

Lafayette gets Firewise



Photo Violet Hsu

ConFire Fire Inspector Taylor King advises Lafayette City Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok to keep bushes and shrubs trimmed well below 3-4 feet when trees are above.

By Sharon K. Sobotta

At certain times Lafayette Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok and his wife Violet fear for their lives when they go to sleep in their home which is just a short uphill walk from the Lafayette BART station. It's not home invasions or crime that they fear. It's California wildfires.

Kwok, who is professionally and personally committed to the issues of environmental sustainability and climate change, has been living with the gravity of that since his (wife Violet's) cousins lost everything except the shoes on their feet and their wallets during the 2017 Tubbs Fire in Santa Rosa. This prompted Kwok to reach out to the people in his neighborhood about forming a Firewise community. Firewise is a national fire prevention and preparedness program. Firewise communities of at least eight residents from respective neighborhoods are dedicated to the common cause of reducing the risk and potential spread of wildfires.

"I reached out to my neighbors hoping to get eight families to sign up (to learn

about the program) and we ended up with 23," Kwok says. "It's a pretty low bar. You commit to spending an hour a year assessing and addressing fire risks around your home."

Kwok says there are more than 20 Firewise communities in the Orinda and Moraga area and he's hoping Lafayette can have at least 10 Firewise communities by the end of 2022. So far there are four.

In February, Kwok and his neighbors arranged to have Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Fire Inspector Taylor King walk through and assess risks. Kwok says it was an illuminating experience, not just for him, but for his neighbors as well.

"I spent an hour clearing out my rosemary bushes, which are very flammable, so technically I can be done with my hour for the year. But I'll keep going because I still have so many things to take care of," Kwok says, while pointing out various plants and vegetation the fire inspector recommended he mitigate. Still, this isn't as intimidating of a process as it may sound. "All

fire safety tips are offered as recommendations and then you can decide what is manageable or even collaborate with neighbors to problem solve."

Kwok says it's important that residents are not in denial about potential wildfires. "Over the past five years, we've seen wildfires in California getting closer and closer to us. Santa Rosa is a suburban community with few trees, and closer still, we had the Lafayette Tennis Club on fire a few years ago," Kwok recalls. "I think PG&E turned off 85% of the power in the city, but not in that area and there was a fire. Thankfully the fire and police were able to extinguish it, but we would be foolish to think that it can't happen to us."

Jack Baker moved to Lafayette last summer to be closer to his daughter and grandchildren. "When I first moved here, I saw that my daughter had a big sign near her home that said Firewise," Baker recalls. "I was aware of it and then started talking about it with Wei-Tai, who arranged the community meeting and a lot of people signed up."

Baker took advantage of the fire inspector's visit to his community and while he wasn't surprised by the findings and recommendations for his particular property, he did gain some insight. "I learned specifics. The irony is that I had a tree service scheduled for the next day. We were planning to clear out trees, but we expanded a little bit to address some of the additional concerns the fire inspector brought to our attention."

In addition to learning about practical things like the recommendation not to have greenery or flammable materials within five feet of his home, Baker learned about structural matters like how to fireproof a wooden staircase. Baker says he's sharing in the cost of removing a few large oak trees (which is something he committed to even before the Firewise community walk-through). "Nobody has to do anything, but we're educating ourselves about what we can do. That, to me, makes it a very valuable program."

Irene Jorgenson has lived in her Lafayette home for 22 years. After doing the neighborhood walk-through with the fire inspector, Jorgenson is thinking about some concrete ways to be a better neighbor. "The most important thing I learned is that we have plants that are highly flammable and we didn't know that," Jorgenson says. "The plants are right next to our neighbor's only exit from their house so it presents a

huge safety issue for our neighbors. Jorgenson says it's not a matter of if but how she'll address the issue. "The thought of a rapid fire is terrifying to anyone. It wouldn't be right for me to be made aware of how to address the issue and do nothing about it," she says. "We're going to meet with our neighbors (to find a creative solution) because it's not only a safety issue, but also a privacy issue."

Firewise pamphlets are sent out to the Lafayette community periodically. In terms of renters or residents of apartments who may not always get such items, they are available at the police department. Kwok says the 30% of Lafayette residents who are renters can also participate in the program. "Renters should talk to each other first and then their landlords to see what can be done. Fire safety is in everyone's best interest."

Some things everyone can do are mitigate or eliminate vegetation within five feet of homes and uplimb trees so that branches are at least six feet above the ground, and also think ahead. The city of Lafayette has 17 evacuation zones. "Along with doing what we can to make our community firewise," Kwok says, "everyone should sign up for the community warning system which sends out text notifications in the event of an emergency."

To learn more about the Firewise program, visit the National Fire Protection Agency's website at NFPA.org.

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, April 20, 6 p.m.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org



ConFire

Board of Directors
Regular Meeting: Tuesday, April 26, 1 p.m.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org
(http://64.166.146.245/agenda_publish.cfm?id=&mt=ALL)



Public Safety

Emergency response:

Emergency: 24 Hours 911
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours
925-284-5010

Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or go to www.nixle.com

Lafayette Police Department:
3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd. 925-283-3680
Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt
925-299-3221

Police Department Tip Line
94549Tip@gmail.com
Police Department Traffic Issues
94549Traffic@gmail.com

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

Orinda Police Department:
22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820
Chief of Police, Ryan Sullivan
925-254-6820
Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report March 6 - March 19



Alarms 47
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 8
Traffic 102
Suspicious Circumstances 9
Suspicious Subject 17
Suspicious Vehicle 5
Service to Citizen 41
Patrol Req./Security Check 30
Public/School Assembly Check 12
Supplemental Report 45
Vacation House Check 20
Welfare Check 18
Ordinance Violation 3
Vehicle violations
Auto Burglary 100 Block Greenbank Dr.
Dui Misd El Nido Ranch Rd./Lizann Dr.
Eb Sr 24 At Oak Hill Rd.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
Quandt Rd./Springhill Rd.
Springhill Rd./Quandt Rd.
Reckless Driving 900 Block Diablo Dr.
Deer Hill Rd./Brown Ave.
1300 Block Martino Rd.

Mt. Diablo Blvd./Acalanes Rd.
500 Block Glenside Dr.
Olympic Blvd./Pleasant Hill Rd.
Tc - Fire And Amb Enroute Golden Gate Way/1st St.
Tc - Property Damage 700 Block Reliez Station Rd.
Deer Hill Rd./Brown Ave.
1000 Block Oak Hill Rd.
Vehicle Theft 1200 Block Quandt Rd.
Wb Sr 24 Central Lafayette/ Moraga

Other criminal activity
Burglary 1000 Block Oak Hill Rd.
Commercial Burglary 1000 Block Oak Hill Rd.
Fraud False Pretenses 3500 Block Brook St. (2)
1400 Block Sunset Lp.
Grand Theft 1100 Block Vacation Dr. (2)
Grand Theft Bicycle 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Identity Theft 600 Block Doreen Way
Panhandling 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)

Petty Theft 3400 Block Moraga Blvd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
500 Block Michael Ln.
Residential Burglary 3900 Block S Peardale Dr.
Shoplift 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)
3400 Block Golden Gate Way
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Vandalism 3300 Block Carlyle Terrace
1000 Block Oak Hill Rd.
Nuisance to the Community
Disturbance-domestic 3300 Block Betty Ln.
Disturbing The Peace 1000 Block Almanor Ln.
3400 Block Moraga Blvd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Loud Music 1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.
Loud Party Brook St./Dewing Ave. (2)
Green Acres Ct./Mcbride Dr.
3900 Block Happy Valley Rd.
Leroy Way/S Peardale Dr.
Public Nuisance 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Deer Hill Rd./Happy Valley Rd.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
Los Palos Dr./Glenside Dr.

Other
Defraud Innkeeper 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
K9 Outside Assist Request Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd., Moraga
Threats 2700 Block Oak Canyon Rd.
Unwanted Guest 1700 Block Toyon Rd.
Violation Custody Order 800 Block Acalanes Rd.

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report March 8 - March 20



Alarms 14
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 12
Traffic 32
Suspicious Circumstances 3
Suspicious Subject 9
Suspicious Vehicle 5
Service to Citizen 25
Patrol Req./Security Check 9
Supplemental Report 10
Vacation House Check 0
Welfare Check 3
Public/School Assembly Check 9
Ordinance Violation 0

Vehicle violations
Accident Property Rheem Bust Marys Rd.
Auto Burglary Ivy Dr./Miramonte Dr.
Dui Misd Moraga Way/Los Cerros, Ori

Excessive Speed Moraga Rd./Moraga Way
Moraga Rd./Skyline
Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor 2000 Block Donald Dr.
Reckless Driving Canyon Rd./Larch Ave.
Starbucks Nations St. Marys Rd./Bollinger Canyon Rd.
Moraga Way/St Andrews Dr.
Moraga Via/Glorietta Blvd., Ori
Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd.
Moraga Country Club Homegoods St. Marys College

Revoked License Moraga Rd./Buckingham Dr.
Ascot/Railroad
Tc - Property Damage Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd.
Safeway

Camino Pablo/Tharp Dr.
Vehicle Theft 100 Block Corliss Dr.
Other criminal activity
Forgery Police Department
Shoplift Safeway
Warrant Arrest Police Department
Nuisance to the Community
Loud Music Canyon Club Brewery
300 Block Deerfield Dr.
Not Available
Loud Party Not Available (2)
Public Nuisance Moraga Way/Moraga Rd.
Calle La Montana/Paseo Grande
2100 Block Donald Dr.
Vandalism Moraga Commons Park
Other
Mentally Ill Commit St Marys College
Unwanted Guest Safeway
Violation Dom Viol Order 600 Block Augusta Dr.
Violation Restraining Ord 600 Block Augusta Dr.



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report March 6 - March 19

Alarms 29
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 8
Traffic 80
Suspicious Circumstances 4
Suspicious Subject 10
Suspicious Vehicle 6
Service to Citizen 46
Patrol Req./Security Check 21
Supplemental Report 18
Vacation House Check 1
Welfare Check 10
Public/School Assembly Check 2
Ordinance Violation 0
Vehicle violations
Accident Injury 200 Block Moraga Way
Accident Property 400 Block Moraga Way
Auto Burglary

10 Block Piedmont Ave.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor 10 Block North Ln.
Reckless Driving Camino Pablo/Brookwood Rd.
Moraga Way/Oak Dr.
Via Floreado/St Stephens Dr.
Vehicle Theft 500 Block Tahos Rd.
Via Las Cruces/St Stephens Dr.
Other criminal activity
Failure To Obey Santa Maria Way/Camino Pablo
Fraud Credit Card Camino Sobrante
Fraud False Pretenses 100 Block Canon Dr.
Grand Theft Orinda Way
Grand Theft Veh Parts 200 Block Camino Pablo
Panhandling Camino Sobrante
Orinda Way
Shoplift Moraga Way
Warrant Arrest Orinda Way

Nuisance to the Community
Disturbance-domestic 100 Block Ardith Dr.
Disturbing The Peace Longview Terrace/Orchard Rd.
Loud Music 20 Block Orinda Way
Irwin Way
Loud Party 40 Block Camino Sobrante
Longview Terrace/Orchard Rd.
Public Nuisance 500 Block Dalewood Dr.
10 Block Hilldale Ct.
Vandalism 60 Block Muth Dr.

Other
Fire/Ems Response Info Rheem Blvd./Glorietta Blvd.
Mentally Ill Commit 60 Block El Gavilan Rd.
Phone Harass 10 Block Las Vegas Rd.
Tc - Fire And Amb Enroute 10 Block Via Floreado
Transient Contact 50 Block Moraga Way
10 Block Theatre Sq 106
Unwanted Guest Camino Pablo



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