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Live Nativity

December 10th | 5:30-8 pm

Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church

mypc



From left: assistant coach Andy Lindquist, assistant coach Megan Gentes, Shea Volkmer, Rachel Moen, Sloan Pullen, Makena Weberski, Caroline McCool, Ellie Buckley, Kate Kabenina, and head coach Chuck Woolridge

Campo girls' cross country competes in nationals

By Jon Kingdon

It was another banner year for the Lamorinda Cross Country teams led by Campolindo whose boys' and girls' teams won the Division III NCS championships and the girls won the state meet which qualified them for an at large bid for the first time in the Nike Cross National meet Dec. 3 in Portland, Ore.

Under cold and windy conditions, Campolindo was represented by seniors Ellie Buckley and Caroline McCool, juniors Kate Kabenina, Shea Volkmer, Rachel Moen and Makena Weberski and sophomore Sloan Pullen, finishing 13th out of 22 teams, led by Buckley who finished 26th out of 197 runners.

Buckley, who will be running for Boston College next year, has had unmatched success at Campolindo having been on the three teams (one year canceled

due to the pandemic) that won the state meet. "There is certainly no one in program history in any sport that can lay claim to such a feat," assistant coach Andy Lindquist said. "Ellie is an incredible athlete and has been a core part of this team for the last four seasons and it's very well deserved."

The Cougars, ranked 18th coming into the state meet felt they were underrated. "We wanted to run our best race of the season and we put it all on the line," Buckley said. "The whole time we had the mindset that we were running this race for everyone on the team including the frosh and JV athletes who supported us all season and played a role in getting us here. We knew that it was going to be hard, but we were prepared and nothing was going to shock us."

Coach Chuck Woolridge was excited and practical in the way everything turned out in 35-degree

weather, according to Buckley: "He said, 'Wow. That was amazing. Get some gear on and get warm.'"

It was not a sure thing that Campolindo was going to get chosen to compete at the nationals. After winning six state championships, the seventh time was the charm. "With only the first two place finishers among all the divisions guaranteed to go to the national meet and having finished only 15 points behind second place, it was great to get an at large bid," Lindquist said. "The team has been working so hard since June to make this a reality and it was something that we talked about accomplishing last year at this time. This is the first time that we've won the state meet in consecutive years. The girls handled the pressure and did not get wrapped up in rankings and projections and just focused on themselves."

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SCAN for accepted items

Lafayette council considers Gun Safety ordinance

By Jennifer Wake

The Lafayette City Council during its Nov. 28 meeting considered the issue of gun safety after the Crime Prevention Commission reported back on a proposed Safe Firearms Storage ordinance, following a request by council at its Oct. 11 meeting for its review.

According to the staff report presented by Cathy Surges-Moscato, Police Department Administrative Analyst and staff liaison for the Crime Prevention Commission, the ordinance presented mirrors others recently enacted by neighboring cities including Moraga, Orinda and Walnut Creek, which would require any person in a resi-

dence in Lafayette to store firearms in a locked container or disable them with an appropriate safety device. The requirements of the ordinance would not apply "when a firearm is legally carried on the person, or otherwise in his or her immediate possession and control, nor when the firearm is in the immediate possession and control of a peace officer."

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the largest organization of pediatric physicians, affirms that "the most effective measure to prevent suicide, homicide, and unintentional firearm-related injuries to children and adolescents is the absence of guns from homes," according to the staff report. If firearms are in the home, the AAP recom-

mends that they be stored locked, unloaded and with ammunition stored in a separate locked location.

The city received several letters as well as public comment in support of the ordinance, with many citing statistics of suicide and gun violence which often culminate from weapons found in private homes, and noting that the ordinance would give another tool to reduce access to firearms. Libby Henry, who spoke from the perspective of a teacher, said, "The idea that anybody would want to oppose for public safety, for child safety just blows my mind. ... Gun safety is not opposing the second amendment so I don't even know how that applies."

Lafayette resident Robert Lavoie, a lifelong gun owner,

expressed concern about the city "sticking its noses into the privacy of our homes," adding that he would like feedback from the NRA and get a different perspective.

Current safe storage technology allows homeowners to safely secure their firearms with locking mechanisms or gun safes that can be opened in seconds, according to the staff report. "This is in stark contrast with the speed of access to firearm use enjoyed in the colonial period, which necessitated significantly more time to load a firearm. Thus, Lafayette's proposed law is rooted in historical tradition and grants firearm owners even faster access to a firearm than they would have enjoyed in colonial Boston, New York, or Philadelphia."

When asked about enforcement of this type of ordinance, Lafayette Police Chief Ben Alldritt said the department would respond reactively, noting that the violation starts with code enforcement and would not just be a criminal matter, but could be charged civilly. A reported violation of this ordinance, according to the staff report, could require entering a private residence and would potentially involve Fourth Amendment issues. The Commission fully supports promoting firearm safety for everyone but was concerned about enforcement and potential legal challenges.

After further discussion, council agreed to return the resolution for a second reading at its Dec. 12 meeting.

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Moraga Planning Commission discusses HCD's Housing Element hurdles - Page A4	Local author's work focuses on courage and strength - Page B1	Football seasons end just short of state tourney - Page C1	Tips to create a magical holiday season - Page D4
Public Safety			
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Council makes difficult decision to focus development in downtown core

By Jennifer Wake

After 18 months of analysis, meetings, and lengthy deliberations, the Lafayette City Council found itself in an untenable position when faced with the decision to identify potential opportunity sites for the 6th Cycle Housing Element.

With the BART parking lot

properties determined to be only 5-10% likely to be approved by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) as part of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) numbers, set at 2,114 units plus a buffer due to Lafayette's proximity to public transit, the city council made the unpopular and difficult

decision to focus opportunity sites in the downtown core versus at the BART sites.

According to the staff report presented by Planning and Building Director Greg Wolff, Senior Planner Renata Robles and Housing Consultant Diana Elrod, the council decided at its Nov. 14 meeting "not to include the BART Parking Lots (Planning Area 7) and

DeSilva South (Planning Area 9-1) in the opportunity sites for the Revised Draft Housing Element Update, instead choosing a Downtown-Only option. Factors that were discussed included that both areas are in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, that BART's Transit-Oriented Development Work Plan places Lafayette in the post-2030 cat-

egory, that BART's review and potential re-prioritization of TOD project timing is after HCD's housing element deadline, and that HCD has not accepted the BART parking lots as an opportunity site; instead asking for substantial evidence to demonstrate that housing could be built on the site within eight years."

... continued on Page A3

Regan takes the reins at Lafayette Chamber



By Diane Claytor

Sara Regan knew she had big shoes to fill when she took over as executive director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. After all, she was replacing the much beloved, much respected Jay Lifson, who had been at the helm of the organization for 17 years. But after spending time with Regan, who is down-to-earth, warm, friendly, exuberant and passionate about Lafayette and its growing business community, one has little doubt that she will be every bit as successful – and appreciated – as her predecessor.

Regan has lived in Lamorinda for 22 years. Having grown up in larger metropolitan areas, she remembers thinking Lamorinda "was in the middle of nowhere" when her parents moved here in 1987. It wasn't long before she realized there's no place she'd rather be. "This is such a great community," she says, "both for living and working. I always wanted a place my kids could ride their bikes, walk to school. Lamorinda is a perfect example of a real community."

The Chamber was formed in 1947 with a stated mission of "promoting and maintaining a healthy business climate and preserving and enhancing the quality of life in Lafayette." The mission remains the same today.

At first glance, Regan may appear to be an unlikely choice to head up this 680-member nonprofit organization. She was a Lafayette stay-at-home mom for more than 16 years, actively volunteering in the community. Nine years ago, faced with the daunting prospect of putting four kids through college, Regan decided it was time to look for a paying job. It's pure luck that at the same time, the Lafayette Chamber was looking for an events coordinator. An interview with Lifson landed her the job.

She has worked with members throughout her time at the Chamber and, in her new position, she says the most important thing now is getting out and seeing the members, "letting them know we're here, always talking about what we can do the help them."

Kathy Merchant, a member of the Chamber's Executive Committee, has every confidence in Regan. Following Lifson's retirement announcement, Merchant said, "We tapped an equally amazing leader who shares the same values of community engagement and hard work."

Past President John McCormick echoes those sentiments. "While it was very sad to have Jay leave, the board knew that Sara would be an excellent executive director. We are excited to see her keep the Chamber moving forward as a tremendous asset for local businesses and our community."

Regan knows that following Lifson won't be easy. "I'm following an icon. He really built the Chamber," she says. The biggest thing now, coming out of COVID, Regan notes, is finding a good balance and determining the new normal.

COVID adversely impacted the Chamber, like it did with everything else. The organization decreased its staff, discontinued its events, lost some members.

... continued on Page A11

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Court upholds city of Lafayette's approval of Terraces of Lafayette development

After more than two years of litigation, the city of Lafayette's approval of the Terraces of Lafayette development has been upheld by the State Court of Appeal. On Wednesday, Nov. 30, the Court of Appeal upheld the Superior Court's decision and found that the city's 2013 environmental review complied with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and that the city properly followed the Housing Accountability Act in approving the project.

In 2020, the city was sued by Save Lafayette, a citizens group, to overturn Lafayette's approval of the Terraces project on environmental and General Plan and zoning consistency issues. On Nov. 12, 2021, the Contra Costa County Superior Court upheld the city's approval of the Terraces of Lafayette (case #N20-1413). Save Lafayette appealed the Superior Court's decision. In the Nov. 30 ruling, the court held that the city had properly

followed the Housing Accountability Act by applying its general plan and zoning standards that were in effect when the application was deemed complete, and rejected all of Save Lafayette's CEQA challenges.

The Court of Appeal's opinion will become final after 30 days. "We are pleased that the Appellate Court has affirmed that the city complied with the California Environmental Quality Act in its environmental review of the development project," said Lafayette Mayor Teresa Geringer. Once finalized, the court's decision will allow O'Brien Land Company to proceed with the development of 315 for-rent apartments, including 63 below-market-rate units.

For more information, go to the city's website at <https://www.love-lafayette.org/terraces>.
- J. Wake

Development in downtown core

... continued from Page A2

While several community members offered suggestions involving pushing forward with the BART sites as part of the city's Housing Element, the majority of council members agreed that the potential of HCD rejecting the BART sites, and the greater potential of the denial resulting in the instigation of the Builder's Remedy - a housing development streamlining tool that provides developers the option to file an application for a housing development project with at least 20 percent affordable housing that is not in conformance with a jurisdiction's zoning or General Plan so long as the local government does not have a HCD-certified housing element - was too great a risk.

"If we include BART, odds would be HCD would reject it," Vice Mayor Carl Anduri said. "Our chances are extremely low of getting approval."

"I would appeal to the community; we don't want to be here," Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok said. "But the sooner we have a robust conversation about a Plan B the better."

Staff presented the council with two options: Option A: Downtown-Only (no BART, no DeSilva South), which involves more dramatic changes in density across the planning areas, ranging from 75 du/acre next to the highway to 40 and 35 du/acre in the downtown core and south of Mt. Diablo Boulevard. While this does involve some upzoning along Mt. Diablo Boulevard, staff finds this effectively mitigates some of the concerns raised by the Chamber and members of the public to safeguard small retail. One area in which HCD may challenge this option is regarding Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing and the concentration of new below-market rate units proximate to the

freeway. This option meets the RHNA and provides for a buffer.

Option B: Downtown-Only (no BART, no DeSilva South) - Less Tiered creates a more uniform distribution of density across downtown planning areas. In this scenario, density is de-emphasized along the highway to mitigate locating the highest density housing along Highway 24. As a result, this option entails extending increased densities farther south of Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

Kwok preferred the more distributed version in Option B, since it seemed buildings in Option A would be taller and more expensive to build.

Anduri preferred Option A, so it would keep one-story retail in front and higher buildings behind: "We want to keep down the height of the boulevard as much as we can." Mayor Teresa Geringer preferred having development spread out more than in Option A, and Council Member Susan Candell preferred A over B.

Council Member Gina Dawson agreed, saying, "The goal of the Downtown Specific Plan is to create a more walkable downtown. I like Option A because it focuses that growth, but I should add that I don't like either option. We're between a rock and a hard place."

None of the council members liked the idea of building up downtown, and emotions were high during the 4.5-hour long discussion, but in the end, the majority agreed to move forward with Option A.

"I'm sick at what we're going to be doing to our downtown," Anduri said. "We need to start talking to BART and discussing the EIR, but this is more palatable than the Builder's Remedy."

"I'm so frustrated," Candell said. "Our community is going to slaughter us on this."



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Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Monday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Planning Commission Meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 19, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Design Review

Wednesday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m. Zoom
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
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MORAGA

See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

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Town Council: Wednesday, Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m.
Special Town Council Meeting:
Wednesday, Dec. 7, 6 p.m.
Planning Commission: Tuesday, Dec. 20, 6:30 p.m.,
Park and Recreation Commission:
Monday, Dec. 19, 7:00 p.m.,
Moraga School District Board Meetings:
Tuesday, Jan. 17, 6 p.m. www.moraga.k12.ca.us.

Planning Commission discusses HCD's comments regarding Housing Element working draft

By Vera Kochan

The town of Moraga submitted its working draft of the Housing Element to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), which was received on Aug. 12. HCD had 90 days to review the content, and on Nov. 10, the town received a two-page cover letter that accompanied a 12-page Appendix containing HCD's responses to the working draft.

According to a Nov. 29 staff report to the Planning Commission by Planning Director Afshan Hamid and Planning Consultant Barry Miller, "The letter/appendix includes a combination of broad observations and findings, as well as direction relating to specific sites, programs, metrics, and analyses."

Hamid and Miller informed the Planning Commission that they have attempted to connect with an HCD reviewer for the past two weeks in order to discuss the comments, but have met with no luck. Staff's goal is to complete a revised Housing Element by Dec. 21 for public viewing over the holidays. The staff report explains that the "documents to be produced include a 'tracked change' version of the HCD Draft, a 'clean' copy for adoption, and responses to each of the HCD comments."

It was noted that currently 35 of the 109 municipalities in the Bay Area have also received their HCD re-

view letters with many of the same comments as were given to Moraga.

Included in the letter were 41 comments to which staff generally characterized into categories. With regards to fair housing issues, HCD requests that Moraga edits its draft to "show that the Town complies with state and federal fair housing laws; add local knowledge on fair housing issues based on input from local and regional advocates and service providers; address any historical patterns, capital investments, budget decisions, or local policies that may have resulted in parts of Moraga having lower (or higher) incomes (or concentrations of racial/ethnic groups) than others; analyze the location and distribution of housing opportunity sites to ensure that they are equitably dispersed and do not concentrate affordable housing in a single location; identify how the programs in Chapter 6 of the Draft Housing Element contribute to fair housing goals such as housing choice and mobility, increased access to opportunity in high-resource areas, and tenant protection; document in greater detail potential constraints to housing for persons with disabilities, including requirements for conditional use permits for large group homes, and reasonable accommodation findings that require accessibility improvements to be 'compatible' with adjacent uses."

The state also needed ad-

ditional information regarding the town's housing sites to make certain the designated 1,118 units can be accommodated according to the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) requirements. More specifically, the state requested "analysis that demonstrates that the sites in the two commercial centers will develop at 20 dwelling units per acre or more, given that recent development in Moraga has been less dense; analysis that demonstrates that 'mixed use' sites will develop with housing, when the zoning also allows projects that are entirely commercial; additional information on sites that are publicly owned, demonstrating they can realistically be redeveloped; additional information on the potential for lower income units on larger sites (several lower income units were assigned to these sites based on the proposed exclusionary zoning regulations); HCD also takes issue with the classification of the sites at the north end of School Street as 'vacant' since these sites have existing uses such as RV storage, a baseball practice facility, and a seasonal Christmas tree sales lot."

The town has asked HCD to send copies of letters that the state received from third parties during the 90-day review period, some of which requested additional actions in the Housing Element to ease development constraints.

... continued on Page A5

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Search for Town Manager takes shape with new recruitment brochure and Community Survey

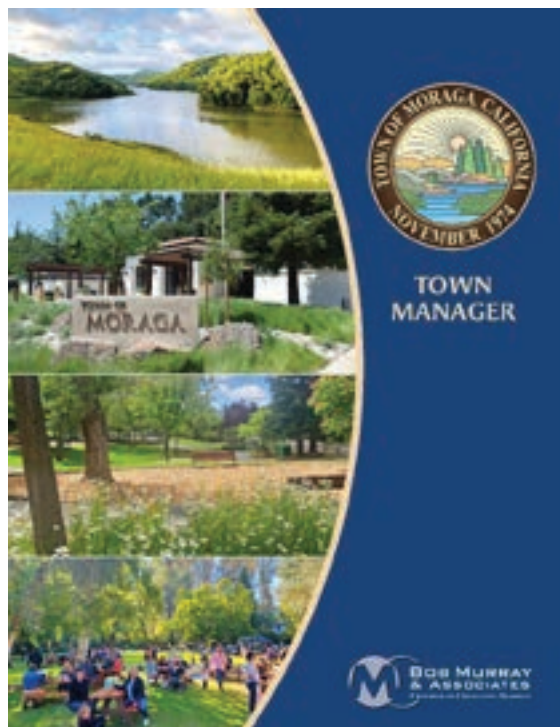


Photo courtesy Town of Moraga

Four-page Town Manager recruitment brochure
By Vera Kochan

Ever since Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg submitted an Oct. 4 written notice to the town council of her plans to resign at the end of the year, the search for her replacement through an Ad Hoc Committee has moved expeditiously forward.

Mayor Steve Woehleke and Vice Mayor Renata Sos, the committee team, with the encouragement of the entire council, have ticked off a number of boxes on their check list, and with the help of recruitment firm Bob Murray

& Associates, are now at the town manager marketing brochure stage.

The Committee, with the help of Bob Murray's rep, Gary Phillips, created a colorful and information-packed recruitment brochure that was presented during the Nov. 9 town council meeting where it received unanimous approval.

The four-page brochure contains an overview of "The Community;" a description of "The Organization;" what the position entails and what is expected from the "ideal candidate;" and compensation information.

Part of the process also included outreach with council members, Moraga's town staff, and key town stakeholders. Expected attributes brought forth included: a team builder; strong manager; effective chief administrative officer, as well as being fiscally prudent and proficient at financial matters; highly ethical; committed to a partnership with Saint Mary's College; and having a high level of experience.

A Community Survey was posted Nov. 18 on the town's website in order to seek input from the public and is still open for responses. Residents are asked to respond to five questions: 1) What are the most important challenges facing the Town of Moraga that the new Town Manager would need to help the Council address? 2) What skills and experiences are most critical for a new Town Manager to succeed in Moraga? 3) What management and leadership attributes should the next Town Manager have? 4) How would you like the Town Manager to interact with the community? 5) Is there anything else you would like the Town Council to consider when selecting a new Town Manager?

The Ad Hoc Committee stresses that the brochure is just one of the many steps in the town manager position recruitment process.



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Moraga racks up another finance-related award

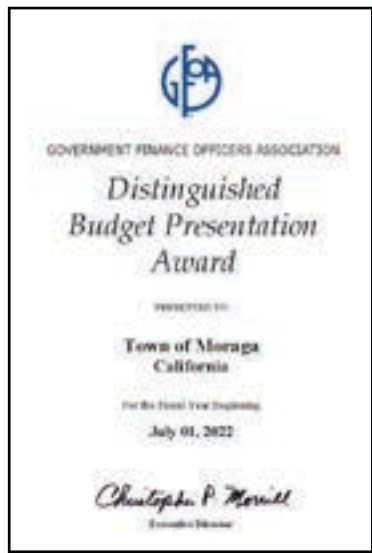


Photo courtesy Administrative Services Department

The actual award (wooden plaque with gold lettering) will arrive in a few months

By Vera Kochan

The town of Moraga has an-

other reason to be proud – it just received its first ever Government Finance Officers Association’s Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget.

“You have to apply for the award by answering a set of questions and go through several reviews by experts in budgeting who are the judges,” explained Administrative Services Director Annie To. It was while going through her emails one day that she discovered a message from GFOA. “When I read it, I jumped up out of my chair! We submitted [the entry] more to get feedback on our methods, but then we found out that Moraga actually won!”

According to GFOA, over 1,700 participants entered the Budget Awards Program and had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effec-

tive budget presentation pertaining to four major categories: a policy document; a financial plan; an operations guide; and a communications device. Within those categories 14 mandatory criteria had to be met.

To was quick to credit the team effort of Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg, the Town Council and the entire Administrative Services staff for their part in putting together the submission packet.

Along with the email To received announcing the town’s award, GFOA Executive Director Chris Morrill included a video commentary, “It is my honor to recognize you for receiving the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.

“The purpose of this award program is to encourage and assist governments to prepare comprehensive and

understandable budget documents that we believe will both improve transparency and trust in government. To earn the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, you met demanding program criteria. Such a record reflects professionalism, commitment and dedication of your organization’s leaders and finance team. We hope that this award

will serve as an example and encourage others to strive for the same high standards in their own budget documents.”

Morrill’s video concluded, “Therefore, it is my privilege on behalf of the Government Finance Officers Association to present to you this Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. Congratulations!”

Moraga’s Holiday Tree Lighting event just missed the rain



Photo Vera Kochan

Holiday Tree lighting at last year’s much drier event.

By Vera Kochan

The unofficial creed of the United States Postal Service, “Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night, stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds,” could almost have been applied to Santa and his elves during the Dec. 1 Holiday Tree Lighting in the Moraga Commons Park.

Touted as a “rain or shine” event, the day began with a goodly amount of rain. Clearly Santa was not to be deterred, because the weather cleared, albeit leaving somewhat freezing temperatures in its wake.

Parks and Recreation Department’s Recreation Supervisor Jasmine Bateson estimated that 400 people attended the tree lighting and partook of cookies and hot cocoa handed out by the Moraga Youth Involvement Committee while listening to carols sung by Performing Ensemble from the Performing Academy. While Santa’s sleigh is undergoing a rigorous final tune-up check, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District provided his transportation to the event.

Don’t forget to have your little ones drop off their letters to Santa at the North Pole Mailbox located near the Holiday Tree. Deadline is Dec. 14 by 5 p.m. for Santa to

have enough time to respond. Make sure that the letters are in an envelope and include a name and return address.

There’s still time to make a donation to the Buy-A-Bulb Fundraiser and help defray the cost of lighting the tree. Donations can be made online at: moragarec.com or by sending a check to: Town of Moraga, ATTN Buy-A-Bulb, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, CA 94556.

Planning Commission discusses Housing Element

... continued from Page A4

Additional issues include maximum allowable densities within the Moraga Center Specific Plan area; Planned Development zoning; residential care facilities; single room occupancy hotels; and development fees.

Moreover, HCD’s comments stated that programs should support “housing mobility” in terms of creating housing for people who work in Moraga to also reside in

town, in addition to allowing individuals of all incomes and abilities the opportunity to live in town as well.

The staff report adds that “the Planning Commission is tentatively scheduled to consider a Resolution on Jan. 10, 2023 that recommends Town Council adoption of the Housing Element and General Plan Consistency Amendments, and certifications of the EIR [Environmental Impact Report].”

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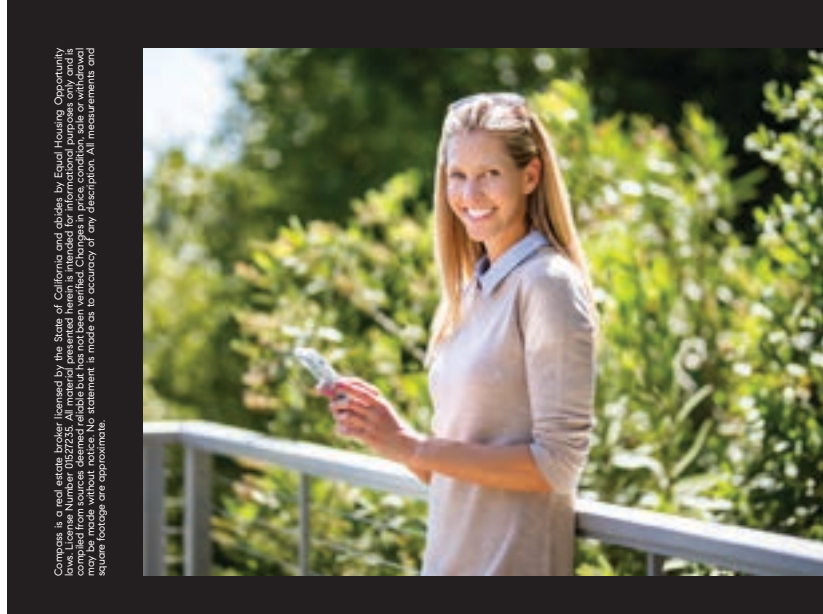
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Planning Commission not yet ready to approve Chevron changes, although supportive of project



Rendering of view from Orinda Way

Image provided

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda Planning Commission tried to hold a meeting on Nov. 22, but, for the first time, technology issues forced the meeting to be continued. When they met on Nov. 29, the commission found that they were still not ready to approve the proposed project for the Chevron station at the corner of Orinda Way and Santa Maria Way, and, after extensive discus-

sion, again continued the matter. The applicant, Chevron, agreed to come back to the Commission at a date in the future, and to work with the city on elements of concern.

The Chevron station occupies the northwest corner of the intersection, and the property includes a portion of San Pablo Creek which Chevron wants to donate to the city. The plan also includes converting service bays that have been unused for many years to a 24-hour convenience store, the addition of a charging station for electric vehicles, an observation deck that would overlook the creek, and an easement that would give the public access from Orinda Way down to the creek.

Vice Chair Willy Mautner presided over the meeting, with Commissioners Robert Hubner, Marian Jelinek and Lina Lee present. Chair Ann Parnigoni and Commissioner John Smith had excused absences. Former Commissioner Brandyn Iverson, who has been elected to the Orinda City Council, had been asked to recuse herself, so that she can vote on the Chevron application when it comes before the City Council.

Contract planner Richard Smeaton explained to the commission that the applicant was seeking a zoning text amendment for the convenience market, was offering part of the parcel that includes a portion of San Pablo creek to the city without charge and would provide an access easement over their land from Orinda Way down to the creek. However, the easement is dependent upon the city accepting title of the property; if the city declines,

Chevron will not offer the easement to what would still be their private property. This was one of the issues that concerned the commission, as city staff recommend that the city not accept the title to the property.

The commission had other concerns, although the members present expressed their support for the project, subject to being able to resolve some issues. One matter of concern is that the proposed observation deck requires the approval of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which has not yet been obtained.

Another issue is that Orinda staff proposed that the wording of the ordinance be amended to include the requirement that food offered in the convenience store be "fresh and nutritious." While Chevron presented photographs of other ExtraMile convenience stores showing salads, sandwiches, fruit, juices, milk and an array of other foods on shelves and in refrigerators and freezers, Planning Director Drummond Buckley worried that without the addition of the words "fresh and nutritious" Chevron could change to selling nothing but "chips and beer." The continuance will permit the company to work with the city to see if some other form of wording can be agreed upon.

The commissioners were pretty much in agreement that they would like to see improvements in the design. Design concerns included the various facades of the building, the canopies, and the use of trellises, in addition to thoughts that the property would actually be improved by not taking out two trees as proposed. Chevron architect Gary Serling agreed to work on the design with the city. "This is a special project," he said, "and we want to make the city proud."

There were public comments both in favor and against the proposed project. Former Orinda Mayor Laura Abrams spoke against the project, at both meetings on Nov. 22 and 29. Although she

said that she is a creek supporter, she criticized the proposed creek observation deck. "It is a very busy intersection," she said, and "hardly a pleasant place to sit and view the creek."

Nick Warranoff opposed the project, referring to its "extortionate nature" over the issue of land title. He claimed, "If Chevron is able to unload this parcel, it will reduce its property tax," and cited convenience stores as crime magnets.

Other creek supporters were very excited about the project. Cinda MacKinnon of Friends of Orinda Creeks praised Chevron for offering the city land free of charge, saying it set a welcome precedent and that the former city manager had encouraged property owners to act in this way. "If the city rejects this offer," she said, "it will be the second time the city has refused riparian land free of charge for creek restoration." She countered arguments about the service bays, noting that they have been defunct for a long time and are not coming back. As for the sale of alcohol, MacKinnon as well as others including some of the commissioners dismissed concerns, as alcohol is already available for purchase at other Orinda locations including BevMo, Rite Aid, and Safeway. Michael Bowen, also of the Friends of Orinda Creeks, said that Chevron has been a valued partner. "We hope developers in the future will look to this as an example."

Roy Hodgkinson, president of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, praised the proposal as the first to enhance retail in Orinda. He suggested that the project responds to residents' desire for more retail in Orinda and "for enhanced creek access." The proposal, he continued, was unique because "we don't have new businesses, we have barely been able to get commercial owners to reface their buildings."

Retired real estate attorney Jennifer Edmister also praised the proposal. "It's a deal worth doing," she suggested, with a "bigger upside than its downside." Steve Berg, a 28-year resident of Orinda was also in favor. "We want creek access, to reuse and refurbish old buildings, to increase sales tax revenue and reduce sales tax leakage, to have a walkable downtown, and this project accomplishes those things," he said.

The proposal, with many drawings and photographs, is available in the Planning Commission's Agenda Packet, available from the city of Orinda website.



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City Council
Special Meeting:
 Tuesday, Dec. 13, 6 p.m. By Teleconference Only

Planning Commission
 Wednesday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m. By Teleconference Only
Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
 Wednesday, Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. By Teleconference Only

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Chabad of Lamorinda opens Bay K kosher grocery store



Photo Sora O'Doherty

least one donation of \$10,000. There was also a matching program by generous donors who pledged to match up to \$100,000. In his fundraising effort, the rabbi quoted Maimonides, who said every good deed, no matter how small, tips the scale of humanity toward goodness.

Labkowsky has two goals for his new store. First, he wants to make kosher food more available in the area, as it is currently very difficult to find kosher items, he says. The most important thing to him is pricing. He says that any stores that carry anything kosher are more expensive, over double the price than the same item in, say, New York, where kosher foods are more prevalent. "Keeping kosher shouldn't be a luxury," he believes.

Secondly, with the COVID pandemic and inflation, the rabbi says that a lot of families need the help of the community.

... continued on Page A10

New free scanner offered at Orinda Library



Photo Sora O'Doherty

New public scanners have been added to the Orinda Library. Library Manager Michael Beller says that the large flatbed scanner is suitable for scanning books and in addition there is a very fast feeder scanner. The scanners are located right by the reference desk, so staff will be able to answer any questions. The

machines can scan directly to a USB device, email, online folders and more. In addition, Beller says that there is immediate AI translations to over 100 languages, including two forms of Klingon: not yap wa' Hol. (Klingon for "One language is never enough.")

– S. O'Doherty

By Sora O'Doherty

Rabbi Israel and Tzipora Labkowsky have opened a kosher grocery store in Lafayette in the building they acquired for the Chabad Center. Located at 3477 Golden Gate Way, formerly home to the Henderson Nut Factory, the entire front of the building will be devoted to the grocery. Labkowsky plans to start

small but hopes to expand to more prepared foods in the future. Bay K kosher is now open for business.

The grocery, located behind the Lafayette Library, is a nonprofit endeavor.

Labkowsky set an initial fundraising goal of \$200,000, and by mid-September had raised more than half that amount. Donations went from modest amounts to at

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Local fire districts appreciate value of using inmate firefighters during major California blazes

By Vera Kochan

The use of inmate firefighters may seem like a new concept to the public, given that the topic has been in the media more recently thanks to the state's drought resulting in high fire danger conditions and out of control blazes, but in fact, inmates have been called upon to assist with large wildfires since World War II (1940s), when there was a shortage of men.

According to an article by Smithsonian Magazine History Correspondent Francine Uenuma, "The roots of these incarcerated firefighters' story date back more than a century; reliance on prison labor in California is almost as old as the state itself. Soon after the Gold Rush-era population boom and California's entry into the Union in 1850, San Quentin State Prison was built by inmates held on nearby ships. In the early 1900s, inmates in road camps labored to meet the demands created by a growing – and increasingly mobile – population."

"Inmate firefighters have been at every large incident I've ever attended," stated Moraga-Orinda Fire District Captain-Paramedic II Jacob Airola. "We typically do not work directly with them. They are formed up in groups with their supervisors. We rarely interact, but respect the work each other are doing."

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) runs the Conservation Unit Camps also known as Fire Camps. One such camp is located in Ben Lomond near Santa Cruz. Before heading there, inmates are trained at

the California Correctional Center in Susanville, Calif., to determine their eligibility for Fire Camp. Ben Lomond houses a maximum of 113 inmates, all of whom are minimum custody male felons who do not have any convictions for sex-related offenses, escape, arson, or have high-violence tendencies. This allows for five 17-man fire crews. The remaining inmates perform other duties such as mechanics, kitchen workers, clerks, porters, launderers, and landscapers. There are also camps that house female inmate firefighters, with the first one opening in 1983, thanks to a lawsuit filed by two women who wanted the same opportunities as the men.

Why would an inmate choose the program? Those whose crimes were neither serious or violent must serve out their long sentences in prison facilities that aren't typically equipped or designed for long-term housing. As such, many seek an alternative sentence to alleviate the boredom and monotony of their incarceration.

While at Fire Camp, inmates are housed in an open-dormitory setting that includes a dining hall supervised by correctional staff. The camps are subject to ongoing inspections and must comply with standards set by the State Department of Health Services.

Even though they have volunteered for this type of duty, inmates are paid for their services. At Ben Lomond, camp workers earn \$2.67 per day. Skilled inmates (mechanics, cooks, electricians, plumbers, carpenters or welders) can earn up to \$3.56 per day. Inmate firefighters earn between \$2.90 and \$5.12 per day on reg-

ular assignments and \$1 per hour on emergencies.

Besides helping to suppress fires alongside Cal Fire teams by creating breaks in vegetation, and carving out barren soil to deny flames any additional fuel by using chainsaws, shovels and axes, inmate crews also help clear streams, improve trails and levees, and assist in rescues involving floods and landslides. "Large scale incidents require the cooperation and dedication of many agencies," explained Airola. "These agencies range from professional, to volunteer, to CDCR crews. The experience, training and skill set vary, but we come together to complete the incident objectives." CDCR hopes that by developing new skills and disciplines, inmates will learn to become positive contributors to society once they are released.

A 2018 Time Magazine report stated that more than 1,000 inmates have required hospitalization between June 2013 through August 2018. "They are more than four times as likely, per capita, to incur object-induced injuries, such as cuts, bruises, dislocations and fractures compared with professional firefighters working on the same fires." They are also more than eight times as likely to inhale smoke and particulates. Since 2016, four inmate firefighters have died in the line of duty, including one female. Family members and friends have expressed the fallen firefighters' desires to turn their lives around and become productive members of society as the reason for sticking with the program.

Assembly Bill 2147: Expedited Expungement, was au-



Photo courtesy MOFD Captain-Paramedic II Jacob Airola

Inmate firefighters construct handline and crews from MOFD lay hose to secure the fire line.

thored by Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gomez Reyes who said that prisoners were treated as heroes on the fire line, but snubbed as "convicted criminals" shortly after being released from prison, after "basically providing a free service to the residents of California. We need to trust that these inmates were rehabilitated." Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the bill in September 2020, which provides an expedited ex-

pungement pathway for formerly incarcerated individuals who have successfully participated in the inmate firefighter program. Many have gone on to work with Cal Fire, the United States Forest Service, and inter-agency hotshot crews which don't require Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certifications.

Letters to the editor

MOFD board power play negatively impacts safety

The MOFD employees' union launched a final power play a few days before they lost control of our fire department's \$30 million of annual tax revenue.

The three directors elected four years ago with \$30,000 of union funding, at the last board meeting of their term, voted to hire six more union members at a cost of over \$2 million a year; money that should be used for wildfire prevention.

The claim that an extra response team will increase our safety is ridiculous. We are already served by six paramedic response units answering 1,900 medical emergencies annually.

That is less than one call per unit per day.

The claim that putting two response units in Orinda's station 45, instead of one, would reduce response times is unfounded. It will take just as long to drive to the top of Orinda Downs or El Toyonal as ever. What these neighborhoods need is brush clearing, not a superfluous medical response unit sitting around most of the day.

Shame on these directors. Thankfully they lost control of MOFD and cooler heads can reconsider how to maximize the community's safety.

Steve Cohn
Orinda

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence – we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters must be factually accurate. Lamorinda Weekly reserves the right to refuse publishing a letter submission. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, 1480 Moraga Road STE C #202, Moraga, CA 94556

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Orinda Police Department:
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Chief of Police, Ryan Sullivan
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Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Nov. 13 - Nov. 26

Alarms 36
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 11
Traffic 33
Suspicious Circumstances 9
Suspicious Subject 19
Suspicious Vehicle 7
Service to Citizen 23
Patrol Req./Security Check 15
Public/School Assembly Check 3
Supplemental Report 21
Vacation House Check 49
Welfare Check 19
Ordinance Violation 0

Vehicle violations

Dui Misd
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor
Pleasant Hill Rd./Taylor Blvd.
Olympic Blvd./Pleasant Hill Rd.
Foye Dr./4th St.
Police Department
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Reckless Driving
Pleasant Hill Rd./Deer Hill Rd.
Pleasant Hill Rd./Eb Sr 24
Pleasant Hill Rd./Reliez Valley Rd.
Pleasant Hill Rd./Springhill Rd.
Happy Valley Rd./Wb Sr 24
Tc - Minor Injuries
Greenvalley Dr./Pleasant Hill Rd.
Noahs New York Bagels
Tc - No Details
Upper Happy Valley Rd./Oleander Dr.
Tc - Property Damage
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Pleasant Hill Rd./Condit Rd.
Tc - Property Damage
Brook St./Dewing Ave.
Vehicle Theft
3200 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Other criminal activity

Commercial Burglary
3800 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Fraud Credit Card
3000 Block Sweet Dr. (2)
900 Block Paulson Ct.
Fraud False Pretenses

900 Block Dewing Ave.
3500 Block Brook St. (2)
Identity Theft
3200 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Misc Burglary
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Panhandling
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
Petty Theft
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Not Available
Robbery
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Shoplift
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Theft Access Card
900 Block Reliez Station Rd.

Nuisance to the Community

Disturbance-domestic
Police Department
1000 Block Carol Ln.
Drunk In Public
Pleasant Hill Rd./Eb Sr 24
Loud Music
1000 Block Via Alta

Loud Noise
3500 Block Brook St.
3500 Block Brook St.
3500 Block Brook St.

Public Nuisance
900 Block Dewing Ave.
St Marys Rd./S Lucille Ln.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Vandalism
10 Block Olde Creek Pl.

Other
Defraud Innkeeper
30 Block Lafayette Cir.

H&S Violation
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Loitering
100 Block Peaceful Ln.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Mentally Ill Violent
900 Block Kelley Ct.

Threats
600 Block Doreen Way

Trespass
3500 Block Springhill Rd.

Trespass W/ Vehicle
900 Block Hough Ave.

Unwanted Guest
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
1000 Block Orchard Rd.

Violation Custody Order
Police Department (4)

Violation Restraining Order
4100 Block Hidden Valley Rd.



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Nov. 13 - Nov. 26

Alarms 44
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 4
Traffic 116
Suspicious Circumstances 2
Suspicious Subject 5
Suspicious Vehicle 4
Public/School Assembly Check 0
Service to Citizen 38
Patrol Req./Security Check 22
Supplemental Report 15
Welfare Check 6

Vehicle violations

Accident Property
Police Department
Moraga Way/Monte Veda Dr.

Auto Burglary
Wilder Sports Fields

Hit And Run Misdemeanor
Camino Pablo/Wb Sr 24

Reckless Driving
Wildcat Canyon Rd./Camino Pablo

St Stephens Dr./Eb Sr 24
10 Block Orchard Rd.

Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.
Tc - Property Damage

Rheem Blvd./Laura Way
Other criminal activity

Commercial Burglary
20 Block Orinda Way

Fraud False Pretenses
40 Block Hacienda Cir.

100 Block Stein Way
Identity Theft

100 Block Silverwood Dr.
10 Block Orinda Way

Petty Theft
50 Block St. Stephens Dr.

20 Block Bryant Way
Camino Sobrante

Warrant Arrest
200 Block Rheem Blvd.

Orinda Way
Santa Maria Way/Orinda Way

Camino Pablo/North Ln.
Nuisance to the Community

Loud Noise
El Toyonal/Chapparral Pl.

Loud Party
Tahos Rd./Oakridge Ln.

Public Nuisance
10 Block Theatre Sq

Other criminal activity
Death Suicide

20 Block Bel Air Dr.
Fireworks

Hall Dr./Rheem Blvd.
Mentally Ill Commit

10 Block La Sombra Ct.
Other Misdemeanor

El Nido/Upper Happy
Ori Way/Cam Pablo

Revocation Of Probation
Camino Pablo/Brookwood Rd.

Trespass
Camino Sobrante

Unauthorized Possession
Orinda Way

Unwanted Guest
Moraga Way

Warrant Service
Santa Maria Way/Orinda Way

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- ❄ Use vegetable peels and ends for stock.
- ❄ Find new recipes for your leftovers.
- ❄ Share leftovers with family and those in need.

First ever Tabor Sister City gingerbread house contest brings a big surprise



Photos Sora O'Doherty

"It's easier to build a house!" he proclaimed during an interview with Lamorinda Weekly. "It's gotta be exact." He works on his creative hobby every evening for a few hours, building with gingerbread, of course, and fondant, marzipan and pastillage. All the buildings are supported only with gingerbread. In the end, he has a big crashing party, where family and friends attack the gingerbread house with hammers and reduce it to rubbish.

One year he recreated a village in Alsace with seven different buildings after a visit there inspired him. Another year he built a replica of the three famous "Painted Ladies" Victorian homes in San Francisco.

His was the only entry in the adult category and of course won an Honorable Mention on Dec. 3. Winners in the 0-5 age category were Bennett Gagon (first); Sophie Rogers (second); Aria Soltani (third); Emery Gagon (honorable mention). The 6-10 winners were Eleana and Grayson (first); Timmy Rogers (second); and Jessica and Monica (third).

A short documentary about Rettig and his unusual hobby is on YouTube, and can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/mzsQncqa25w>

By Sora O'Doherty

When the Orinda-Tabor Sister City Foundation decided to celebrate the holiday season with a contest for builders of gingerbread houses, they probably never dreamed that they would get a stunning reproduction of scenes from Alice in Wonderland in the adult division. But that is exactly what hobbyist Russ Rettig has provided. The gingerbread confection, all strictly speaking edible (although according to Rettig, you actually wouldn't want to eat it) has Alice looking in at the wonderful world she found when she fell down the rabbit hole.

There is the Mad Hatter's Tea Party in one corner, the Queen of Hearts' Castle, where the roses are being painted red, the White Rabbit, Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee and the Cheshire Cat.

Rettig, who is a general contractor, tries to build his gingerbread constructions as close to life as possible. He builds one every year and has done so for the past 25 years. He doesn't have a website, doesn't build them for contests, but just to amuse his family and friends. Every year, he begins in July, with the goal of finishing just before Thanksgiving, so that the family can reclaim the dining room table.



Chabad of Lamorinda opens Bay Kosher grocery store

... continued from Page A7

He wants to adopt the idea of some New York kosher grocers who allow low-income families to have an account with the store so that they can shop in the store but when they check out, they are charged reduced prices based on their needs. Labkowski says that this is an easier and more dignified way of doing things. "We will be introducing a special program that will allow for lower income families to receive food at greater discounts and at times, free of charge depending on the families need," Labkowski said. "This is a revolutionary program that will help feed the poor and low-income families."

Although the discount plan will be available to all, the rabbi notes that kosher food will still cost more than ordinary supermarket prices, so will probably only be attractive to those who wish to keep kosher.

The grocery has a complete range of foods, including, milk, meat, bakery, dairy, and dry goods. Everything is kosher, either meat, dairy or parve (foods that can be served with

either meat or dairy). Over time and with the proper approvals, they hope to prepare food and have a deli section. The hours have not been finalized yet, but Labkowski says that the store will be open a good part of every day and will have full-time staff. He says that other Chabads don't have groceries here, but some do in other parts of the world.

Labkowski noticed that in the Bay Area, Jewish style foods and kosher foods in particular can be challenging to come across. "Whether it's kosher meat, brisket, steaks, lamb, turkey, etc., or fresh challah, bourekas, kugel, cheese, deli sandwiches, or ready Shabbat and Holiday food packages," and, he added, "that's not to mention the high price that tends to go with it if you could find it."

With the opening of this nonprofit market, the Labkowski's goal is to provide the Jewish community with a large variety of Jewish style and kosher foods of the highest quality and freshness at low affordable prices as well as helping the less fortunate within the community.



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Regan takes the reins at Lafayette Chamber

... continued from Page A2

But the smaller staff took on more responsibilities, working with the members to find ways to help them and showing them how working together could help them prosper and succeed, Regan reports. In fact, according to McCormick, during COVID, Regan “worked miracles with our membership.”

The Chamber was instrumental in helping the restaurants work around the ban on indoor dining during the pandemic. “Jay was out there pounding the pavement to see what we could do to keep the restaurants viable,” Regan says. They are continuing to help this important segment of Lafayette’s business community by spearheading an ad hoc restaurant committee

to work on a variety of challenges, including staffing shortages and inflation.

Today, “membership is the best since 2017,” Regan proudly states. She sees that people want to connect with the community. New businesses are coming in and she’s confident it will keep growing. The Chamber has hired a new member engagement coordinator because, Regan says, “as we’ve grown the membership, we really want to support them. We want to find out what they need and how we can help them.”

In addition to figuring out what the new normal may be, Regan sees 2023 as a time to “streamline efforts to be more relevant in the community.” She wants to keep the relationships they have built over

the years and support the “membership we have been able to build back up.” She looks forward to “getting off the roller coaster and having some stability in the business community.”

Chamber Executive Committee member Merchant is confident that Regan will be able to accomplish these goals. “Sara’s irrepressible humor, grace with members and the greater community, and her commitment to inclusive leadership continues the Chamber’s legacy as an unwavering partner with the city,” she says.

Regan is especially proud of the team she works with — both her staff and her board. “They’re the ones that really make it all happen.”

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Campo girls' cross country competes in nationals



Campolindo cross country teams at State meet

Photo provided

... continued from Page A1

At the NCS meet, the five leading runners for the Cougars were Buckley, Volkmer, Weber-ski, Moen, and Kabenina, finishing with a combined score of 34 at the NCS and 63 at the state meet, the lowest ever by the team at the state meet, led by Buckley and Volkmer who finished 2-3 at the NCS and 3-4 at the state meet.

"To have two girls finish in the top five at the state meet has only been done one other time in Campolindo history and having that front end of the team did make things easier," Lindquist said.

Moen, Kabenina and McCool all came in with good times led by Moen who exceeded expectations. "Rachel had the race of her life to finish in the top 15," Lindquist said. "In only her first season running cross country and to finish that high was incredible. To see how much she improved and how well she ran was really exciting."

After winning the NCS tournament, the Campolindo boys' team finished second at the state meet. "We ran a very solid race, but we had some runners that struggled to finish the race though it spoke to their character that they gutted it out," Lindquist said. "To finish as a second-place team in the state of California is pretty impressive and to have both teams sweep our league, have both teams on the podium at the state meet, we felt really good about that."

Alexander Lodewick, who will be running for California next year, won the NCS and was third among the Campolindo runners at the state meet spoke

of the culture of the team. "There has been a lot of support for every individual on the team and we looked out for each other," Lodewick said. "I had a difficult race at the state meet but with our team environment, my teammates came and hugged me after the race. My teammates have been very meaningful to me and have helped me figure out who I am, providing support, positivity, and enthusiasm when it was hard for me to find it."

Acalanes

The Acalanes girls finished in 19th at the state tournament. It was a non-senior group led by juniors Megan Yee and Nina Gehrig, sophomores Cameron Powell, Charlotte Sutherland and Sadie Poole and freshman Cate McCormick and Nevis Murphy.

"All of the girls were pleased with their overall team's performance despite Nina and Megan not running at 100%," Coach Jeff Hutson said. "What pleased me was how they supported each other and how happy they were to be there and not upset at the outcome."

At the NCS, the Acalanes girls finished in third, qualifying for the state tournament and the boys team finished in fourth, just missing state, but junior Logan Farzen and senior Tyler Hunt finished high enough to compete as individuals at the state meet.

Hutson spoke to the unity of the team that was brought together by so many of the runners: "Nina was a great leader for the girls and the boys. Nevis showed herself early on as a competitor along with Cate who also plays for the soccer team. Megan really helped to keep the team together and Charlotte was a real galvanizer and created a community on the team."

The team is looking forward to the return next year of sophomore Olivia Williams who sat out this season with an injury. Last year, Williams won the state meet with a time of 16:50.2 which beat the best time run this year (16:57.9) and finished in 17th in the national meet. "Olivia came to our practices and meets," Hutson said. "She has been a part of the team even though she was not able to compete."

The boys' team missed the state meet by seven points after coming into the NCS ranked eighth. "Our boys ran the third fastest time ever for Acalanes and just missing state by so little was hard for the team to accept," Hutson said.

Farzan and Hunt finished

fourth and seventh at the NCS and in 15th and 24th at the state meet. "Logan ran the fastest time of all the Diablo Athletic League runners and missed a school record by only six seconds, running a very good, patient race," Hutson said. "Tyler closed out his career running a faster time than he did last year."

Miramonte

After graduating their top five runners, Miramonte's top six runners at the NCS was comprised of four freshman, Sasha Bevacqua, Alana Jardine, Inara Inesi and Teia Adler, sophomore Zoe Schmidt and junior Grace Bell. The team finished sixth and Bell finished seventh at the NCS tournament and 52nd at the state meet.

"With such a young team and so much turnover, this was a rebuilding year," Coach Andrew Lewis said. "They did extremely well; Grace Bell leading the way. She really improved her performance this year and she also took a big step coming into her own as a leader, taking the reins for all of the freshmen that were on our team."

Lewis is already looking forward to next season: "Our freshmen were a quality group of runners that wanted to work hard, earning their spots at the NCS," Lewis said. "We have a good number of upperclassmen next year that are extremely strong runners and good leaders. We showed a lot of improvement over the back half of the season with a number of the runners setting new personal records."

The boy's team was also a young group and finished in sixth at the NCS meet. "We're only losing two seniors this year and every runner on the team improved over their time from last year," Lewis said.

The boys were led by junior Asher Patel who was fifth at the NCS and 32nd at the state meet and freshman Logan Letulle who finished in 18th place. "Asher had a breakout performance over last year which was a carryover from his stellar track season where he ran a 4:18 mile," Lewis said. "Logan was the fastest freshman in all of the five divisions that competed that day. We're really excited to see what he will do next year."

For Lewis, this was a year to build on: "Every runner improved over their time from last year. We're returning most of our team and our goal next year will be to make it to state which would be the first time since 2016."

~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Local author's work focuses on courage, strength and resourcefulness



Lafayette author Ying Chang Compestine cooks in her kitchen.

Photo provided

By Lou Fancher

To enter the Lafayette kitchen or the imagination of award-winning author, public speaker, editor and TV chef Ying Chang Compestine is to experience good fortune. An opportunity to observe Compestine wield a wok filled with vegetables, herbs, oils, and an array of other fresh ingredients is to witness sculptural, vibrant, colorful, culinary art-making. With a few prompts and only a little coaxing, it's not difficult while she is cooking to open the window into her imagination and the machinations whirling behind the stories told in her 20 books that include novels, children's picture books and cookbooks.

Compestine's debut novel, 2007's "Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party," chronicled her life growing up in the Chinese Cultural Revolution. In addition to receiving 30 national awards, the novel is included in school curriculums worldwide. She holds a degree in English from Central China Normal University and a master's in sociology from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She is widely recognized as a leading authority on Asian culture and cuisine. As a sought-after speaker, Compestine's constant travel schedule came to an abrupt halt in March 2020.

What made the shelter-in-place lockdowns all the more intense for a writer accustomed to being on the road was that Compestine is from Wuhan, China. In early 2020, her bags were packed for a lecture tour in Southeast Asia and she and friends along her journey chatted eagerly on WeChat as they planned reunions. But suddenly, Compestine was forced to cancel her flights and could only watch helplessly from afar as the entire city of Wuhan and much of her family were placed under strict quarantines. Compestine sought solace in work, resulting in three picture books, a novel, and a soon-to-be-completed graphic novel cookbook.

Among the new books released in 2022 is "Little Red Riding Hood and the Dragon," a picture book retelling the fa-

miliar folk tale with a Chinese spin. The titular protagonist lives in a village near the Great Wall in China and trains in kung fu. The story's villain is not a wolf, but a dragon that Little Red vanquishes while bringing rice cakes and herbal medicines to her grandmother. The revamped fairy tale characters and action are vividly illustrated by artist Joy Ang.

Likewise, at a trim 208 pages and with equally compelling interior artwork by Peish Zhang, her new novel, "Morning Sun in Wuhan," revolves around 13-year-old Mei, a young girl grieving over the loss of her mother in a tragic car accident and suddenly separated by COVID from her father, who is a respiratory specialist and at Yangtze Hospital in Wuhan.

Mei turns her passion for cooking into a powerful tool and, fused with her love of computer cooking games and WeChat conversations with two close friends, forms during her father's one-month absence a volunteer delivery group. Under the watchful eye of her Auntie and Chef Ma, Mei joins them in a community kitchen in which she cooks meals for frontline medical workers.

Blended seamlessly into the dramatic narrative passages are WeChat conversations and 10 recipes, with easily followed ingredients and instructions for dishes such as Eight-Treasure Rice Pudding, Pan-Fried Dumplings, Thai Red Chicken Curry, Spicy Egg Ramen, Kung Pho Beef and more.

"With each book you see the writer in the story," says Compestine. "I'm direct. I speak my mind. I don't hold back. I admire women and girls like that. For 'Little Red Riding Hood,' I thought, why does she need someone to save her? Why can't she save herself? She doesn't have to be gentle, passive. That's not me. Asian women are very strong. Why does this Asian girl have to wait to be saved? If I were her, I would find a way to save myself."

Compestine says she wants her books and the characters in them to change the perceptions of Asian women as weak, outdated, or subservient. "We

are not weak. We are strong, successful. Especially in the last couple of years, with the Asian American hate crimes, my friends wanted to go to the streets to protest. I wanted to write books to show we are kind, passionate, but yes, also have weaknesses." Her books' underlying messages include courage, strength, intelligence, families, and the resourceful-

ness of young girls and women especially. 'Little Red,' the message of not to be reliant on others to save you is there, but it also has humor."

On the calendar, there will be a cavalcade of appearances, workshops and inevitably, deadlines for more books. Resuming life on the road, the schedule will always leave time for trips to the gym, the markets, and lunch or dinner dates with Compestine's diaspora of food-loving friends and family.

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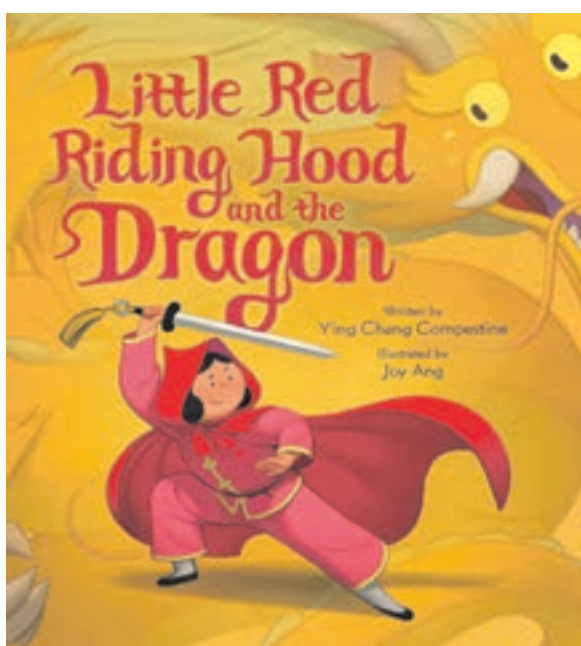
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Pass the plate with these fabulously festive holiday crostini



Festive Holiday Crostini

Photos Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

'Tis the season for holiday gatherings and here are a few festive crostini ideas to pass around your crowd! I just love the colors in these little appetizers and the flavors are so good, but each very different. Roasted cherry tomatoes pair beautifully with turkey pepperoni, Kalamata olives and burrata, while goat cheese makes the perfect base for a

topping of pomegranate seeds, dried cranberries and roasted salted pistachios. Top each with micro greens or small basil leaves for a little extra color. If you are planning Hanukkah festivities, then swap the cranberries and pomegranates seeds out for blackberries, dried blueberries and blanched almonds or macadamia nuts for the perfect blue and white appetizer.

These are so easy to make and you can slice the baguette

ahead of time and store it in an airtight container for several days. Then, when you're ready to roll, simply brush the baguette slices with a little olive oil and sea salt and bake in a low oven for about 5-7 minutes to get them slightly toasty. Then spread with your cheese of choice and start decorating away.

I like to roast or grill the cherry tomatoes so you get a little bit of charred color before adding them to the crostini, and the tomato juices are so good on top, but if you're in a hurry, just use raw tomatoes.

This step can also be done ahead to save time when you want to serve them.

You can swap out the dried fruit on the goat cheese variety with any dried fruit you like. Apricots or dried cherries would also be delicious and you can pick any nut you like to go with this crostini that

pairs well with the dried fruit you selected. This recipe makes about 30 crostini.



INGREDIENTS

Crostini

- 1 plain baguette, sliced into 1/4-inch slices (about 30 per baguette)
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Roasted Tomato, Kalamata & Burrata

- 8 oz. Burrata cheese or goat cheese
- 50-60 cherry tomatoes, roasted
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon pepper
- 30 Kalamata olives, cut into quarters
- 30 slices of turkey pepperoni (can use ham, salami, or any kind of charcuterie that you love best)
- Small basil leaves or micro-greens

Goat Cheese, Fruit & Nuts

- 8 oz. goat cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1 cup dried cranberries (can use cherries, blueberries, apricots, etc.)
- 1 cup pomegranate seeds
- 1 cup roasted and salted pistachios (can use whatever nut you love best)
- Small basil leaves or micro-greens for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 F. Toss cherry tomatoes with olive oil and lemon pepper. Place the tomato mixture in an oiled or sprayed baking dish and roast for approximately 15 minutes, or until the tops of the tomatoes begin to turn slightly brown and the tomatoes become soft. Remove from oven and reduce oven temperature to 300 F.

Line a baking sheet parchment paper.

Slice baguette into 1/4-inch (or so) slices and lay out on the prepared baking sheet. In a small bowl, mix olive oil with salt and pepper if you like, or lemon pepper, and lightly brush just the tops of the baguette slices. Bake for 5-7 minutes, or just until the bread becomes slightly toasted. Remove from oven.

Spread cheese over the top of each baguette slice and arrange the tomatoes, pepperoni and olives on top, (or the fruit and nuts). Garnish with the greens of your choice.

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>



Longtime Lafayette resident turns 100



Photo Kathryn Ishizu

Birthday celebration at a Lamorinda Village Coffee and Conversation meeting

Submitted by Betty La Porte

Lafayette's Joseph M. Fox III celebrated his 100th birthday on Nov. 20. And he did it as he does just about everything – with vigor and enthusiasm. Talk to people who know Joe, and they all say the same thing: he has been remarkable at just about any age, and the 100-year-old Joe did it again with the elegant slideshow that was presented to an admiring group of partygoers. One tech-savvy 15-year-old was overheard saying:

"That's really awesome! I can't even do that." Ah, well. That's Joe, with the skills and know-how that's the envy of everyone. Who knew, at 100 years, that Joe would be a faithful regular at Lamorinda Village's chair yoga? And who could imagine someone at 100 years old swimming every day? And how many of us know anyone who has written three books that have all been published after the age of retirement?

Joe and his wife, Betty Larkin Fox, moved their family of six children (two

daughters and four sons) to Lafayette in 1966 from the East Coast when Joe became employed by Bechtel as a chemical engineer. Betty was active in the local real estate market. Together they kept the home fires burning, participated in the kid's school activities, made lasting friendships in the community, and traveled when there was time.

In 1992, when all the kids had their college degrees, Betty died after a short illness. Joe carried on, keeping the family home a place where everyone could gather when schedules permitted. Four years later, Joe met and married Shirley Pugh, and the Fox family, along with Shirley's three sons, became a blended family of adult children, albeit a scattered one. Even so, family gatherings were frequent.

It was about this time, having retired from Bechtel, and with time on his hands, Joe became interested in tracing the history of the Fox family. Fox is not an uncommon name, and many emails to people with that name led to interesting connections. Joe became an expert in Y-DNA and his research led to a published book entitled "Growing with America; the Fox Family of Philadelphia." He expanded the information by writing his second book "Growing with America – Colonial Roots." In 2004, Joe started the Fox Y-DNA project which has

over 300 members. Even though he is Joseph Mickle Fox the third, there are eight other ancestors by the same name, which will surely confound and confuse future genealogists.

Now a full-fledged author, Joe was on a roll and authored one more book about an ancestor, titled "Mary Hite's Story: A Pioneer Woman with Grit." It was published in 2019, before the pandemic, when Joe was a mere 97 years old.

His research and writing, which started as a hobby and grew into an almost full-time commitment, gets credit from Joe for his good health and longevity. "I honestly believe that keeping busy with something that interests me is responsible for my well-being as I aged."

Sadly for Joe, Shirley passed away in March 2020. By this time, Joe had hung up his pool leaf catcher, sold the family home and moved to Byron Park. But hold on! His story continues to grow! At Byron Park, he has made a ton of friends, played Romeo in a recent Byron Park production of "Romeo and Juliet," and with his children, hosted a birthday celebration to end all celebrations. Joe was the perfect host and birthday celebrant. It was the hottest ticket in town and was a party for the "ageless."

What is a good college?

By Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D.

If you did a survey and asked people what characteristics define a good college, you might get 100 different answers. If there is so much variation just in what constitutes a good college, we know there is even more variation in what constitutes a best fit for a particular student. But starting with features of a good college is a great way to begin. For this reason, I start my college search process with a set of characteristics in mind that I know constitute a good college in general. These I share with you below.

A good college graduates its students within four years and with as little debt as possible. It is a no brainer to assume that students and their parents are interested in the four-year college plan rather than a five- or six-year plan! Thus, it is important to know what the college's four-year graduation rate is. (Be aware that many sources only publish a six-year graduation rate). A good college will graduate at least two-thirds of an entering class in four years. Also, a good college admissions office considers the true full financial need of its students and uses

need-based aid and merit-based aid to make an education more affordable. In addition, the college makes it as easy as possible for students to keep their merit aid. This can be done by making realistic requirements for academic achievement, such as a maintaining a 3.0 GPA in contrast to a 3.5 GPA. A conscientious college will also increase aid as it increases tuition and fees.

A good college educates to the student's interests and abilities. We measure this not only by curricular offerings but by analyzing a college's learning support resources; these resources should be available not just for those students with learning challenges, but for all students – for example, athletes with rigorous practice schedules, and students whose major includes some coursework that may be especially difficult for them. Not all students who want to be finance majors are naturals at linear algebra, nor are all pre-med hopefuls whizzes at organic chemistry. A good school offers support to all students to help to ensure their academic success.

A good college helps a student test their academic direction early enough to change course, as many students do. The

reality is that 70-80% of students change their major at least once while in college. Internships and shadowing opportunities are great ways to test if the major they are pursuing will lead to a job after graduation that they will enjoy.

A good college helps the undeclared student select an academic direction early enough to graduate in four years. We know that many students are uncertain about what they want to do, but these days many colleges seem almost to "prey upon" the undeclared entry. It's one thing to welcome them but what are you doing to help the undeclared set a direction once they arrive and use their general education coursework in a way that will work for a variety of possible majors.

A good college is somewhere a student feels connected and comfortable on campus and in the surrounding community. A good college for a given student must include academic, cultural and social factors.

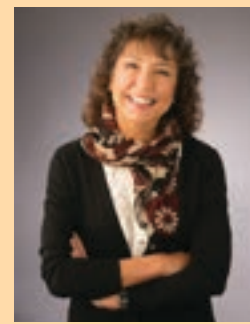
A good college has strong networking capabilities like access to internships, as well as resume and interview preparation. It also has a career center that provides an alumni system that fosters post graduate life including job searches, career

changes and professional opportunities.

A good college example: To share a little first-hand mom experience, this is something I saw clearly with one of my daughters who attended a good college. To test her academic direction, she applied to several internships. The career services center provided information and assisted with identifying internship opportunities in both the public and private sector. The center provided resume and cover letter reviews, videotaped interviews, and even told her when she fiddled with her hair too much. And, perhaps most importantly, she could see her mannerisms and hear how well she responded to questions. She's now on her second job with a very good salary in New York City – not bad for one of those liberal arts and sciences majors we hear about who struggle with entry level income. I attribute this mostly to her taking the initiative to use resources available to her and the strong support she had and still has from her alma mater.

The consideration of this set of parameters that define a good college gives you a head start in determining where you would have the greatest opportunity for a happy and productive un-

dergraduate experience.



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Lions announces Peace Poster contest winners

Submitted by Robert Murtagh

The Lions International Peace Poster contest for 2022-23 was titled "Lead with Compassion," and 75 students, age 10-13, from Stanley Middle School in Lafayette submitted entries. Annually, 55,000 students from around the world compete in the contest. This year student Ruby Bogan won first place and

Chloe Cooper took second, with Olivia Parker placing third. The winner will now compete with other entries from students from Alameda and Contra Costa counties and eventually a winner will be chosen from California. The International Peace Poster winner is awarded a trip to the United Nations Headquarters in New York City accompanied by a parent and teacher.



From left: Robert Murtagh, president Moraga Lions Club, Olivia Parker, Ruby Bogan, Chloe Cooper and art teacher Robert Anke. Photo provided

Joint efforts will light up the town this spring



Photo provided

Garden Club members: Janice Lieu, Ellen Beans, Linda Foley, Gillian Gray

Submitted by Linda U Foley

On a gorgeous Saturday morning this November, the Moraga Garden Club joined in with Kiwanis, Scouts, kids and town officials to plant 2,000 daffodil bulbs, half provided by Joan Bruzzone.

The areas across from the skateboard park and fronting the library sign will be a welcoming bright sight in the spring – barring gophers, moles or strangling clay. Moraga Garden Club welcomes new members. Follow us on FB and Instagram. moragagardenclub.com

Mechanics Bank donates \$10K to support The Park Theater Renovation Capital Campaign



Photo provided

From left: Sara Regan and Jay Lifson of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, Sana Bhumbla, Raully Butler and May Gonzalez from Mechanics Bank, Tracey Farrell, Kathy Bowles, Jana Corey from The Park Theater Trust.

Lafayette's all-volunteer nonprofit Park Theater Trust (TPTT) – and actually the entire Lamorinda community and East Bay – is the recent beneficiary of a \$10,000 grant from Mechanics Bank to TPTT's Park Theater Renovation Capital Campaign.

Why such a broad-reaching effect? "This generous grant will make an immediate impact in our fundraising efforts to bring back Lafayette's much-loved community cinema for all to enjoy," says Kathy Bowles, fundraising chair and TPTT board member, "particularly as right now, two generous families have pledged to match, dollar for dollar up to \$350,000, every donation to our renovation campaign." The match campaign challenge runs until Dec. 31.

"We share our East Bay roots with the Park Theater, which has been an architectural marvel and community centerpiece in Lafayette since 1941," said Raully Butler, executive vice president and director of retail banking for Mechanics Bank. "Restoring its splendor for classic films, indie releases, and a wide range of events and activities will make the theater a vibrant community hub that entertains for many generations to come."

Almost a year ago, thanks primarily to gifts from private citizens, businesses, family foundations, and the city of Lafayette, the 510(c)(3) nonprofit TPTT founded in 2019 raised the \$3 million needed to purchase and protect Lafayette's historic downtown cinema built in 1941 and dark since 2005. Now TPTT volunteers are working to raise the \$5 million for the renovation of the Park into a two-theater movie and live music venue with a commercial

kitchen, community space, and Lafayette's only rooftop terrace. The goal is to re-open in 2024 offering first-run art/indie films, new Hollywood releases and classics, special events, and live music curated by highly regarded CinemaSF (<https://www.cinemasf.com/>) as the operator.

The past few months have seen a flurry of fundraising activities supporting this grassroots effort, including sold-out dinner benefits at RÊVE Bistro, and Hideout Kitchen, featuring jazz recording artist Shawn Raiford and his band. Point of sale support has come from local merchants Five Little Monkeys toy store and Clocks, Etc., and in August, the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce hosted along with Hollie's Homegrown and Sideboard a packed Chamber Mixer. For the holidays, TPTT is selling custom Park T-shirts, totes, water bottles and collectible pins through Lamorinda Music. The response from the community continues to be one of excitement and engagement, which was evident when TPTT gave out over 500 bags of popcorn to eager families at the recent Trick or Treat Street Chamber event in October.

The Park Theater Trust's mission is to restore and operate Lafayette's iconic Park Theater building and revitalize it into an accessible and inclusive, community-centered cinema, arts and culture hub with programming that includes critically acclaimed films, throwback favorites and engaging non-film events. For more information or to donate to the Park Theater Renovation Match Challenge, please visit <https://parktheatertrust.org/>.

Season of Giving

Support local nonprofits during this Season of Giving

One of the best things about Lamorinda is its strong volunteer base within local nonprofit organizations that raise much needed funds to benefit the community. Each year, Lamorinda Weekly offers an opportunity for these nonprofits to promote their charitable giving opportunities. Here are a few ongoing campaigns this holiday season:

Lamorinda Village Season of Sharing

Lamorinda Village, a virtual village that allows seniors to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible, is raising funds to continue its mission. Volunteers provide rides, grocery shopping, companionship, handyman and check-in call services as well as fun and educational events to its members. Help keep our elder neighbors engaged with love. Donate at www.lamorindavillage.org/donate or mail a check to P.O. Box 57, Lafayette. If you are a senior interested making new friends or needing help, or if you are thinking of volunteering, email us at info@lamorindavillage.org.

Lamorinda Spirit Van

The Lamorinda Spirit Van has reopened and is providing rides to Lamorinda older adults age 60+ to destinations in Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, Concord, Martinez, Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek. We are currently seeking a part-time dispatcher who will take ride reservations, schedule route, communicate with Passengers/drivers, prepare reports. Position requires good communication skills and knowledge of Excel. We are also looking for volunteer drivers for 4-hour weekly or bi-weekly morning or afternoon shift – taking older adults to appointments, errands and shopping. Help us help others! Donate to Lamorinda Spirit this holiday season by mailing a check payable to: City of Lafayette (note "Lamorinda Spirit" on memo line) 500 Saint Mary's Road, Lafayette 94549. Learn more at www.lovelafayette.org/residents/transportation/lamorinda-spirit-van Or email Riki at rjuster@lovelafayette.org or call (925) 284-5546.

Moraga Community Foundation

The Moraga Community Foundation is excited to be just over \$50,000 shy of our goal to raise \$450,000 for needed enhancements to the Moraga Commons Park. A new drinking fountain/ water bottle station and new flagpole have already been installed. Planned for 2023 are ADA/accessibility improvements including brand new, gender neutral bathrooms, an updated accessible picnic area near the All-Access Playground, and beautiful trees with improved irrigation (also completed with MCF's financial support). Do you love and enjoy the park? Show your appreciation by donating to the Commons Enhancement Project at www.MoragaCommunityFoundation.org. Help us raise the last \$54,000 to make this happen.

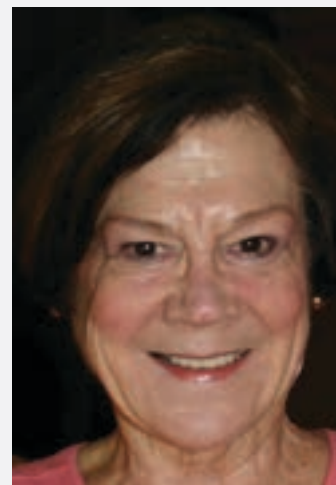
Goodwill of the San Francisco Bay

Join Goodwill of the San Francisco Bay for a drive thru community donation event at the Orinda Masonic Lodge located at 9 Altarinda Road in Orinda. Clean out those closets and bring all of your gently used items from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10, from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11, and again from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 17. Can't come in person? Schedule a pickup at tinyurl.com/SFBAYPickUp or visit www.sfgoodwill.org to discover other ways you can support our mission.

In Memory

Marsha Healey Robinson

Jan. 13, 1938 – Oct. 2, 2022



Marsha Healey Robinson, beloved sister, mother and grandmother passed away peacefully on Oct. 2, 2022. Marsha was born in San Francisco on Jan. 13, 1938 to Margaret and Harry Healey of San Mateo. Marsha graduated from San Mateo High School and then earned a teaching credential from San Jose State University in 1959. Marsha was a teacher at Francis Scott Key elementary school in San Francisco. Marsha married Frank Robinson in 1961. They moved to Lafayette in 1972 and Marsha stayed home to raise their daughters Frances and Tori. Marsha volunteered in the Lafayette school district and was active with the Junior League of the East Bay. Later Marsha returned to work in the retail sector at Talbot's in Walnut Creek and Pendleton in Lafayette.

Marsha is survived by her daughters Frances Farley (husband Jim) and Tori Heffelfinger (husband Warren), her grandchildren Jessica and Alex Farley, and Mary, Heidi and Wendy Heffelfinger, her brother Bill Healey (wife Linda), her sister Angela Hollman (husband Steve), and many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

Marsha was preceded in death by Frank and her sister Jane Jones (husband Bob). A celebration of life will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Dec. 21 at St. Perpetua Church with reception immediately following in the Parish Hall.

Not to be missed

Art

Art show at Orinda Books. December features the paintings of Paul, Tia, and Joel Kratter. Paul is an accomplished landscape artist. Tia, his wife, worked as a background painter at Disney and as an Art Director at Pixar. Their son, Joel, is an experienced wildlife painter. Visit the Artist of the Month for a preview at <https://www.orindabooks.com>. Orinda Books is located at 276 Village Square, Orinda, 925-254-7606.

Annual 57th Artful Giving exhibition at Valley Art Gallery, which continues to Dec. 31, includes a wide variety of beautifully crafted ceramics, wood and glass pieces, original designer jewelry, fiber arts, small paintings, and many other unique, one-of-a-kind gift items all handcrafted by our talented East Bay artisans. Valley Art Gallery: 1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 110, Walnut Creek, www.valleyart-gallery.org; (925) 935-4311.

Music

Miramonte Choirs Winter Concert on Friday, Dec. 9, 7 p.m. Miramonte Theater. Fee for students, \$5 general.

The Diablo Symphony presents holiday favorites at 2 p.m. on Dec. 10 at the Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church. The Blackhawk Chorus joins in for music from Home Alone, Messiah and more, and Anna Presler and Leighton Fong premiere a jazzy Double Concerto for Violin and Cello. Orchestra pieces include Chanukah Festival Overture, and "Sleigh Ride." Tickets are available at <https://www.diablosymphony.org/events/holiday-concert-home-for-the-holidays/> until 5 p.m. on Dec. 9, or at the door.

Theatre

Synergy Theater returns to the Leshner Center for the Arts, at 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, with the world-debut of Spontaneous Myth and Magic: An Improvised Ancient Mythology! This completely improvised two-act comedy will keep the audience in laughter from the dawn of time until the end of days! It plays Thursday, Jan. 12, through Sunday, Jan. 22, at 8:15 p.m., Thursdays – Saturdays, and 3:15 p.m. on Sundays.

Other

The Acalanes Chapter of the

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) will host a free ceremony as part of Wreaths Across America at the historic Lafayette Cemetery at noon on Saturday, Dec. 17. Following the ceremony, wreaths will be placed at the graves of nearly 300 veterans who lie at rest in the Lafayette Cemetery. The public is invited to attend the ceremony and assist Scout Troop 284 place the wreaths as they say each veteran's name out loud. Learn more about the event at www.wreathscrossamerica.org/CA0565.

Join Goodwill of the San Francisco Bay for a drive thru community donation event at the Orinda Masonic Lodge located at 9 Altarinda Road in Orinda. Clean out those closets and bring all of your gently used items Saturday, Dec. 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 11 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., and again Saturday, Dec. 17 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Can't come in person? Schedule a pickup at tinyurl.com/SF-BAYPickUp or visit our website at www.sfgoodwill.org to discover other ways you can support its mission.

Join ARF for Yappy Hour, an evening of fun for animal-lovers ages 21+ Dec. 8, 6-8 p.m.

Unwind after work over cold drinks, smiling faces, and the company of new friends. Doesn't that sound paw-sitively amazing? Come in your ugliest holiday sweater for a chance to win prizes! All guests will be asked to follow current Contra Costa County COVID safety mandates. Purchase tickets at arflife.org/yappy-hour.

Support 60+ young entrepreneurs (ages 8-17) at the 5th Annual Girls Crushing It Winter Pop-up Shop. With everything from handmade gifts and decorative accessories to dog treats and one-of-a-kind works of art, you will find something for everyone on your holiday list. Shop Sunday, Dec. 11 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Lafayette Community Center at 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette. Admission is free. Learn more at: www.girlscrushingit.org/

Moraga Garden Club spreads the holiday spirit. The tradition to decorate the library for the holidays was started by the Moraga Garden Club over 30 years ago. As always, the tree will be decorated with handmade natural ornaments most resembling woody animals. Hence, the description Critter tree. In keeping with this

theme, pine cone snowy owls will be created by its youngest citizenry sponsored by the Moraga Garden Club. This fun activity may create another tradition and create memories for our kids and grandkids. Join in the spirit. The event takes place Dec. 8 at 4 p.m., no registration required, materials provided.

Winter Workshop for Kids! will be held Saturday, Dec. 17, at Lafayette Plaza Park, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Children will make a gift for someone they love. Materials and assistance will be provided. Parents/guardians can assist. Gift options include wreaths, photo boxes, and ornaments; Christmas and non-Christmas choices will be available. This event is sponsored by Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, which invites you to join us and help spread the spirit of giving! www.lamorindasunrise.org

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

Lamorinda Weekly

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Contact us:

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Publishers/Owners: Andy and Wendy Scheck; andy@lamorindaweekly.com, wendy@lamorindaweekly.com
Editor: Jennifer Wake; jennifer@lamorindaweekly.com
Sports Editor: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com
Advertising: 925-377-0977, Wendy Scheck; wendy@lamorindaweekly.com
Staff Writers: Vera Kochan; vera@lamorindaweekly.com, Sora O'Doherty; Sora@lamorindaweekly.com, Jon Kingdon; sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com
Digging Deep: Cynthia Brian; Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com
Food: Susie Iventosch; suziventosch@gmail.com
Contributing Writers: Conrad Bassett, Sophie Braccini, Diane Claytor, John T. Miller, Fran Miller, Jenn Freedman, Mona Miller, Kara Navolio, Moya Stone, Margie Ryerson, M.D. Jones, Linda Fodrini-Johnson, Lou Fancher, Jeff Gomez, Chris Rauber, Sharon K. Sobotta
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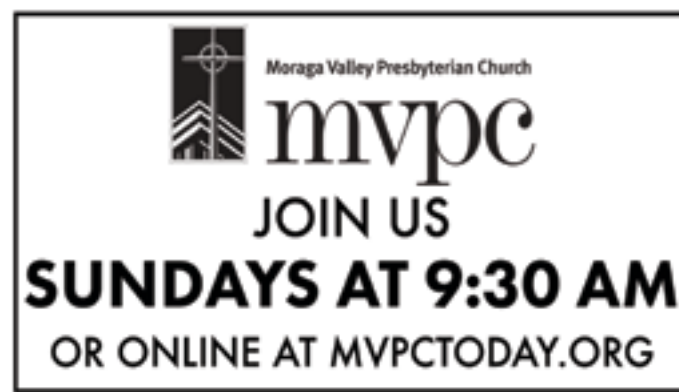
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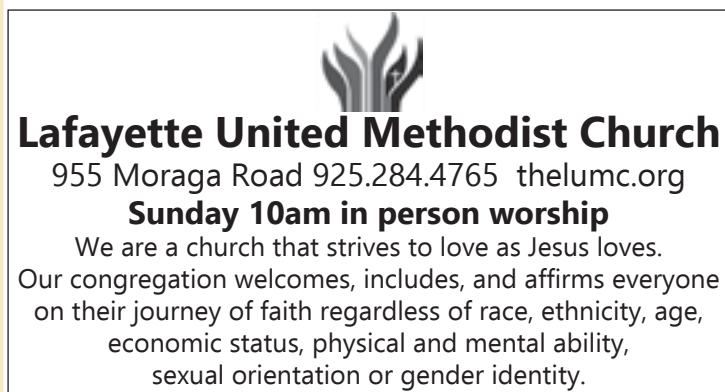
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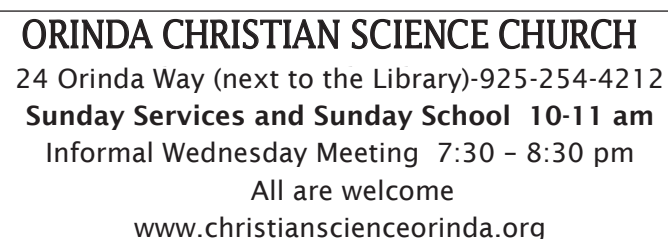
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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Successful football seasons end just short of state tournaments



Quarterback Luke Duncan

Photo Scott Barmmer

By Jon Kingdon

At the conclusion of the regular football season, the Lamorinda football teams had a combined record of 25 and 5: Campolindo 10-0, Acalanes 9-1 and Miramonte 6-4, with Acalanes' only loss coming against Campolindo and two of Miramonte's losses coming against Campolindo and Acalanes. Each team was seeded second in the North Coast Section playoffs with Campolindo in Division II, Acalanes in Division IV, and Miramonte in Division V.

Campolindo and Miramonte made it to the North Coast Sectional finals and Acalanes made it to the semifinals. Each team came up short of advancing, which could be attributed primarily to uncharacteristic mistakes by these three excellent teams.

Last season, Miramonte made it to the NCS semifinals and head coach Jack Schram pointed to making it to the championship game this year. After defeating Sonoma Valley

and Analy by a combined score of 89-14, Miramonte lost to San Marin 42-28, finishing the season with an 8-5 record.

Despite the loss, Schram was quite pleased with the team's play this year. "It was a great season, and I'm glad that we got back to the championship game, but it was disappointing that we dug such a big hole in the first half against San Marin," Schram said.

With five interceptions, two that were returned for touchdowns and one on a 2nd and goal play on their first drive along with a lost fumble, the Matadors were down 35-7 at the half before outscoring San Marin 21-7 in the second half.

"I told the team that I thought we were the best team in Division V since day one and I still think we are, but we just got in a place where it was hard to recover," Schram said. "Those things sting but you have to be able to overcome those mistakes."

Schram is already looking ahead to next season, despite

graduating a number of very productive seniors. Schram will miss quarterback Luke Duncan who threw 42 touchdown passes this year, running backs Bennett Destino (663 yards) and Thomas Wilson (388 yards), and receivers John Williams (53-524), Cooper Bohlig (39-1102) and Jimmy Foster (33-362).

While celebrating this year's team but also looking to the future, Schram said, "We've got the program back up where we want to be," Schram said. "Our juniors helped us to get as far as we got and we're looking for help also from our JV team that was 5-1 this past season."

Acalanes

Finishing the season with a 10-2 record, coach Floyd Burnsed felt there was a lot to celebrate about the season. "I thought we had a great season and the kids played really well," Burnsed said. "We lost to two good teams by three points each."

A number of mistakes by Acalanes led directly to the loss against Cardinal Newman, in the NCS semifinal by a score of 17-14. With five turnovers, one of which was an interception that was returned for a touchdown, the Dons fell behind 14-0 but battled back to tie the game at 14 in the fourth quarter. A missed field goal by Acalanes and then a turnover in their own territory, set up a final winning field goal for Cardinal Newman.

Coming into the season, Acalanes did not have a quarterback with any varsity experience, but juniors Sully Bailey (105/189/16 TD's/6 ints) and Jake Boselli (85/137/13 TD's/6 ints) successfully stepped into the position and led an offense that averaged 35.2 points per game. "They were both talented and it was such a step up from JV where they did not throw the ball very often and they both did a great job," Burnsed said.

Acalanes had graduated a number of players in 2021 and Burnsed was not sure what type of season this was going to be but he saw constant improvement with each game. "We didn't know what we had from the start but players on defense like (seniors) George Churchill (74 tackles, 6.5 TFL) and Nate Bennett (44 tackles, 10.5 TFL) and (junior) Jack Giorgianni (94 tackles 4.5 TFL) had great seasons and a number of other seniors really stepped up," Burnsed said. "The class came together and really played for each other and that's when you're usually successful."

Even with running back Ellis Burger (158/779/17 TDs) graduating, there's still a lot of talent returning on offense. WR's Trevor Rogers (58/1120/15 TDs) and Paul Kuhner (33/441/1 TD) center Henry Hagel will be key players on next year's team.

Campolindo

With only four starters returning from last year's NCS champion team, coach Kevin Macy was cautiously optimistic about the team's chances coming into the season. Questions were soon answered by an offense that averaged 37.6 points a game, led by the passing combination of quarterback Dashiell Weaver (204/297/32 TD's) and wide receivers Robbie Mascheroni (66/1196/18 TD's), Scott Lyon (46/457) and Tim Daugherty (33/567) along with 16 different running backs led by Brendan Comerford (84/517/7 TDs) and Lucas Concepcion (93/366/6 TDs).

After a memorable win over Rancho Cotati by a score of 42-41, in a game that came down to the last play, Campolindo had a rematch with San Ramon Valley, a team that they had defeated in the NCS championship game last year.

Macy was not pleased with Campolindo being elevated into Division II for the playoffs. Still,

it was a game that proved very competitive but, in the end, as with Acalanes and Miramonte, it was mistakes that led to San Ramon Valley coming out ahead 35-21.

With the score 14-14 late in the second quarter, a defensive breakdown led to an SRV touchdown. Then, on the opening drive of the second half, SRV returned a Weaver interception for a touchdown. Another interception on the SRV 3-yard line going in and a final interception with four minutes to go, closed out the game.

"Competitive equity shoves us in the corners, and it came back to haunt our kids," Macy said. "They played their hearts out and we just came up a little bit short. We were just outmanned and they deserved a lot more. We had to play a perfect game, but we had more turnovers than we had all year."

Macy drew a military analogy to the game while acknowledging the careers of his seniors: "An army should not advance beyond its supply lines, or they will get cut off," Macy said. "That's what it felt like tonight. We lost a number of our seniors to other sports due to the COVID virus but what they did the last two years was incredible and historic."

Senior Robby Horst left the field with his head held high. "No one expected us to be 12-0 and to make it to this game," Horst said. "We're all really proud about what we accomplished this season."

Mascheroni shared his feelings as his career concluded. "It was great to be coached by Coach Macy and to play with such a great bunch of guys," Mascheroni said. "I learned that you're going to have some setbacks, but you keep pushing and pushing and everything will pan out. What happens, happens and it's all for a reason."

Miramonte and Campolindo girls tennis teams conclude successful season individually and as a team

By Jon Kingdon

In the ever-competitive DAL tournament, Miramonte and Campolindo both qualified for the North Coast Section team tournament with Miramonte having representatives in the single and doubles tournament and Campolindo had a doubles team competing.

In the cold but playable NCS tennis tournament at San Ramon Valley High School, Miramonte defeated Alameda in the first round, Campolindo in the second round and the top seeded Redwood High School in the semifinals, making it to the championship match against Amador Valley but came one set short of winning the tournament 3-4.

With the team finishing in second, Miramonte Coach Riki Sorenson had mixed emotions with the end result. "We did great, but it was disappointing that we came so close to winning the whole thing," Sorenson said. "I wasn't surprised that the girls did exactly what I thought they were capable of doing but that may have been because they did not know how good they were."

Sorenson was most pleased at the mental toughness that the team showed when the pressure on the team was the greatest. "The players learned how to handle the pressure of big matches and in matches where they were trailing badly and yet found a way to pull it back together," Sorenson said.

... continued on Page C2



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Miramonte and Campolindo girls tennis teams conclude successful season individually and as a team



Photo provided

Back row, from left: Coach Riki Sorenson, Olivia Tomasco, Elena Sullivan, Lily Lincoln, Maddie Silveira, Caitlin Chan, Nicole Guo, Jessica Hui, Nicole Hui, Charlotte Westin, Asst Coach Julie Silveira; front row: Grace Liu, Soleil Skjorshammer, Juliet Krumholz, Alison Rhee, Olivia Rhee, Audrey Kosla

... continued from Page C1

“That’s the kind of mental strength and toughness that is part of tennis - feeling it and playing through it.”

In particular, Sorenson singled out freshman, number three singles player Caitlin Chan and the doubles teams of Audrey Kosla and Alison Rhee and Nicole Hui and Lily Lincoln against Amador Valley. With the match tied at 2-2, Chan and each of the double’s teams all lost their first sets and when rolling over could have been easy, each of the players elevated their games.

“Caitlin lost her first set 5-7 and was in an emotional struggle and seemed undone by her opponent,” Sorenson said. “It was then that Coach Silveria helped talk her down with suggestions to pull her game together. Caitlin then closed out the match 6-0, 6-0.”

Kosla and Rhee dug themselves out of the deepest of holes in their match. Down one set and 2-5 in the second set, they won their next five games despite facing multiple match

points and won the third set. “This was an example of the mental toughness I have been talking about where they did not allow the pressure to get to them,” Sorenson said. “Audrey and Alison were calm, fun loving and happy on the court and put us in a position to win the championship. Nicole and Lily recovered but ultimately lost in a back-and-forth match in three sets.”

Miramonte received a late season boost with the addition of Juliette Krumholz who had competed mostly in private tournaments but maintained her eligibility to play in the DAL and NCS tournaments by competing for Miramonte late in the season. She played as Miramonte’s number one singles player in the team tournament. Krumholz would go on to win the DAL singles tournament and finished in third in the NCS tournament.

“Juliette is a great athlete who devotes a lot of time to her game and played against top players,” Sorenson said. “She is really strong and consistent. It was great for her to join us, contribute to an al-

ready strong team and find that community that is unique to team competition.”

Soleil Skjorshammer and Elena Sullivan who played one and three singles all season, chose to play doubles and won the DAL tournament defeating Campolindo’s Sienna Carroll and Paige Davis with both team’s qualifying to play in the NCS tournament.

Skjorshammer and Sullivan were seeded fourth and made it to the semifinals, losing to Dougherty Valley who won the tournament and then defeated the second seeded Monte Vista team to finish in third place. “Soleil and Elena, playing doubles for the first time, were a phenomenal team,” Sorenson said. “They improved as they went along, developing a balanced partnership and they were really fun to watch.”

Losing only two top players to graduation, number three singles Elena Sullivan, and number one doubles member Lily Lincoln, Sorenson is anticipating a successful season next year. “We had great depth this year and if

everyone stays healthy and hungry, we should have a strong team next year,” Sorenson said. “Our girls also know that there is great competition out there to keep up with and I hope they’re really motivated to work hard after just missing the championship by a hair. They’re excited about having another year together.”

Campolindo Coach Sunan Faulkner was also positive about the performance of her team. “We finished second in our league with our only losses coming against Miramonte during the season and then we had to face them in the second round in the NCS tournament,” Faulkner said.

In the NCS team tournament against Miramonte, Faulkner singled out the play of their number two singles player, sophomore Sofia Raldugnia-Zhu and the doubles team of Paige Davis and Sienna

Carroll. “Sofia had to play Skjorshammer who was normally playing one and she only lost 6-7, 5-7 but played out of her mind well and Paige and Sienna came out victorious,” Faulkner said. “When Sienna got sick the night before the doubles tournament, Alex Goetz, our number one singles player took her place, and they made it to the second round.”

The Cougars will be graduating seven players who were always in the lineup to graduation: Alex Goetz, Annie Coane, Sienna Carroll, Paige Davis, Liesel Hilkemeyer, Emily Floyd, and Louis Goldblatt. “We may be looking at a rebuilding year so we will be counting on Sofia Raldugnia-Zhu, Delaria Basgamez and Summer Chang in singles and Allisa Muller who is our top returning doubles player.”

Miramonte Lady Matador golfers win league title and finish third at NCS D2



Photo provided

From left: Antong Cao, Katherine Scheingart, coach Doug Senz, Courtney Scheingart, Paige Sovocool, Emma Wang

Submitted by Doug Senz

Athletic League title and finishing third in the NCS D2 Tournament. Quite an accomplishment for the five-girl team.

The Miramonte Lady Matadors Golf team won the Diablo

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Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 16 Issue 21 Wednesday, December 7, 2022



Creating a magical holiday season

read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Nature's ornaments



Christmas ornaments decorate Japanese maples. Photo Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

"There is material enough in a single flower for the ornaments of a score of cathedrals." ~ John Ruskin

Like so many Americans, the day after Thanksgiving I pulled out my stored Christmas décor. I'm not one to shop on Black Friday, preferring not to fight the crowds for sale items that I don't need. Instead, I chose to bask in the deliciousness of autumn by spending time meandering around my garden with my adopted animals in tow, deciding where to display my holiday treasures. It was a beautiful clear, warm day with a gentle breeze that tickled the leaves to fall like feathers. Songbirds caroled as hawks circled above in the air currents. As I inhaled the fragrance of pine needles, I exhaled joy and gratitude for such natural splendor.

What I realized was that Mother Nature had already decorated my landscape for the holidays with colorful leaves carpeting the

flower beds and blooming white chrysanthemums imitating snow. The merry berry bushes of nandina, cotoneaster, and pyracantha were chock full of fiery red fruit favored by wildlife. Hachiya persimmons resembled bright orange ornaments hanging from the near-bare branches. I mistook a lone red pomegranate hanging from the golden-leaved tree for a crimson Christmas bulb. Sprays of yellow Meyer lemons glowed like sunshine, while azalea bushes sported leaves in rainbow hues. I climbed the hillside steps to marvel at the multitude of cherry-pink pistache berries flanked by the redwood tree that the squirrels had not devoured this year. In the foreground, my weather-vane of a prancing deer reminded me of Dancer flying through the night sky.

I hung gold and red giant ornaments on my Japanese Maples. They glistened in the afternoon glare, yet these trinkets made by humans could not compare to what Mother Nature had already designed.

Many people seek a Christmas tree or Hanukkah bush to brighten their homes in December. Every tree is a perfect tree, even those Charlie Brown ones, especially if a child chooses. If possible, buy a living tree that can be placed on your patio after the holidays are over this year and be reused for the next festivity.

When considering trees, it's essential to also think about safety. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, last year over 15,000 people ended up in the emergency room due to decorating falls, burns, cuts, strains, and electrical shocks.



Colorful maple leaves on the ground.

... continued on Page D10

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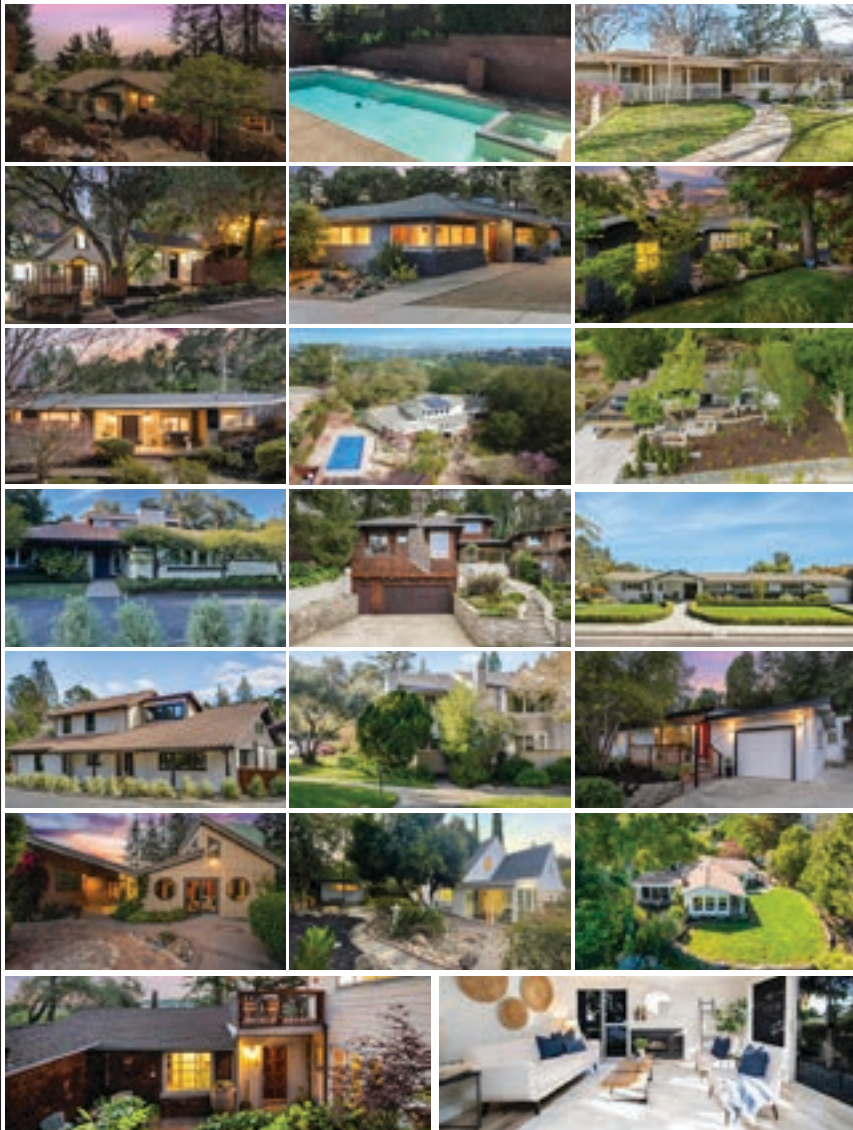


Happy Holidays

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	12	\$825,000	\$5,195,000
MORAGA	6	\$560,000	\$2,950,000
ORINDA	13	\$1,640,000	\$3,300,000

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

- 806 Hidden Pond Court, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 2784 SqFt, 1993 YrBlt, 10-19-22
- 1254 Juanita Drive, \$1,349,000, 5 Bdrms, 2425 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 10-28-22, Previous Sale: \$805,000, 11-08-04
- 810 Mariposa Road, \$2,120,000, 3 Bdrms, 2546 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 10-24-22, Previous Sale: \$885,000, 10-18-01
- 3272 Marlene Drive, \$825,000, 3 Bdrms, 1160 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 10-21-22, Previous Sale: \$490,000, 08-06-13
- 612 Michael Lane, \$1,350,000, 4 Bdrms, 1534 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-18-22
- 1171 Monticello Road, \$5,195,000, 4 Bdrms, 3570 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-21-22, Previous Sale: \$5,195,000, 05-20-22
- 3838 Palo Alto Drive, \$3,725,000, 4 Bdrms, 3440 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-26-22, Previous Sale: \$2,630,000, 02-25-20
- 26 Reliez Valley Court, \$1,939,000, 4 Bdrms, 3216 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 10-20-22, Previous Sale: \$275,000, 12-01-79
- 9 Ruth Court, \$1,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 1596 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 10-19-22, Previous Sale: \$174,000, 01-01-87
- 13 Shreve Lane, \$1,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 1962 SqFt, 2013 YrBlt, 10-21-22
- 10 Smoketree Court, \$1,280,000, 4 Bdrms, 1604 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-17-22, Previous Sale: \$595,000, 06-17-03
- 3377 West Terrace, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 1710 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 10-17-22

MORAGA

- 1982 Ascot Drive #C, \$560,000, 3 Bdrms, 1473 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 10-19-22, Previous Sale: \$570,000, 06-12-18
- 2135 Ascot Drive #23, \$755,000, 2 Bdrms, 1529 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 10-21-22, Previous Sale: \$575,000, 10-04-16
- 899 Augusta Drive, \$1,475,000, 2 Bdrms, 1656 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 10-21-22, Previous Sale: \$690,000, 01-20-10
- 100 Corliss Drive, \$2,130,000, 3 Bdrms, 2417 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-27-22, Previous Sale: \$1,265,000, 03-03-09
- 178 Corliss Drive, \$2,685,000, 5 Bdrms, 2838 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 10-21-22
- 54 Merrill Circle, \$2,950,000, 5 Bdrms, 5051 SqFt, 1996 YrBlt, 10-20-22

ORINDA

- 58 East Altarinda Drive, \$1,960,000, 4 Bdrms, 2290 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 10-25-22, Previous Sale: \$1,205,000, 04-02-14
- 19 Candlestick Road, \$1,835,000, 4 Bdrms, 3063 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 10-20-22, Previous Sale: \$254,500, 08-01-80
- 10 Hazel Tree Ridge, \$1,660,000, 4 Bdrms, 2394 SqFt, 2014 YrBlt, 10-19-22
- 7 Hilldale Court, \$2,340,000, 5 Bdrms, 3602 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 10-20-22
- 239 Ivy Drive, \$1,645,000, 4 Bdrms, 2113 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-24-22
- 525 Kite Hill Terrace, \$2,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2437 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 10-19-22
- 15 La Cuesta Road, \$3,300,000, 6 Bdrms, 6125 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 10-19-22, Previous Sale: \$2,325,000, 07-11-06
- 32 Loma Vista Drive, \$2,415,000, 5 Bdrms, 3502 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 10-24-22, Previous Sale: \$455,000, 10-20-99
- 131 Meadow View Road, \$1,625,000, 3 Bdrms, 1590 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 10-27-22
- 160 Moraga Way, \$1,090,000, 3 Bdrms, 1693 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 10-25-22
- 109 Sleepy Hollow Lane, \$2,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2075 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 10-24-22, Previous Sale: \$1,615,000, 10-07-16
- 684 Tahos Road, \$1,900,000, 3 Bdrms, 1862 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-17-22, Previous Sale: \$1,077,000, 08-27-13
- 60 Tarry Lane, \$2,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 3022 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 10-24-22, Previous Sale: \$1,275,000, 12-09-05

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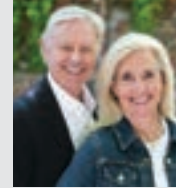
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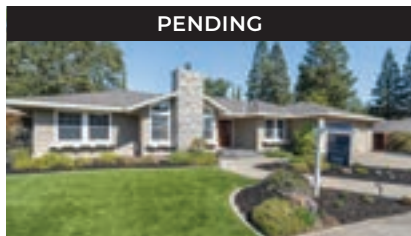


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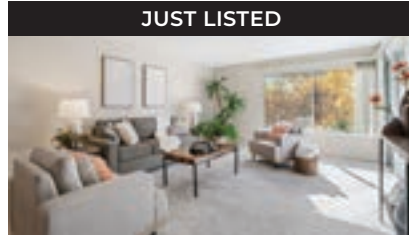
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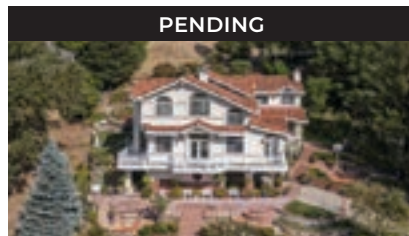
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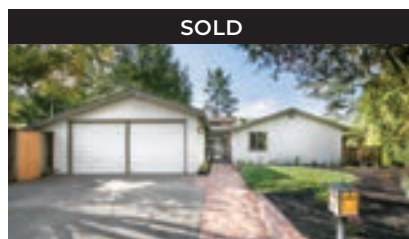
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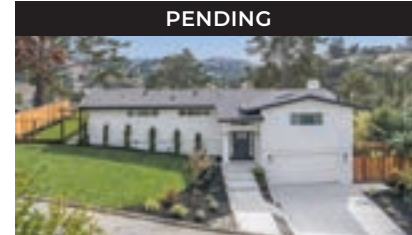
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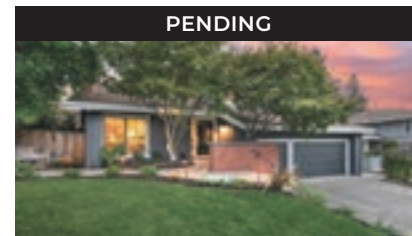
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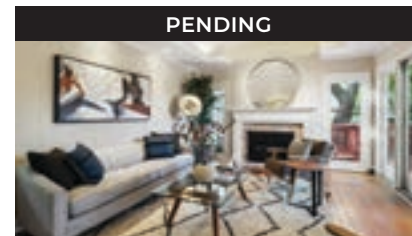
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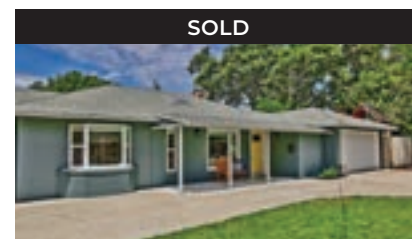
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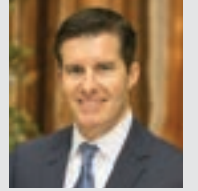
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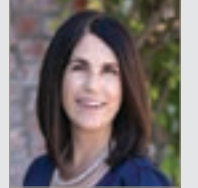
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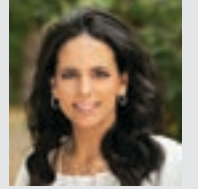
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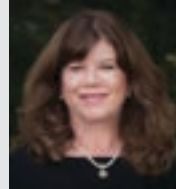
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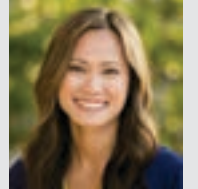
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Make this a magical and meaningful holiday season



Photos provided

Shopping local craft boutiques are a great way to support local artisans and find unique gift items.

By Jennifer Raftis, CPO

When did the magic of the holidays become surviving the holidays? I enjoy the holiday season because it inspires people to focus on family, friends and our communities. Driving through the neighborhoods and seeing the lights on the houses helps remind me that we live in a special place where the entire community is celebrating all together. The lights, music and festive decor are where the magic begins for me.

For years, my Lamorinda neighborhood would hand out little paper bags with tea lights to be lit on the evening of Dec. 24. Each house would receive bags and candles and we would line them up on the curb in front of our houses. After dark, on Christmas eve, we would drive down the streets and tell the kids the candles were to help light the way for the reindeer. Even though my kids are now grown, I still feel the magic on Dec. 24.

Magical Traditions

A long time ago, I decided to make traditions a priority. My family made dough ornaments, cookies and meals together. For example, on Thanksgiving, everyone was responsible for part of the meal. Having the entire family working together (in a small kitchen) was memory making at its best (good and bad). Nothing is better than surrounding yourself with people you love. Our family also loved driving around the neighborhoods in the evening, admiring the holiday lights with holiday music blaring and steaming cups of hot chocolate in our mugs.

Another fun tradition was planning a caroling party with our neighborhood. We had jingle bells, holiday hats and custom song sheets along with flash lights and very warm coats (it was always freezing). We would start the party with fun appetizers and hot drinks at one of our houses, then carol around the neighborhood for hours and come back for desserts.

There are many memories associated with the holidays, some going back to our own childhoods. One of my dear clients told me of his first memory of shopping during the holidays at Macy's and how scared he was to ride the elevator (memories are memories ... good or scary). He also reminded me of how special it would make him feel when his family went to Orchard's nursery in Lafayette to see all of the holiday displays.

How do we focus on the magic and also make our gift giving more meaningful?

The most popular gift I gave my kids last year cost about \$4.50 and trust me, it wasn't about the object. Last year my friend told me about these cute toothbrushes that had rainbow bristles. She sent me the link and I discovered the shop owner was a part of the LGBTQIA+ community and the business itself was 100% women owned. It was so meaningful to my kids that I supported this small business. That was when I realized how meaningful it is to purchase with intention. I definitely had an "I'm proud of me" moment.

Where you shop matters

We live in an instant gratification world and packages showing up on our doorstep is convenient but where the heck is the magic in that? Even though it's annoying that the holiday season starts in October (commercialism), that is when all the warm feelings can begin.

Does anyone remember going into a darling, festively decorated store where the holiday music is playing and you could take your time to walk down the aisles? There is magic in finding that "perfect gift" and you smile at the thought of seeing the look on their face when they open it – also, the adrenaline from knowing you just "nailed it." It's hard to replicate that experience when you sit at your computer pushing "purchase and send" and your package arrives at your door the next day (often with materials that you cannot recycle).

If we carefully plan our time, we can often shop when it's not so busy and really enjoy the experience.

... continued on Page D8



Tom Stack

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50 Meadow View Rd, Orinda
461 Ridgeview Dr., Pleasant Hill
30 Parklane Dr., Orinda
27 Woodland Rd., Orinda
21 Monte Veda Dr., Orinda

92 Coral Dr., Orinda
65 Meadow View Rd., Orinda
44 Ivy Dr., Orinda
30 E. Altarinda Dr., Orinda
9 Bel Air Dr., Orinda
50 Woodbury Highlands, Lafayette
20 El Gavilan Road, Orinda
589 Tahos Road, Orinda
52 Via Floreado, Orinda

If you are thinking of buying or selling in the Lamorinda area in 2023, give me a call. I specialize in bringing buyers and sellers together to create happy moments!

925.980.3829
Shannon@ShannonConner.com
ShannonConner.com

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Make this a magical and meaningful holiday season



A magical holiday tradition of lighting the streets on Dec. 24.



Enjoy a magical holiday season!

... continued from Page D4

Supporting your local brick and mortar stores is meaningful especially when it's located in your hometown. Shop local and support your community. They need you to survive.

Gift Ideas

- 1) Support your local businesses. Your hometown's business is there for you; help to keep them in business. Typically, the customer service is top notch, returns are easy and you don't have to break down and recycle a huge cardboard box.
 - 2) Buy consumables - baked goods, food baskets, wine, tea, coffee, chocolates (local holiday craft markets).
 - 3) Support companies that are women or minority owned.
 - 4) Search for "companies that use recyclable packaging."
 - 5) Frequent companies that give a portion of the proceeds to a charity (many Etsy shops donate to charity).
 - 6) Patronize local craft boutiques. You can support local artisans and find unique gift items. Look for local event listings on social media.
 - 7) Purchase tickets of any kind for any event - theater, community events, opera, jazz, musicals, plays, concerts, comedy clubs; Sports - baseball, basketball, football, hockey, college games; Museums - Leshner, MOMA, Exploratorium, Asian Museum; Activities - skiing, mini golf, go-karts, paintball, Color Me Mine, laser tag, rock climbing, city tours, Segway tours; Classes - art, cooking, music, dance, photography, tennis/pickleball. (Check out classbento.com for more classes.)
- Lastly, give the gift of your time – doing anything together. Hands down, the most valuable gift we can give is our time. The gift of time means "I want to be with you, our relationship is important and I

want to create memories together." Keep that in mind when trying to think of the perfect gift for your parents.

Have a magical holiday season!

Professional Organizer, Jennifer Raftis, CPO® founded Efficiency Matters, LLC to help you with all of your organizing needs for your home and business. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and an active board member with NAPO, National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals.

She is also an independent representative for The Container Store and has expertise in designing closets, garages, pantries, playrooms and more. In addition, she is a Corporate Organizing and Productivity Consultant and has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the U.S. Another large part of her business is move management especially working with seniors who are downsizing. She and her husband have lived in Moraga for 30 years, raising 3 kids and working countless volunteer hours with many local non-profit organizations and schools. Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com, 925-698-3756 www.efficiencymattersllc.com



Lamorinda home sales recorded

... continued from Page D2

ORINDA

- 58 East Altarinda Drive, \$1,960,000, 4 Bdrms, 2290 SqFt,
1974 YrBlt, 10-25-22, Previous Sale: \$1,205,000, 04-02-14
- 19 Candlestick Road, \$1,835,000, 4 Bdrms, 3063 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 10-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$254,500, 08-01-80
- 10 Hazel Tree Ridge, \$1,660,000, 4 Bdrms, 2394 SqFt, 2014 YrBlt, 10-19-22
- 7 Hilldale Court, \$2,340,000, 5 Bdrms, 3602 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 10-20-22
- 239 Ivy Drive, \$1,645,000, 4 Bdrms, 2113 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-24-22
- 525 Kite Hill Terrace, \$2,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2437 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 10-19-22
- 15 La Cuesta Road, \$3,300,000, 6 Bdrms, 6125 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 10-19-22,
Previous Sale: \$2,325,000, 07-11-06
- 32 Loma Vista Drive, \$2,415,000, 5 Bdrms, 3502 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 10-24-22,
Previous Sale: \$455,000, 10-20-99
- 131 Meadow View Road, \$1,625,000, 3 Bdrms, 1590 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 10-27-22
- 160 Moraga Way, \$1,090,000, 3 Bdrms, 1693 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 10-25-22
- 109 Sleepy Hollow Lane, \$2,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2075 SqFt,
1955 YrBlt, 10-24-22, Previous Sale: \$1,615,000, 10-07-16
- 684 Tahos Road, \$1,900,000, 3 Bdrms, 1862 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-17-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,077,000, 08-27-13
- 60 Tarry Lane, \$2,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 3022 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 10-24-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,275,000, 12-09-05
- 216 The Knolls, \$1,640,000, 3 Bdrms, 2408 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 10-24-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,450,000, 10-15-20



WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY HAPPINESS IN THE NEW YEAR

Thank you to all of the wonderful clients
I worked with in 2022!



Jennie Swan

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COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

Goddess Gardener December Garden Tips

CONSIDER purchasing a living Christmas tree instead of a cut one. Garden centers have a selection of cypress, pine, fir, and even rosemary clipped to resemble a Christmas tree. Place your tree in a charming copper container or wrap it with festive fabric. Live trees will survive year after year and prices are reasonable.

FERTILIZE shrubs and trees after all the leaves have fallen to provide food to last for the season.

RAKE the overabundance of leaves in your gardens to add to the compost pile.

RESEED lawns with Pearl's Premium Ultra Low Maintenance Lawn Seed if you are keeping a lawn. The roots grow down to six feet with 75% less water, and no chemicals are needed which keeps children, animals, pollinators, and biodiversity safer. Pearl's Premium lawn seed sequesters 10 times the carbon compared to shallow root grass. Best of all, scatter it over your existing grass to outcompete everything. www.PearlsPremium.com

GATHER pinecones, berries, twigs, and grasses to add to your arrangements.

ATTRACT birds to your backyard throughout the cold months by keeping feeders filled and baths ready.

PICK persimmons, pomegranates, quince, and lemons to use in displays and holiday cooking.

PRUNE dormant fruit trees including peach, apricot, prune, plum, apple, and pear. Save the wood for barbecues next summer.

LIGHT up your decorations with battery-powered twinkle lights, or other outdoor lights set to timers. Trees trimmed with lights inspire delight.

HARVEST cauliflower, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts.

ALLOW rosehips and berries to remain on the bushes as holiday bird feasts and picturesque ornaments.

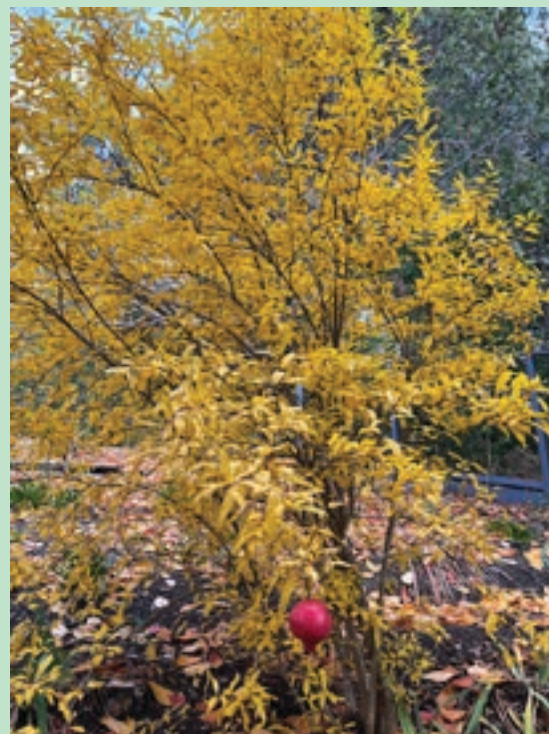
Nature provides enough material to decorate the holidays with ornaments as glorious as cathedrals. Embrace them as part of your festivities. Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Holidays!



The third flush of florets of cauliflowers.



Golden orbs of Meyer lemons.



Single pomegranate dangles from yellow-leaved branches.



Red nandina berries are beautiful but poisonous.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Saturday, Dec. 10 is Santa Day at 5A in collaboration with Be the Star You Are!® charity. Come get your photo taken with Santa and his elf plus a book signing of the children's book, "No Barnyard Bullies," the perfect holiday gift delivering kindness. Thanks to Mark Hoogs of State Farm Insurance (www.TeamHoogs.com) for sponsoring BTSYA. Info: www.bethestaryouare.org/copy-of-events



Cynthia Brian by the Meyer lemon tree.

Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian 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. Her newest children's picture book, No Barnyard Bullies, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures is available now at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store For an invitation to hang out with Cynthia for fun virtual events, activities, conversations, and exclusive experiences, buy StarStyle® NFTs at <https://StarStyleCommunity.com> Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com <https://www.GoddessGardener.com>

... continued from Page D1

Here are a few suggestions to decorate safely:

Light your yuletide with the freshest tree whether you buy a tree from a lot or cut one yourself. Look for ultra-green needles that are not falling off the tree. Shake the tree and if the needles stay put, you have a winner.

If your tree is not a living tree, soak your tree for 24 hours before installing it and keep the basin always filled with water.

Keep all trees, branches, and flammable decorations away from fireplaces, radiators, and high-traffic areas.

Hang stockings on chimneys only when there is no fire burning.

Buy new lights that have been tested by the Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Make sure that lights for your garden are labeled as outdoor capable. All lights need good wiring, devoid of any broken or cracked sockets, frayed wires, or loose connections. Only use extension cords that are designed for the outdoors and beware of the number of light sets that may be attached.

Never add electric lights to metallic ornamentations as you could be exposing yourself to electrocution.

When climbing ladders, use the buddy system.

Unplug lights and all electrical devices whenever you leave the premises and especially when you go to bed.

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40 Via Floreado
Charming 5 bd/ 3.5 ba gem is full of old-world features yet perfectly updated w/ all the modern amenities!

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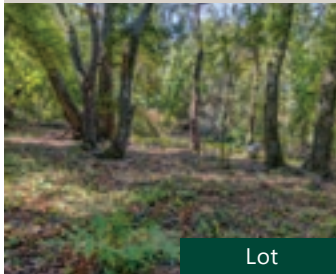
ORINDA



2 Orchard Court
Home sweet home! 3 bd/ 2 ba home needs lots of TLC now & is awaiting the next generation!

\$1,025,000

ORINDA

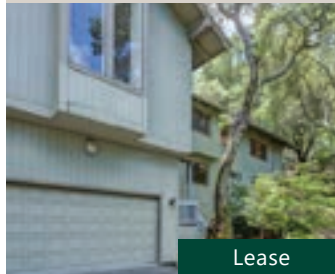


Lot

0 Camino Del Monte
Come see this desirable lot located minutes from Hwy 24/BART, top rated schools, downtown, regional parks & views!

\$225,000

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19 Woodcrest Road
Fabulous Glorietta location! Spacious, light & bright 4 bd/ 2.5 ba home with high ceilings and beautiful views!

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1336 San Reliez Court
Rare opportunity on .75 acre lot with 5 bd/ 3.5 ba 4098 sq.ft. in the heart of Springhill!

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LAFAYETTE



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4010 Woodside Court
Spacious 4 bd/ 3 ba home w/ sparkling pool, formal living room & hardwood floors. Private location w/ big views!

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MORAGA



92 Warfield Drive
Classic two story 5 bd/ 3 ba home sits on a private .39 acre parcel w/ 2527 sq.ft of a fully functional floor plan!

\$1,945,000

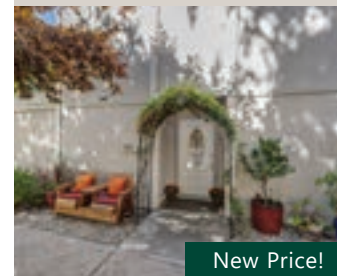
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