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Food waste disposal is the focus of new waste reduction law, SB 1383.

Photo Bigstock

Lamorinda in great shape to meet new recycling law

By Sora O'Doherty

As Senate Bill 1383, the most significant waste reduction law in the past 30 years, comes into effect, Orinda, like the rest of Lamorinda, is well positioned to be in compliance. In a Feb. 1 presentation to the Orinda City Council, Senior Program Manager Judith Silver of Recycle Smart explained that Orinda is already ahead of the game, because residents have already been separating green waste from

trash and recycling. One of the most significant elements of the bill, finding ways to get edible food to people who need it instead of to the landfill, is already being practiced to a significant degree in Lamorinda.

SB 1383 is intended to reduce short-lived climate pollutants in California, and sets goals to be reached by 2025. Food is 18% of what is discarded. Silver said that she is confident that Lamorinda is largely in compliance with this law, although there

will be some changes. Up until now, multifamily buildings could opt out of food waste recycling and recycle only yard waste, but the requirement now applies to everyone. New Administrative Services Director Doug Alessio helped with a grant application that will provide one-time funding for educational outreach to explain the new provisions.

Recycle Smart will begin conducting random "lid flips," checking for non-compliant materials in bins, along their 68 routes. ... continued on Page A6

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Masses of junipers removed from Campo development before fire season



Photo Sora O'Doherty

By Sora O'Doherty

The Campolindo Firewise community has been actively assisting member residents to rid their property of fuels that will have to be removed to meet the new fire code, which specifies that juniper bushes and bamboo within 10 feet of all public and private roads must be removed by the end of next year. Junipers, sometimes nicknamed "green gas cans," are known to be highly fire prone.

According to block captain Steve Hoyt, there are 402 homes in the Campolindo Firewise group, with near complete coverage of the community. The objective of their group is to improve emergency preparedness of the neighborhood, such as encouraging residents to prepare go bags, obtain emergency supplies, and improve the fire defensibility of their homes. The Campolindo group has 30 block captains, each responsible for 10-15 homes. The Firewise group is associated with FireWise USA, a program of the National Fire Protection Association, that encourages local solutions for safety by involving homeowners in taking individual responsibility for preparing their homes from wildfire risk; it is not associated with the Campolindo Homeowners Association.

About 17 homeowners took advantage of an offer arranged by the Firewise group to use Wildland Corporation to remove unwanted plants, mostly junipers, in February, ahead of the deadline imposed by the revised Moraga-Orinda Fire District Fire Code. Homeowner Raj Rikhy plans to replace the extensive juniper planting with artificial turf and dark wood chips. He won't miss the rats that came with the juniper. Gorden Graham, MOFD fuels mitigation manager, and Dennis Rein, MOFD emergency preparedness coordinator, were on hand to support the effort.

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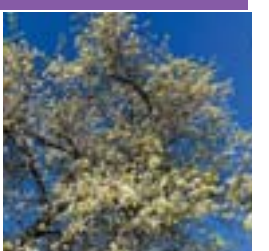
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Mayor focuses on accomplishments during State of City address

By Lou Fancher

Relegated to an online delivery of the Feb. 10 State of the City Address, Lafayette Mayor Teresa Geringer spoke of school safety, wildfire prevention, PG&E PSPS events, emergency response capabilities, new inclusive and diversity initiatives, and funding from regional, state and federal sources the city is pursuing to support businesses, nonprofits and individuals as the city emerges from the pandemic. She also talked about General Plan updates and acknowledged city staff and her fellow council members for continuing to provide high quality services to residents. Geringer made note of the long hours logged by city staff and their contributions to what makes Lafayette great.

During a Q&A with leaders of several departments, City Manager Niroop Srivatsa, who assumed her position as city manager in 2019, said she has the privilege of leading the 44 full- and part-time staff members who often go above and beyond to fulfill their roles serving residents.

Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson, Greg Wolff, Lafayette's Planning and Building Director, and Director of Engineering and Public Works Mike Moran all spoke about challenges they have faced during the pandemic,

with Robinson noting that there are currently four engineering jobs alone to fill at the city.

Parks Trails and Recreation Director Jonathan Katayanagi, who has been with the city for 24 years, talked about the Lafayette Spirit Van for seniors, in-person and Zoom classes available for seniors, adults and children, after-school childcare and summer camps, and room and picnic area rentals at the community center. Events returning to the department include a Father-Daughter Dance (now called a Family Dance) on March 11 and a Youth Commission outdoor movie night (date TBD).

Katayanagi said the Lafayette Senior Services Commission is working on a new action plan and residents are welcome to email advice at love-lafayette.org. "They are working the AARP's eight domains of livability to improve the age friendliness of the city." Also on tap, a project with the Senior Services Commission and the Youth Commission called "Lafayette Rocks." Older adults and youth in the community will be joining forces to paint rocks and spend time talking to one another.

Katayanagi also brought up the three Lafayette pickleball courts located at the community center hockey rink and the free program that includes instruction from volunteers. Katayanagi

said he sees people of all ages on the courts.

Moran said keeping the roads, drains, streetlights, traffic signals, Lafayette Library and Learning Center and other physical structures means Public Works has "a lot going on." Recent projects completed or in progress include paving a large portion of Moraga Road coming down from Moraga, reconstructing and paving a large portion of Reliez Valley Road, implementing traffic calming and safety measures around schools and more.

Police Chief Ben Alldritt said partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce such as the Rez Run continue and indicated a close collaboration between the department and the city. When asked about wildfire safety, Alldritt noted the collaborative effort between the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and the Police Department, and highlighted the Alert Wildfire camera system that now has over 30 cameras in and around the Lafayette area for early detection of wildfires. He invited people to visit alertwildfire.org to learn more about the program. The AM 1670 radio station he said is "alive and well," and he mentioned that the Board of Supervisors, acting on behalf of ConFire, approved a plan to apply for up to \$5 mil-

lion in state grants to extend the MOFD shaded fuel break into Lafayette and Walnut Creek.

Increased levels of attention have been implemented to improve safety and traffic awareness around schools in the area, and Alldritt noted that cameras have helped minimize criminal activity. "If you come to Lafayette to commit a crime, we will come find you," he said.

Other questions from the public involved Vision Zero, which focuses on street safety, and the desire for sidewalks, which Moran says the Local Roadway Safety Plan will address, but "we need a funding structure."

When asked about how the city is working to reduce its carbon footprint, Geringer spoke about the push to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mentioned the work being done by the Environmental Task Force, which is looking into ways the city can convert from using gas-powered leaf blowers and other gas-powered equipment to electric. The ETF plans to bring a draft ordinance to the council and is also researching EV charging standards in new developments.

After questions from the public were answered, Stanley Middle School Music Director Bob Athayde introduced a video recording of the Stanley Symphonic Band to close the event.

Some single-income renters struggle to stay afloat in Lafayette



Photo J. Wake

By Sharon K. Sobotta

When Sunita Shastri's apartment manager suggested she leave her name off the lease of her unit when she and her husband and two children downsized from a two to a one-bedroom place in 2019, it seemed like no big deal. But when Shastri, who is in the final stages of divorce, tried to take over the lease in 2021, management told her she'd first need to vacate and reapply. "I asked my manager where we should go with my kids and my stuff while I waited and she shrugged her shoulders," Shastri recalls. "She seemed to think 'it's not my problem.'"

Shastri reached out to the apartment in Lafayette that has low income

units and placed herself on the waiting list. When she recently checked on her waitlist status, she was number 200. Shastri has also reached out to the Contra Costa County Family Justice Center, which can waitlist her for housing in places like Concord, Martinez or Antioch, but not Lafayette.

"It's easy for people to say that you should just leave Lafayette if you can't afford it," says Shastri, who is a preschool teacher in Moraga and whose children attend Lafayette Elementary School. "As a single mom, I can't just pack up and move. It's taken me a long time to build a support network in this community, who help me with caring for my kids, and my job is very important to me." Shastri doesn't think she

should have to leave a community that she loves.

"I've been looking at two-bedroom units in Lafayette. Most of the leasing agents say I have to prove that I earn two to three times more than the cost of the rent," Shastri says. "I've tried negotiating a few times and the landlords tell me that it's fixed (and that their hands are tied because of the market rate)."

Shameka, a single mom of three who asked that we not use her full name, has been a catering manager in Moraga for over a decade, but has never been able to live in the Lamorinda area. Pre-pandemic, Shameka lived in a two-bedroom apartment in Antioch with a total of nine other people.

... continued on Page A3

An Open Letter from the Lafayette Homeowners Council Board of Directors to Save Lafayette

To: All Lafayette Residents, Business Owners, Workers and Land Owners. Lafayette Homeowners Council Board of Directors sent the following letter to Save Lafayette with copies to the City Council and City Manager with respect to a productive alternative to continuing litigation over the Terraces Project. Please see below.

Save Lafayette

Mr. Michael Griffiths, President

February 6th

Re: The Terraces- Appeal of Superior Court Decision

The Board of Directors of the Lafayette Homeowners Council requests that Save Lafayette seek a productive alternative to the continuing litigation over the Terraces Project. As an advocate of homeowners' interests, we find that the Terraces Project significantly helps the City in meeting its housing RHNA goals and obligations, particularly those for lower income groups. The Terraces' 315 apartments are being counted on by the City in the current *General Plan Housing Element* update, which will be submitted to the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review.

After reading the Superior Court ruling, we find that the City has fully complied with CEQA. The developer worked closely with the Design Review Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council to reduce visual impacts of the project. The currently approved project is attractive and with its commitment to sustainability, will be an asset to our community.

We respectfully request that you consider using your group's time, money, and resources to support the expansion of the project's current shuttle service to include the nearby schools and the downtown. There are other initiatives relating to traffic mitigation and safe routes to Acalanes High School and Springhill Elementary School that would benefit the neighborhood and which the LHC and Save Lafayette could work on, together.

The Board of Directors of the LHC asks that you drop your appeal of the Superior Court ruling that upheld the City of Lafayette's approval of the Terraces project. We invite you to collaborate with us and the City staff to improve the area near the Terraces in lieu of expensive and contentious litigation.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,
Bill Bucher, President, Lafayette Homeowners Council

CC: Lafayette City Council

Niroop Srivatsa, Lafayette City Manager

<https://lafayettehomeownerscouncil.org/>

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- Citizen Advisory Committee to CCTA
- Downtown Street Improvement (DSIMPIC)
- Environmental Task Force
- Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission
- Public Art Committee
- Transportation & Circulation Commission

For additional information on these volunteer positions visit the city's website www.lovelafayette.org

Hot Topics

Or e-mail City Clerk Joanne Robbins, jrobbins@lovelafayette.org

Positions open until filled.

Single-income renters

... continued from Page A2

To be on time before she had access to a car, Shameka departed before sunrise. During the pandemic when Shameka's hours were cut, she lost her apartment and found herself couch surfing and in some cases sleeping in her car.

"It was hard. It was really hard," Shameka recalls. "Some days I broke down and cried and then I thought about my children. That's what kept me going."

While Shameka would love to have the option of living in a community like Lafayette for the sake of her kids' education and the close proximity to her job, it's a nearly unimaginable idea for her. Shameka's hopes are simple yet profound: "Just to be stable."

Natalie Oleas, the Family Justice Center's central director, says struggles like these are commonplace in the Bay Area: "We've seen a lot of single parent households struggling and a lot of people staying in situations where DV (domestic violence) is a factor and where their safety is at risk simply because they have no place to go."

The Family Justice Center is a hub where clients can get resources and support relating to anything from legal services to counseling to assistance applying for and accessing health and human resources benefits like food stamps. In the housing realm, outside of connecting clients with low-income listings that often have long waitlists and in some cases offering temporary financial assistance, Oleas says finding a long-term solution is complicated.

"We try to get creative and explore ways that clients can be resourceful like staying with family members (if they have family in the area) or renting along with another single parent," Oleas says.

Jeremy Levine is the director of Inclusive Lafayette, a volunteer community group

that focuses on local inclusive housing. Levine says it's tragic that the people who teach children, provide service and care for the community can't afford to live in the community.

While Levine says there's not necessarily an immediate solution for renters who are being priced out, he's hopeful about the city's commitment to bring more housing to Lafayette in the years to come. "The more people we have of different backgrounds (and life experiences) living in Lafayette, the better the community will be," Levine says.

Lafayette City Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok says accessible and affordable housing is a cornerstone to building an inclusive Lafayette, but it is not necessarily an easy issue to tackle.

"Homeowners no doubt are delighted by rising home values, but existing renters are not fans of rising rents," Kwok says. "The growing economic gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' is not good for society and so personally I favor efforts to achieve a more diverse housing supply from low to median levels."

Kwok and Levine agree that while addressing housing insecurity in Lafayette is of the utmost importance, figuring out the best way to do it is the challenge. With \$400 per square foot construction costs, even a 500 square foot unit with free land would cost \$200,000 to build.

"Success will require multiple funding sources, including federal, state or local monies, nonprofit contributions, and private enterprises," Kwok says.

For now, housing advocates are looking at ideas ranging from raising local taxes to implementing vacancies taxes or partnering with nonprofits. Meanwhile, people like Shastri and Shameka are doing their best to hold onto jobs in Lamorinda with dreams of a stable place in the community to lay their heads each evening.

Bookmark contest returns to LLLC

The Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center invite all Lafayette K-8 students to create an original bookmark illustrating a favorite book. Entry forms will be distributed to Lafayette public schools and St. Perpetua School. Additional forms will be available at the Lafayette Library and the

Friend's Corner Book Store. The contest opens on Feb. 11 and all entries are due at the Library by March 4. Winners will be announced on April 27 at the Library and winning bookmarks will be on display at the Library and bookstore as well as handed out to Library patrons.



Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Monday, Feb. 28, 7 p.m.
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Planning Commission Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 22, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Design Review

Wednesday, Feb. 23, 7 p.m. Zoom
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
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Town's Fiscal Year 2021-22 Mid-Year Budget Report looks good

By Vera Kochan

The Mid-Year Budget Report provides staff the opportunity to assess the town's revenues and expenditures for the first half of the 2021-22 Fiscal Year. Its purpose is to identify major variances between actual transactions and estimated budget amounts.

Administrative Services Director Annie To's Feb. 9 town council presentation outlined any significant increases or decreases to the Operating and Capital Improvement Budget.

Fund 101 – General Fund saw an increase to the beginning fund balance by \$138,032. There was an increase to the General Fund Revenue (property taxes and assessments) of \$150,000 due to projected increases in real estate valuation. Parks and Recreation saw a small revenue decrease of \$28,630 due to the lease agreement with Wedgewood Weddings for event operations at the Hacienda de las Flores. A Transfer In of \$40,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act (Fund 102 -- ARPA) was the result of a one-time payment to cover staff vacation

and administrative leave payouts due to the pandemic.

In addition, the General Fund saw an increase in expenditures by \$60,000 in the Moraga Police Department with regards to salaries and overtime. Due to retirement vacancies, the death of an officer and two injured officers, a number of shifts had to be filled with remaining officers in an overtime capacity. Also, MPD's wholesale gasoline contract with the Acalanes Union High School District was terminated resulting in gas being purchased at retail prices locally.

The remaining General Fund expenditure adjustment increase was \$1,100 in Parks and Rec due to the hiring of a security guard to monitor noise limits during the 2021 rental season at the Hacienda (that contract of \$11,000 offset the \$9,900 decrease in costs).

Other funds adjustments saw a Fund 100 revenue increase of \$2.25 million in One-Time Developer Fees (Palos Colorados Fund); Fund 102 – ARPA also saw a revenue increase of \$453,406 of which \$200,000 was transferred out for storm drain repairs; Fund 205 – Gas Tax

had an increase in expenditures of \$331,068 which was transferred out to Fund 700 for pavement resurfacing; Fund 213 – Measure K revenue increased \$300,000 with an overall \$600,000 fund transfer towards pavement reconstruction; Fund 702 – 2013 Certificates of Participation expenditures increased \$2,800; and Fund 720 – Public Safety Development Impact Fee expenditure increased \$126,000 (this entails a community surveillance program, radio system encryption, vehicle/equipment purchase, and vehicle fueling system for MPD and Moraga-Orinda Fire District).

According to To's staff report, "The Town's General Fund Proposed Budget Adjustments for FY 2021/22 would result in an increase to the projected year-end fund balance from \$4,902,047 to \$5,215,773 or \$313,726 which represents a \$138,032 adjustment to the Beginning Balance based on the FY 2020/21 Audited Comprehensive Financial Report and \$175,694 projected operating surplus. Overall, the General Fund Reserve is projected to increase from 50.0% to 52.0%."



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MPD's Lt. Brian South moves on after 20 years of service to the town



Photo provided

MPD's Lt. Brian South

By Vera Kochan

To paraphrase from a 650-year-old proverb, "All good things must come to an end," the same can be held true when referring to Moraga Police Department Lt. Brian South's decision to leave after a 20-year career with the town.

South's history with Moraga began well before the police force, in that he's a hometown boy who attended Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School and later graduated from Campolindo High School. As a youngster, he always kept his eye on the prize. "Ever since I was little, all I ever wanted to do was become a police officer," he recalled. "I have always been

drawn to service, helping others and protecting the vulnerable."

Prior to his long tenure with MPD, South worked a year for the Probation Department, but not as a police officer. When he leaves Moraga his new employer will be the State of California at the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). South's new title will be Law Enforcement Consultant with a variety of duties to perform. "POST sets hiring and selection standards of California law enforcement and the mission is to continually enhance the professionalism of California law enforcement in serving its communities," he explained. "I am looking forward to having the opportunity to positively impact the profession of law enforcement statewide in my new role."

MPD Interim Chief Jon King referred to South as a "true professional and the heart and soul of this department for many years. He's served the town as a patrol officer, detective, sergeant, lieutenant, a mentor to other officers, and my right hand and partner."

South has had his share of disturbing experiences while on the job. "I have had a lot of interesting and challenging cases over the years, but cases involving children tend to be the ones that stick with me," he remembered. "One in particular involved a very vulnerable survivor, and I have always admired her courage in working with

us and standing up to her abuser."

"Brian's been an integral part of this town," stated King. "Besides being a public servant he's been president of Moraga Police Officers Association, president of Moraga Rotary, a volunteer for many causes, and overall, a good community person."

The ever-humble South is proudest of his opportunity to have been a mentor to other officers and youths who are interested in law enforcement careers. "I was grateful to have had great mentors," South said.

When asked why he decided to leave the town he grew up in, South replied, "It was a difficult decision, and I will miss Moraga, but I am looking forward to the opportunity to impact the profession of law enforcement statewide in my new role."

South's legacy to the town is that "hopefully, I helped to contribute to the safety and well-being of the community. Moraga is a special place and I will miss the residents and the town staff who make it such a great place to live and work. I appreciate being able to serve the community and for all the opportunities that were provided to me over the last 20 years."

"As an officer, he's the model of what we look for," remarked King. "He can arrest the bad guys when he needs to; and he's a great community liaison for the department. We're gonna miss him."

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Planning Commission:
Tuesday, March 1, 7 p.m.,

Park and Recreation Commission:
Monday, Feb. 21, 7 p.m.,
Moraga School District Board Meetings:
Tuesday, March 8, 6 p.m.
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Moraga Chamber of Commerce looks to revitalize the town's business climate

By Vera Kochan

Two years ago, COVID-19 and its fallout, took a hard toll on every community's business sector. Moraga was not immune. The lack of new retail offerings in town still reflects the uneasy atmosphere in a world of yo-yoing government mandates and regulations.

On the cusp of 2022, the Moraga Chamber of Commerce is hoping to get back on track to pre-COVID times by going full speed ahead with a game plan to boost established businesses and attract new ones to the area. Loss of business meant loss of Chamber membership as business owners needed to prioritize expenses. With that in mind, the Chamber held workshops and took meetings with local political leaders to help its members navigate the waters of uncertainty and maintain a feeling of connectivity.

Newly elected Chamber President Gian (John) Panetta, a financial service professional, has been a Chamber member for nearly two years. "I saw this as an opportunity to give back and put my contribution stamp on the town." He has also served on a state government level by interning with Congressmen Mark DeSaulnier and Eric Swalwell.

The Chamber conducted a survey among its members in order to get an idea of Moraga's current business climate and concerns. "The vast majority of survey respondents were not aware of federal funding nor were they aware of the limitations of how those funds can be used," Panetta stated. Others did take advantage of various relief programs.

A mere 20% said that they suffered no negative impacts from COVID; 64% incurred financial loss; and 36% found it difficult to hire or retain staff. A majority of businesses lost between 10-50% of annual revenue, while 2% said they lost 90-100%. At least 69% feel

they are still challenged due to COVID. Almost all businesses would like to increase benefits to staff; many feel they could use a cash infusion from \$1,000-\$60,000 with the majority needing \$20,000-\$40,000.

Other requests on the survey include more public events; help with business marketing and networking resources; technical seminars; and assistance with applying for aid.

The Chamber has a newly designed, user-friendly website (www.moragachamber.org). "We would like to see the Chamber page become a significant resource for businesses and the community," said Panetta. "We feel that a 'Help Wanted' and well-managed 'Calendar of Events' pages will help to build that resource."

It is hoped that before long many Chamber-sponsored events will once again be held within town limits. Business of the Year, Job Fair/Summer Jobs Faire, the golf tournament at Moraga Country Club and Community Faire are on the list once mandates allow.

The Chamber is also hoping to continue its involvement with Saint Mary's College by continuing the Small Business Catalyst Program among others.

On the horizon, to increase patronage within town, is a "Shop Local" benefits program – considered a win-win for shoppers and shop-keepers. Moraga's chamber has contacted various chamber organizations to see how they have handled this type of program for maximum results.

When asked whether the Chamber can influence both shopping center property owners to revitalize the appearance of those areas, Panetta replied, "The property owners, of course, need to operate within the reality of their own economic circumstances, but I do believe they value the input and engagement of the Chamber in

helping make their centers conducive to new business."

The town itself is striving to become more involved with the local business climate. "The Moraga Chamber of Commerce has made a request to the town of Moraga during their goals setting meeting for funds to support local business and the Chamber," explained Panetta. "The Chamber made a minimum ask for what we hope will be a substantial impact for our community. We look forward to the town's response." Streamlining the conditional use permit process and recent

new sign ordinances have been a step in the right direction to make Moraga more business friendly.

The Chamber is hoping that local businesses who are not members decide to become one, given all of the positive changes happening going forward. Some of the perks of membership include: a liaison with the town council and SMC; free educational forums and workshops; networking with other businesses; marketing advantages through the chamber's online presence; business promotion from the chamber's booth at

town events; participation in Business of the Year award; and participation in all promotion pieces.

The Chamber also welcomes new board members, and anyone who would like to fill out the still on-going survey can find the link on the Chamber's website. For additional information email: MoragaChamber925@gmail.com. A new phone line is in the works, and at this point in time, Katie Bidstrup is currently serving as the Interim Executive Director.

Tragic events unfold over weekend in quiet Moraga neighborhood

By Vera Kochan

The Moraga Police Department responded to a disturbance at 11:45 a.m. Feb. 12 on the 300 block of Birchwood Drive after neighbors reported hearing a woman screaming for help.

According to interim MPD Chief Jon King, officers had arrived to discover that a man in his 50s had assaulted his female neighbor with a baseball bat by hitting her in the head. Officers attempted to speak with the man, but he refused to comply, going in and out of his house several times; eventually staying inside. While the officers tried to de-escalate the situation, additional units from Orinda, Lafayette, Walnut Creek (with a K-9 unit), and a trained negotiator from the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office arrived.

The Community Warning System (CWS) issued a lockdown alert for the area. Authorities urged residents to go inside and lock all doors and windows as a safety precaution. The alert was even-

tually lifted at 4 p.m.

"Officers attempted to negotiate with the suspect by calling him and through a PA System," explained King. "We even had drones to observe the residence." The suspect, at one point, opened the front door holding a gun and tried to shoot down the drone. He also tried to fire a shot at the officers, which wound up lodged in the door. Officers used "a less lethal weapon" (bean bag bullets) to try and stop him, in order to take him into custody, with no luck.

The standoff continued until 2:30 p.m. when the suspect went into his backyard and committed suicide using an AR-15 style rifle. No one else was home at the time of the incident.

The suspect's victim was transported to John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek and was released later that evening. "We're very thankful for the assistance we received from our allied agencies," stated King. "We did our best to resolve the situation as quickly as possible."



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

City Council Regular Meeting:
 Tuesday, March 1, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only
Planning Commission
 Tuesday, Feb. 22, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only
Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Special Meeting
 Monday, Feb. 28, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only

Orinda struggles to meet competing interests of pedestrian safety and safe fire access



Speed Cushions

Courtesy Staff Report

By Sora O'Doherty

The city of Orinda was forced to confront a dilemma at its Feb. 1 city council meeting, when Moraga-Orinda Fire District chief Dave Winnacker told the council that he had not received sufficient information to approve the installation of speed cushions on Dalewood Drive. The fire chief has said that he could approve the projects if the community would agree to offset the speed cushions by 20 feet on either side of the road. However, Orinda's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee opposed that idea, fearing it would lead to vehicles swerving from one side of the road to the other to avoid the speed cushions.

Under consideration was whether or not the city should appeal the denial of approval to the MOFD. The proposal for traffic calming on Dalewood Drive has been in progress for more than three years.

In the staff report, acting Public Works Director Scott Christie said that the MOFD has not objected to speed cushions in the past. TSAC had unanimously recom-

mended that the city council direct staff to appeal the MOFD's rejection of speed cushions without a 20-foot offset. Other alternatives suggested were to accept the MOFD revision and move forward with installing the speed cushions with an offset of at least 20 feet or to advise TSAC that alternate traffic control measures should be considered for the location.

In public comments, TSAC chair Travis Miller said he was fully supportive of an appeal. "The process has been long and arduous," he said, and is not a technical issue.

Dana Wentworth spoke about working on speed cushions on Sleepy Hollow. "We want to put traffic calming measures in our neighborhood. There are 100 pedestrians getting out of school from November to May," she said, adding, "If you decide not to install speed cushions, you might as well dissolve TSAC."

Brandon Heddu, a new member of TSAC, recommended appealing the MOFD decision. "We shouldn't allow MOFD to trump a well thought out decision," he said. In his opinion, speed

cushions are more important now than ever because a lot of people are working from home, which means more pedestrians are out on the streets.

During council discussion, Council Member Nick Kosla, while agreeing with comments from Council Member Amy Worth about the need for better pedestrian and bike access, concluded that if the city chose to appeal the fire chief's decision, they would lose.

Christy told the council that in the past the city has not submitted a formal document. Winnacker submitted both written correspondence in advance of the meeting and attended the meeting to explain his position, which was that the data required by the city itself was not presented to him, leaving him without a basis to approve the installation. Winnacker said, "Approving an obstruction of the sole evacuation route from a wildland urban interface fire area requires particular diligence in order to provide for public safety." He also debunked the notion that fire vehicles could use nearby private roads. They cannot, he said.

Worth opined that there has been a "huge national effort for pedestrians and biking. We have to provide for traffic calming in a big way." She suggested that, rather than pursuing a formal appeal, the city "find a way to figure out how to adjust or amend our policies to take what we have and put it together in a form that meets the needs of MOFD."

Kosla agreed. "Why not go with the practical approach and provide the chief with information to convince him that the neighborhood will be safe?" he suggested.

Council Member Darlene Gee agreed with her colleagues. "We have demonstrated to chief Winnacker how deeply we care about fire safety," she noted, but added that "to hire a consultant to provide the quantitative study the chief is asking for would be an extraordinary waste of money. We don't have the money to conduct a study that would not provide the required numbers."

Although Winnacker pointed out that he was just asking for things explicitly provided for in the city's own policy, Worth said that things had changed and that the policy needs to be reexamined. "We've got to do everything we can," she said, "to slow down traffic, particularly where people are walking."

Vice Mayor Inga Miller spoke about the uptick in speeding traffic during the pandemic, coupled with more people wanting to get out and walk. "That is a terrible combination," she concluded. Mayor Dennis Fay agreed that the policy needs to be reviewed. "This is a complicated balancing act of safety concerns," he said. He does not believe that a full-blown traffic study is required on any residential road.

In the end, the council decided not to formally appeal the MOFD's decision yet, but to have staff put together a document explaining the city's decision that speed cushions are the right choice for Dalewood Drive. Winnacker agreed that the MOFD could be flexible about the time limits for appeal in order to allow the city to submit its documentation. That approach received unanimous approval from the council.

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Lamorinda in great shape to meet new recycling law

... continued from Page A1

This will include residential bins, but citations and fines for non-compliance will be limited to commercial bins. Businesses are divided into two tiers. In Orinda, there are only two Tier One businesses, Republic of Cake (because they sell product wholesale) and Safeway, which is already largely doing what is required. Tier Two includes the country club and schools, and they will be required to partici-

pate in food recovery. This work is already underway with White Pony Express, The Muffin People and the Recycle Smart Food Recovery Program. Through White Pony Express and The Muffin People, edible food is being collected in Lamorinda and elsewhere and distributed to different nonprofits in Oakland via a safe and consistent delivery system, according to Silver.

Additional requirements of the new law for businesses, including the city

government, include assuring that paper purchases have recycled content. Orinda is participating, and will save about \$55,000, Silver said. She also said that there will not be fines for residents, only for businesses.

Council Member Inga Miller, who also serves on the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority along with Council Member Amy Worth, asked Silver where the money will come from for the new initiatives. Silver responded that through their rates they already have the infrastructure in place. Eighty percent of the new requirements are around food recovery, and they received a grant to help White Pony Express expand its services and a block grant in the last state budget of around \$250,000 for the next two years. After that, funding will be through rates.

Worth talked about how interested high school students are in the environment, including the reduction of methane gas. She noted that clean, unused food from restaurants is used by the East Bay Municipal Water District, which converts it to energy to power its filter plant and sewage treat-

ment. Council Member Darlene Gee inquired about the program under which residents can get compost from Republic Services. Silver confirmed that the program is still active and she would like to increase the program. Manager of Recycle Smart's composting program, Ashley Louisiana, confirmed after the meeting that there is an annual compost giveaway coordinated with Republic Services. There is a one-day event in the Lamorinda area (last year in Lafayette) and a one-day event in the Danville/Walnut Creek area. "I try to host the event in May each year for International Compost Awareness Week," Louisiana added.

In public comments, Charles Porges said that he has been composting his own yard waste for 40 to 50 years, and asked if there is a discount available for doing so. Silver replied that indeed, home composters are eligible for a discount, and the information is available on the Recycle Smart website. Jules Forgarty commented that "if food waste were a country, it would be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gasses after U.S. and China."

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White Pony Express introduces new app to make food donation easier

White Pony Express has a new tool in its mission to end hunger in Contra Costa County: a new app. Restaurants and caterers can download the app and sign up to be a "food rescue hero." Once the food safety training has been completed, the restaurant or caterer can claim a food run via the app. No long-term commitment is needed. In as little as an hour, surplus food can be picked up for delivery to neighbors in need, according to the nonprofit. "Food rescue pickups can be set up on a regular schedule or just as a one-time event. Food rescue prevents healthy, fresh food from being wasted by delivering it to those who can use it."

White Pony Express was founded by Dr. Carol Weyland Conner in September 2013 on the simple idea that supermarkets had excess food that was being thrown out while people who couldn't afford food were going hungry. In addition to the app, restaurants and catering company can set up regular or one-time food rescue pickups by contacting Pete Olsen at peterolsen@whiteponyexpress.org.

- S. O'Doherty

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Police chief updates city council on police services in the city

By Sora O'Doherty

In response to public comments about the level of crime being experienced by residents of the Ivy Drive neighborhood, Orinda Police Chief Ryan Sullivan addressed the Orinda City Council on Feb. 1 on the state of law enforcement in the city. Chief Sullivan stressed that Orinda continues to be an extremely safe city, and that recent residential burglaries are currently being investigated. "Due to the active investigation," he said, "nothing can be announced regarding leads and suspects."

As far as the number of crimes reported in the Ivy Drive neighborhood, Sullivan wanted to clarify that, although reported by residents at an earlier council meeting, there have not been any home invasion crimes in the area, but there have been burglaries. The difference is that the term "home invasion" is normally used when the residents are at home and the crime connotes an element of fear or force. None of the Ivy Drive neighborhood residents were at home when their homes were entered.

The chief did take the time to review how the OPD operates and current staffing issues.

Updating the community on OPD initiatives, Sullivan said they are working on a safer community, with more transparency and enhanced use of technology, as well as more robust resources, most of which come from the county.

The chief spoke about the use of automatic license plate reader cameras (ALPR). One of the two sets of ALPRs are Vigilant stationary cameras, two of which are mounted on a vehicle to capture actions in front of and behind the vehicle. The city also owns several Flock cameras while others are owned by homeowners' associations, which agree to give the police access to the cameras. Sullivan asked that any neighborhood interested in obtaining Flock cameras contact OPD as well as the company.

A new OPD officer has recently been trained to work with Neighborhood Watch groups in the city. Sullivan clarified that these groups are not vigilantes, but citizens trained to recognize and re-

port suspicious activity. Neighborhood Watch groups also implement crime prevention techniques, such as home security and Operation Identification, which engraves driver's license numbers or other ID numbers onto valuable items. Additionally, residents should make sure their vehicles are locked and should let a neighbor know if they are going to be out of town. Sullivan said that the new officer is extremely passionate about the program. Interested persons should contact either the administrative assistant or dispatch, and say they are interested in Neighborhood Watch.

Sullivan also addressed an issue that has been a cause of community concern: the interface between police officers and people with mental health issues. The city and the county have been working on better paring of mental health services with policing. Efforts include pairing the Mental Health Evaluation Team with law enforcement departments and with the County Behavioral Health Services to address critical mental health needs of community members.

Goals include reducing law enforcement repeat calls for service with individuals with mental illness; reducing violent encounters between law enforcement and citizens with mental illness; reducing visits to Psychiatric Emergency Services; increasing safety for police, community, consumers, and family; increased utilization of outpatient mental health services; and providing education to families and the community.

Currently a mobile crisis response team consisting of a deputy sheriff and a mental health evaluation team works Mondays through Thursdays from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. to provide same-day intervention for adults who are experiencing a mental health crisis. This unit will visit clients and their families to prevent acute psychiatric crises from becoming emergencies that required law enforcement involvement or involuntary hospitalization. The goal is to de-escalate the crises and safely connect clients with care and mental health resources. When necessary, law enforcement will be requested to respond for assistance.

A new county initiative, the A3 Community Crisis Initiative for Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime, is intended to facilitate a better, safer way to respond to individuals experiencing behavioral health crises and reduce need for police intervention. The county will hire and train staff for regional crisis response teams and a call center hub to provide scalable, 24/7 service to meet the needs of community members, from non-urgent wellness responses to people experiencing acute mental health crises. This initiative includes the launch of the Miles Hall Crisis Call Center. The county has allocated Measure X funds - \$5 million in one-time funds dedicated to infrastructure and \$20 million in ongoing funds to support the overall staff.

In conclusion on crime prevention, Sullivan noted that officers cannot be everywhere at once.

"If you see something suspicious, call law enforcement," he said. Either call 911 or call non-emergency dispatch, (925) 646-2441.

Superior Court upholds Orinda's approval of memory care facility at 1 Wilder Road

By Sora O'Doherty

Judge Edward Weil of the Contra Costa Superior Court on Feb. 10 issued a 35-page judgment upholding the decision to the city of Orinda to approve a memory care facility to be constructed at 1 Wilder Road, a piece of property between Highway 24 and the Wilder housing development. The matter had been argued before the court on Feb. 2, at which time the judge took the matter under submission. In its order after hear, the court directed the city to prepare a judgment denying the petition for writ of mandate that was filed by Wilder Owners' Association (WOA). The court also granted petitioners' motion to augment the administrative record, which signals the intent of the WOA to proceed with a further appeal.

The court found against the WOA on all the points argued. The court found that Orinda's general plan and municipal code do not preclude private, for-profit ownership of land uses in districts zoned for public and semipublic land use. The court also found that the project satisfies the definition and requirements for a congregate care facility under Orinda's code. A particular objection of the WOA was the inclusion of small kitchens in each unit that will not be accessible to the resident, but only to staff or guests. The court noted that "The definition of congregate care facility only requires that the physical elements of the small individual dwelling units 'allow for independent living,' not that the residents actually live independently or actually use the physical elements provided that allow for independent living in their units."

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Rescue One Foundation a vital provider of cutting-edge equipment to fire district

By Lou Fancher

Moraga's Rescue One Foundation might be one of the best-kept secrets in Lamorinda. Board President Maridel Moulton says more than once people have asked if the organization she works with is part of Tony LaRussa's ARF (Animal Rescue Foundation).

R1F is a citizen-developed nonprofit whose mission since it's founding in 1977 has been to fund and purchase vital medical and safety equipment, supplies, and first responders' educational services for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. The small, all-volunteer group does not supply the emergency fire and paramedic departments with big equipment such

as fire trucks, but instead pours its resources into ambulance improvements, drones, cutting edge weather data technology, portable command system hardware, CPR devices, decontamination systems and similar items.

"We do no actual fundraising," says Moulton. "All of the donations come from citizens who are thrilled and want to be supportive of our fire department."

Prior to R1F's formation, Moraga in particular was isolated from the ambulance services of Contra Costa County. Residents requiring an ambulance often had to use a private company for service and delays of up to an hour were not uncommon, according to R1F's historical fact gathering. De-

spite adequate Emergency Medical Team members to provide on-site medical services, delays in emergency transportation to medical facilities was inadequate or even life-threatening.

The Moraga Service League, a group active even before the formation of R1F, bought a van and refitted it to be an ambulance. Moulton says, "People went door to door to collect money." The R1F website fills out the history: "At the same time the Fire Chief, Don Skinner and his staff were in communication with the State of California Health Services, County Medical Office, and John Muir Hospital with the goal of obtaining the ambulance contract for the District. This was the start of community efforts to begin the MFPD Rescue Service and was the forerunner of today's Moraga-Orinda Fire District's paramedic ambulance service."

Moulton says citizen activists have continued the early groundwork laid by the Moraga Service League. "We always have invested in cutting-edge equipment," she said. "It began with the concept that we wanted this to be local. We now ask the fire chief to come to us - not for big ticket equipment like trucks and ambulances, but for state-of-the-art equipment and technology. For example, we were one of the first fire departments to have a drone."

In addition to the DJI Inspire v2 Drone that monitors fire conditions and fuel loads in remote areas and is capable of providing low-cost assistance in search-and-rescue operations, R1F has funded the Remote Automatic Weather Station (RAWS). Developed by Forest Technology Systems, the RAWS tracks real time wind, humidity, moisture content, and other data used by fire managers to predict fire behavior.

"The RAWS expands the window in which we can conduct prescribed burns for the



MOFD's Stryker Emergency Patient Transport

Photo provided

purpose of fuel mitigation and firefighter training," MOFD Fire Chief Dave Winnacker said. "Having this tool and its ability to directly report real time local weather conditions to the BAAQMD has resulted in a significant increase in the number of days we have been able to use fire as a training and fire risk reduction tool."

Other acquisitions include the Aeroclave Decontamination System and the Kubota RTV with Skid Pump. "The Aero-Clave has been critical in both the efficiency and efficacy of our expanded decontamination efforts," Winnacker said. "This nets two benefits by reducing the potential for disease transmission while returning units to an in-service status more rapidly. Given the small size of our system and increased demands for pre-hospital care and transport, both have been critical to the maintenance of our service delivery. The Kubota not only increases access to remote areas, but it has facilitated our use of prescribed fire by reducing the staffing required to move firefighting equipment over rugged terrain."

Moulton, asked about the Aeroclave, says, "When they were transporting patients with COVID, they had to make sure the firefighters didn't get ill. The inside of an ambulance is stuffed with nooks and crannies. They were cleaning all of those surfaces with Clorox

wipes between each run. It was very difficult and time consuming."

R1F also supplied funds for the district's Stryker Emergency Patient Transport. The Stryker battery powered gurneys allow paramedics to use a hydraulic system to raise and lower gurneys with a simple press of a button. A retractable head section allows for maneuverability in tight spaces common to homes and ambulances.

Moulton says the foundation relies on Chief Winnacker and other firefighting and rescue experts to recommend equipment and services needed to bolster their capabilities. "We don't try to do their job. They know their business. We are completely separate from MOFD, but we're responsive to their needs," she says.

Winnacker says the community support the MOFD enjoys is nothing short of remarkable and "one of the true joys of being a member of the fire district." Embodied in the volunteers who make up the R1F, he feels an obligation to return the commitment. "We strive to live up to these expectations and are deeply appreciative of the generations of residents and firefighters who worked so hard to make this a reality."

For more information about the Rescue One Foundation, visit its new website at www.rescue1foundation.org/.

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California insurance commissioner provides assistance for consumers

By Sora O'Doherty

The California Department of Insurance released two new features to its website to better serve its customers, including Lamorinda residents. According to Orinda City Manager David Biggs, who highlighted the new services in a recent Orinda Outlook, the Home/Residential Insurance Shop Around Webpage show-

cases insurance companies currently offering discounts for home hardening.

Under "consumer resources," you can find out if you own a home in an area under the mandatory one-year moratorium, along with historical information about the moratoriums. (At this time, there are no moratoriums affecting Lamorinda.) The Insurance commissioner's web-

site also includes information about many different kinds of insurance, from homeowner/residential to automobile to medical and workers' compensation. The current insurance commissioner, Ricardo Lara, is California's eighth insurance commissioner since Californians voted to create the elected position in 1988.

For more information, and to look into these resources visit: www.insurance.ca.gov
 Comparison information on residential insurance link: <https://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/105-type/5-residential/index.cfm>
 Insurance moratorium information link: <https://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/140-catastrophes/wildfirenonrenewalinfo.cfm>

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District
 Board of Directors
 Wednesday, Feb. 16, 6 p.m.
 For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire
 Board of Directors
 Regular Meeting: Tuesday, March 8, 1 p.m.
 For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org

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 Chief of Police, Ryan Sullivan 925-254-6820
Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Jan. 23 - Feb. 5

Alarms	32
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	20
Traffic	117
Suspicious Circumstances	6
Suspicious Subject	12
Suspicious Vehicle	9
Service to Citizen	30
Patrol Req./Security Check	27
Public/School Assembly Check	40
Supplemental Report	31
Vacation House Check	4
Welfare Check	18
Ordinance Violation	2

Vehicle violations

Auto Burglary
 800 Block Rosedale Ave.
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 20 Block Lafayette Cir.
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 10 Block Olde Creek Pl.
 3400 Block Black Hawk Rd.
 500 Block St. Mary's Rd. (2)

Dui Misd
 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Hit And Run Misdemeanor
 1300 Block Reliez Valley Rd.
 Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Topinera Ln./Withers Ave.

Reckless Driving
 El Nido Ranch Rd./Wb Sr 24
 Deer Hill Rd./Happy Valley Rd.
 Deer Hill Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd.
 Pleasant Hill Rd./Wb Sr 24

Tc - Property Damage
 Silverwood Dr./Knox Dr.
 School St./Moraga Rd.
 Police Department
 Moraga Rd./School St.
 Mt. Diablo Blvd./Carol Ln.

Vehicle Theft
 900 Block Reliez Station Ln.
 800 Block Rosedale Ave.
 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Other criminal activity

Computer Fraud
 600 Block Doreen Way

Fraud Credit Card
 300 Block Castello Rd.
 900 Block Janet Ln.
 1000 Block Carol Ln.

Fraud False Pretenses
 Police Department (2)
 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3600 Block Walnut St.
 3700 Block Highland Rd.

Grand Theft Veh Parts
 900 Block Acalanes Rd.
 2Nd St./Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Identity Theft
 10 Block Olympic Oaks Dr.
 Police Department
 1500 Block El Sombra

800 Block Reliez Station Rd.
 Petty Theft
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
 4200 Block El Nido Ranch Rd. (2)
 1400 Block Meadowlark Ct.
 1300 Block Summit Rd.
 Petty Theft From Veh
 1000 Block Carol Ln.
 Petty Theft Veh Parts
 3600 Block Bickerstaff St.
 3200 Block Stanley Blvd.
 Shoplift
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)
 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)

Nuisance to the Community

Loud Music
 3200 Block Mt. Diablo Ct.

Loud Noise
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Loud Party
 1100 Block Vacation Dr. (2)
 3100 Block Somerset Dr. (2)
 700 Block Los Palos Mnr

Public Nuisance
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Vandalism
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 1000 Block Laurel Dr.

Other

Animal Cruelty
 Springhill Rd./Briones To Mt. Diablo Regional Trail

Brandishing Weapon
 1St St./Eb Sr 24

Disturbance-fight
 Condit Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd.

H&S Violation
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Illegal Entry
 1300 Block Summit Rd.

Threats
 El Curtola Blvd./Old Tunnel Rd.

Trespass
 3600 Block Deer Hill Rd.
 1100 Block Via Media

Trespass W/ Vehicle
 1300 Block Reliez Valley Rd.
 4000 Block Mario Way

Unwanted Guest
 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Violation Custody Order
 1800 Block Reliez Valley Rd.

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report Jan. 25 - Feb. 6

Alarms	17
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	10
Traffic	40
Suspicious Circumstances	5
Suspicious Subject	5
Suspicious Vehicle	7
Service to Citizen	27
Patrol Req./Security Check	26
Supplemental Report	3
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	1
Public/School Assembly Check	8
Ordinance Violation	0

Vehicle violations

Auto Burglary
 Not Available (5)

Dui Misd
 Rheem Blvd./Moraga Rd.

Excessive Speed
 Moraga Rd./Devin Dr.
 Moraga Way/St. Andrews Dr.
 1800 Block Camino Pablo
 St. Andrews Dr./Augusta Dr.
 Moraga Way/Ivy Dr. (2)
 Moraga Way/Moraga Valley Ln.
 Moraga Blvd./Moraga Rd., Laf
 Moraga Way/Coral Dr., Ori
 St. Andrews Dr./Country Club Dr.

Reckless Driving
 Moraga Way/Valley View Dr., Ori
 Moraga Rd./St. Marys Rd.

Tc - Property Damage
 St. Marys Rd./St. Marys College

Vehicle Theft
 Not Available

700 Block Augusta Dr.
Other criminal activity
 Commercial Burglary
 500 Block Center St.
 Grand Theft
 700 Block Augusta Dr.
 Identity Theft
 800 Block Augusta Dr.
 Panhandling
 Safeway
 Petty Theft
 1800 Block Ascot Dr.
 1900 Block Ascot Dr.
 Safeway
 Petty Theft From Veh
 Rheem Valley Shopping Center
 Petty Theft Veh Parts
 80 Block Miramonte Dr.

Nuisance to the Community

Disturbance-domestic
 Rheem Blvd./Fernwood Dr.
 Disturbing The Peace
 100 Block Oxford Dr.
 Loud Music
 Canyon Rd./Country Club Dr.
 Loud Noise
 1400 Block Camino Peral
 Post Office
 Vandalism
 10 Block Lisa Ln.

Other

Harassment
 Safeway
 Mentally Ill Commit
 Campolindo High School
 Simple Assault
 Police Department
 Violation Custody Order
 2100 Block Donald Dr.

Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report will be back soon

Staffing shortages, COVID restrictions challenge coffee houses, other businesses



Photo J. Wake

Papillon in Lafayette's La Fiesta Square has weathered the pandemic with small adjustments.

By M.D. Jones

The pandemic has affected businesses in many ways, like shortened hours recently announced at Moraga Hardware & Lumber and Across the Way to due to severe staffing shortages and ongoing health and safety concerns – and our local coffee shops are no exception. There was a recent stir on social media about limited hours for the Moraga Starbucks coffee shop as well as it being closed for a few weeks in January. According to Shift Manager Maricella Quintero, Starbucks has strict pandemic protocols to protect staff and clients. Every day, employees must have their temperature checked, fill out a COVID questionnaire and

have signature confirmation by themselves and their manager to screen out people who might have COVID-19 before they can start their shift. Twice this past January the location had to shut down for the county's required 10 days because of potential COVID-19 exposure.

As staff slowly returned based on their timeline for exposure, the coffee shop had limited hours – sometimes closing as early as 1 p.m. "In this situation Starbucks feels bad they can't provide the customer service they want to but we want to make sure people stay safe in the community. It may be hard for customers to understand we are doing this for their health," Quintero said. "We

have had to adjust in the moment. If 2 to 3 people show up with symptoms that's half our staff and so we would have to do things like close the café for walk-ins and only service the drive thru." Making things more difficult during the virus surge "some people will not wear a mask at the drive thru which makes it hard for us to mitigate the risk of our employees picking up the virus," Quintero said. "Fortunately, we can handle things better because we are corporate and can have employees cover from other stores versus a mom and pop who might not be able to have extra coverage that Starbucks has as a company."

Across town at Si Si Caffé in Moraga, owner Cathy Corsi

noticed that business went up about 20% while Starbucks was closed. "We knew they were Starbucks customers by the way they ordered their drinks. They'd say 'I'd like a grande such and such,'" said Corsi. Because of COVID, Si Si has had to close the inside of their café to the public but was lucky enough to have windows that open outside to the front of the café where drinks and food continue to be ordered and served. In the back of the café is an outdoor seating area which was also able to remain open through the pandemic.

When asked about recent inflation as the pandemic subsides, Corsi stated that the costs of supplies are up a good 15-20% overall but "we try to be sensitive to our customers and keep our costs the same or go up in small increments if we have to." As far as having the staff needed to run the café, Corsi stated, "Luckily we're a family run business so we didn't need to rely as much on outside help. We also have Saint Mary's students working for us. We're fortunate that Si Si's Caffé has had such a loyal following, like kids from JM who use the Si Si's gift cards and hang out in the back."

Local Lafayette café Papillon was also able to stay

open through COVID. Owners Sam and Betty Sukh did not notice a huge difference in traffic during the pandemic and couldn't shut down because "Lafayette rent is super high." Even so, they had to limit hours to between 6 a.m. and 1 p.m. for about six months during the pandemic because of difficulty finding employees. They are now back to being open 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays and 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends.

"The biggest change we have seen is the cost of our supplies," Sam Sukh said. "Some supplies have gone up about 50%. Boxes of 1,000 coffee cups used to be \$50 but now they are \$75 to \$80. It's double now for plastic cups. Suppliers have said prices will come down but I don't see when that will happen. Sixteen-ounce coffee cups are almost impossible to find in the Bay Area. Still, we don't increase our prices until we absolutely have to and are waiting another month or two before we reevaluate our menu prices."

Even with the higher cost of running the business, things are looking better. According to Sukh, Papillon has recently hired a new person and is getting ready to hire one to two more employees by summer.

Lions and Leos donate \$4K to fire victims



Photo provided

Lioness Karen Kalvass delivers crab dinners and door prizes.

Submitted by Robert Murtagh

The Moraga Lions Club and Campolindo High School Leo Club hosted the 40th Annual

Crab Feed Jan. 22 at the Holy Trinity Serbian Church in Moraga. Due to COVID restrictions the event was drive-thru and traditional activities, such as auctions and raffles, were canceled.

A total of 320 crab dinners were prepared and delivered to cars as they arrived in the parking lot. In addition, each car was presented a door prize and asked to make a donation to help 2021 California fire victims. The Lions Club offered to match all donations and all Lions clubs are required to donate 100% of all donations to charity. Crab Feed customers donated almost \$2,000 in cash and checks and Moraga Lions will send a check for \$4,000 to the California Lions Foundation with instructions to distribute the funds to fire victims.

For more information about the Lions Club, Leo Club or making a donation to the California Fire Victims contact Lion Ray Casabonne, rpcasa94@gmail.com

St. Patrick's Day Celebration returns to SMC



Photo provided

Dancers from the Rohan Murphy Irish Dance Academy

Submitted by Millicent McCormack

After having to cancel last

year's event due to the pandemic, the Saint Mary's College Guild will be hosting its St. Patrick's Day Celebration Fundraiser benefitting its Student Scholarship Fund from 5 to 9 p.m. Saturday, March 12 at Saint Mary's College Soda Center. The popular annual event will feature The Frank O'Connor Band and the Rohan Murphy Irish Dance Academy as well as a delicious Irish dinner (or pasta) plus raffle baskets filled with exciting Irish treasures.

Masks and proof of vaccination and booster will be necessary for admittance. Tickets are \$60 per person (includes wine at dinner). Make checks payable to: St. Mary's College Guild. Provide your name, guests' names, number of guests in your party and a telephone number and mail with the check by March 5 to Donna Jollymour, 387 Calle la Montana, Moraga, CA 94556. Contact Jollymour with any questions at (925) 299-1651.

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.



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Charlotte Angela Pagani Savinovich

Nov. 18, 1934 – Jan. 24, 2022



Charlotte passed away peacefully in her sleep, following her battle with Alzheimer's disease.

Charlotte was born to Charles and Marguerite Pagani. She was the middle child, and grew up a farmgirl on Sonoma's now historic Pagani Ranch. Throughout her life she was close to her

sisters, Marie Meursing and Norma Amantite. After Marguerite passed when Charlotte was 6, her Aunt Olive and Uncle Lou Pagani helped raise the girls as they worked incredibly hard on the ranch and family winery, alongside their uncle and father. With her large green eyes, she was given the lifelong nickname, "Googie."

Smart and athletic, Char attended Dunbar Elementary, Sonoma Valley High School '52, and UC Berkeley '57 earning a BA in Social Welfare. The bonds she forged with her Sonoma friends and college roommates were lifelong and as close as family. Very involved in school activities and community volunteering, she applied her strong work ethic to a 34-year career in Social Work for Alameda County. Char was close to her co-workers in Oakland as she caringly handled difficult cases, during turbulent times.

Charlotte married Samuel George Savinovich (1932–2002) of Pittsburg, Calif., on Nov. 25, 1961. They moved to Lafayette, Calif., where Charlotte resided for over 50 years. Charlotte is survived by her sons, Samuel and Michael, her grandchildren Alyssa, Mathew, Grace, Luke and Elisha, Sam's wife Lisa, and her sister Norma. Char is also survived by many beloved nieces, nephews, godchildren and very close friends. Charlotte's joyous caring nature, her generosity, her thunderous laugh, and her legendary cioppino will be missed and forever remembered. "Ciao Googie, Arrivederci!"

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Alzheimer's Association on behalf of Char. A private family funeral service was held at Holy Cross Cemetery.



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Contra Costa County joins all other Bay Area counties in lifting mask mandate



bigstock images

By Sora O'Doherty

Vaccinated individuals over the age of 2 will no longer be required to wear masks in most indoor public settings as of Wednesday, Feb. 16, although masks continue to be strongly recommended. According to Supervisor Candace Andersen, "Businesses, venue operators, and hosts may determine their own paths forward to protect staff and patrons and may choose

to require all patrons to wear masks." Unvaccinated individuals over age 2 will continue to be required to wear masks in all indoor public settings. The new rules apply in 11 Bay Area counties, including Contra Costa, Alameda, Napa, Solano, San Francisco, and the city of Berkeley.

Indoor masking is still required by the state for everyone, regardless of vaccination status, in public

transportation; health care settings; congregate settings like correctional facilities and homeless shelters; long-term care facilities; and in K-12 schools and childcare settings.

The change adopted by the counties aligns with the California Department of Public Health's decision to let the statewide indoor mask requirement, in place since Dec. 15, expire.

Bay Area health officers continue to strongly recommend masks be used as an effective tool to prevent the spread of COVID-19, especially when case rates are high, or when additional personal protection is needed. Continuing to mask in indoor public settings, especially crowded or poorly ventilated spaces, remains the safest choice for an individual and protects those who are medically vulnerable or are not able to get vaccinated, including young children. As evidence continues to show, vaccinations and boosters remain the best defense against the virus.

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

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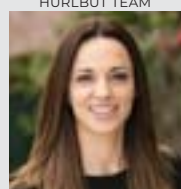
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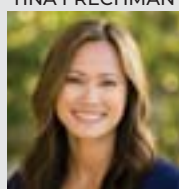
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~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

A local connection to late-1800s wine grower and brandy distiller, controversial Theodore Gier



Theodore Gier, Livermore Herald 1896

Image provided

By Vera Kochan

With his vintages often winning medals in the late 1800s and early 1900s, German immigrant Theodore Gier was considered a “wine baron” and prominent business leader in California, often lauded for his many contributions and generousities. In 1904, Gier made a temporary home on Fish Ranch Road, but before delving into Gier’s saga, a little back history is in order.

In 1879, John Olive inherited a ranch that produced, you guessed it, fish. Folks would take the dirt road in from Oakland that passed along the front of his trout enterprise. He built a little community there which included a stage coach station, guest cottages and a saloon. Word spread that his wife was an excellent cook and visitors would stop in for one of her savory meals. Their venture became so popular that the dirt road was officially named Fish Ranch Road. Olive was considered to be a good judge of horse flesh, and his property also provided cattle corrals, a stable and his expertise in horse trading. He died in 1897, due to a horse-related accident.

Olive’s widow and two daughters, Ella and Rose, continued to run the business along with their husbands. Ella was married to Gabriel Y. Moraga, a grandson of Joaquin Moraga. They ran the

saloon at Fish Ranch Road. A Contra Costa County Supervisors meeting agenda dated April 3, 1899, acknowledges liquor licenses granted to several hotels and saloons in the county. On the list is: Moraga G. Y., Fish Ranch Saloon, Fish Ranch. The agenda is faded, but for the most part reads, “It is ordered that the License Tax Collector issues licenses to sell spirituous malt-fermented and intoxicating liquors and wines in quantities less than one quart to the following named persons and the following named places to wit.”

It is during this time that Gier had already begun the early stages of his liquor and wine dealership, which he established in 1892, called Theo. Gier Company. His business headquarters were in two Oakland, California locations.

Gier’s heart was in wine-making, but as the owner of a grocery store he noticed that the sale of hard liquor was more profitable. Choosing to amass a tidy sum, he began to sell his flagship brand, “Metropole Whiskey.” This decision helped him to bankroll the money he needed to buy vineyards in Alameda County. In 1893, he purchased one in Livermore, followed by one in Napa in 1898, a second one in Livermore in 1901, and another vineyard in St. Helena in 1903.

The following year, Gier took up residence locally, according to a copy of the 1904 lease agreement between

Gabriel and Ella Moraga (the party of the first part) and Gier (the party of the second part): “That certain road house known as the ‘Fish Ranch Road House’ and its surroundings, situated on the County Road between Oakland, Alameda County, California, and Lafayette, Contra Costa County, California, and formerly known as the ‘John Olive Ranch,’ consisting of 15 acres of land, together with a residence and out buildings, and all furniture therein, and including also two cottages and pleasure grove and trees situated thereon; (save and excepting therefrom one cow barn and back shed and back Corral), with the appurtenances, for the term of four and one-half years from the first day of May, one thousand nine hundred and four, at the monthly rent or sum of Fifty (50) Dollars, payable in Gold coin of the United States of America, payable in advance on the first day of each and every month during said term.”

It was at this time, however, that Gier was about to see a dramatic downfall with his popularity and his fortune.

During the Boxer Rebellion (an uprising against foreigners that occurred in China about 1900), Gier made contributions to the international forces. In 1903, Germany’s Kaiser Wilhelm honored Gier with the Order of the Crown. When World War I broke out, the Kaiser became America’s enemy. A business competitor of Gier’s had accused him and others at a 1918 wine-makers function of toasting the Kaiser and singing German patriotic songs. Newspapers reported that Gier was jailed and later made to kneel and kiss the American flag. Although the charges were never made official, the damage was done.

In order to avoid further harm to his reputation, Gier placed an ad in the Oakland Tribune with the headline: “I Am Not Pro-German!” The ad went on to state, “If the Kaiser should triumph, civilization would be endangered.” Unfortunately, it was too little, too late as Gier saw himself removed from several state and county boards.

By the time 1920 rolled in, Gier had already been involved with several anti-Prohibition legal transgressions, most of which he was innocent. Besides short stints in jail, his vineyards (which would have been worth \$20 million today) were confiscated, and over 20,000 gallons from his Napa distillery were dumped into a sewer by authorities. After liquidating the rest of his property, Gier sold his Napa vineyard to The Christian Brothers for only

\$50,000 (\$10,000 of it was in cash). He later purchased a 180-acre orange grove near San Jose that never thrived due to frost conditions.

With his fortune nearly depleted, Gier, who had recovered from a heart attack years before, grew increasingly despondent over events. Although there exists no real

proof, some reports say that his descendants were convinced he committed suicide by ingesting small amounts of poison over a lengthy period of time. He passed away in 1931, at the age of 70, at his home in Piedmont, California.

Special thanks to Moraga Historical Society president Susan Sperry.

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Miramonte students make it to Wharton School's Global High School Investment Competition semifinals

Submitted by Jonathan Su

The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania recently announced the semifinalists for the Wharton Global High School Investment Competition, an annual contest for high school teachers and students run by the School’s Wharton Global Youth Program. MATADORS-OF1 from Miramonte High School, Horace Mann High School and College Preparatory School was among the 50 global semifinalists selected by judges from Aberdeen Standard Investments, an asset management firm in Philadelphia. Unlike other competitions, winners are selected on the strength and creativity of their team in-

vestment strategies, not on the growth of their stock portfolios.

This year had nearly 7,000 students from 64 countries competing in the Investment Competition, which is sponsored by Citi, a leading financial services company. The semifinals will be conducted virtually.

“Although we did not expect to make it to the Semifinals, we are excited to compete in the next round and, hopefully, have a chance to make it to Philadelphia,” MATADORS-OF1 team leader Jonathan Su said.

Eli Lesser, executive director of the Wharton Global Youth Program, said their team was impressed by the quality of the submissions and global representation of the teams. “Students

showcased their strong financial knowledge and teamwork, and many worked hard to understand their potential client as a first step toward developing comprehensive, creative and sound investment strategies.”

A total of 50 top teams from around the world were selected from nearly 1,300 final competition reports, which were submitted for judging on Dec. 13, 2021. The Semifinal results will be posted on the Wharton Global Youth Program website in March (<https://globallyouth.wharton.upenn.edu/>). The top 10 teams from the semifinals move on to the Global Finale at Wharton in Philadelphia. The grand prize winner will be announced on April 23.

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Gluten-free arepas offer rich corn flavor as counterpoint to gooey mozzarella filling



Arepas with Mozzarella Filling

Photos Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

When I saw these enticing corn-based snacks at a street fair in New York City last fall, I just couldn't pass them up! Anything made with corn has my number, but these also had a delicious, gooey mozzarella filling and the combination was delicious. They were like two thick corn pancakes with mozzarella cheese in the middle, grilled to perfection. I make mine with only corn flour, so this version is gluten-free too, and great for anyone with wheat allergies.

Arepas date back to pre-Colombian times, but are still a very popular staple in Colombia, Argentina, Panama and now, New York City! They can be served plain or with any

number of fillings from meats, to veggies and cheese, or even eggs. Or, you can top them with chopped tomatoes and cilantro. Sometimes they look more like an English muffin, with the filling in the middle, and sometimes they more resemble pancakes, a bit thinner. When I decided to make them myself, I tried several different recipes before settling on my own. I thinned out my batter and made them more like stacked thin pancakes, layered with the cheese. I think what makes them so tasty is that the batter is made with puréed frozen corn, so they have a really rich corn flavor.

We normally make the arepas about four inches in diameter, but on several occasions, we've made them smaller, about two-inches in

diameter, to serve as appetizers. Whichever way you decide to make these, they will probably become a staple in your diet, too. This recipe makes about 12 four-inch single pancakes, or 6 double stacked.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup frozen corn kernels
1 1/4 cup corn flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
3/4 cup milk
2 tablespoons melted butter
3 tablespoons canola oil or olive oil (for frying the corn cakes)
8 ounces fresh mozzarella, thinly sliced

DIRECTIONS

Place corn in the bowl of your food processor and puree until almost smooth. There will still be some lumps and that is okay.

Turn the corn out into a mixing bowl. Add all remaining ingredients except the mozzarella. Stir well. If the mixture is too thick, add a little extra milk.

Preheat the griddle over medium-high heat. Spoon the corn batter onto the griddle in whatever size pancakes you would like. We make a 4-inch pancake for a side dish, and we make a 2-inch pancake for an appetizer size.

Allow the pancakes to turn golden-brown on the bottom and then flip to cook the other side.

Once the second side is cooked, cover the tops of half the pancakes with a slice or two of the mozzarella. Then leaving the prettiest side up, place the remaining pancakes on top of the mozzarella. Cook just until cheese is melted and gooey.

If you want tall arepas, just double up the pancake sandwiches with a layer of mozzarella in between for a double arepa pancake sandwich.

Serve hot with your favorite hot sauce, salsa, or dipping sauce.

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>



Managing student stress in the pandemic and beyond

By Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D.

Academics, entrepreneurs, innovators, and activists have long flocked to Northern California, creating a breeding ground for some of the best academic institutions and companies the world has to offer. Bay Area schools dominate lists of best high schools in California, according to SF-Gate (September 2021). For example last year Oakland's College Preparatory School and Hillsborough's Nueva School were identified by online platform Niche <https://www.niche.com/k12/rankings/> as the fourth and fifth best private high schools in the country last year. Meanwhile, Palo Alto's Henry M. Gunn High School was deemed the best public high school in California.

Attending a high-ranking high school often takes a toll on students' mental health. Many California students grow up in communities that expect extraordinary achievement both in and out of the classroom. Over the past two years a global pandemic halted student participation in extracurricular activities, delayed standardized testing, and caused school closures. While some students, at least initially, thrived with Zoom school, setting their own pace, and getting relief from extracurricular pressures, many

others suffered anxiety and depression.

Adolescence already demands a stockpile of coping skills to successfully make the transition to young adulthood; unfortunately, actions to control the pandemic stripped away many of the coping mechanisms that make the stresses of adolescence and its accompanying social and academic pressures more manageable. Canceled sports practices and social distancing measures make fun forms of exercise and important interpersonal connections less accessible. Teens with various mental health challenges were often left without the tools they relied on to manage them.

While the pandemic has caused tangible shifts in everyday life for all of us, these changes magnified problems for many of our most vulnerable adolescents. The pandemic also altered many academic requirements for students; for example, test-optional college admissions is becoming increasingly more popular. While these changes have reduced stress for some students, for others the uncertainty surrounding the value of requirements they once believed were essential has increased academic pressure as grades and rigor or coursework take on increasing importance. Thus, for two cycles of high school seniors,

navigating the pressure of schoolwork and college applications in an unconventional learning environment has not made academic life easier. These issues make it ever more vital to understand how to recognize signs that students may be struggling with their mental health and respond accordingly.

What are the signs that students are under too much stress? Alterations in sleeping, eating, and exercising schedules, engaging in more negative self-talk, and expressing less optimism about the future are some of the sure signs a student is suffering. Certainly engaging in "high risk" behavior like self-isolation, substance abuse, or verbal and physical aggression is a clear sign of trouble. While some stress may help highly motivated students spend more time studying, too much negatively affects all aspects of healthy living including their academic performance – in particular, high levels of anxiety can prevent students from engaging in the critical thinking needed to perform well on exams.

What can we do to help? Students' mental health can be improved by surrounding them with a compassionate support system that recognizes the pressures of adolescence. Fostering open and thoughtful conversations about the stresses of school

can ensure that teens feel comfortable talking about their mental health. Many students may feel uncomfortable discussing their mental health challenges; sparking compassionate conversations may help them express their emotions and seek out support. For example, if you notice your student sleeping less or self-isolating, let them know what you are observing and ask how you can best support them. Be sure to emphasize that their negative feelings are not permanent, and assure them that they have the ability to improve their mental health with the help of supportive family and friends. For teens with test anxiety, helping them identify a clear-cut system for test preparation that reflects their learning style can help develop study habits that will set them up for success in college.

More generally, practices like journaling, mindfulness, meditation, and deep breathing can be employed to help improve mental health. Many high schools now offer yoga to fill a PE requirement, and I often hear students tell me how much they enjoy this class. Therapy or other treatment may also be helpful, especially as dedicated care providers can guide teens through specialized programs taking emotional, familial, and cultural factors into account.

In high achieving pressured environments, like we often find in our affluent California communities, it is especially important to create space for supportive conversations and as necessary take action to support adolescent mental health.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD personally guides each student through each step of selecting and applying to well-matched schools for undergraduate and graduate school study. Over the past two decades, Elizabeth has placed hundreds of students in some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. The number of clients taken is limited to ensure each applicant has personalized attention. Contact Elizabeth early in the process to make a difference in your outcomes. Write elizabeth@doingcollege.com; Visit www.doingcollege.com; or Call: 925.385.0562.

GCCP presents 'Culture, Crisis, and Creativity' with the Horszowski Piano Trio



The Horszowski Piano Trio

Photo provided

Submitted by Pamela Freund-Striplen

The Gold Coast Chamber Players are delighted to bring back live music to

the Lamorinda community at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 25 at the Don Tatzin Community Hall at the Lafayette Library. The live concert will be recorded and all ticket holders will have the option to watch the concert

virtually from March 3 to July 1. Proof of vaccination is required and N95 masks will be provided.

"Culture, Crisis, and Creativity" features the esteemed Horszowski Piano Trio based in New York City. Giving performances that are "lithe, persuasive" (The New York Times), "eloquent and enthralling" (The Boston Globe), and described as "the most compelling American group to come on the scene" (The New Yorker), the Horszowski Trio has quickly become a vital force in the international chamber music world.

This colorful program features piano trios by Bedřich Smetana, Rebecca Clarke, and Arno Babadjanian, which grapple with political struggles and personal challenges. As the most distinguished British female composer of the inter-war generation, Rebecca Clarke composed her trio on the heels of the 1918 influenza pandemic while battling prevailing sexist attitudes and personal depression. Clarke's Piano

Trio (1921) is an extraordinary work of striking originality and craft reflecting some of the most modern influences of the time including Ravel, Bloch and Debussy with its impressionist atmosphere. Bedřich Smetana, whose work is imbued with inflections of Czech folk music, wrote his emotional op.15 trio as a response to the death of his daughter. Smetana's lone piano trio is a milestone of romanticism. Much of Arno Babadjanian's music is rooted in Armenian folk music and folklore. Passionate and full of memorable melodies, Babadjanian's Piano Trio in F-sharp minor is considered one of his most important works.

Tickets: \$15-45 online (<https://app.artspeople.com/index.php?show=123572>) or by phone at (925) 283-3728. For more information, visit <https://www.gccpmusic.com/>

◆ **Not to be missed** ◆ **Not to be missed** ◆ **Not to be missed** ◆ **Not to be missed** ◆

ART

The Moraga Art Gallery announces the opening of a spirited new show, "Singularities," a title derived from the unique visions of the show featured member artists: Orinda's Linh Kang and Walnut Creek's Susan Erickson. Feb. 2 to April 10, also consists of paintings, etchings, prints, ceramics, jewelry, woodworking, glasswork and photographs by the gallery's other members and additional guest artists. 432 Center Street in Moraga's Rheem Shopping Center, open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. www.moragaartgallery.com, or call 925-376-5407.

19th High School Visual Arts Competition Registration is Open! Registration is open for the High School Visual Arts Competition (HSVAC). Deadline is midnight, Feb. 22. Cash awards, merit citations, in-person exhibit in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library and online public exhibit. Hosted by the Lamorinda Arts Council. For information and registration, visit www.lamorindaarts.org/vac. Questions? Call 925.359.4490.

Art Gallery at Wilder: Virtual Exhibit – Abstract Artist Valerie Corvin Held Over. The Lamorinda Arts Council invites you to view Valerie Corvin's virtual exhibit at www.lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries through Feb. 28. She has added new abstract work to her show, which is held over from January. Corvin builds "layers of marks, first bold dark marks, and then colorful shapes ... that communicate unique shapes in nature." For in-person viewings, email Aniston Breslin at wildergallery@lamorindaarts.org.

Art show at Orinda Books. February features the paintings of Lisa Gunn. Lisa has a long artistic presence in Orinda. Her style is a "California Impressionism" involving plein air, landscapes, and abstracts. She notes, "I am hoping that people will connect with my painting and find some attachment that speaks to them whether it be through color, composition or some thread of energy transmitting from one human to another." Visit the Artist of the Month at www.orindabooks.com. Orinda Books is located at 276 Village Square, Orinda, 925-254-7606.

MUSIC

Pacific Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Conductor Lawrence Kohl, presents "Words!" with the chamber orchestra version of Gustav Mahler Symphony #4 and William Walton Façade: An Entertainment. Marnie Breckenridge will be soprano soloist for the Mahler and the reciter for the Walton. Performances are Saturday, March 26 at 7:30 p.m. at the Auditorium theater of the Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda and Sunday, March 27 at 3 p.m. at Bankhead Theatre, 2400 First Street in Livermore. Tickets online at pacificchamberorchestra.org and additionally for the Livermore performance by calling 925-373-6800 or visiting the Bankhead box office at 2400 First Street in Livermore

Live concert! Gold Coast Chamber Players. Culture, Crisis, and Creativity with the Horszowski Piano Trio Friday, Feb. 25 at 7:30 p.m. Don Tatzin Community Hall at the Lafayette Library, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Tickets: \$15-\$45 <https://www.gccpmusic.com/>

LITERATURE

Bookmark contest is back! FLLC invite all Lafayette K - 8 students to create an original bookmark illustrating a favorite book. Entry forms will be distributed to Lafayette public schools and St. Perpetua School. Additional forms will be available at the Lafayette Library and the Friend's Corner Book Shop. The contest opens on Feb. 11 and all entries are due at the library by March 4. Winners will be announced on April 27 at the library. Winning bookmarks will be on display at the library and book shop, and will be handed out to library patrons as well. Start creating!

THEATER

"Cinderella's Wedding" performs at the Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive in Walnut Creek. Performances are: Friday, Feb. 11 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 12 at 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. Single tickets are on sale (\$25 - \$52) with senior and youth pricing available. Diablo Ballet will also present a virtual option, which will be a recording of the live performance, streaming Feb. 18 - 27 and available for viewing at any time during this timeframe. Price \$37 per household. For in theatre or virtual tickets, call 925-943-SHOW (7469) or visit www.lesherartscenter.org or www.diabloballet.org. For a link to the Leshner Center for the Arts safety protocols that are currently in place, please visit: www.lesherartscenter.org.

Shotgun Players presents "Passing Strange" March 5-April 10: Wednesday and Thursday at 7 p.m., Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 5 p.m.; except

March 10 at 8 p.m. and no performance March 9, at Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave, Berkeley. A young bohemian charts a course for 'the real' through sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. Loaded with soulful lyrics and overflowing with passion. Cost: \$0 - \$40. For more info see <https://shotgunplayers.org/online/article/passing-strange> or call 510-841-6500 or email boxoffice@shotgunplayers.org.

OTHER

AAUW-OML is sponsoring a Girls4STEM webinars for high school girls. Sheryl Mordo, P.E., B.S., Civil Engineering from UC Davis, will talk about her career path from math classes in high school to a career as a construction project engineer and manager at Intuit, one of the world's largest business software companies, with an internship at DisneyWorld along the way. Her webinar is on Sunday, March 6 at 4 p.m. Get more information at <https://oml-ca.aauw.net/girls4stem-webinars/>

Acalanes High School Class of 1971 - 50 year reunion. April 9, at the Coop in LaFiesta Square. For more information please contact: Katrina Neblett Silvani 71Acalanes@gmail.com

Registration for the free online Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour and Green Home Features Showcase is now open. This year there will be four days of inspiration: two days online, and two days in-person. This tour will also showcase green home features. Saturday and Sunday, April 16 and 17 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bestselling author Doug Tallamy will kick off the April 16 event. The online Tour will feature beautiful, water-conserving na-

tive plant gardens, as well as visits to homes with Tesla solar panels and Powerwall backup batteries, heat pumps for heating and cooling the house and heating water, induction ranges, and more. www.BringingBacktheNatives.net

American Association of University Women- Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW-OML) general meeting on Tuesday, March 15, 9:30 to 11 a.m. at the Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda, presents Bonnie Spindler, a real estate agent with 30 years experience in advocating and educating about historic properties. She has appeared on HGTV, has been interviewed on numerous news and entertainment shows, and is a regular contributor to American Dream TV. Free and open to the public. More information at <https://oml-ca.aauw.net>.

Sustainable Lafayette and Project Earth host free screening of the film "Idle threat" at Town Hall Theatre on Saturday, March 12 at 11 a.m., 3535 School St., Lafayette. RSVP at TownHallTheatre.com. Tickets are limited, first-come-first-served. "Idle Threat" follows its director/producer George Pakenham as he brings the attention of New York motorists to the dangers caused to the environment by idling cars. Following the film, Project Earth will lead a youth panel to discuss the film and ways we can combat the effects of vehicle exhaust on a local level.

GARDEN

The Montelindo Garden Club, membership open to all, presents landscape designer Katie Creighton talking about Early Bloomers — the Harbingers of Spring, Feb. 18, email montelindogarden@aol.com to learn if the meeting is via Zoom and to request a link. For further information, including times and in-person location, see the website at montelindogarden.com.

The Seed Library, sponsored jointly by the Moraga Public Library and the Moraga Garden Club as a way to share free seeds for individuals and families to grow in their home gardens, opened Feb. 15. Residents may get six packets of seeds every visit to the Moraga Library, during open hours – you don't need to have a library card to get the seeds, and you don't have to live in Moraga. The seeds will be in cabinets like old-fashioned card catalogs, organized alphabetically by name (local Girl Scout Troop 402 has done the lions-share of this organization). You will only need to tell the check-out desk how many packets you are taking. For more information, email MoragaSeedLibrary@gmail.com.

The Orinda Garden Club is pleased to host a free online discussion with famed local master gardener and writer, David George, who will discuss natural ways to deal with fruit snatching rodents and other pests in our gardens at 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 24. George is a famed local master gardener with UC and Contra Costa County and a writer. His monthly sustainable gardening column is featured in the Diablo Gazette, known by his pen name, The Naked Gardener. Naked from pesticides, not clothing! His column delves into eco-friendly, all-natural gardening techniques. For more information and to register (required to attend) please visit: www.orindagc.org/community-meeting.html

Moraga Garden Club, Feb. 17 general meeting program "Good Bug, Bad Bug," features Master Gardener John Pike. Anyone is welcome to join on this Zoom meeting. Please, contact moragagardenclub@gmail.com and you will be provided a Zoom link. New in Town? Want to learn about our organization, improve your gardening skills, volunteer or join? See our website: www.moragagardenclub.com for more information.

Lamorinda's Religious Services



ST MARK'S CHURCH OF ORINDA & MORAGA
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www.stmarksorinda.org | (925) 254-5965
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 WORSHIP SCHEDULE In person worship at 9:30 a.m. Live stream on facebook.com/HSLCOrinda/
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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Acalanes Female Athletic Board serves as voice for female student-athletes



FAB at a recent soccer game

Photo Haley Walsh

By Jon Kingdon

One afternoon when Acalanes Athletic Director Randy Takahashi was cleaning out his office, he came upon some old issues of Blueprint, the school newspaper for Acalanes. As he scanned the articles, there were two stories that caught his attention. One was on the hidden issue of sexual abuse and the other, in which he was interviewed, was on gender equity.

These articles forced Takahashi to confront those very important concerns. "I was thinking about whether we had really addressed these issues, or did we just bring them to light," Takahashi said. "I may share the same vision and viewpoint of the girls but that is me looking at it from my lens. I wanted to establish a safe space for our female student-athletes to be able to meet, talk and discuss things about what is in the best interest of female sports at Acalanes."

Tatum Zuber, a junior and co-captain on the girls' soccer team, was asked by Takahashi what she thought about the formation of a group of female student-athletes to share their thoughts and ideas. "I told him I thought it was a good idea and so he said we would go for it," Zuber said.

Once that safe place was established, it took on the moniker of Female Athletic Board (FAB). Takahashi then asked Haley Walsh, an Acalanes teacher and the girls' volleyball coach to oversee the group because "I felt, as a male, if I was in there, the girls wouldn't have the same conversations and with Haley running things, it would make the conversation richer."

Walsh readily agreed to supervise the board meetings. "I had thought

about different ways to support female athletes, being a female athlete myself, but I had not ever really thought about being on a board or with a group," Walsh said. "We've done a lot of equity work but one of the most discriminated groups historically tends to be women, so Randy wanted to make sure that gender equity was addressed as well."

Though the titular head of the group, Walsh made it clear who would be overseeing the meetings: "I wanted the girls to understand that they were running the meetings. This was a place for them to be heard. The girls have seen a lot of inequity issues and they're so used to it that they may not know how to address it or if there are even issues that need to be addressed."

An invitation was sent to all the female athletes informing them of the first meeting. "Ms. Walsh told us at the first meeting that this was a safe place for us to express how we felt about athletics at Acalanes," Zuber said. "It was there that we could be heard and have our ideas presented to the administration."

Takahashi has welcomed the ideas and comments from the female student-athletes. "They're taking an active role and looking at what we are doing in the athletic department and thinking about ways that we can improve things," Takahashi said. "I had a colleague that asked me if I was concerned this this might stir up some trouble for me. My response was that we should be able to start addressing what we need to do to make things better for everybody. We hear the voices of the females and asking the questions, 'Is it good, and how do we figure it out?'"

The board has been meeting outside once a month due to the coronavirus protocols. "Our meetings are very 'Camelot-like' with a round table discussion," Walsh said. "In our first meeting, we just talked about different topics and areas where the girls felt there could be improvements, ranging from equal apparel for the boys and girls teams, getting more female representation on the coaching staffs and getting more attendance from the student body at the girls' events."

From there the board went to the Acalanes website and compared the budgets for the boys and girls teams. "There wasn't a great difference and it showed that our district does a great job in supporting both the male and female athletes, but it was interesting to see which sports raised the most money and what they're spending it on," Walsh said.

Zuber cited the difference in gear provided to the boys and girls teams. "We got a backpack, parka and our jerseys," Zuber said. "The boys got sweatpants, windbreakers along with long and short sleeve jerseys. Though the overall budgets the teams received from the school are similar, there was far more additional money that went to the boys teams from outside donations."

This is an issue that Takahashi and the administration have already talked about and how to address it. "We've asked the question about having something in place that is more structured and having parameters for each program so that one team will not appear to have more than another," Takahashi said. "It's good that we're hearing from the girls on this issue and how it's important to them."

The differences in the budgets of the teams, gender aside, aligns with the number of players that go out for each sport. Much of the funding for each team comes from contributions from the families. "We take all of the expected expenses and potential revenue, and we then figure out what the difference is going to be, and then learning how many people are in the program will then determine how much we are going to ask the families for a contribution," said Takahashi. "It's not a fee and it's not mandatory but we do really appreciate the parents making the contribution because it really helps us fund our program. Our percentage of funding from the families is over 80%."

With far more attendance at the boys' games, the question then became on how to increase attendance at the girls' games. For Walsh, it was a matter of attacking the issue head-on. "The more we talked about it, we found that the lack of support for the girls' teams comes from a societal em-

phasis that stressed attending the Friday night football game, but never any emphasis on encouraging attendance at the girls' events," Walsh said. "What the girls found is that in order to change these norms, they would have to make it more normal to be supportive of the girls' teams. They concluded that in order to get more students to come to the girls athletic events, they needed to raise the expectations."

Zuber and the board wanted to demonstrate that with enthusiasm and effort, there can be larger crowds at the girls' games. "We got the school to promote going to our soccer games. We made posters and got commitments from the other teams to support each other's games," Zuber said.

Takahashi saw this as a very positive step. "We had a greater number of girls that showed up for the next soccer game and they were loud, positive, energetic and had a good time," Takahashi said. "It was a great thing."

A very valuable intangible has come out of the formation of the Female Athletic Board: the feeling of empowerment for the girls. "I believe that's true," Walsh said. "It's interesting to see the girls, some of whom are quiet in the school environment, come to the group and really start to speak up and be vocal in ways that I had not seen in class, so it's really awesome to see them take this and turn it into a positive experience."

Zuber, who has always taken on the leadership role on her teams, said it has allowed her to find a new avenue to make her opinions known: "I definitely feel that my voice is being heard more and I am able to present ideas whereas before I would not have thought about bringing these issues up. It's given us an opportunity to express what we're seeing and feeling as our seasons have progressed."

Where does it go from here? "I believe that the boys teams will support the issues that we have brought up," Zuber said. "Our ultimate goal is for us to be able to draw the same type of crowds, get the same gear and be looked at as equals to the boys teams."

Takahashi is taking a long-term approach with the Female Athletic Board: "I'm glad that I'm able to hear what the girls are thinking but it's nice that they have been able to come together so they can feel that they have a voice and can talk, not only about things they feel need fixing but also to be able to rally around each other. This program is in its infancy but I really believe that this is going to be really good for us. I've been talking with one of our board members about the program and his comment was, 'This is so great I wish that this was going on throughout the entire district.' I just hope that we're doing the right thing."

20th win for Saint Mary's in dominating San Diego, 86-57

By Jon Kingdon

Saint Mary's, ranked 22nd in the nation, defeated the University of San Diego Feb. 10 by a score of 86-57, raising their record to 20-5, the 14th time in the last 15 years that coach Randy Bennett has coached the team to at least 20 wins.

After a tough loss to the University of Santa Clara earlier in the week, Bennett was more than a little pleased at the outcome of the game and how the team has not lost two games in a row all season. "There could have been a lot of different scenarios," Bennett said. "We did lose to a

good team last Tuesday, so it was good to bounce back from that. I'm glad that we came in ready to play. San Diego is a good, competitive team but they caught our best shot tonight. We shot well and took care of the ball. This was one of our best performances of the year."

It was a classic team victory for the Gaels offensively and defensively. Every player on the roster scored in the game and of the 33 field goals for Saint Mary's, 17 were off assists. The defense held San Diego to 10 points under their average and had nine steals. Logan Johnson led the team with 16 points and had five

steals by himself.

"Logan was inspiring with how hard he played tonight," Bennett said. "He showed tremendous leadership just by playing so hard. He got us going defensively and we were really good defensively tonight. He's an elite defender and is as good as anybody in this league and in the West. He just brought that intensity and played with a lot of passion which we need to have on a regular basis."

It's no accident that Saint Mary's defense is ranked eighth in the nation allowing an average of 59.1 points per game. "It was important to get off to a good start tonight

for our confidence after the Santa Clara game," Johnson said. "We felt we had to be first to hit our opponent in the mouth, not getting behind for 10 or 20 points. We do a ton of stuff defensively in practice every day and we don't skip steps or short cut routes. It pays off and we're one of the top defensive teams in the nation."

Having played Santa Clara on Tuesday, San Diego on Thursday and going to Gonzaga last Saturday, Bennett was very happy to be able to play all his substitutes. "To be able to give our regulars rest, I was pumped about that. One of the most enjoyable things

for me as a coach is when I get to play our young guys. They don't get to play a lot because we have seven older players that get the majority of the minutes."

The improved play gave the opportunity to get a number of minutes in a game like this for sophomores Jabe Mullins, Mitchell Saxen, Leemet Bockler, Judah Brown and Luke Barrett. "It's fun to watch them improve," Bennett said. "It's important for their development when they can get substantial minutes. It's just fun to see them out there getting to do what they love to do." ... continued on Page C2

20th win for Saint Mary's in dominating San Diego, 86-57



Photo SMC Athletics / Tod Fierner

Logan Johnson (0) with assistant coach Justin Joyner (center) and head coach Randy Bennett (right).

... continued from Page C1

When a team's record is 10-3, most coaches are loath to make any changes. Bennett was pleased with the way his offense and defense was playing but felt the need to make a change at guard after that 13th game, starting freshman Augustus Marciulionis and

bringing senior Tommy Kuhse in off the bench, a decision he put a lot of thought into.

"I found that when we started the game with Johnson and Kuhse the ball stuck in their hands because they're both guys that try to make plays and they're good at it, but things could get stagnant. Augustus is more of a pass first point guard and is a very

good defender. If I were to start Kuhse, I might not get to Augustus who needs the minutes to develop. He is really developing, and we are moving the ball better. It also helps that we have a nice scoring punch with Kuhse coming off the bench and it's worked out well. When the change was made, Tommy came to me and said 'Coach if

you think this is going to help us, I'm all in.' That's how he approached it."

It has also helped that the team is scoring six points a game more than last year and has improved their overall shooting percentage from 42.2% to 46.5% and connecting on 35.6% of their 3-point shots after shooting 29.4% last season. Kuhse, in particular, has improved his 3-point shooting percentage from 27.5% to 45.1%.

"A lot of Tommy's improvement came from having a good spring, summer and fall practicing in the gym and working on his mechanics," Assistant coach Mickey McConnell said. "The improvement of the entire team is due in part to having a number of players back that were injured last year. Our shot selection has also been better. Last year with Alex Ducas and Leemet Bockler out, we started to press. This year, we've told the players to take the open shots when you get them. We have a lot of confidence in our players, and they've done a great job in sharing the ball."

The adversity of battling through all the injuries last season has proven to be a positive factor on this year's team. "Last year we scrapped out the majority of our wins,"

Johnson said. "This year we're putting more points on the board and we're still scrapping. You may have an open shot, but we'll still be looking to find someone who has a more open shot. We've taken the right steps, getting everyone involved offensively and knowing our defensive assignments each game has allowed us to keep growing."

Senior Matthias Tass (12.8) and junior Alex Ducas (11.0) have been the team's leading scorers and keys in the overall play of the team. "Ducas and Tass both really stepped up this year. We've been able to use them in different ways, lining them up in the post and playing off them and then our guards can off-penetrate. The players are really unselfish and have really gotten comfortable with their roles and in sharing the ball. Dan Fotu is playing a short role this year but still is an unbelievable teammate. The players have figured out their roles offensively, cut down on their turnovers and started shooting it better. We had a breakthrough confidence wise and had a better idea of what we wanted to do since the early season Maui tournament."

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Moraga Garden Club cherishes old traditions, creates new memories



Photo provided

Submitted by **Linda U. Foley**

The Moraga Garden Club annually
decorates the local library with gar-
lands, bows and wreaths in Decem-

ber. The star of the decoration effort,
however, is a tree festooned with 'crit-
ter' ornaments, adding a hint of the
mystery of the forest.

The tradition for critter orna-
ments was started by Moraga Garden
Club member Jamie Bonetto in a
workshop at her home about 30 years
ago. Dried pine cones, leaves, twigs –
with the imagination of the creator –
were turned into miniature quirky an-
imals and whimsical dolls.

The history of these ornaments
can be attributed to the Brandywine
River Museum in Chadds Ford, Penn-
sylvania, in 1972 to emphasize the
museum's role in protecting the nat-
ural, cultural and historical resources
of the region. All ornaments were
made of completely natural compo-
nents (i.e. dried flowers, acorns, Queen
Anne's lace, pods and spices for eyes).

The Smithsonian Institute also
created a critter tree. In 1984, Nancy
Reagan invited volunteers to decorate
a natural tree and because she
loved red, lots of cockscomb and eu-
onymus were used.

Lamorinda Weekly

is an independent publication, for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, CA
25,000 printed copies; delivered to homes & businesses in Lamorinda.

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Publishers/Owners:
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Layout/Graphics: Andy Scheck. Printed in CA.

Mailing address:
Lamorinda Weekly, 1480 Moraga Road STE C #202, Moraga, CA 94556
Phone: 925-377-0977; Fax: 925-263-9223; email: info@lamorindaweekly.com
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Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 15 Issue 26 Wednesday, February 16, 2022



Lamorinda Home Sales

... read on Page D2

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Fabulous February flora



Photos Cynthia Brian

The fluorescent cerise blooms of the Christmas cactus.

By Cynthia Brian

"No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem." ~ Booker T. Washington

For the past two months, I've been working on writing a series of children's books, a bit of prose, a bit of poetry. But with the ubiquitous sunny days and warm temperatures, digging in my garden wins the race. In the past, February has notoriously been a drab and dreary month, but this year it is filled with fabulous flowers, unsea-

sonal sunshine, and idyllic conditions for working outside. My Christmas cactus shines with fluorescent cerise blooms, the blazing blue of the rosemary bush host busy, buzzing bees, the viburnum is covered in masses of sweet-smelling white blossoms, and roses continue to bud and bloom. Wood sorrel or oxalis already showcases bursts of buttery yellow flowers. These shamrocks don't usually appear until St. Patrick's Day. The purple-tinted flowers of the marvelous magnolia liliiflora, known as the tulip magnolia, suggest that spring may have already sprung.

It's mid-February and still no sign of rain. January was considered the driest month on record in California since 1895. Daffodils blanket the roadways and hillsides; ornamental pear trees are in full bloom with peach buds prepared to explode into luminous pink. Back in December when we experienced the atmospheric river and the record-breaking 17 feet of snowfall in the Sierras, we had high hopes that drought conditions may be receding.



Shamrocks (oxalis or wood sorrel) are early.

Cynthia Brian's February Gardening Guide on Page D12



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City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	8	\$920,000	\$4,250,000
MORAGA	7	\$1,258,000	\$3,400,000
ORINDA	5	\$460,000	\$2,300,000

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

- 820 Acalanes Road, \$920,000, 5 Bdrms, 5883 SqFt, 2004 YrBlt, 12-29-21,
Previous Sale: \$3,500,000, 08-06-19
- 4144 Canyon Road, \$3,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 2970 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-30-21,
Previous Sale: \$2,755,000, 11-20-17
- 8 Dale Court, \$2,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 2383 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 01-03-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,630,000, 12-28-20
- 7 Hartwood Court, \$2,805,000, 4 Bdrms, 2226 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-30-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,375,000, 05-17-16
- 4022 Mario Way, \$1,510,000, 4 Bdrms, 2398 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 12-30-21
- 1130 Nogales Street, \$1,500,000, 3 Bdrms, 1869 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 01-07-22,
Previous Sale: \$112,000, 09-01-78
- 744 South Pond Court, \$1,950,000, 5 Bdrms, 2923 SqFt, 1996 YrBlt, 01-07-22
- 1040 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$4,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 2366 SqFt,
1959 YrBlt, 12-27-21

MORAGA

- 226 Alderbrook Place, \$1,525,000, 4 Bdrms, 2312 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 01-05-22
- 30 Brandt Drive, \$2,515,000, 4 Bdrms, 2802 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 01-06-22
- 168 Draeger Drive, \$3,400,000, 5 Bdrms, 5554 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 01-06-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,700,000, 03-03-14
- 132 Moraga Road, \$1,585,000, 3 Bdrms, 2719 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 12-30-21,
Previous Sale: \$425,500, 03-02-98
- 1091 Sanders Drive, \$1,258,000, 4 Bdrms, 1659 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 01-06-22
- 149 Sandringham Drive, \$1,725,000, 5 Bdrms, 2926 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 01-04-22
- 89 Shuey Drive, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 2047 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-30-21,
Previous Sale: \$429,000, 05-01-91

ORINDA

- 67 Brookwood Road #4, \$460,000, 2 Bdrms, 897 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 01-03-22,
Previous Sale: \$94,500, 06-01-86
- 32 Dos Posos, \$2,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 3163 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 01-07-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,975,000, 04-24-18
- 144 Las Vegas Road, \$1,700,000, 3 Bdrms, 1703 SqFt, 1940 YrBlt, 01-07-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,294,000, 12-20-17
- 57 Lombardy Lane, \$2,250,000, 6 Bdrms, 3377 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-30-21
- 37 Vallecito Lane, \$1,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 2020 SqFt, 1940 YrBlt, 01-06-22



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New home primer, Part 1

By Jim Hurley

As a handyman, it is always a pleasure to help a new homeowner get settled. Typically, the request is to install some towel bars and hang artwork, or maybe adjust some doors that don't latch. Being old, and a dad at heart, I like to include my "New Home Primer" on that first visit.

What's in the primer? So glad you asked.



Photos Jim Hurley

Water shutoff valves on the outside of a house

First, I ask if they know where the main water shutoff valve is. If the answer is "no," we walk around outside to find it. Typically, that water main shutoff is right out front. It may be near the garage door, or possibly in the garden by the front door; you'll see a pipe coming up from the ground with a valve in it that goes into the wall of the house.

Sometimes that main is not so easy to find. On older homes, they might be buried under several decades of garden soil

buildup. On rare occasions, I've found the valve inside the garage. If the main shutoff is not visible, I look for the meter box on the street. The water meter has a shutoff valve also, but it is much more difficult to access and shut off. Finding the meter box may help locate the main shutoff because typically the water main runs in a straight line of sight from the meter at the street to the closest point of the house. (Plumbers like to use as little pipe as possible.) If we still can't find the main water shutoff at the house, the water district will come out to help you locate it.

Sometimes finding the main shutoff is not the end of it. Many homes have the water main split with one line to run the irrigation system (what we used to call sprinklers), and the other supplying water to the house. It is good to test which valve does what before an emergency and possibly label the valves once you know which is which.

Why is that main water shutoff valve so important? Because on very rare occasions (think earthquakes) a water line might break causing an unrestricted flow of water. If this should happen, your first response must be to go to the main valve (which you fortunately had the forethought to locate) and turn it off. Once the free flow of water is stopped, mopping up and repairs can be done.

Of equal importance, the second stop on our homeowner's tour is the gas meter. The gas main has an inconspicuous valve in the pipe that feeds into your gas meter. Instead of a handle to turn, gas main valves have a rectangular stem on one side and a nut on the other. The long side of the stem will align with the pipe when it is open and is perpendicular to the pipe when it is closed.

To shut off your gas main, you provide the handle. The hardware store sells a flat bar shutoff wrench to keep near your gas meter for emergency use: Don't buy it. Instead I recommend spending your money on a really big (at least 12-inch long) crescent wrench. The flat bar is short and thin and hurts your hand when you try to push on it. The long crescent wrench is more comfortable for your hand and gives you more leverage for turning the valve.

... continued on Page D10



Gas shutoff valves



Gas shutoff valves can be closed with a wrench

Melanie
Snow

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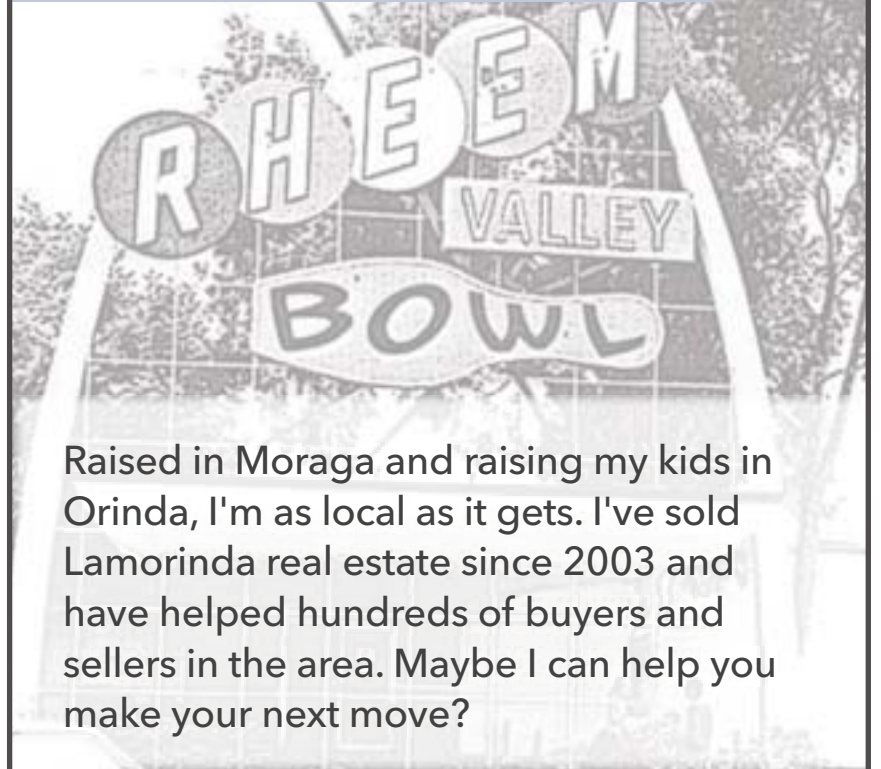
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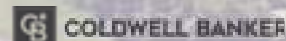
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The Brant



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Drawing Entry
Deadline:
3/2/2022

Opportunity Index:

#263 (3 Units)

- 2 Bed
- Price: \$524,446
- HOA: \$743.56
- Income: Moderate

Opportunity Index :

#264 (2 Units)

- 2 Bed
- Price: \$251,745
- HOA: \$743.56
- Income: Low

Opportunity Index :

#265 (1 Unit)

- 3 Bed
- Price: \$594,891
- HOA: \$743.56
- Income: Moderate

Opportunity Index :

#266 (2 Units)

- 1 Bed
- Price: \$452,591
- HOA: \$743.56
- Income: Moderate

Opportunity Index :

#267 (2 Units)

- 1 Bed
- Price: \$59,920
- HOA: \$743.56
- Income: Very Low



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2. Complete the HouseKeys Webinar Orientation
3. Meet with a HouseKeys Registered Loan Officer to get PRE-APPROVED
4. Enter the Opportunity Drawing (Lottery) by the published deadline
5. Register for HUD Approved 1st Time Homebuyer course

Income Category	Percentage	Household Size 1	Household Size 2	Household Size 3	Household Size 4	Household Size 5	Household Size 6
Moderate	120%	\$105,500	\$120,550	\$135,650	\$150,700	\$162,750	\$174,800
Low	80%	\$76,750	\$87,700	\$98,650	\$109,600	\$118,400	\$127,150
Very Low	50%	\$47,950	\$54,800	\$61,650	\$68,500	\$74,000	\$79,500

*Income Categories Effective as of 12/31/2021

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Green Living

Resolve to Make Your Household More Earth-Friendly in the New Year



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Resolving to green up your act in the New Year? Here are just a few tweaks you can make right at home to substantially reduce your environmental footprint.

Make Appliance Upgrades

Home appliances are improving all the time, with many newer models designed specifically with efficiency in mind. If your home appliances, such as your washer, dryer, dishwasher, refrigerator and HVAC system, are on the older side, it may be time to replace one or more of these items. Over time, you'll offset the upfront cost with reduced energy bills. Plus, you'll be helping protect the climate. Look for ENERGY STAR-rated products, which have met strict EPA standards.

Optimize Heating and Cooling

North American Technician Excellence (NATE) offers the following energy-saving tips to help you keep your home comfort system running at peak performance:

- Change your air filters monthly, or as directed by the manufacturer.
- Add weatherstripping and caulk around windows and doors to improve your home's insulation. Improperly insulated walls, floors, attics, basements and crawlspaces waste energy and can also lead to moisture imbalance.

- Install a programmable thermostat to help regulate temperatures.
- Don't keep clutter near your HVACR units, and don't store anything next to them that could impede ventilation. Likewise, keep vents and returns free of obstructions. Don't lay carpet over vents, place furniture over or in front of them, or obstruct airflow.
- Dry air feels cooler than moist air. A simple humidifier may make your home feel five degrees warmer.
- Even the most efficient system can suffer if it's not properly maintained. For optimum comfort and sustainability, make sure all your HVACR installation, maintenance and other work is performed by a NATE-certified technician. NATE-certified technicians have demonstrated their knowledge of today's increasingly sophisticated heating and cooling systems by passing a nationally recognized test developed and supported by all segments of the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning industry. Better installation and service means your equipment will run at peak efficiency. Visit nate.org for additional HVACR energy-savings tips and resources, and to find a NATE-certified technician in your area.

Reduce Food Waste

American food production uses 10% of the nation's total energy budget, 50% of its land, and 80% of its freshwater, according to FoodRescue.net. Unfortunately, up to 40% of all food ends up in landfills. Label food items in your pantry and fridge and organize them by date to help ensure you consume food before it spoils. If you see that you've prepared too much of a certain item, freeze it. Of course, many foods produce unavoidable scraps. Use them to create stock or compost them. Composting will reduce your home's contribution to landfills while enriching your garden. Bonus: it's also a great way to reduce yardwork waste.

Make an Impact Today

Want a quick project you can complete in an afternoon? Swap out incandescent lightbulbs for energy efficient LEDs. According to the EPA, residential LEDs -- especially ENERGY STAR-rated products -- use at least 75% less energy, and last up to 25 times longer.

This year, consider making Earth-friendly New Year's resolutions. A few tweaks can reduce your household's impact on the planet.

(StatePoint)

New home primer, Part 1

... continued from Page D4

Find a spot near the meter where you can leave the wrench, (maybe on a hook on the wall), so it is there when you need it.

The gas main valve can be very difficult to turn off, not something you want to find out in an emergency. I strongly advise practicing shutting it off before there is an emergency. If you turn it off and back on quickly there will be no problem. If you can't turn it off, call PG&E. They provide a free safety check service to residences. If it remains off for too long, you may need to relight the pilot light on your water heater.

What about water heaters and electrical panels you ask? Watch for Part 2 of the New Home Primer in an upcoming edition of Lamorinda Weekly.

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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Cynthia Brian's February Gardening Guide



Add a rock dry creek and mulch to your garden.

Here are some tasks to accomplish now.

- If you haven't already, it is time to turn on the sprinklers and give your garden a deep drink. Check the sprinkler heads on lawns as grass tends to grow over them when not in use during the winter months. If your irrigation system needs a tune-up, professionals have told me that winter is the ideal occasion to schedule appointments for repairs or installations. In the summer months, when we need to irrigate the most, specialists are swamped with emergencies.
- Water in the morning to give plants the opportunity to dry out before night.
- Fertilize trees, shrubs, and ground covers. When it comes to fertilizers, people often wonder what N, P, K mean. N stands for nitrogen which stimulates leaf formation to give plants the luminous, healthy green. P is phosphorus which encourages strong root formation, aids in flowering and fruit set. K is for potassium providing disease resistance and hardiness to plants. The three numbers that you see on labels such as 5-10-15 indicate the percentage of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium that the product contains. This listing is required by law on all packages of organic, synthetic, and chemical fertilizers. Keep in mind that although nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium are necessary to maintain plant health, there are more than 20 other nutrients needed as well.
- Get a head-start on pulling weeds while they are small, and the ground is malleable. Weeds harbor disease.
- Apply snail bait around plants that are susceptible to snails and slugs.
- Use an organic systemic insecticide around the base of roses to prevent the first flush of aphids.
- Spray fruit trees, roses, and citrus with dormant oil to protect them from overwintering insects and fungal diseases. Copper Sulfate is approved for organic use and offers a strong defense against fungal pathogens. Be sure to follow all safety and application instructions, as copper is a potent control method, and should be used responsibly. Do not spray on windy days. Wash any citrus before consuming. Harvest tangelos, lemons, oranges and limes as needed.
- Check for mole and gopher activity. These rodents do not take a winter hiatus. It's best to trap them before they reproduce.

... continued on Page D13



Marvelous magnolia liliiflora, known as the tulip magnolia.



A bounty of tangelos on the citrus tree.

Photos Cynthia Brian

Cynthia Brian's February Gardening Guide

... continued from Page D12

- Complete pruning of roses, grapes and berry bushes.
- Sanitize tools between use. Alcohol, bleach, or hydrogen peroxide solutions are recommended.
- Cut small branches of peach or crabapple to force the blooms for an indoor arrangement.
- Plan an edible garden. What vegetables and herbs do you love the most? Find out what varieties are best planted from seed (arugula for instance) and what plants are better purchased in six-packs, quarts, or gallons. (tomatoes, in my opinion).
- Dress your garden with fresh mulch or chipped bark to maintain moisture, control temperatures, and minimize weeds.
- Add a rock dry creek to an area with run-off.
- Peruse gardening books and seed catalogs for ideas on what you want to plant. This season I suspect that we will be sowing seeds earlier as the soil warms.
- Repot houseplants. Remove dead leaves, add fresh soil, give them a sunshine retreat outdoors for a few hours.
- Enhance a corner of your exterior with a wall fountain and colorful potted plants.
- Build a path or walkway that will integrate into the landscape and complement your home.
- Get outside to soak up the Vitamin D. Garden, stroll in a park, hike a trail, or walk the reservoir. Pay attention to the natural landscape.
- Check out the FREE Seed Bank at Moraga Library. Free vegetable, herbs, flowers, and milkweed seeds are available thanks to the efforts of the Moraga Garden Club, the high school all-girl Scout Troop 401 and middle school Girl Scout Troop 33778. - www.moragagardenclub.com

Although California needs increased precipitation, and we must all continue to be diligent in conserving water, I admit that I am enjoying springtime in February immensely. The hills are currently green, cows are munching on the plentiful grass, the air smells fresh, and the creeks are trickling. A bit of the winter bite remains as soon as the sun sets, and the moon rises. It is a lovely time to be outside expressing gratitude for Mother Earth. There is indeed dignity in digging in the dirt, and of course, it is what I write about so that we will prosper and thrive through nature.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



Gertrude Jekyll climbing roses blooming.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Ornamental pear tree in full bloom.



Enhance an exterior wall with a small fountain and colorful potted plants.



Viburnum is covered in masses of sweet-smelling white blossoms.

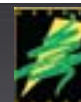


Peter Pan daffodils are sunny and bright.

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Cynthia Brian sits on a green hillside.

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

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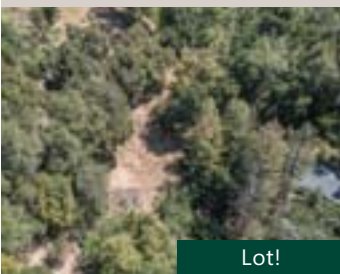
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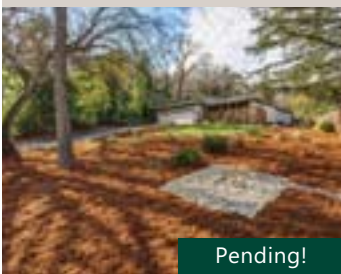
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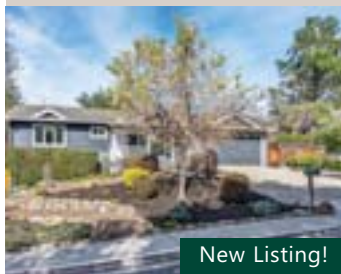
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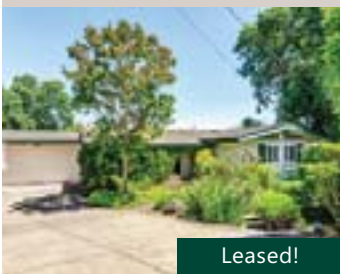
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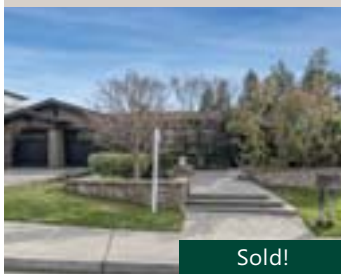
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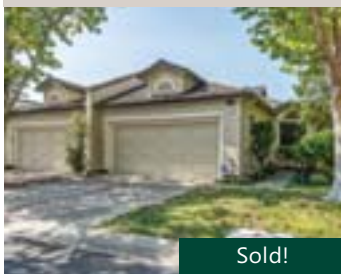
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