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Award-winning bartender Cynthia Songco, right, keeps thirsty revelers' glasses filled at Casa Orinda on New Year's Eve.

Revelers ring in the new year after heavy downpour saturates Lamorinda

Lamorinda residents of all ages gathered at various watering holes and restaurants to celebrate the end of 2022 and usher in a hopeful and happy new year, to be filled with many more opportunities for fellowship and fun.

The day's deluge had the chance of derailing party plans. Sandbags were being offered through the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District for Lafayette residents, and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District had several locations set up for sand bag filling in Moraga and Orinda. Roads were closed at different locations throughout Lamorinda on Dec. 31, with Nixle alerts from local police departments pinging on phones reminding folks to be careful when driving on slick surfaces, and ride apps like Uber sent out notices that rides could not be guaranteed after 5 p.m. on New Year's Eve due to high demand. But the rains didn't dampen any spirits and the heavy New Year's Eve downpour didn't keep revelers away, who despite the inclement weather, 'poured' into local establishments to ring in the New Year, donning festive and sometimes silly attire amid sparkling decor at Casa Orinda, the Moraga Country Club, Canyon Club Brewery in Moraga, as well as Postino and the Roundup Saloon in Lafayette (see more photos on Page A8).

Slick roads and swollen creeks aside, the joy on the faces of folks was evident – a wonderful respite after so many months of lockdowns and COVID restrictions. – J. Wake



Photos Jeff Heyman

Two sisters seemingly can't wait for 2023 to arrive at the Canyon Club Brewery in Moraga.

... continued on Page A8



Advertising

- Not to be missed B3
- How to contact us C3
- Obituary B2
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- Community Service C3
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Local teens reflect on 2022

By Ashley Dong

Ring in the New Year is a time for reflection, a time to think about all that has happened in the past year and all that is to come. For teenagers, in many ways, 2022 was a return to normalcy, especially after California officially lifted its mask mandate in March.

"I will miss the feeling of taking my first international trip after COVID," high school junior Jason Wagner said. "I went to France in April and was so excited to have the opportunity to do something I love again: international travel."

However, 2022 was also an unprecedented year in many ways: Russia invaded Ukraine, the world population hit 8 billion, the first all-woman team refereed at the World Cup. With a lot of global uncertainty, many nationwide issues remain unresolved. "One of the biggest issues society faces right now is the political division and gridlock, which hinders progress and leads to the neglect of significant problems such as climate change and the fund-

ing of public education," high school junior Vivienne Ardnt said.

"A big issue facing society right now is our tolerance of violence, regarding gun violence specifically, because not enough is being done to resolve this pressing problem," high school sophomore Caleb Elkind said.

In addition, as a smaller community, Lamorinda has struggled with its own issues. "I think a huge issue for Lamorinda is the persistent academic pressure, especially for students in high school," Ardnt said.

Now, at the start of 2023, many teenagers take the time to reflect on what they learned and the knowledge they accumulated over the past hectic year. "My biggest takeaway from 2022 was that you can only control what you can control, if that makes sense. If you put in your best effort, then you can't irrationally stress about the outcome, because you know you've done everything you can," high school senior Grace Liu said.

"My biggest lesson learned from 2022 is this: the best way to approach something you don't want to

do is to take the small step of starting it. A lot of times, I've been scared to start something because it felt impossible to tackle," high school junior Nicole Guo said. "But, I've realized that the hardest step is just to start it, and once you get the momentum, it becomes a lot easier."

In addition to contemplating the past year, many set their hopes and resolutions for the upcoming year. "I am optimistic that I will get a second shot at some of the things I could improve on from 2022 – dance auditions, spending more quality time with my family, and keeping my plants alive," Ardnt said.

"In 2023, I hope to spend my time wisely and experience new things. I'm excited to create new memories with the people I care about," Elkind said.

"There are things I'll miss about high school – and I'll definitely miss home – but, for 2023, I'm excited to meet new people, live in a new place, and take classes in topics I'm really interested in but never had the opportunity to explore before," Liu, an excited new admit to Cornell University, said.

So, pop open that fizzy champagne – or apple cider – and here's to a wonderful new year, 2023!

Civic News A1-A8

New playground equipment installed at Moraga Commons - Page A4

Public Safety

Keeping homes safe during winter months - Page A8

Life in Lamorinda B1-B3

Interesting exhibit discussions and openings in Lamorinda - Page B1



Sports C1-C3

Lamorinda wrestling returns to a sense of normalcy - Page C1



Our Homes D1-D8

Garden trends and tips for 2023 - Page D1

