contact for the nominee.



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 Tuesday, Sept. 7, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only
Planning Commission
 Tuesday, Aug. 10, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only

Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
 Wednesday, Aug. 11, 6:30 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only

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Once dubious, Wilder residents now wildly enthusiastic about preschool

... continued from Page A6

She added that the school provided a sense of community and togetherness, and that her family has gotten to know many others. Yet another speaker praised the school as “high quality early childhood education,” and deemed it a “life-saver and a source of happiness our children have needed during this difficult time.”

Vivian Wei is a Wilder resident, a corporate executive in a Fortune 500 company, a book author and blogs about women in the workforce. She said she was “incredibly excited that my child is starting at MIA.” Wei also talked about how millions of women dropped out

of the labor force during the COVID-19 pandemic because they had to stay home with their children. “I’m hanging in because of MIA and the schools in Orinda,” she concluded. Other speakers told the commission about their very positive experiences with the school and how happy they were to find childcare in Wilder.

Commissioner Hubner asked how the school would be monitored if the annual review were dropped. Buckley said, “We have use permits for other things and they don’t have annual review requirement.” He explained that if an applicant is out of compliance with a use permit, the city can use code enforcement, and could ulti-

mately revoke a use permit for noncompliance. In addition, he pointed out, because the city owns the properties, it bears added responsibility as the landlord. The director of parks and rec has an obligation to operate facilities in a manner consistent with the neighborhood and residents of Orinda.

Foster pointed out that it isn’t a one-year lease but a 6-month rental agreement. The applicant added that they have been responsible renters and have provided a steady stream of revenue to the city, while the facilities remain available for public use in the evenings and on weekends. The matter passed unanimously.

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Lamorinda communities participate in virtual evacuation drill

By Jennifer Wake

Lamorinda residents began receiving text messages and phone calls from the Contra Costa County Community Warning System the morning of July 31 during a virtual evacuation exercise conducted by the Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda police departments, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, and the East Bay Municipal Utility District. The drill allowed local residents and first responders an opportunity to practice evacuation procedures that would be utilized during an actual wildfire emergency.

Evacuating in one vehicle helps avoid congestion on arterials, according to MOFD Fire Chief Dave Winnacker, who spoke at a June 14 Lamorinda CERT meeting about fire safety. Preparing for evacua-

tions in advance is vital, he said, since any delays can mean you are likely to run into downstream traffic on the few arterials leading to safety. "We do not have surface street capacity for everyone to get on the roads at the same time."

Each municipality has an evacuation plan that includes specific geographical evacuation zones, according to an email sent by Lamorinda CERT Registrar Julie Sparks. "In an actual emergency, evacuation messages will be issued for these zones when there is extreme danger to an area. When a real evacuation order is issued, residents should evacuate immediately."

Residents were advised to pack their "go bags" in one car and knock on neighbors' doors as part of the drill.

If you have signed up for the Community Warning System and did not receive an

alert, you can go to www.cococws.us and click the 'Sign In' link at the top right of the page. (Remember, your username is your email address and if you do not

know your password, click the 'Forgot Password' link to reset your password. You can review your existing account information by clicking on the "My Profile" button at the

top of the page. You can also call CWS directly at (925) 655-0111 or email cws-staff@so.cccounty.us.

What to include in a 'go bag'

As noted in the May 26 Lamorinda Weekly article, "Packing an emergency 'Go Bag'" by Cynthia Brian, go bag essentials include:



Photo Cynthia Brian

First Aid kit
Duplicate chargers for phones, tablets, and computers
Copies of important documents including

passport, drivers license, vaccination card, credit cards, insurance
Work gloves
Warm gloves
Towelettes
Small towel
Bottled water (1 gallon per person per day)
Thick blanket
Walking shoes
Socks
Warm jacket
Peanut butter
Honey
Protein bars
Personal hygiene kit with a

toothbrush, soap, medications
Matches
Candle
Flashlight and headlamp with extra batteries
Eating utensils and plates
Breathing masks (Niosh-N95)
Clothing change
Reading glasses
Extra set of keys to home, office, etc.
Pet necessities: food, leash, medications
Cash
Toilet Paper

MOFD board votes to maintain equal Moraga/Orinda six cent Fire Flow Tax rate

By Vera Kochan

Currently the Fire Flow Tax in both Moraga and Orinda zones are assessed at \$0.06 per fire flow unit. That rate was originally capped in Moraga's FFT zone, which also includes portions of Orinda and unincorporated Contra Costa County. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District's July 21 board meeting agenda included an item involving the possibility of raising Moraga's FFT.

MOFD Chief Dave Winnacker briefly addressed the board with a staff report that mentioned various reasons why the FFT rate for Moraga should remain at \$0.06, most notably that it would be too difficult to untangle and keep separate accounting documentation regarding Moraga

and Orinda for transparency purposes. There were no questions or comments from the board members after Winnacker's presentation.

During the Public Comment portion of the meeting, it was noted that former MOFD board member Dick Olsen provided an in-depth historical overview of the FFT to the board several hours before the evening's meeting. Additionally, Moraga Mayor Mike McCluer read a rate hike opposition letter crafted by the town council during its July 14 meeting (see details in Lamorinda Weekly's July 21 issue).

Former MOFD board president and Moraga mayor, Frank Sperling stated, "Directors, please do your homework. Please remember that questions and comments you

make in the public view are taken very seriously and oftentimes with the public filling in the blanks with a negative scenario. Whether those statements revolve around merging into the ConFire organization, or gee, I wonder why we don't increase the Fire Flow Tax rate in Moraga. You can see the ramifications of such statements." Sperling stressed the importance of board members asking questions of staff before meetings in order to ensure that they come to the table with a complete knowledge of the topic at hand.

Another former Moraga mayor, Dave Trotter, complimented Winnacker's informative staff report and added, "This issue keeps coming back. I think it's time to put a stake in the heart of

this particular subject." He also reminded the MOFD board members that "three out of the five of you depend on one form or another for votes from Moraga residents to have your seats, and understand that we're watching; we're paying very close attention. I would ask you to consider that in the actions

that you're being asked to take tonight and to approve what Chief Winnacker has proposed as the right path forward for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District."

Without any debate, the board voted unanimously for the continuation of the \$0.06 FFT rate in both the Moraga and Orinda service zones.

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, Aug. 18, 6 p.m.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors
Regular Meeting: Tuesday, Aug. 10, 1 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



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Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt
925-299-3221

Police Department Tip Line
94549Tip@gmail.com
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

Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report July 11 - July 24

Alarms	35
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	11
Traffic	71
Suspicious Circumstances	14
Suspicious Subject	12
Suspicious Vehicle	15
Service to Citizen	26
Patrol Req./Security Check	63
Public/School Assembly Check	0
Supplemental Report	20
Vacation House Check	30
Welfare Check	20
Ordinance Violation	0

Vehicle violations

Auto Burglary	3100 Block Sandalwood Ct.
	3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
	3600 Block Lincoln Way
Hit And Run Felony	Mt. Diablo Blvd./Pleasant Hill Rd.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Reckless Driving	3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Moraga Rd./Hamlin Rd.
Pleasant Hill Rd./Olympic Blvd.
Pleasant Hill Rd./Stanley Blvd.

Tc - No Details
1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.

Tc - Property Damage
Deer Hill Rd./Brown Ave.

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

4000 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Vehicle Theft
3700 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

10 Block Dollis Park Rd.

Other criminal activity
Computer Fraud

800 Block Avalon Ave.

Fraud False Pretenses
Police Department

Identity Theft
600 Block Lucas Dr.

Panhandling
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (4)

Petty Theft
700 Block Las Trampas Rd.

900 Block 3Rd St.

Petty Theft Veh Parts
3200 Block Marlene Dr.

Shoplift
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (5)

Nuisance to the Community
Disturbance-domestic

Pleasant Hill Rd./Acalanes Ave.

Disturbance-fight
3700 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Loud Noise
4000 Block Mario Way

No House Number
1100 Block Glen Rd.

100 Block Peaceful Ln. (2)

Mt. Diablo Ct./Mt. Diablo Blvd.

1000 Block 2Nd St.

700 Block Solana Dr.

900 Block Hough Ave.

Loud Party
3600 Block Brook St.

No House Number
3300 Block Beechwood Dr.

3000 Block Rohrer Dr.

Martino Rd./Springhill Rd. (2)

Public Nuisance
Happy Valley Rd./Deer Hill Rd.

1000 Block 2Nd St.

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

3700 Block Highland Rd.

3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Vandalism
900 Block Acalanes Rd.

100 Block Greenbank Dr.

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)

1000 Block N Thompson Rd.

Other

Animal Cruelty
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Fireworks
3400 Block School St.

El Curtola Blvd./Old Tunnel Rd.

Threats
1300 Block Sunset Ln

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

1200 Block El Curtola Blvd.

Unwanted Guest
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)

3200 Block Old Tunnel Rd.

3700 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Violation Custody Order
1200 Block Warner Ct.

Violation Restraining Order
1200 Block Panorama Dr.

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report July 13 - July 19

Alarms 9

911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 2

Traffic 26

Suspicious Circumstances 1

Suspicious Subject 1

Suspicious Vehicle 6

Service to Citizen 14

Patrol Req./Security Check 10

Supplemental Report 8

Vacation House Check 9

Welfare Check 3

Public/School Assembly Check 3

Ordinance Violation 0

Vehicle violations

Excessive Speed
100 Block Block Rheem Blvd., Ori

Moraga Way/Hardie Dr.

Moraga Rd/Rheem Blvd. (4)

Camino Ricardo/Moraga Way

Seven Elven

Reckless Driving
Police Department

Draeger Dr./Moraga Rd.

St Marys Rd./Rheem Blvd.

Tharp Dr./Camino Pablo

Seven Elven

Tc - Property Damage
100 Block Eileen Ct.

Vehicle Theft
School St./Moraga Way

Other criminal activity

Fraud Credit Card
Not Available

Shoplift
Moraga Way/St Andrews Dr.



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report July 11 - July 24

Alarms 57

911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 6

Traffic 23

Suspicious Circumstances 2

Suspicious Subject 4

Suspicious Vehicle 8

Service to Citizen 80

Patrol Req./Security Check 95

Supplemental Report 8

Vacation House Check 0

Welfare Check 11

Public/School Assembly Check 6

Ordinance Violation 0

Vehicle violations

Accident Injury
Dos Osos/Los Norrabos Rd.

Accident Property
80 Block La Encinal

Brookwood/Camino Pablo

20 Block Orinda Way

Moraga Way/Monte Veda Dr.

Auto Burglary
Camino Sobrante

Hit And Run Misdemeanor
El Toyonal/Camino Pablo

20 Block Irwin Way

Reckless Driving

St Stephens Dr./Eb Sr 24

Moraga Way

100 Block Tappan Ln.

Calvin Dr./Rheem Blvd.

Shoplift
Sobrante

Camino Sobrante

Tc - Property Damage
20 Block Orinda Way

Camino Pablo/Bevmo

Vehicle Theft
200 Block Village Sq.

60 Block Sunnyside Ln.

Other criminal activity

Grand Theft
10 Block Northwood Ct.

60 Block California Ave.

Grand Theft Veh Parts
Wilder Rd./Eb Sr 24

10 Block Donna Maria Way

Misc Burglary
300 Block Camino Pablo (2)

Panhandling
Brookwood Rd.

Prowler Heard
40 Block Las Cascadas Rd.

Warrant Arrest
10 Block S Point Rd.

Moraga Way/Brookside Rd.

Nuisance to the Community

Disturbance-domestic
Wilder Blvd./Gateway Blvd.

Loud Music
20 Block Heather Ln.

Heather Ln./Glorietta Blvd.

Loud Noise
70 Block El Toyonal

70 Block La Cuesta Rd.

50 Block Rheem Blvd.

Public Nuisance
Camino Sobrante (2)

Theatre Square

Vandalism
El Toyonal/Vallecito Ln.

300 Block Camino Pablo

Orinda Way

Other

Failure To Obey
10 Block Francisco Ct.

Fireworks
Ivy Dr.

Hailed By Citizen
Police Department

Other Non Criminal
20 Block Acacia Dr.

Unwanted Guest
10 Block Theatre Sq 106 (2)

Violation Restraining Order
500 Block Moraga Way



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Letters to the editor

The cost of service

I disagree with the statement "MOFD Fire Flow Tax quantifies the risk of fire to a parcel" in the article about the MOFD board considering a possible fire flow tax rate hike.

The formula for the Moraga tax was an attempt, back in 1992, to allocate additional revenue (above the funds provided by regular property taxes) needed to provide premium service to the residents of the Moraga Fire Protection District (MFPD). It was called a "fire flow tax" but since MFPD did not provide the "flow" (water) to put out fires, it did not really cost MFPD anything extra to put out a little fire or a big fire. What MFPD provided was the equipment and man-power; fixed costs.

They had two stations, two fire engines, and if they needed mutual aid to put out a big fire, adjacent stations provided that aid for no cost.

The same is true today.

MOFD today receives most of its revenue, \$29.3 million, from property taxes. Most of that is used for employee salaries and benefits and most of that to the three shifts of 17 firefighters and the administration required to supervise and support them.

Eight of those 17 firefighters (47% of the total) are stationed in and serve Moraga and Canyon whose population (18,000) is about 47% of the total 38,000 served by MOFD.

While MOFD does not allocate its costs between Orinda and Moraga, it is not unreasonable to assume that the cost to provide service to Moraga is 47% of the \$29.3 million in property tax revenue;

which equates to \$13.8 million. This is what it costs to provide Moraga with the premium service it desires.

However, regular tax from Moraga and Canyon property owners to MOFD only adds up to \$9.6 million; \$4 million short of what it costs to serve them. The current parcel tax only adds another \$500,000. Even if the parcel tax was increased five times to \$2.5 million, what Moragas voted on in 1992, it would still be \$1.5 million short.

Moraga should not complain about paying what it costs to service them.

Steve Cohn
Orinda

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 for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

'Our light is on' – Visitors welcome to the Lafayette Historical Society

... continued from Page A2

"We didn't have much space prior to this. ... The picture files were in the old library," Kikkert said. "Otherwise most of the material would be in people's garages and attics. There was no central space where we could put them and where people could view them."

The Lafayette Historical Society is definitely a place of interactive learning; people who wander through its doors interact intimately with the volunteers. It is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in operation since 1973. "Originally there was a historical committee which was related to the library," said Flood.

This description on its website describes the society's aims perfectly: "We believe in the power of history

to ignite the imagination, stimulate thought and provide enjoyment. Through our collections and programs we strive to link Lafayette's history to the lives of people."

"We are sort of a hidden gem; we do not get a lot of traffic," said Kikkert, who showed this reporter their visitors log, which included a couple names over the last several months – and then a yearlong gap.

Volunteer Sande Hubbs explained to me how the pandemic affected their volunteer staff: "We used to all be here at the same time but of course with ... COVID we closed completely and then when we reopened it was just in small groups."

In most instances, visitors to the center are curious about the history of their own property, and they are shown

aerial photographs of their land in years past, maps of the town over the years, et cetera.

Less trodden are the oral histories, transcripts of the society's interviews with characters from the city. Many of these oral histories are now available on the society's website, but the content is most special when read where the volunteers can add anecdotes and direction.

The archives and materials kept in this space are brought to life by its loyal volunteers who are interested in sharing their findings with others.

"It is wonderful to be a part of Lafayette and its history," Kikkert said, "and it's fun to help people who share that same interest."

Council approves Samantha Townhomes construction

... continued from Page A1

Hearing descriptions of parking shortages and concerns from both parties about cars backing out of driveways, especially the driveways of three units located closest to the school, Mayor Susan Candell asked Attorney Bryan Wenter to explain why eliminating those units did not fall under the council's purview.

Wenter explained the project meets the legal requirements of Density Bonus law and the Housing Accountability Act that "mimic each other in terms of the discretion that is curtailed at a state level in connection with projects that benefit from the protection of those laws."

Wenter said the HAA prevents a public agency (in this case, the city council) from limiting or altering the proposed project because the development meets all zoning requirements and there are no proven public health and safety violations. Other than speculation from the appellants about the negative impact the townhouses would or would not have, he said there are no violations of written criteria establishing public health and safety standards.

He confirmed that the city could be sued by the applicant if they tried to eliminate the end units. He noted that the area had been studied previously and is located where housing has been planned for and sought by the city.

The Whiteheads reiterated concerns about the safety of children attending

the school, highlighted the area's limited parking and the likelihood of increased traffic congestion on Stuart Street.

Speaking for applicant/owners Samuel Bing and Linda Lai Lee, representative Stuart Rickard showed a photograph of Stuart Street as it currently exists. He said the end of the street had been striped for parking. The elimination of those five striped parking spots – a contentious subject that received considerable attention during the meeting – would increase public safety. He also suggested the townhomes' one-car garages could have auditory opening signals that would add to public safety and awareness.

Minus the parked vehicles, Rickard said there would be more room for emergency vehicles to access the area and less multi-point turnarounds made by people bringing their children to the school. "The sidewalk we will be adding will also contribute to the overall safety of pedestrians," said Rickard.

During public comments, a parent of a child enrolled at The Child Day Schools said he was concerned the project was making the area more dangerous. He said developing the land with "a cavalier attitude" left him worried about the construction phase and the increased traffic congestion on an already challenging street. He encouraged council to consider some kind of compromise to mitigate the concerns.

Rickard said he is "a big supporter of the public process because it brings out the issues and allows us to debate them in public." He

said an idea proposed during the discussions to have a traffic engineer look at the situation is a good one. "Our project will improve the situation but it probably needs someone who's an expert to help develop some structure around it." He emphasized the applicant is "not cavalier in any way" when it comes to safety.

Because the city must consider and either approve or deny this type of project at one of five hearings – the council meeting July 26 was the fifth public hearing for the project – a decision was required of the council.

Council discussion led to amendments to the Resolution and Conditions of Approval, most relating to ensuring the updated plans and other future information submitted by the applicant includes 220V EV-ready hookups in each garage, a mention in homeowners association agreements of the proper use and maintenance of MERV filters, and limiting construction hours to 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Saturday. No construction will be permitted on Sundays or holidays.

It was agreed that staff will direct the public works manager and the city's traffic engineer to consult with the applicant and appellant and make recommendations to the council regarding a possible traffic study.

After voting unanimously to approve the revised articles of Resolution and Conditions of Approval, the council agreed to discuss reductions in the appellant's \$12,637 fee to appeal the decision at the next council meeting.

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A man and his horse



Dude with the American Flag

... continued from Page A1

Getting Dude shipped to the West Coast presented a challenge. First finding a transport that could cross the Canadian border, then, due to a huge horse sale in Kentucky, spots on trucks were thin. Dude traveled from New York to Pennsylvania, to Lexington, Kentucky, to Southern California then on to Pleasanton.

Wilbur hopes to train Dude as a flag-bearing parade horse. "One of the most crucial things for success is for both horse and rider to bond and totally trust each other. He has to trust that I won't put him in danger, and I have to trust that he won't kill me."

Wilbur has led parades as part of the Shriners contingent. He proudly carried the American flag at many parades throughout the Bay

Area, including Castro Valley, Dublin, Danville, and the Fourth of July parade in Orinda a number of times. "The horse has to be able to carry a flag, deal with crowds and noises, and be friendly and controlled." Wilbur said.

With his two horses before Dude, one of Wilbur's favorite activities was participating in cattle roundups locally and in central California. "I have high hopes to do branding and roping with Dude, but it's something he's never done before."

Wilbur, who has been president of the Aahems Shrine Mounted Patrol since 2011, says, "I'm most excited about taking him to the Shriners Hospital in Sacramento to entertain the children."

Currently, Wilbur works a full shift as Construction

Manager at Lawrence Livermore Lab, then stops at the stables and routinely works with Dude for an hour or two every weekday, and somewhere between five to eight hours on weekends.

When asked what was special about this horse, Wilbur replied, "He's big and strong, and really wants to please. So far he can carry a flag, and can lie down and bow with simple hand commands."

About his previous horse, officially named Miss American Tie, nicknamed Xena, Wilbur said, "She was the epitome of a perfect parade horse and performed well in front of crowds." Xena was an Arabian Saddlebred cross that developed an inoperable intestine issue and had to be put down in April of 2020, leading to the pursuit of his current horse.

After Dude's arrival, they spent the first few months bonding, riding around in the stable and local hills. One challenge was trying to figure out how to trailer his horse. He learned that Canadian horses were trained to trailer backward, as opposed to the traditional American way of facing forward. Once into the trailer and off to their first excursion, Wilbur found himself with almost more than he could handle. "My first trip out was going wonderfully until the shadow of a turkey vulture crossed straight across Dude's head," he relates. "It startled him and caused an open field bucking horse rodeo. I had to hang on for my life!"

Despite the high purchase price and the challenges of training his high-spirited horse, Wilbur considers Dude a bargain and a delight. "He's only 8 years old, so I plan on having him a while."

For a look at what the Cavalia horses and performers can do, check out the video at https://cavalia.com/?cavalia_video=cavalia-odysseo-three-minute-glimpse-cavalia

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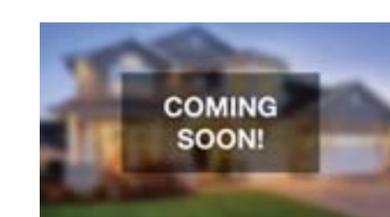


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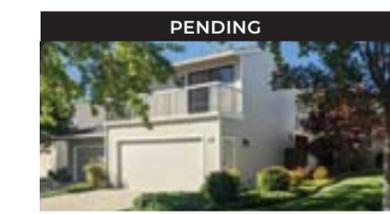
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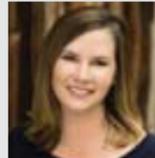
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~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

The entrepreneurial endeavors of one local comic book creator



Photos provided

Comic book writer/artist/publisher Mel Smith points out his Metallica Rock N Roll comic.

By Diane Claytor

As a boy growing up in Sunnyvale, Mel Smith, like most kids his age, read comic books. He liked them a lot. As an adult now living in Orinda, Smith still likes comic books. Actually, he more than likes them. He earns his living writing, drawing, producing and publishing them. His work has been praised, won awards, and now there is talk about making a movie based on his latest comic, "Becoming Frankenstein."

Years ago, the teen-aged Smith went to a comic book convention in San Jose. "I got bit by the bug to write and draw my own," he remembers fondly. He started hanging out in comic book stores, acknowledging that owners of two different shops took him under their wings. He became passionate about learning everything he could about the process of putting together a comic book and began going to more shows, talking to more people, drawing more pictures and writing more stories.

At 16 years old, Smith produced his first comic book, "Messiah," with Pinnacle Comics. It received considerable attention and he "actually got paid," Smith notes.

Basically self-taught, Smith went to work for Marvel Comics and Spike and Mike's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation. The young Smith soon hit some major bumps and spent time in rehab, after which he decided to leave the comic book world and try his hand at something else. But the pull was too strong and he soon returned to his first love.

Smith attended ComicCon, the massive annual gathering dedicated to comics and related art forms. He started talking to colleagues again and produced "Feed America's Children," a 48-page original superhero story, with every page illustrated by a different known comic artist.

One day, his mind wandering, Smith remembered Gumby, the green clay humanoid character created in the early 1950s that went on to become a TV celebrity in the 1960s. "It was one of the characters I loved as a kid," Smith remembers.

By the early 2000s, Gumby had all but disappeared. But not in Smith's mind. A light bulb went off: how about a Gumby comic book series. Conversations, negotiations and deals between Art Clokey, Gumby's creator, and Smith took place before Smith was granted

permission to move forward. Smith put Gumby "back in the forefront," he says, "just as I initially promised the Clokey family I would." He and his Gumby team won the coveted Eisner Award, often referred to as the Academy Award of the comics industry.

Eventually, Smith felt he had "come to the end of the road with Gumby, having done everything I could with it," he explains.

Next from Smith's creative mind came "Dead Ahead," a zombie on the water story. One reviewer described it as, "An original spin on the Zombie Apocalypse/survival genre. Vivid characters, knockout artwork and a promising premise and story."

It became quite popular; so popular, in fact, that AMC apparently produced their "Fear of the Walking Dead" TV series using storylines from Smith's comics. In a lawsuit filed by Smith in 2018, he alleged that large portions of season two's "Fear of the Walking Dead" TV show were lifted from his "Dead Ahead" comic. Several months later, a deal was struck and the lawsuit resolved. Although the details are confidential, Smith is pleased with the outcome.

During the years, Smith dealt with personal problems, serious health issues and spent many years caregiving a loved one. Through it all, he kept coming back to his passion for comics.

A documentary on the late Todd Loren, creator of Rock N Roll comics, a line of comic book rock star biographies, presented Smith with his next creative opportunity. "I knew many Bay Area bands, knew how to publish comics and saw a void in this arena so I decided to give it a shot," he declares. The first band Smith wrote about was Slayer, an American thrash metal band.

This rock n roll series, like most of Smith's other endeavors, have become popular among comic book readers. "I even have bands approaching me now, requesting that I cover their group," he states.

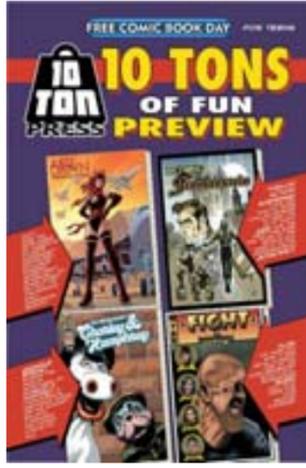
Smith is quite excited about his newest publication, "Becoming Frankenstein."

"Have people ever wondered whose body parts make up Frankenstein?" Smith asked. He has and is now producing a series which gives the back stories on the Frankenstein's various body parts and the individuals that provided them.

As if all this creating, writing and illustrating isn't enough to keep Smith busy, he has just formed 10 Ton Press

which will produce color comics from different creators. In addition to "Becoming Frankenstein," 10 Ton Press is developing "Charlie and Humphrey" comics, featuring the mad-cap adventures of the legendary puppets, as well as the superhero "Red Dawn" comic series. "We'll have something for everyone," Smith promises.

Previews of these new comics will be available on Free Comic Book Day, Aug. 14, at your favorite comic book stores.



The preview of comics being produced by Mel Smith's 10 Ton Press.

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Tackle summertime sizzle with refreshing fruit-filled rosé sangria



Rosé Sangria

Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

We love a good summery cocktail and there is almost nothing more refreshing for an afternoon in the backyard than a pitcher of fruity sangria. With hints of strawberry, orange, grapefruit, lime, cucumber and mint, this drink is sure to make you and your guests happy!

Our recipe calls for rosé because

we love the lighter version of this drink that's normally made with red wine. We also add a little Aperol (an Italian liqueur) to our sangria. Besides, the taste, which is delightful and sparkly with lots of fresh and macerated fruit, the color is gorgeous. The Aperol adds a rich coral hue to the drink. By macerating some of the fruit with sugar for about 20 minutes, you get a super intense fruit flavor and

then you simply toss in some additional sliced fruit for color and texture. We also like to add the cucumber and mint to balance out the sweetness of the drink.

You can add a little seltzer to lighten up the alcohol content, too, which is nice if you're enjoying it during the daytime!

INGREDIENTS

1 orange, sliced with peels on
2 cups strawberries, sliced
2 tablespoons sugar
1 lemon, sliced with peels on
1/3 cucumber, sliced
1/2 small grapefruit, sliced with peels on
1/2 lime, sliced with peels on
1 bottle of rosé wine
1/3 cup Aperol
1 can of plain seltzer, optional
A handful of mint leaves
Garnishes: sliced orange, grapefruit, lemon and lime, and whole strawberries

DIRECTIONS

Chop the orange (keep the peel on) and slice the strawberries. Put both in a pitcher and add the sugar. Stir and let sit for 20 minutes to macerate and allow the fruit to develop some juices.

Meanwhile, slice lemon and cucumber and chop grapefruit and lime (keeping the peel on both).

Pour rosé and Aperol into the fruit mixture.

Add cucumber, lemon slices, grapefruit, lime pieces and mint, then stir.

Refrigerate for 1-4 hours.

Garnish the pitcher or individual glasses with the sliced citrus, cucumber and strawberries.

Serve as is, or over ice, and/or with a dash of sparkling water!

Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website:

www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



Lynn's Top Five

Time to review your portfolio?

By Lynn Ballou CFP®

In the past two years we've been on quite the roller coaster ride with markets both swooning and swelling. For good reasons, we've been glued to the news wondering when it will be safe to travel, eat out and most basically, hug our friends and family! And despite the amazing vaccines available, with the surge of the recent virus variants, many of us are still left to wonder. All these issues and so many more have impacted our investments and I think many of us suffer from decision paralysis. Most recently it's especially logical to believe that we still don't have enough information to actually DO anything. But now is not the time to stick our collective thinking in the sand – let's agree to dust off the statements and take a look at what we own and our thoughts about if these holdings make sense given who we are, where we are, what we know and our vision and hopes for the future. Some perspective might help.

1) Should I lock in gains on investments?

Looking at your portfolio, if you feel that your equity holdings have overtaken your

portfolio percentages too much, despite the tax cost of locking in gains in non-retirement accounts, you might want to think about taking some gains off the table. This is especially true if you have need to access some of your capital in the next year or so for major purchases, or even for retirement income. If you are unwinding positions with large capital gains, work with your tax professional to determine if you have any timing considerations to guide you such as different income projections in different calendar years which could impact many calculations on your return.

2) **What's going on with inflation?** And how will that impact rates of return on fixed income investments? If you believe that pent up demands for goods and services and the labor shortage in some sectors will drive prices up, then you may also feel that those concerned about inflation are right to feel as they do. Clearly we are not being rewarded for sitting on cash with respect to interest income, although it does allow us to park funds while limiting valuation fluctuation. If you believe that rates are poised to increase, you should consider keeping your fixed

income assets liquid and short term. As rates increase, you can start to buy a ladder of longer-term maturities.

3) **Think about investing globally.** If you are looking to add depth to your high quality, dividend stock portfolio, don't neglect stocks that are not U.S.-based. Many very respected foreign-based companies in sectors from health care to finance are worth consideration as holdings in a diversified, large cap dividend-oriented portfolio. If this is not an area of expertise for you, look to investment managers to shoulder that work for you. You can access that type of capability with mutual funds, ETFs and private wealth managers. Other readers might be interested in investing globally in fixed income assets. Again, unless you feel competent handling the research yourself, lean on investment pros to assist in these types of holdings.

4) **529 Plans continue to be a college saving favorite.** In California we do not receive a tax benefit for funding 529 plans which leaves us free to use any state's 529 plan. Research which state has the investment choices you feel most appropriate for your future graduate. Understand what

all family members are doing to support future college students so that you know if you would like to retain control and how much to fund (www.scholarshare.com has a lot of helpful 529 information especially with respect to Californians). Be sure your plan choices are flexible so that as your student beneficiary ages, you can rebalance the holding allocations appropriately.

5) **Understand your risk tolerance as you consider changes.** So while I encourage readers to review their holdings and make changes as appropriate, I also want to emphasize the importance of understanding your risk tolerance before jumping in. And be open to the notion that your risk tolerance changes over time and with respect to your and your family's circumstances. Also, when reviewing your portfolio and thinking about risk management, you have the opportunity to use different types of accounts to handle different aspects of risk. For example, if you have holdings in retirement plans such as IRAs and 401(k)s and you are many years out from retirement, you can think about overweighting these accounts with equities, whereas you may want to keep your after

tax accounts more focused on tax free income holdings such as tax free muni bonds, or more tax efficient equity products such as ETFs. Remember to look at all your holdings together and how they are managed as a group, while nonetheless taking the opportunity to use different types of accounts to invest in different aspects of portfolio vehicles.



All investment strategies have the potential for profit or loss. Changes in investment strategies, contributions or withdrawals, and economic conditions, may materially alter the performance of your portfolio. Different types of investments involve varying degrees of risk, and there can be no assurance that any specific investment or strategy will be suitable or profitable for any investor's portfolio.

Live-ish theater returns to Orinda



Photo Sora O'Doherty

From left: Ken Sollazo, Al Guaraglia, Carson Campbell, Alicia Rydman and standing is the director Suzan Lorraine. Geotty and Susie Chappel are also cast in this show but were not present for this first read through of the Mini 10 Minute Play Festival.

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda Starlight Village Players are delighted to be back providing live entertainment in Orinda's Community Park, starting Aug. 6. Although the events will be in person, the plays won't be fully pro-

duced but will be read by actors from scripts. This is a first step toward returning to the group's normal season, after not being able to have any events at all last year owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The troupe will be performing in street clothes

without costumes, lights, sound effect, or a fully built out set. Still, the productions will feature professional actors and directors. The actors will have scripts in their hand and may move around a bit.

Mainly because of the uncertainty connected with the COVID-19 situation, OSVP didn't want to put in the tremendous hours of work to build sets and memorize lines, perhaps only to have their season canceled again, as it was last year. It takes months of work to produce a full season of plays. Normally OSVP builds its sets in April. But even without sets, the troupe guarantees that the season's performances will be "very entertaining."

Performances will be on Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m. and on Sundays at 4 p.m. The plays will run from one and a half to two hours. There will be an intermission, and prepackaged items will be for sale, such as bottled water and candy.

OVSP's Stories by Starlight

season will run through Oct. 3, with the exception of Labor Day weekend when the theater will be dark. The summer schedule is as follows:

"Tartuffe" by Molière
Adapted By Patrick Cleary, Director Amy Cook, Aug. 6-8;
"Two Left Feet" by P.G. Wodehouse, and "The Town in the Library, the Library in the Town" by Edith Nesbit, Director Eddie Peabody, Aug. 13-15;
"Mini 10 Minute Play Festival" by Bill Chessman, Director Suzan Lorraine, Aug. 20-22; A Triple Tryst of Terror including "The Black Cat" by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Monkey's Paw" by W. W. Jacobs, and "The Open Window" by Saki (H.H. Monroe), Director Malcolm Cowler, Aug. 27-29; "Don Quixote, A Play" by Matthew Garlin, based on the novel by Miguel Cervantes, Director Amy Cook, Sept. 10-12; "Seven Keys to Baldpate Inn" by George M. Cohan, Director

Suzan Lorraine, Sept. 17-19; "A Familiar Visage" by Eddie Peabody, Director by Eddie Peabody, Sept. 24-26; and lastly, "Carmilla" by Sheridan Le Fanu, Director Malcolm Cowler, Oct. 1-3.

OSVP president Geotty Chapple explains on the website that no one involved with OSVP is paid and they do not receive any civic funding. "We do this for the love of community theater and for YOUR enjoyment!" He explains that Orinda parks and rec charges for the use of the stage and publishers/agents charge between \$75 and \$100 per performance. In normal years, the cost of lumber, fasteners and paint run well over \$1,000. Used furniture, necessary props and costumes, etc., all add up quickly. Ticket sales, program ads, and concessions are OSVP's only revenue, so donations of cash or materials help tremendously.

A GoFundMe fundraiser for the theater group can be found at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/Orinda-Starlight-Village-Players>

Moraga Art Gallery enlivens East Bay art scene

**Submitted by
George Ehrenhaft**

To celebrate its full-time return to normalcy, the Moraga Art Gallery cordially invites art fans of all ages to a free and festive reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 7. Its current show, "Midsummer

Synergies," which ends on Sept. 19, features Donna Arganbright's ceramics and Danguole Rita Kuolas' etchings as well as paintings, photos, ceramics, glassware, jewelry, woodworking, sculpture and other media by more than 25 members and guest-artists. Also, esteemed floutist

Nike Rejto, touted by NPR to "enthral, caress and go straight to the soul," will be play for all to enjoy throughout the reception. The gallery is located at 432 Center Street in Moraga's Rheem Shopping Center. Come to meet the artists and enjoy light snacks and wine.

Another event will take place at the gallery on the next afternoon – Sunday, Aug. 8 – when artist Danguole Rita Kuolas will demystify print-making during a free public demonstration, using solar etching. All are welcome at any time between 1 and 4 p.m. and all will be invited to

take home a small original etching as a keepsake.

The gallery is now open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. For more information, please call (925) 376-5407, or visit <http://moragaartgallery.com> or email moragaartgallery@gmail.com.

Moraga Rotary named the "Outstanding Club of the Year"



Photos provided

Moraga Rotary Directors for 2021-22, front row: Evie Michon, Debbie Roessler, John Erickson, Mary Sue Erickson, Linda May, Frank May, Debbie Koo; back row: Lad Lynch, Tony Schoemehl, Dianne Wilson, Gary Irwin.

Submitted by Gary Irwin

Moraga Rotary Club was recently named "Outstanding Club of the Year" for the 2020-21 year by District 5160 Governor Mark Roberts, echoing Moraga Rotary's winning the same designation in 2017-18 after the opening of the All-Access Playground at the Moraga Commons. This was a recognition of Moraga Rotary's outstanding achievements in service on both the local and international levels. This District is composed of 72 Rotary Clubs from Berkeley and San Ramon in the south to Weed, near the Oregon border.

Moraga Rotary was also named Moraga's Non-Profit organization of the Year by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce.

Moraga Rotary launched a series of "Dinners with Rotary" during the pandemic that not only raised funds for its own service projects but also supported local restaurants that were struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic. This spring, after learning firsthand about the devastation that the Delta variant was causing among the people of India from one of its own members who was visiting there, Club President Brian South and his fellow club members took the lead in launching a fundraising effort to help Rotary districts and clubs in India to purchase lifesaving equipment and supplies. In just three weeks, with contributions from other clubs and individual Rotarians throughout the District, the Moraga Rotary Foundation was able to send almost \$35,000 to their partners in India.

In addition, Moraga Rotary was able to install security cameras accessible to first responders in Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, conduct e-waste collections, award a "Teacher of the Month" prize, fill hygiene kits for a local church project, supply medical kits for every classroom in Moraga, complete the education project in Sierra Leone (the "Makambo-Moraga campus"), and fund the library project in Goma, Congo, while making its usual donations to scholarships and local charity relief programs.

Roberts said, "I am deeply grateful to the members of the Moraga club for exemplifying Rotary's commitment to Service Above Self through their pro-

jects and achievements during the challenging 2020-2021 Rotary year. ... All Moraga club members can be very proud of what they have accomplished together."

At a recent year-end dinner, South was elected Rotarian of the Year by his fellow Club members.

This award is named in honor of Cliff Dochterman who, during his 60-plus year career as a Rotarian, served as District 5160 Governor in 1968-69 and Rotary International President in 1992-93. As a Past RI President, Dochterman was in great demand as a speaker about Rotary activities all over the world. While he is revered by Rotarians worldwide, he is a living legend in District 5160. He was a member of the Berkeley club for many years and is currently a member of the Moraga club. Dochterman was named "Moraga's Citizen of the Year" several years ago.

Moraga Rotary is a 54-year-old service club within Rotary International, one of the four Clubs in Lamorinda, and one of about 33,000 Rotary Clubs in about 200 countries. Regular meetings are held at noon on most Tuesdays at La Finestra restaurant. If you are interested in information about Rotary, or would like to donate to their worthy causes, please visit the website at moragarotary.org, or call Brian South, president, at (925) 888-7052.



Moraga Rotary Club President (left) displaying his "Rotarian of the Year" award plaque, voted by Club members, and Treasurer Rich Render displaying the plaque of past recipients of the award.

Fashion camp finale features fabulous designs



Photos provided

Participants of the Isabel Azam fashion camp July 22 at the Wilder Art & Garden Center.

Submitted by Jaleh Naasz

A talented group of Lamorinda kids showcased their fashion designs and upcycled garments during designer presentations at the finale of their Isabel Azam fashion camp at the Wilder Art & Garden Center on July 22. Isabel Azam first launched in Moraga with a kid's fashion show where the kids got to be the designers and have their vision brought to reality by designer and educator Jaleh Naasz. Since the 2015 launch, the mom of three has evolved the brand to offer seasonal fashion camps for kids ages 8 and up.

Naasz uses her technical training from her graduate studies in fashion design, industry experience as a designer as well as 15 years of college instruction in the field of Fashion Design and Merchandising to create this unique, purposeful, and fun curriculum for kids.

In this session of fashion camp, the kids created concept boards and learned about designing from original inspiration, they practiced sketching, played with fabrics, and were introduced to draping. They practiced sewing and re-purposed a dated men's shirt to make themselves a skirt. Alongside learning some foundational sewing basics, they also made some new friends and did a lot of singing along to fun tunes as they worked in their creative space.

During the last day of camp, parents were invited to watch the kids present their creative ideas and accomplishments and encourage them as they worked up the confidence to speak in front of an audience. Naasz discussed how her instruction for the Sacramento State University Fashion Merchandising and Management program impacts her camp layout and some of the ways she incorporates sustainability and inclusivity as she works with kids in this capacity.

"I loved hearing about your work, focus, mission, and passions – so perfect for these girls! What a great confidence booster and learning experience for all of them," said Krysta Lapcevic.

A contributing factor to this summer's successful camp was the cooper-



ation of the city of Orinda in working with Naasz as she searched for a venue to hold the camp. The Art & Garden Center at Wilder was a fantastic venue and even attracted a few future fashion campers from the nearby preschool who would cheer the attendees on from the windows.

To learn about future camps and events, use this QR code to sign up for the Isabel Azam contact list: <http://eepurl.com/dgxl6f.qr.16>

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.

Hopscotch squares span nearly quarter mile, thanks to local girls' efforts



Annie Andres and Fiona Greenaway

Photos John T. Miller

Hopscotch squares meander down the middle of this quiet Lafayette street.

By John T. Miller

A pair of neighborhood girls drew a 1,000 square hop-

scotch pattern in the asphalt on their quiet street in Lafayette. Annie Andres, 11, and Fiona Greenaway, 12, used Crayola Sidewalk Chalk

to draw the hopscotch game in rainbow patterns. It took the girls nine hours over the course of two days. Annie's sister Leah stood

guard and warned them when a car was coming. The quiet lane is usually only visited by residents, guests, and delivery trucks, but it was enough traf-

fic to send them to the side plenty of times. At one point they were scraping their fingers on the asphalt, so Fiona's mom went to the store and bought two fresh six-packs of chalk for them. A lot of the neighborhood kids have attempted to "go the distance," but the longest anyone has lasted is about a hundred hops. Annie and Fiona had made many chalk drawings on the street before, including extended hopscotch games. "This time, when we got to 100, we thought we'd just keep on going to a thousand," said Fiona. Both girls admitted that it was upsetting that their project is not permanent, but they said they might make it an annual tradition. After an East Bay Municipal Utility District crew worked on a water leak, Annie went back and redrew the damaged section. Their thousand square hopscotch measures about 410 yards, or close to a quarter mile. If the girls were looking to set a record, they've got a ways to go. According to the Guinness World Records, a hopscotch created by Leg-work for Lungs in New Jersey measures 7,041 yards, or about four miles.

Building community two wheels at a time



First Mile Cycle Works owners Carey Platto and Dave Fraioli

By Jeff Gomez

It's a dream lots of people have: quit the corporate grind, team up with a good friend, and start a business devoted to something you love. With the recent opening of First Mile Cycle Works, a new retail and repair shop located on Mt. Diablo Boulevard, two Lamorinda dads - Carey Platto and Dave Fraioli - have done just that.

Fraioli, a Lafayette native, has lived here the better part of his life while Platto, a long-time Bay Area resident, has been a staple of the community since 2012. When the pair met, they discovered they each had a passion for sports and being outdoors. This led to ski

trips, backpacking with their kids, and mountain biking. "We love the thrill of speed and challenging yourself to do new things," says Platto. "And with mountain biking, those two things go hand in hand." This past year, they decided to take the plunge and open a business together. Seeing as how the duo have complementary skills, the decision made a lot of sense. Fraioli is an entrepreneur with ample experience in operations and finance, while Platto has an extensive background in brand building, marketing, and vendor relationships. "Those two skill sets are very different," says Platto, "but both are very necessary." The physical shop is itself

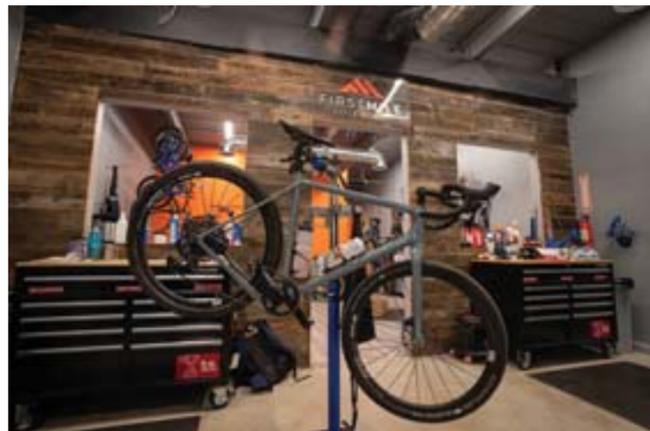
the perfect synthesis of the two founders' talents and vision. The strong visual look plays to Platto's marketing background, while having bikes worked on out in the open speaks to Fraioli's love of fixing things and making them work.

Even the shop's location has meaning. First Mile sits in what used to be Milosport, a popular snowboarding and skateboarding shop which closed in 2015. Says Fraioli, "We felt like there was some tradition here, as far as the expectation from the community - that this is where you go for your sports activity."

The location has more than just sentimental meaning. "Not only are we central to Lafayette," adds Platto, "but we're accessible to all of the East Bay. You can get on and off the freeway right here. And, for road riding, this is an amazing place to start and finish."

But rather than open the usual shop, the pair decided to offer consumer mainstay brands like Marin, while at the same time specializing in showrooming direct-to-consumer brands like Commencal and Blackheart. The reason for this is simple: when a person orders a bike online and it arrives unassembled, consumers often discover it's the wrong color or size, the bike can be difficult to assemble, and there's nowhere they can get it serviced. First Mile changes all that by giving consumers the opportunity to see and touch bikes from these direct-to-consumer brands.

The whole First Mile experience is designed to make



Inside the First Mile shop

Photo Oliver Lane

people feel comfortable - this isn't a place where people are made to feel intimidated if they don't know the difference between a derailleur and a disc brake.

"We're not here to hard sell and we're not here to up-sell," says Fraioli. "We do a good job of listening to customer needs and recognizing a price point they're comfortable with. And we can give you great value."

First Mile is also a place where you can bring any bike to get it repaired. "We'll take bikes of all shapes, sizes, and forms," says Fraioli. "We'll assess them and give you an honest and fair appraisal of what the work is going to cost." The shop strives for a one-day turn around on most repairs, and walk-in service visits are encouraged. First Mile also offers bi-weekly clinics where attendees can learn how to service bikes on their own.

Another staple of the shop are its weekly group rides. These cater to every level of

rider and range from routes that start at the store to ones that include some drive time in addition to the ride itself. But wherever the rides take place, the purpose is the same. "It's really about connecting with other people," says Fraioli, "and being part of a biking community. That's the glue that'll help keep people interested in the sport and wanting to do it more."

That sense of community is central to every aspect of First Mile. The shop itself feels less like a retail space than a clubhouse, something they encourage by offering a coffee table and chairs for lounging. They're even applying for a liquor license so evening rides can culminate with a beer. "At this stage in our lives and careers," says Platto, "we want to have fun at work." With the opening of First Mile, they're trying to ensure that everyone else has fun, too.

First Mile can be contacted at (925) 385-7072; www.first-milecycle.com; 3566 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette

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Not to be missed

ART

Valley Art Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of "On a Summer's Day" on Aug. 7. A new selection of over 300 artworks, representing the best of the best of East Bay artists. There will be an Open House to commemorate the opening on Saturday, Aug. 7 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Gallery. The over 300 artworks on display are available for both sale or rent. Also available are a wide selection of juried, high quality, hand-made crafts and jewelry. Open Tuesday to Saturday, 11-a.m. to 5 p.m. Remember that our digital doors are always open. Valley Art Gallery: 1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 110, Walnut Creek, www.valleyartgallery.org; (925) 935-4311

Christian Ehrhorn Fine Arts gallery kicks off an exciting exhibit with an Open House Artist Reception on Saturday, Aug. 7 from 5-9 p.m. This will be the first in-person exhibit at the fully opened gallery since March 2020! Come join us for wine, cheese, and community as we celebrate the artwork of Peeta Tinay, Aaron Webb, and Christian Ehrhorn. Tinay is a basket weaver who pushes the boundaries of her material, showing us that form and function are happily wed in her dynamic pieces. Webb's paintings explore love, loss, and finding the grace in between through his use of acrylic paint, dyes, salt, and rum. Ehrhorn is showing abstract expressionist landscape oil paintings with light and muted color palettes. He is also showing bold mixed media pieces that revolve around nostalgia, order, and natural form. The gallery is located at 39 Moraga Way in downtown Orinda's theatre district. Regular gallery hours are held

Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 4 p.m. christianehrhornfineart.com or call 510-703-7020.

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library Lino Prints and Landscapes in Oil and Pastel. The Lamorinda Arts Council presents artwork from Marie Cotter, Hallie Strock, Carol Tarzier and Mike Yashar at the in-person and virtual Art Gallery at the Orinda Library through the month of August. Meet the artists at an outdoor reception in their honor on Aug. 7 from 3 to 5 p.m. Visit www.lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits/ for details.

Art Gallery at Wilder: Artist Rusk Draws Inspiration from Social Issues. The Lamorinda Arts Council invites you to view a virtual exhibit of the photography of Grant Rusk through Aug. 31 by visiting www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries. His series of chromogenic prints is entitled "The Ambient Fence." Never at a loss for new ideas, he is inspired by social, natural and environmental issues which arise on a regular basis. Rusk serves on the Moraga Art in Public Spaces Committee.

The Moraga Art Gallery invites art fans of all ages to a free and festive reception on Saturday, Aug. 7 from 5 to 7 p.m. Its current show, "Midsummer Synergies," which ends on Sept. 19, features Donna Arganbright's ceramics and Danguole Rita Kuolas' etchings as well as paintings, photos, ceramics, glassware, jewelry, woodworking, sculpture and other media by more than 25 members and guest-artists. Also, esteemed floutist Nike Rejto, touted by NPR to "enthrall, caress and go straight to the soul," will be play for all to enjoy throughout the reception.

The gallery is located at 432 Center Street in Moraga's Rheem Shopping Center. Come to meet the artists and enjoy light snacks and wine. Another event will take place at the gallery on the next afternoon – Sunday, Aug. 8 – when artist Danguole Rita Kuolas will de-mystify printmaking during a free public demonstration, using solar etching. All are welcome at any time between 1 and 4 p.m. and all will be invited to take home a small original etching as a keepsake. Open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. (925) 376-5407, or http://moragaartgallery.com

MUSIC

St. Paul's Concert Series is excited to present Classical Pianist Misha Galant in a live performance. It is our first in-person performance, and we will also broadcast online from St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Sat., Aug. 28 at 7 p.m. Wildly talented concert pianist Misha Galant recently graduated from the Columbia-Juilliard Exchange in New York. He is the recipient of the Gilmore Young Artist Award, and a prize-winner at the Van Cliburn Junior international piano competition. He is a rising star, and we are excited to host a performance with him on the West Coast. At long last, the St. Paul's Concert Series is able to invite guests to attend our performances in-person. This performance will also be broadcast online. Please visit www.stpaulswc.org/concert-series to access the ticket registration, donation links, and links to the Concert Program. Or, just come to the performance at 1924 Trinity Avenue, in Walnut Creek.

Lamorinda Idol Singers Go Live with In-Person Performances. The

Lamorinda Arts Council is thrilled to announce the Lamorinda Idol Finals at the Orinda Theatre on Aug. 15. Finalists compete from 11 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.; awards ceremony is 7 to 7:30 p.m. Soloists compete in four categories by grade level; groups compete in three categories by grade level. Visit www.lamorindaarts.org/idol-2/ for details.

Solo Opera presents "Scalia/Ginsburg an Opera" by Derrick Wang. Friday, Sept. 10 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 12 at 2 p.m. at the Leshar Center for the Arts. The opera will include an incredible cast: Nikki Einfeld as "Ginsburg," Christopher Bengochea as "Scalia," and Kirk Eichelberger as the "Commentator." The chamber opera will be accompanied by a seven-piece orchestra under the baton of Maestro Alexander Katsman. An incredible production team will be led by Solo Opera Artistic Director, Sylvia Amorino, as stage director/producer. Seating is reserved and ticket prices are Adults: \$50, Seniors: \$40, Youth 17 and under: \$25. Tickets at (925) 943-7469 or visit the Leshar Center for the Arts Ticket Office: 1601 Civic Drive Walnut Creek.

THEATRE

California Shakespeare Theater presents "The Winter's Tale" Sept. 1-26; Evening Performances: 7:30 p.m., Sunday Matinees: 4 p.m., Select Saturday Matinees: 2 p.m., at Bruns Amphitheater, 100 California Shakespeare Theater Way, Orinda. Cal Shakes welcomes audiences back to the Bruns with a new adaptation of "The Winter's Tale-Shakespeare's exquisite reflection of our current moment." Cost: \$30-\$65. For more info see

Not to be missed

https://calshakes.org/winters-tale/ or call (510) 548-9666 or email boxoffice@calshakes.org.

August marks the return of the Orinda Starlight Village Players (OrSVP) to their home at the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater and the end of their 14-month pandemic-caused hiatus. OrSVP brings four shows to the stage this month, with a different production every weekend in Aug., each performing as reader's theater. (See story on Page B2 or visit www.orsvp.org.)

OTHER

The Monarch Habitat and Demonstration Garden installed by the Moraga Garden Club at Moraga's Rancho Laguna Park is in full bloom and has monarchs – 11 sightings from July 6-26, including a mating pair! Birds and butterflies sip at a solar-powered fountain; art and benches to be installed soon. Check it out at 2101 Camino Pablo, during park open hours, one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset. Free. More info: MoragaforMonarchs@gmail.com and MoragaGardenClub.com

GARDEN

Moraga Garden Club. New to the area? Have a barren garden and need to know what grows in our Mediterranean climate? Want to help beautify Moraga and make new friends? Want to hear interesting speakers ranging from renowned authors, photographers and master gardeners to other experts in their fields covering floral design, growing vegetables, proper pruning and many other topics? Now is the time to join! Starting again in September – barring possible COVID restrictions – we meet every third Thursday at 9:30 a.m. at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center 1700 School Street. Otherwise, Zoom meetings have proven to be very successful. We are free and open to the public. To learn more, visit: www.moragagardenclub.com

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

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Lamorinda's Religious Services

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church
 433 Moraga Way, Orinda, 254-3422
 www.holyshepherd.org

ONLINE WORSHIP SCHEDULE
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LAMORINDA SPORTS

A difficult season and coaching changes in Lamorinda Wrestling



Jason, Justin and Jessi Rosiak

By Jon Kingdon

Despite all the chaos this past spring, the changes with the wrestling head coaches in Miramonte, Acalanes and Campolindo have brought stability for all three schools. After four years at Miramonte, Jason Rosiak will be stepping away and Louis Suba, an Orinda resident, and former co-head coach at Campolindo is taking over for the Matadors, Nikko Triggas will remain as the head coach at Campolindo while Acalanes has promoted from within by hiring long-time assistant coach Greg Weitzman as the Don's head coach.

Ironically, it was the coronavirus that allowed Weitzman to find the time necessary to be a full-time head coach. "I was living in San Francisco and started a company called Flexibility, which does management consulting around diversity and inclusion and also does executive searches in helping organizations find talent," Weitzman said. "With the virus we became a fully remote company, so I was able to move to Walnut Creek and was able to jump in last year as the team's head coach."

Rosiak and Suba each made their decisions for familial reasons. Rosiak's daughter, Jessi, a recent Campolindo graduate, will be a freshman this fall at the University of Edinburgh (Scotland) and he wants to be free to visit her. Suba accepted the

offer to replace Rosiak because his son will soon be attending Miramonte. "Broady will be in eighth grade this year," Suba said. "If he wrestles next year, I wanted the opportunity to coach him myself rather than have someone else fill that position."

Attending The University of Edinburgh will be a unique experience for Jessi who will be studying finance and economics. The University of Edinburgh opened in 1583 and is the sixth-oldest university in the English-speaking world. Alumni of the university include Charles Darwin, Alexander Graham Bell, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Arthur Conan Doyle.

"Jessi looked at the globe and saw that the university had a little bit of everything that she wanted along with being able to do some traveling," Rosiak said. "If there is any time in life to do something different, she decided that during college was the time, not to mention that the tuition is like that of a UC school."

The California COVID protocols for the wrestling teams were the most extensive of all the sports due to the need for so much physical contact. Several of the meets were held outdoors on the football fields. "Our athletes and coaches had to be tested once a week and before each match we had to have instant PCR COVID tests," Rosiak said. "This was to ensure that we were staying virus free and only the wrestlers on the mat

were allowed to remove their masks."

With wrestling normally a winter sport, it was a unique experience for the teams to be able to wrestle on the football fields under the lights. "Wrestling outside allowed the parents to watch the matches from the stands," Weitzman said. "It really changed the environment from being in a small gym."

Initially the wrestlers were encouraged to wear the masks during their matches. "After a while, the kids couldn't breathe," Suba said. "It was too limiting for them. In practice, we did have appropriate spacing, and they would only have one partner for the entire practice. It was essentially an ad-hoc schedule. We would call another team and set up a match so we would have two matches a week. It was certainly a big change, but we were just thankful to have a season."

The numbers were limited at Acalanes, but the team was comprised of 13 wrestlers. "That was a good number under the conditions," Weitzman said. "The kids were fantastic to work with and the community came together to put on some really fun matches and exhibitions outside, which one coach referred to as 'Grappling on the Gridiron.'"

Rosiak is pleased to have someone the caliber of Suba to replace him: "Louis is a good strong person who really knows technique. He is also familiar with the wrestlers at

Miramonte. He coached a number of them because, with the diminished numbers of wrestlers this year for both schools, Campolindo and Miramonte often joined together as one team for the matches."

Suba, who wrestled at Indiana University and coached at Sacred Heart Cathedral (S.F.) will be bringing much of what he learned coaching at Campolindo: "I'm going to take a lot of things that I learned coaching with Nikko. My style will have some similarities, but it won't all be the same."

Weitzman is bringing in his own coaching philosophy to the Dons: "I want the kids thinking about and focusing on two things – strong fundamentals and also really utilizing flow wrestling to be able to transition and constantly work through a series of breakdowns and attacks that all flow into each other so when they hit their moves, it's through a sequence and not just a single move and takedown."

What Rosiak did in his four years at Miramonte was not lost on Suba. "Jason generated a lot of interest in the community and got the numbers up and I hope that I can continue that," Suba said. "Right now, we have our regular off-season program going on with an open mat twice a week which several local wrestlers have attended in the past. It gives the kids an opportunity to keep training in the off-season. I believe that the only way you get better at

wrestling is to wrestle."

Even though Rosiak could not make the full-time commitment in the winter to coach, he is not going to disappear. "I'll be coaching my son, Justin, who is 9, in wrestling, soccer and baseball and I can also be a 'free agent' assistant coach if anyone else is looking for help."

Rosiak takes great memories with him from his four years at Miramonte: "I was fortunate in that I was able to work with some great student-athletes and families. When I started out, there were only two returning wrestlers and pre-COVID we had over 30 wrestlers on the team. Two of the years, our team won the best GPA in the North Coast Section. They were good students as well as athletes. We went from no females on the team to as many as eight. Next year, I believe that junior Hannah Ripper has a good chance to qualify for state. Finally, in 2019, we defeated Campolindo in a dual match for the first time in 15 years with the victory clinched by a young woman, Yazee Mendez."

Weitzman is looking forward to joining the coaching fraternity: "There is a great deal of experience with Nikko, Louis and Jason and I'm looking forward to getting to know them better. They care a lot about the programs and their kids, and it's always been a joy to talk with them. I'm looking forward to wrestling with them and against them."



Louis Suba, who will coach Miramonte next year, with his son Broady

CC United Wins National Junior Olympics



Submitted by Sean McFarland

Led by head coach Matt DeTrane, and assistants Jack Brown and Garrett Dunn, the CC United 18U team won the 2021 USA Water Polo Junior Olympics National Championship held July 17-20 in Orange County, California. The CC United Water Polo Club is based in Orinda and draws players from the East Bay Area. Founded in 2011, CCU has been knocking on the championship door at JO's, registering a half dozen top five finishes across different age groups over the last few years. This

year's 18U team finally brought home the Gold for the club, as they went 7-0 during the grueling four-day event, which is the largest of its kind in the world.

CCU players Caleb Boggan, Charlie Saunders, Nate Rego, Brodie Sladek, and Bardia Koopah rounded out a CCU team that devoted two years to practicing, training, and developing a complete team approach – all while dealing with the grueling conditions of COVID. Their hard work, and that of their teammates and coaches, resulted in CC United winning the 2021 Junior Olympics National Championship.

Names of Players in Team Photo: Back row: Bardia Koopah, Jay Mills, Charlie Saunders, Caleb Boggan, Kyle Thomas, Tommy O'Conner, Chase McFarland, Ben Larsen, Brock Zamanian, Grant Watson, CJ Indart, West Temkin, Gil Gvishi, Mark Laurlund, Leo Lueddemann, Nate Rego, Brodie Sladek; front row: Kirk Jensen, Jack Brown, Matt DeTrane, Garrett Dunn, Sean Thomas

Photo provided

Mia Mastrov follows family footsteps to California



Mia Mastrov

Photo provided

By Jon Kingdon

You would be hard pressed to find someone that was able to benefit in any way due to the onset of the coronavirus. Though she would have been willing to cancel the tradeoff, the University of California Women's basketball head coach Charmain Smith was able to get Miramonte senior Mia Mastrov on her team several months earlier than expected.

According to Smith, "Mia's father and I had some conversations early on prior to COVID really being a big deal. When we learned that Mia would not lose a year of eligibility were she to begin her college career in the spring, I knew that we would love to have Mia come early to Cal to get acclimated to our program. That's when I called her dad and he said that I could bring it up with Mia."

Mastrov had committed to attending UC Berkeley her junior year, where her grandfather had played basketball under the great Pete Newell. At the end of December, though, it was not an easy de-

cision for Mastrov with all the uncertainty as to whether there would be a season for any sports this spring. "If we were guaranteed to have a season at Miramonte, it's likely I would have stayed. It was a blind decision as to whether to stay or go on to college early, knowing that at California, I was going to have a good experience and good knowledge for the future."

Mastrov showed great prescience by taking online classes the summer of her junior year to ensure that she would have enough credits to be able to graduate by the end of December. "When I had all my credits to be able to graduate early, I got a call from Coach Smith," Mastrov said. "She knew that I had been planning on being able to graduate early and it all came together from there."

After completing their senior year in high school, it's hard enough for any freshman to be able to make the adjustment to the academics of college and playing Division I basketball. As talented as Mastrov was in high school, being named first team all-

Northern California as a sophomore and junior, as a 17-year-old going against 22 and 23-year-old opponents, it's that much harder, but Mastrov was aware of what was to come: "I went in there with the mindset to have an open mind, willing to learn and gather as much information as I could. No one can adjust that quickly to playing college basketball. Initially it was a big adjustment, but I think that now that I have a feel for what it's like, I'll be more prepared for my true freshman year."

Mastrov's success was no surprise to the former head coach at Miramonte who coached Mastrov from her sophomore year. When this reporter interviewed him four years ago in writing the preview story about the Lamorinda basketball teams, Sopak pointed to freshman Mastrov. "Don't write this but she's going to be my next great one," Sopak said. High praise from someone who had coached Sabrina Ionescu.

Smith was confident that Mastrov had the qualities to take on the challenge of col-

lege level basketball head on: "Mia is a competitor. She's played at a really high level in high school against top competition and talent at Miramonte and with her club teams. She has that mindset to not be afraid at all. I knew that throwing her into the fire would be something that she would embrace, and it would help her down the road."

By the time Mastrov arrived at Cal, there were only six games left in the season, all of which she played in, starting the last five games. With only a week to acclimate herself to her teammates and the team's system, Mastrov came off the bench against the University of Utah, scoring 20 of the Bears' 51 points. With too little time to learn the team's offensive system, Smith limited what Mastrov needed to know when she was on the court. "We gave Mia a few plays which she was comfortable with. She was willing to embrace any challenge that we threw her way, and it really helped the team to have an additional ball handler and shooter."

Being an unknown commodity does not last long when you lead your team in scoring in your first game. Scouting reports were quickly made to take away what Mastrov did best which was to score. Despite shooting 1 for 16 in the next two games, Mastrov did not allow it to lessen her confidence. "I'm mentally stable on the court and no matter what happens, I've learned that you just have to move on from it. I realized that any shot I was going to get was not going to be wide open and would be contested. It takes adjustment to that when teams know that you're the shooter and obviously they don't want to let you score on them."

Smith appreciated how Mastrov handled these new situations: "Mia's reaction was to try and find a way to adjust to her opponents, figuring out how to counter how she was being defended. She is really

poised and doesn't get rattled. She has a game face and stays with it and is extremely resilient.

Those are the things that we talked about for the off-season and what she has been working on."

What could have been a more difficult situation was made that much easier by Mastrov's teammates. "They were all amazing and very welcoming," Mastrov said. "They were all great people on and off the court. Without having them there to help and support me, I wouldn't have been able to get as much of a boost as I did this year."

Mastrov also began her academic career at Berkeley and that was more of a change for her than for most first-year students. "My classes on campus were also more of an adjustment in that I went straight into my college classes without the summer break from high school," Mastrov said. "They were difficult but manageable once I adjusted to it. I'm considering majoring in media studies and business though that could change. It's Berkeley and it doesn't get much better than that."

Mastrov still looks back on her at time playing with Miramonte with some emotion: "I missed being able to play my last year with the graduating seniors like P.K. (Sam), Julia (Miller), and Jordan (Allred), who were my teammates since my freshman and sophomore years. Looking back, I did not realize that the last game that I had played with them as a junior would in the end be my last game for Miramonte."

Looking forward, Mastrov is confident in what she sees soon for Cal basketball: "Coach Smith and the staff are on a really good path. We'll have a much better season with the return of our injured players and our freshmen are now more advanced and COVID will not be as limiting this upcoming season."

Lamorinda Water Polo Club celebrates its graduating seniors



Front row, from left: Griff Hallahan, University of Washington; Maddie Sumner, UC Davis*; Will Coons, UC Santa Barbara*; Devon Byrne, UC Berkeley; Sofia Vattuone, Indiana University; Sophia Leto, Indiana University; Iris Gallagher, Loyola Marymount*; Cooper Tunney, UC Berkeley; Johnny Shepherd, Santa Clara University*; back row: Gavin Grosz, Loyola Marymount*, Will Hollerbach, UCLA, Hugh Flanders, DVC*, Molly Ostrowski, Arizona State*, Mackenzie Murphy, UC Santa Barbara*, Connor Mechelke, Johns Hopkins*, Jamie Steingraf, San Jose State University*, Parker Hett, University of Washington, Chris Bruen, Colby College, Spencer Tarkoff, University of Wisconsin, Ryan McAninch, University of Wisconsin, Jack Bunzle-Hardie, Chapman University*
Not pictured: Adam Ting, UC Davis*; Charlie Cohen, Chapman University*; Reese Whipple, Savannah College of Art/Design
(* Athletes committed to NCAA water polo teams)

Orinda Aquatics makes strong showing at USA Swimming Sectional Championships



Photo provided

Submitted by Don Heidary

Orinda Aquatics finished third at the recent USA Swimming Long Course Sectional Championships in Roseville, California. The meet was comprised of 50 teams from Northern California, Southern California, and Nevada and featured swimmers from the Sectional to Olympic Trial levels. Orinda Aquatics is a local USA Swimming team of 140 athletes and took 40 swimmers to the high-level meet. Highlights were Ben Hayes achieving an Olympic Trial cut, and new Junior National stan-

dards for Jalen Evans (100m fly 56.5), Andrew Hallett (50m free 24.1), and Adriana Smith (100m back 1:04.2 – summer cut). For Orinda Aquatics, high point scorers were Emilia Barck with 116 points and Isaac Kim with 96 points. "A" finalists included Channing Hanley (100/200 breast), Emilia Barck (200 IM/400 IM, 100/200 back), Maggie Buckley (200 back), Mac Follmer (200 fly), Paige Hanley (100 breast), Ben Hayes (100/200 breast, 400 IM, 100 fly), Isaac Kim (400/800 free), Zach Le-Nguyen (100/200 back), Tommy Roder (100 back), Adrian Smith (100/200 back), and Lily Struempf (200 free).

12U Moraga Baseball team Champs



Photo provided

From left: coach Sean Goldstein, Noah Muldoon, Colby Webster, Max Olson, Frankie Polichio, Jaxson Luckhurst, Aiden Goldstein, Carter Cook, Ryan Erickson, Liam Baldelli, Evan Kelly, Coach John Kelly, Garrett Joyce

Submitted by Sean Goldstein

Congratulations to the Moraga Mavericks 12U baseball team for their victory in the 2021 NCS World Series in Reno, Nevada. Over the course of four days (July 15-18), Moraga met teams

from the Central Valley, Southern California, Idaho and Nevada. The Mavericks went 7-0 over their tournament run, which culminated in a 6-2 victory over the Cory Lidle Baseball Academy from Covina, California. The team's balanced pitching, hitting, and defense were keys to winning this coveted championship.

Submit sports stories and story ideas to sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com

Dons Youth Football Camp



Submitted by
Jim Malmquist

The Dons Youth Football Academy was held at the Acalanes Football Field in July, for all kids in the Lamorinda community from fourth to eighth grade. This year's academy was exceptional, with over 90 kids registering for the four-day program. The goal of the camp is

to teach the fundamentals of football from an offensive and defensive perspective, to develop skills, both football and life. Focus was on things like sportsmanship, teamwork, leadership and to help in the transition from flag football to tackle. This year's camp featured a 7 x 7 Flag Football Tournament, the camper favorite Trench Wars and Combine Stations, and the Agility Obstacle Course.

Photo provided

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OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 15 Issue 12 Wednesday, August 4, 2021



Home repair advice

read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Water matters



Daylilies bloom for a single day and are drought resistant.

By Cynthia Brian

"When the well is dry, we know the worth of water." ~ Benjamin Franklin

We turned on the spigot. A trickle. Seconds later, nothing.

For over 100 years the deep well had served three houses, several barns, and all the gardens on our Napa county ranch without a problem. This summer, the well is empty. The bucolic lake built by my Dad and brothers in the former horse pasture served as a family playground, fishing area, and



Crocosmia, the firecracker plant is not a water hog.

Photos Cynthia Brian

farm irrigation reservoir for decades. In 2021, it is a big basin of cracked clay. There is no water.

In the San Joaquin Valley, an area known to be the breadbasket of fruit and nuts for America, the aquifers and canals are depleted. It is projected that by 2040, 535,000 acres of agricultural production will be lost. If the drought persists and water is not available, double that amount of land will not be planted resulting in food shortages around the country.

Seventy-one percent of the earth is

covered in water. Over 96% of that water is saline, represented by our oceans and seas. The human body consists of 60% water. H₂O is a vital nutrient to the life of every cell. People can survive without food for several days, but without water, organ failure commences around the third day of dehydration.

Water matters and water is scarce. Climate change is resulting in rising temperatures and when the soil gets warmer, heat waves worsen. Fifty-five percent of the West is experiencing extreme drought conditions. Some scientists have declared the summer of 2021 the worst drought in over 1,200 years.

What is a gardener to do?

Because of the efforts to reduce water usage as well as the higher costs of water, many people have asked me if it would be best to "let their landscape go." My rapid reaction is a decisive "NO!" Besides the financial burden of re-landscaping, maintaining a garden during a drought is essential not only for the aesthetics and beauty a garden provides but for keeping your home cooler and contributing to a fire safety zone. If you let your plants and trees die, your parched landscape could become a fire hazard.

Here are ways to minimize watering while keeping your plants alive.

1. Weed your garden thoroughly as weeds are huge drinkers.
2. Mulch to conserve water. Add three inches of good quality mulch to your entire landscape to suffocate weed growth, conserve water, prevent evaporation, and reduce the heat to the soil.

... continued on Page D10

Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	15	\$960,000	\$2,600,000
MORAGA	5	\$411,000	\$1,775,000
ORINDA	9	\$1,425,000	\$5,200,000

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

- 1084 Brown Avenue, \$1,578,500, 3 Bdrms, 2180 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 06-16-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,495,000, 09-06-19
- 3175 Cordova Way, \$2,430,000, 4 Bdrms, 3197 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 06-15-21
- 3275 Gloria Terrace, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2393 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 06-17-21
- 3909 Happy Valley Road, \$2,335,000, 4 Bdrms, 3681 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 06-15-21,
Previous Sale: \$800,000, 07-26-01
- 9 Harper Court, \$1,900,000, 5 Bdrms, 3298 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 06-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$550,000, 08-12-04
- 956 Janet Lane, \$1,295,000, 3 Bdrms, 1755 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 06-16-21,
Previous Sale: \$780,000, 12-19-06
- 3611 Lincoln Way, \$1,625,000, 3 Bdrms, 1634 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 06-14-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 01-15-21
- 1032 Lindsey Court, \$2,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 3734 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 06-14-21
- 812 Mountain View Drive, \$2,240,000, 6 Bdrms, 4175 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 06-16-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,755,000, 09-25-15
- 1555 Rancho View Drive, \$2,430,000, 3 Bdrms, 5308 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 06-16-21
- 6 Shreve Lane, \$1,175,000, 4 Bdrms, 2002 SqFt, 2013 YrBlt, 06-17-21
- 1570 Silver Dell Road, \$2,110,000, 4 Bdrms, 2421 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 06-14-21
- 562 Silverado Drive, \$2,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 2132 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 06-14-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,325,000, 10-06-15
- 1072 Via Roble, \$1,850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1998 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 06-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$452,500, 11-29-16
- 1003 Woodbury Road #207, \$960,000, 2 Bdrms, 1110 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt, 06-15-21,
Previous Sale: \$890,500, 09-01-16

MORAGA

- 2067 Ascot Drive #243, \$411,000, 1 Bdrms, 790 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 06-14-21,
Previous Sale: \$280,000, 03-02-15
- 2135 Ascot Drive #9, \$760,000, 2 Bdrms, 1643 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 06-16-21
- 140 Derby Lane, \$1,775,000, 5 Bdrms, 3055 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 06-14-21,
Previous Sale: \$650,000, 06-15-99
- 28 Hansen Court, \$1,065,000, 3 Bdrms, 2095 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 06-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$765,000, 08-15-08
- 245 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 2445 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 06-18-21

ORINDA

- 46 East Altarinda Drive, \$2,635,000, 4 Bdrms, 3764 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 06-15-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,325,000, 08-05-20
- 23 Crestview Drive, \$1,425,000, 3 Bdrms, 1830 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 06-15-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,125,000, 10-18-19
- 244 El Toyonal, \$1,975,000, 5 Bdrms, 2538 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 06-18-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,126,000, 12-06-16
- 14 Francisco Court, \$1,740,000, 3 Bdrms, 2232 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 06-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 06-04-07
- 11 Ivy Drive, \$1,818,000, 3 Bdrms, 1572 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 06-16-21,
Previous Sale: \$825,000, 12-30-20
- 37 La Campana Road, \$1,750,000, 3 Bdrms, 2325 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 06-14-21,
Previous Sale: \$910,000, 06-02-07
- 20 La Campana Road, \$2,514,500, 4 Bdrms, 2512 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 06-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,295,000, 09-03-02
- 513 Miner Road, \$5,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 3825 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 06-14-21,
Previous Sale: \$3,008,000, 06-10-20
- 36 Owl Hill Road, \$2,050,000, 5 Bdrms, 2456 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 06-14-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,277,500, 04-28-14



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Lot 2: This approximately 3.88 acre lot offers gorgeous views and loads of potential. Both properties are being sold together and are close to K-12 Schools, Highway, Bart, Reservoir, and Downtown



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Choosing the best disposal

By Jim Hurley

A call to look at a “drip under the sink” took a nightmarish turn for me one time. Typically, the leak under the sink is a loose pipe, or a damaged dishwasher drain line. This time, the entire drain assembly had been in place for over 40 years. The drain lines had eroded to the point that there was nothing left but a thin veneer of chrome on the P-trap and pipes. Everywhere I touched, the pipe crumbled in my hand. When I went to disconnect the disposal, the whole bottom fell off. It was time for a new one.

People will ask me, “What disposal should I get?” The answer starts with another question: How much room do you have under the sink? Disposals have two basic features, noise level and motor power. The more quiet and power you purchase, the more space it takes under your sink. (Also, the more they cost.)

First, consider the noise factor. The whisper quiet disposal is more expensive than its lower-cost, louder cousin. Think of how often you use the disposal: How critical is it for you that a noisy disposal not interrupt your conversation for 15 to 30 seconds? Then consider the size of the unit. The super quiet disposal is surrounded with more insulation. This means it can be twice as large in diameter as the noisier one. If your under-sink space is needed for cleaning supplies or wastebaskets, you



Photo A. Scheck

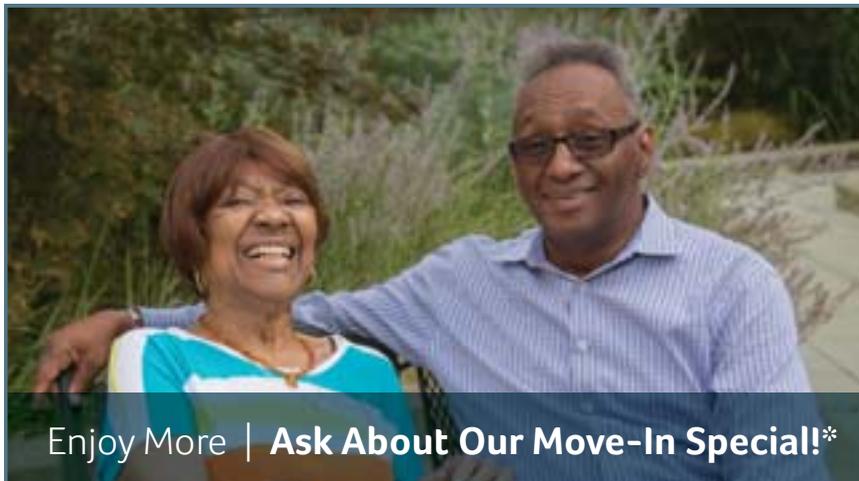
simply might not have room for the quieter model.

The second consideration is power. Disposals are rated by Horsepower (HP). When shopping for the unit, you can choose between a 1/3, 1/2, or 3/4 HP motor. Again, the size (and cost) increases with the HP factor, so if maximizing space below is a requirement, your best option is small and noisy. Motor power becomes important, depending on the amount of use. If you are constantly cooking and running the disposal for a few minutes a couple times a day, the smaller motor might wear out sooner. If you have not adopted my advice from an earlier column, and still stuff the disposal full before you turn it on, you would definitely benefit from more HP.

A word about installation. You can call your plumber (or a handyman) to replace it and have it done. They will appreciate it if you know which one you want or have bought the disposal in advance. The big box building supply stores also offer installation services at their customer service counter. The service is done by local licensed plumbers and might introduce you to the plumber you want to call back for future plumbing problems.

You can always do it yourself if you have a few basic tools and are willing to spend a little time under your sink. For the DIY job, consider replacing the old disposal with the same model (if you can find it); this will save you time. The same unit will attach to the old collar, saving that step in the installation, and the drainpipes will connect at the same length and height, so there is less to change on the drain. The secret to the DIY install is removing the C-Ring that holds the collar together. Once you've removed the old disposal, loosen the screws that push up against the base of the sink. Lift up the screw plate and remove the C-Ring, (the spring clip in the groove below the plate). This releases the rest of the collar assembly from the base of the sink. Or just call that family member who can fix anything. Yes, we all have one.

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

Water matters

... continued from Page D1

3. Check for leaks in your sprinkler system. If you find a spike in your water bill, you probably have a broken pipe somewhere.
4. Water deeply and infrequently. Once or twice a week will suffice. Most plants need about one inch of water weekly. Check your soil to make sure that the water is penetrating the soil. Dry soil sheds water as run-off. If this happens, water twice, five minutes apart until the soil is saturated. Deep watering encourages a healthy root system while frequent short showers are wasteful and not beneficial to plant growth.
5. Water early in the morning or early evening when moisture will be retained.
6. Refrain from fertilizing in the summer months as feeding promotes thirsty hyper-growth.
7. Mow your lawns without using the bag.

Grass clippings supply nutrients to the lawn with less water usage.

8. Don't worry about keeping your lawn super-green. Just keep it alive and it will re-green when the weather is wetter.
9. Use soaker hoses around plants to eliminate evaporation. Trees can be especially vulnerable during a drought. Use a deep soaker wand to supply water to the roots.
10. Don't put your irrigation on a schedule. Instead, check your soil moisture and monitor your plants. Turn your system on when it is necessary but do make sure to run it to keep the system free of invading insects, roots, and stagnant water.

For both firewise and waterwise gardening, permeable surfaces in your hardscape such as decomposed granite, gravel, stones, and mulch are advisable. They provide a fire-safe zone and allow rainwater to percolate into the soil without runoff. ... continued on Page D10



Don't eat the toxic leaves of rhubarb.

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian Water matters

... continued from Page D8

For a list of plants that are both fire and drought resistant, re-read my article located at www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1508/Digging-Deep-with-Goddess-Gardener-Cynthia-Brian-Fire-retardant-and-fire-resistant-plantings.html.

11. Summer is not the time to plant but to plan. Any specimen planted in August will require regular and concentrated watering to establish strong roots. Late fall before frosts will be optimal for sowing.

12. Recycle your household water. Keep a bucket in your shower and bowls in your sinks to catch the water from your faucet. Use it on your houseplants or pour it into your garden. When you steam or boil vegetables, allow the water to cool, then use it on your plants.

13. Minimize your personal water usage. Turn off the water when brushing teeth or when soaping up in the shower. For toilets, we may be approaching the former drought mantra "if it's yellow, let it mellow. If it's brown, flush it down." This is obviously a personal choice.

14. Adjust your expectations for your garden. Accept the fact that your garden may not be as green, lush, and colorful as it would normally be if water scarcity was not an issue. Plants wilt to conserve energy. Many plants are resilient and can deal with hot weather. They will bounce back with winter rains.

During the past two months, I have been busy personally repairing broken PVC pipes, valves, sprinklers, and hoses as hiring anyone to assist has been impossible. Between the marauding deer, shifting soils, and invading roots, the work is endless, arduous, intensive, and necessary. I have also implemented the tips that I am suggesting.

Taking a long, relaxing shower used to be my reward after a day of digging, weeding, pruning, repairing, building, and planting, but for the past few years I've resorted to three-minute scrubs to save water.

Living in Lamorinda, we are fortunate to be able to turn on our faucets and have water. Farmers throughout the state are not so lucky. Continue to grow edibles as growing your own groceries will become more critical as the drought continues.

As for now, on our family ranch and vineyards we are buying water. Last year's grape harvest was 100% destroyed by smoke taint. Because of the three-digit temperatures experienced thus far, we have already lost 20% of our Cabernet. I pray for a winter of maximum snowfall.

Water is life. It's precious. Don't waste, conserve.

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Cynthia Brian

Photo Jim Scala

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. Buy copies of her books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD and special savings. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

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