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Acalanes volleyball vs Bishop O'Dowd (33) Joseph Costelli, Liam Hill and Douglas Roberts (white) Photo Jon Kingdon

Lamorinda Volleyball hits new heights

By Jon Kingdon

With Acalanes starting off strong, Campolindo coming off winning the NCS and a new coach at Miramonte, things are looking up for the Lamorinda volleyball teams, each in their own unique way.

Acalanes

Despite a 9-13 record last season, Acalanes made it to the semifinals in the North Coast Sectional tournament. With the departure of coach Mark Passalacqua, Alexis Hammer, who was the Dons JV head coach last year, has carried over the late season success of the team to this season.

After losing their first two games, the Dons have won their last seven games, six of them under tournament conditions. The energy and the commitment of the team is what Hammer most appreciates. "I've learned that if I have even one little lull in practice, they're going to go crazy and just start hitting balls back and forth," Hammer said. "So, they have to be constantly moving, which is a really good thing to have as a coach. For example, if I tell them to go get a water break, they'll say no, let's do hitting lines."

Hammer, a longtime volleyball player, played at Alhambra High School and Simpson College (IA), is currently a student teacher at the Stanley Middle School and has had no problems in transitioning to the varsity. "I coached a lot of players on the JV team last year, and I assisted with the varsity at times with Mark, so I've coached all these boys before in one way or another," Hammer said. "The boys have been amazing players and have been super respectful so it has always been fun coming in the gym and being able to coach them to improve their game."

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Saint Mary's seeded 5th in NCAA Tournament



SMC coach Randy Bennett and the team hear seeding on March 12. Photo Ben Enos

By Jon Kingdon

For the 15th straight season, and the 16th time, Saint Mary's will be playing in the post season under Coach Randy Bennett. This is the ninth time Saint Mary's will be

playing in the NCAA tournament, along with seven appearances in the National Invitational Tournament.

At the Saint Mary's University Credit Union Pavilion, in front of the team, family and fans, the Gaels learned by watching the video board, carrying the CBS broadcast, they were named the fifth seed in the West bracket and will be playing the 12th seeded Virginia Commonwealth in Albany, New York this Friday. With a win, Saint Mary's will be playing the winner of the fourth seeded University of Connecticut and 13th seeded Iona College (New York). The only time Saint Mary's and VCU have met was in the first round of the 2017 NCAA tournament with Saint Mary's winning 85-77.

For head coach Randy Bennett, despite knowing that the team was in the tournament, he still needed to hear it officially. "It's an unbelievable feeling," Bennett said. "You know that you're in, but before your name is called you're a little nervous and there's some anxiety. However, when your name is called, there's nothing like it and you don't even care what happens with the rest of the event."

Bennett made it a point to share the credit all around. "First I want to thank our fans," Bennett said. "We've been 32 and 2 at home the last two years and that's what has gotten us our five seeds the last two years. I also want to thank our administration, our players and especially our seniors, Logan Johnson, Kyle Bowen and Alex Ducas. They've been awesome and we couldn't have a better group of guys leading our program. They just care about winning and being a tight team."

Johnson believes that the experience in the tournament last year will really help the team this year.

... continued on Page A9

Tri-Cities City Council Meeting, March 15, 7 p.m.

St. Mary's College-Soda Center, Lafayette Conference Room, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga

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Public Safety

MOFD receives \$800K state grant - Page A10





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Council discusses potential state legislature grant projects; Pleasant Hill Road Pathway project pulled from list for now



Conceptual image by Robert Lyman of Johnson Lyman Architects

A rendering of proposed pathway on Pleasant Hill Road near Acalanes High School.

By Lou Fancher

A considerable portion of the City Council's Feb. 27 meeting was devoted to a discussion and public comments about four Lafayette projects under review with potential to be submitted for possible grants to the state legislature. Community Project Funding projects are expected to be included as "earmarks" in upcoming appropriations bills.

The proposed projects included: "Synthetic Turf for City Fields" (\$2.5 million); "West Reach Creeks" (\$900,000); designs for the "Pedestrian & Bicycle Pathway Along the EBMUD Aqueduct Right-of-Way in Downtown Lafayette" (\$675,000); and "Pleasant Hill Road Pathway to Acalanes High School" (\$4.3 million).

According to the staff report presented by City Manager Niroop Srivatsa, installing synthetic turf in local city fields would save water, reduce maintenance costs, create (wild) pig proof fields, and allow for increased youth sport opportunities, notably, sports

actives which are currently underserved.

Parks and Recreation Director Jonathan Katayanagi clarified the benefits of adding turf and lights to city fields, noting that additional lighting would maximize the hours made available to sports teams and clubs. Several council members and members of the public noted concerns that artificial turf requires continuous repair and care, has potential environmental impacts, could cause injuries to athletes, and comes with no guarantee it will deter the pig invasions that have haunted local fields during the last few years.

The creeks project would stabilize the banks of Lafayette Creek, restore native riparian wildlife habitat, and serve as a vehicle to educate the public about climate change-related resilience.

The designs for a pedestrian and bicycle pathway along the aqueduct that would ultimately provide a low-stress pedestrian and bicycle right-of-way through Lafayette's downtown were a "new ask" added to the list to support what the

report said is "a vibrant area that includes a mix of residential, public transit, commercial, educational and institutional land uses."

The Pleasant Hill Road pathway project involving funding for a multi-use pathway down the center of Pleasant Hill Road between Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Deer Hill Road/Stanley Boulevard would, according to the staff report, advance safe routes to school, reduce automobile trips and emissions, increase user safety – a claim that received considerable, broad-based pushback during public comments – and complete a regional bikeway and walkway network.

Pleasant Hill Road is a major arterial that can serve up to 36,000 vehicles per day. It is a connector to Highway 24 on-ramps and off-ramps and located immediately south of Acalanes High School and Springhill Elementary School. Pedestrians and bicyclists currently need to cross the freeway on-ramps and off-ramps when commuting to either school.

The project's design is underway and if completed, would close a gap between northeast, central, and southern Lafayette and connect to the East Bay Regional Park District's Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail. The pathway would be 14 feet wide and separated from vehicle traffic by vertical concrete barriers on either side. In order to accommodate this design, the parking on Pleasant Hill Road between Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Stanley Boulevard / Deer Hill Road and the existing dedicated northbound right turn from Pleasant Hill Road to Stanley Boulevard would be eliminated. The city's website

emphasizes in a project overview that no decision has been made about preserving or eliminating the right turn lane while the pros and cons of two options continue to be evaluated.

During public comment, residents spoke overwhelmingly about three issues: installing synthetic turf at ball-parks, the need for a usage survey on the proposed Acalanes bike path, and the council's "rush-to-decide" timing they said did not allow for adequate study and public input to take place.

Lauren Herpich said, "No one wants to see the Pleasant Hill and dedicated bike and pathway project done." She believes funding requests should shift and be aimed at furthering the Safe Routes to Schools projects that have already been vetted.

Brad Rosenthal highlighted the bike path on Pleasant Hill Road and suggested a lack of studies had been done regarding safety and, especially, the impact the project would have that is related to additional traffic. The other path project, near the EBMUD aqueduct, he said, is in a high water table area and, especially with the exacerbated difficulties during rainy years like the current one, warrants more attention. Rosenthal questioned the path's usage because it would benefit only certain parts of the area and therefore more studies must be conducted.

Carol Singer raised a practical point and said students at Acalanes High School should be involved in the discussion about the multi-use pathway on Pleasant Hill Road.

Others requested more community meetings be held about Pleasant Hill Road issues

and questioned an engineer's reports and statements they said inaccurately assessed the cost of an alternative pedestrian overpass that had been submitted by a Lafayette resident. (Design plans for the alternative project, in addition to safety and usage features, has a budget of \$3 million, versus the city's \$4.3 million project.) Several people said the Pleasant Hill Road report was rushed, lacked sufficient study, and failed to give serious consideration to alternatives proposed by Lafayette citizens.

More than one person proposed using funding for projects that are already underway, such as road striping and other elements in the Safe Routes to School project that are still unfunded years after they were initiated.

In response to residents' concerns regarding short time frames, the city manager suggested developing a calendar for future years so council members will consider projects well in advance of having to make decisions. Her idea received strong support from the city council.

The council decided unanimously to put forward three of the four projects: The play field turf and lights; the pedestrian and bicycle pathway along the EBMUD aqueduct; and the West Reach Creeks project. If Parks and Recreation staff, after further study, decide they do not want to proceed with installing artificial turf, council will decline any funds applying to turf.

The Pleasant Hill Road Pathway was pulled to allow more time for studies to be conducted and to fully consider the significant public input.

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Council approves proposals for PD's 'Go Slow Lafayette' campaign



Photo Jeff Heyman

Lafayette's Chief of Police Ben Alldritt

By Elaine Borden Chandler

Lafayette's Chief of Police Ben Alldritt gave a presentation on Lafayette PD's "Go Slow Lafayette" campaign to the City Council on Feb. 27. The campaign is focused on improving pedestrian and traffic safety within Lafayette. The presentation covered Alldritt's main proposal, the purchase of four different kinds of equipment, and a proposal from Lafayette Director of Engineering and Public Works Mike Moran to update the Lafayette Traffic Calming Program policy document.

While some citizens have called for greater police officer presence in monitoring drivers, Alldritt instead recommends the use of technology. "For better or for worse, we're a very finite resource as far as officers go," he said. He emphasized that the campaign is currently in its information gathering phase where technology is more effective and cost efficient.

The first of the technology requested are two portable radar trailers, also known as speed trailers, which are large wheeled signs that inform drivers of their current speed from the sides of roads. "Our existing speed trailer is pretty much defunct," Alldritt said. The two new speed trailers will have the additional capability of recording the speeds of passing cars and each cost approximately \$9,000.

The second items proposed are two battery operated portable radar signs. These signs would record and display drivers' speeds, and could be moved to various locations. Lafayette PD currently has one portable radar sign that inform drivers of their current speed. Each sign costs approximately \$4,200.

The third kind of technology are two low-profile radar boxes that record vehicle speed but do not display

it. Unlike the radar trailers and portable radar signs, they are not intended to make drivers slow down but instead to accurately collect drivers' speeds without alerting them. They will be placed in areas where speeding is particularly problematic. The police department has one of these but it is nearly nonoperational.

The fourth items are two lidar units for speed enforcement. These are commonly known as speed guns and are used by officers to accurately determine a driver's speed. These new lidar units are able to film and record speed violations, which the two current lidar units owned by the PD do not. Each unit costs approximately \$6,200.

Alldritt firmly stated that none of this technology, except the two lidar units for speed enforcement, collect any personal details and none of the information shared with the city or public will include personal information.

"The goal behind collecting the data is deploying our resources at the PD more wisely or more efficiently; also sharing this information with the council, share it with the public, and share it with Mike and his team [...] when we do analysis and when we get requests for various speed bumps or additional signage or reducing the speed limits in areas," Alldritt said. "We'd make this data publicly available on the city's website." He estimated the overall cost of these purchases would be \$50,000-\$60,000 and would be covered by the existing Police Services budget.

Moran then presented his proposal to update the Lafayette Traffic Calming Guide, last revised in 2003. Lafayette Public Works and Planning is currently finishing a statewide local roadway safety plan and this guide would fill in the details of that broader document. Moran noted that the information gathering technology proposed by Alldritt would complement this guide. Part of the guide will specifically state that Transportation Action Requests from residents for traffic calming will require data to support them and publicly available information gathered by the proposed technologies would greatly help citizens in their requests.

The proposals were complimented by Mayor Carl Anduri, Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok, and Council Member Robert Swanson. Following a motion from Candell, the Council unanimously voted to authorize both proposals.

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



Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Monday, March 27, 7 p.m.
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

City Council Tri-Cities Meeting
March 15, 7 p.m.
St. Mary's College-Soda Center,

Lafayette Conference Room
1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga

Planning Commission Meeting

Tuesday, March 20, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Design Review

Wednesday, March 29, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
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MORAGA

Town Council:

Special meeting Wednesday, March 22, 5:30 p.m.

Regular meeting Wednesday, March 22, 6:30 p.m.

Tri-Cities Council Meeting

Wednesday, March 15, 7 p.m.

St. Mary's College-Soda Center, Lafayette Conference Room

1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga

Planning Commission: Tuesday, March 21, 6:30 p.m.

Moraga School District Board Meetings:

Tuesday, April 18, 6 p.m. www.moraga.k12.ca.us.



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Update on the town's mid-year financial condition

By Vera Kochan

Moraga's Fiscal Year 2022-23 Operating and Capital Improvement Budgets were adopted in June 2022. The mid-year report gives the opportunity to assess any revenues and expenditures thus far, as well as identify major variances between actual transactions and estimated budget figures. Administrative Services Director Annie To's Feb. 22 staff report detailed the results.

With regards to Fund 101 – General Fund FY 2022-23 proposed ending fund balance: The ending fund balance on the FY 2021-22 (per Annual Comprehensive Financial Report) was \$6,159,038; the ending fund balance (per town council adopted budget) was \$5,429,742, making the total proposed FY 2022-23 Mid-Year Budget Adjustments (pending town council review and approval) \$729,296.

One of the town's major sources of revenue for the General Fund are property taxes which amount to 53% and are considered the largest and most stable. The town receives 5.3% of 1% of property taxes. The other major source of revenue comes from sales and use taxes which con-

tribute 14% of revenues.

The staff's proposed FY 2022-23 transfer-out from General Fund to Asset Replacement (which since 1989, was established to provide for the expected replacement of the town's assets, such as vehicles, roofs, and other building components) was \$325,000. However, the town council voted to increase the amount to \$650,000.

Parks and Recreation's proposed Mid-Year Budget revenue adjustments include: increased camp capacity, and transportation revenue; Hacienda Hoppy Hour event; Wedgewood percentage rent for repairs; transfer-ins due to gopher abatement, electrical work at the library, and playground mulch all totaling \$75,520.

Staff had recommended a \$75,000 transfer-in revenue for an evacuation study to come from the Palos Colordos account, but the council agreed that it should be paid from the General Fund.

Expenditures budget adjustments for Parks and Rec include: a transfer-out to Art in Public Spaces; temporary salaries; supplies and materials; senior programs; special event expenses; Hacienda contract services, and building/grounds maintenance

(heating and roof); library contract services; parks contract services (playground mulch and gopher abatement); and fuel/oil. This totals out to \$84,250.

Expenditure budget adjustments for the Moraga Police Department \$30,000 (contract services and gas/oil); Planning Department \$75,000 (contract services); and Public Works Department \$18,000 (temporary salaries) total \$123,000.

The General Fund Fiscal Impact of the Proposed Mid-Year Budget Adjustments show: Projected Year-End Fund Balance (Adopted Budget) of \$6,159,038. The Proposed Adjusted Budget is \$6,201,614. The variance between the two is \$42,577 with the percentage of General Fund Reserve after the Proposed Adjusted Mid-Year Budget being 56.4%.

This winter's series of storms had a negative monetary impact on the town. The Public Works total actual estimated costs came to \$56,212. This included: emergency landslide cleanup, tree services, and Geotech services, as well as traffic striping and signage. Parks/Open Space costs are \$33,650 for Mullholand Ridge maintenance and fire abatement.

Moraga appoints new town manager



Photo courtesy Town of Moraga

Scott Mitnick

By Vera Kochan

The Moraga Town Council wasted no time in looking for a new town manager by creating an ad hoc committee, hiring an executive search firm, soliciting staff and resident feedback, and sifting through approximately 40 applicants vying for the position. The search has ended with the March 8 appointment of a new permanent town manager, Scott Mitnick.

With three decades of public service under his belt, Mitnick's professional background includes over 20 years of executive level experience,

16 of which saw him as either a city manager or county administrator. His disaster planning and emergency response experience were instrumental in helping him lead Sutter County through the Oroville Dam evacuation in 2017. Mitnick's strong background in public finance, fiscal management, public sector, and private industry experience have helped to check off many boxes on Moraga's town manager wish list.

"Scott is a consummate professional, who also is open, warm and approachable," stated Mayor Renata Sos in a recent press release.

"The Council is confident that he will manage the Town offices with effectiveness and empathy and will quickly become a positive presence in our community. He is the right person to help steer the Town through our many opportunities and challenges today and in the years to come."

Mitnick personally attended the March 8 town council meeting with one of his twin sons, Michael, in the audience. He told the assembled that he takes to heart part of a 2,000-year-old Greek code of civic responsibility called the Athenian Oath: "Leave the city better than you found it." Mitnick explained that he had those words framed and always lo-

cated by his office door, so that at the end of each day he looks at them and hopes that he left the community better than he found it.

Currently residing in Southern California, Mitnick has had an eye on the Lamorinda area for quite some time. When Moraga's town manager position became available, it was too good to be true. He appreciates all of the open space and hillsides, the parks, schools and overall quality of life. He's looking forward to a working partnership with Saint Mary's College, the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, the Moraga School District, and local businesses.

Besides an annual salary that is competitive with both Orinda and Lafayette's city manager positions, Moraga will help Mitnick make a permanent relocation to town by providing a housing rental allowance for six months, along with a relocation allowance to help with the move from Southern California to the town. His first day on the job will be April 10.

"I love public service," Mitnick stated. "There's nothing I'd rather do. Being a town manager, I believe, is the best job you could possibly have. Public service is a privilege, but to be a town manager is an honor."

Proclamation issued to SMC basketball coach for 500th win

By Vera Kochan

The Town of Moraga issued a proclamation during the Feb. 15 town council meeting honoring Saint Mary's College basketball head coach Randy Bennett for his team's 500th win on Feb. 2 against the University of San Francisco. The presentation was intended to be made during SMC's home game against the University of the Pacific on Feb. 23, but according to Moraga Mayor Renata Sos, Bennett did not want

his team to be distracted from the game.

This is Bennett's 22nd year at SMC where he has, to date, racked up 16 postseason appearances, five West Coast Conference (WCC) Coach of the Year honors, and according to the proclamation, "numerous top 20 rankings in the AP and Coaches Polls, multiple All-WCC and All-American honors for his players, and players who continued on to the NBA."

Bennett became SMC's 27th head coach in 2001, and thanks to his winning ways

has helped to put the town on the sports world's radar. He and his wife, Darlene, along with their two sons, Chase and Cade continue to call Moraga home.

"What distinguishes Coach Bennett in the world of collegiate athletics is his unwavering commitment to developing student athletes who not only excel at basketball but do so with hard work, integrity, teamwork and sportsmanship," reads the proclamation, while continuing to praise "his steadfast loyalty to Saint Mary's College and its community of faculty, staff and students, and his devotion to the Town of Moraga and its residents."

As of press time, the framed proclamation is still in the mayor's possession, waiting to be presented to its recipient. If the main concern to Bennett is distraction, fingers-crossed that it won't be delivered until a long postseason of tournament participation is over.

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A few reasons why horse sightings began to poop out along Moraga's streets

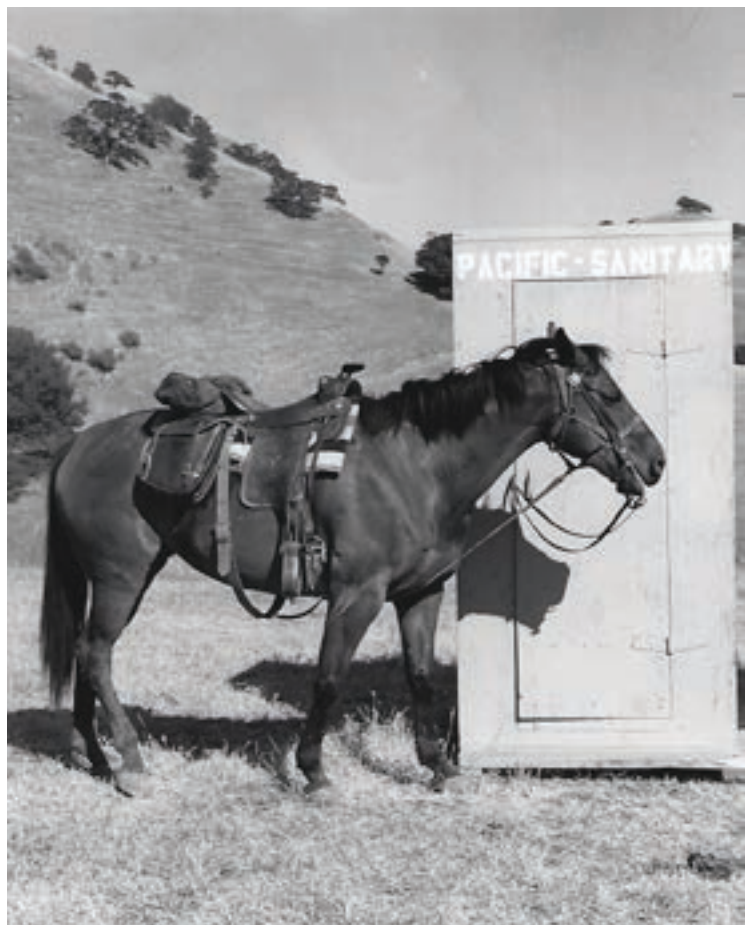


Photo courtesy Moraga Historical Society

If only more of these outhouses had dotted the streets of Moraga in the 1970s and '80s.

By Vera Kochan

Seeing horses and cattle on the hills of Moraga is a common sight. There was a time when you didn't have to look up at the hills to see horses, because they were walking down the streets of town carrying their owners to the Moraga Shopping Center, the library (formerly on School Street), and other strategic locations around town where a hitching post was available for the rider's convenience. However, the more populous the town became the more some folks took umbrage at what the horses left behind.

Back in May 1977, one resident wrote to the town council asking them to look into the problem. "Can something be done about the horse 'droppings' that are becoming more prevalent on our streets and what few sidewalks we have?" she asked. "It is not only offensive, inconsiderate and unhealthy (flies), but unappealing, unattractive and unappetizing as well." One can't help but wonder why she chose to include the word "unappetizing."

According to a June 1977 newspaper article, a resident of Campolindo Drive had asked the town's leaders whether they were going to pass an ordinance to control horse droppings. Then Town Manager Gary Chase explained that it wasn't the kind of regulation that the staff wanted to enforce administratively, but should be done on a "neighbor to neighbor" basis. The policy of the day was to respond to a call with two members of the Public Works Department's maintenance crew and a town truck.

The horse traffic slowly began to subside as the car traffic increased in conjunction with Moraga's burgeoning

population. Horse owners felt that the town's busy streets were no longer a safe place for their equine friends. Thus, the horse sightings and the "fall-out" over their sharing the road began to dwindle. But, that did not stop the great horse poop debate from making its way into the neighborhoods.

Horse manure, and its subsequent attraction of flies, turned one bucolic parcel of land along Camino Pablo across from Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, into a letter writing battle zone.

On Aug. 27, 1984, the pastor of St. Monica Catholic Church sent a letter to Moraga's Town Planner Dave Baker expressing concern that the parcel of land directly to the east of the church was being sold and advertised as "suitable for horses." Up until that point it was thought that the land had been used for sheep grazing. The letter stated, "It was our understanding that this was permitted since it was an existing use at the time of adoption of the town zoning ordinance."

Associate Town Planner Richard Chamberlain, in a Sept. 26 letter, replied, "The existing non-conforming status for livestock has terminated. Any request for horses or livestock would require a Use Permit with a Public Hearing by the Planning Commission. The meaning of the sales solicitation 'suitable for horses' is not very clear. I have already received several calls from prospective buyers who have questioned this."

Before December the property was purchased by a couple who was interested in keeping three horses on the 1.84 acres of land. They were advised by the town to "discuss your application with your neighbors prior to filing."

Copies of letters to neighbors can be found in the Moraga Historical Society's archives.

The new property owners sent an application form on Jan 21, 1985, to the Planning Commission along with a letter detailing their plans for keeping the horses and allaying any apprehensions their neighbors might have. "Manure can, if improperly cared for, create two problems: odor and flies. Manure which is spread in the fields will break down and replenish the soil causing neither odor nor flies. Manure in an enclosed area such as a stable or pen will and should be transferred daily to a compost bin which will eliminate flies (due to the high temperature of decomposition) and odor (when layered with garden clippings, old hay, and other organic material). As for noise and dust, which are listed in your request sheet, neither are problems associated with the maintenance of horses."

A week later, St. Monica's Church once again contacted the town noting that all 26 members of the parish council "voted unanimously to express its opposition to this proposal" and noting that representatives would be present at any public hearings to explain their position on the matter.

Another neighbor, located on the other side of the property, responded to the idea of more horses once again taking up residence at that Camino Pablo address. Besides sending a letter noting her displeasure to the new owners, she also contacted Moraga's Planning Commission. "I would like you to know that I am very much opposed to horses again being permitted on that property. The [previous owner's] horses were the one completely annoying element of my life here." She continued, "One of the reasons many of us supported incorporation for Moraga was that we would then have somewhat more to say about the introduction of horses, for instance, into a rather closely occupied neighborhood. Regardless of care and planning, horses are not in my estimation desirable as relatively close neighbors, particularly during the long hot summers that we have in Moraga."

In what appears to have

been an effort by the town to put the matter to rest, Contra Costa County's Health Services Department sent an inspector to assess the fly situation with regards to the horse manure issue. In a letter to the town, Senior Environmental Health Inspector Robert L. Leighton, R.S. stated, "There was a thin layer of dried manure, in the main corral, with no accumulation visible. No odor was detectable at that time, fecal or otherwise. There is no evidence of fly breeding in or around manure. The only flies present were on the face of the pony." The report added, "It

should be noted that the attraction of flies to manure is transitory, occurring when manure is fresh or piled and allowed to remain moist. Once dried there is no attraction to insects and, in fact, there is some evidence of repulsion under this circumstance."

With the inspector's report, the issue appeared to have pooped-out, and no one came forward to make another stink about it.

Special thanks to Moraga Historical Society President Susan Sperry and Archivist Bonnie Krames.

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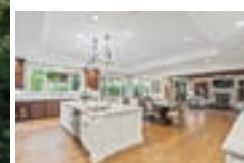


ESTATES IN HAPPY VALLEY

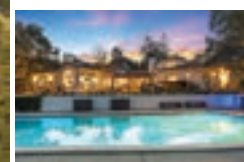
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MCF donates funds to town for restroom structure



Photo provided

The Moraga Community Foundation presented a \$104,320 check to the Town of Moraga at the town council's March 8 meeting to be applied to the town's procurement and delivery of the new ADA-accessible public restroom

structure at the Commons Park. Together with MCF's two previous \$100,000 donations, MCF has now donated \$304,320 toward the cost for the project.

-J. Wake

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COMPASS

Orinda mid-year budget adjustments are limited to two, budget remains balanced

By Sora O'Doherty

In one of two mid-cycle budget adjustments, Orinda found the funding to add one full-time-equivalent (FTE) position in Parks and Rec. The department, which is responsible for increased revenue during the six-month period of \$260,000,

had been one of the city areas hardest hit by the pandemic, with even the director of the department, Todd Trimble, laid off for a period, although he is now back to his full-time position. The new FTE position will be funded at \$126,225.

The other mid-cycle change was to allocate an ad-

ditional \$150,000 to the Public Works Department, primarily to deal with storm damage from this season's winter storms. Together, the proposed adjustments come to \$276,225. According to Administrative Services Director Doug Alessio, the budget will remain balanced, even with the proposed changes. Rev-

enues were up over the six-month period, with \$200,000 coming from taxes and another \$260,000 coming from Parks and Rec fees.

City staff are now working on the Biennial Budget for fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25, and it is anticipated that it will be adopted at the June 20 city council meeting.

Orinda City Council returns in person, hears about drainage problems, farmers' market disruption

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda City Council's March 7 meeting took place in the Orinda Library Auditorium for the first time in

about three years. Despite meetings having been held on the Zoom meeting platform, the return to in-person seemed surprisingly easy and familiar. For City Manager David Biggs, it was his first ever in-person Orinda council meeting, having been hired during the COVID pandemic. Council Member Brandyn Iverson had an excused absence, but the rest of the council was in attendance, along with the required staff. Masks were not worn in the sparsely populated auditorium. City Clerk Sheri Smith could be seen to be working on some technical difficulties, but nothing that interfered with the smooth flow of the meeting.

During the public forum, a number of neighbors showed up to complain about the lack of action on the storm drainage issue they say exists around the intersection of Sleepy Hollow and Ichabod Lanes in Orinda. Ian and Penny Baird provided the council with photographs and explained that they have been asking the city to deal with the issue since 2019 when Penny slipped on storm debris and broke her hip. The Bairds stated that some kind

of storm drain solution has been needed since they bought their home in 1976, and they have asked the council before in 2012, but thus far, nothing has been done beyond adding it to the list of capital improvement projects.

They were supported in their claims by neighbors Gareth Noyes and George Councilis, who explained that the curbed wheels of parked vehicles send fountains of water into nearby front yards. "If you put out your bins when it is raining," he said, "they'd be washed away."

On another topic, the council heard from developer Bahadour (Ben) Zarrin, who expressed concern that the renewal of the agreement with the Farmers' Market would jeopardize the redevelopment of 31 Orinda Way, the old Bank of America building. When the market is taking place on Saturday mornings, the most direct entrance to the building is not accessible. While it is possible to navigate to the building by entering the Rite Aid parking lot and driving around to the work site, Zarrin expressed concerns that this would present considerable

risks, especially when heavy construction vehicles require access. An additional concern he expressed was the willingness of restaurant tenants to commit to the building owing to the access situation. He suggested moving the street closure area somewhat to the south to allow the entrance to 31 Orinda Way to remain open during the Farmers' Market.

The council discussed the matter at some length, expressing support for the new development. Biggs pointed out that, although the agreement was proposed for three years, it could in fact be changed at any time. Council Member Janet Riley suggested that perhaps the number of vendors could be reduced or rearranged in order to keep the Village business-friendly. Mayor Inga Miller and Vice Mayor Darlene Gee thought that, at the time, there were more questions than answers. The council agreed to reduce the agreement period from three years to one, with the additional provision that the city manager could bring the matter back to the council if construction becomes an issue.

The annual Poul Anderson writing contest for Orinda high school students opens

By Sora O'Doherty

All students who reside and/or attend high school in Orinda may now submit entries for the Poul Anderson writing contest. The deadline

for submission is midnight, April 14. Students may submit one entry in any of the four categories for a total of not more than three entries. The categories are Science Fiction/Fantasy, Essay/Memoir/Biography, Poetry, and Short Story.

Entries will be judged by a panel of local judges who are involved professionally in reading, writing or publishing.

The contest is named in honor of the late Poul Anderson, a popular science-fiction writer and Orinda resident, who was a true friend to the

community for 40 years.

Up to four winners will each be awarded \$500 prizes at the end of the school year, underwritten by the Friends of the Orinda Library.

Awards will go to the works judged best. There will not necessarily be one award in each category. The winning entries will be posted on the Friends' website. Winning entries from previous years are also available to read on the website.

Entries must be submitted as PDFs or Word attachments to an email sent along with a contest entry form.

Further instructions for submission are on the 2023 Contest Entry Form, which can be found at <https://friendsoftheorindalibrary.org/2022/02/27/announcing-the-2021-poul-anderson-creative-writing-contest-2/>

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City Council Tri-Cities Meeting
 Wednesday, March 15, 7 p.m.
 St. Mary's College-Soda Center, Lafayette
 Conference Room, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga

City Council Regular Meeting:
 Tuesday, March 21, 6:00 p.m.

Planning Comm.:
 Wednesday, March 28, 7:00 p.m.

Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
 Wednesday, April 12, 6:30 p.m.

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Strong win likely for Orinda school parcel tax

By Sora O'Doherty

At the close of polls on March 7, Measure Z, the parcel tax for Orinda schools, was looking like passing with a three-quarters majority, while only a two-thirds majority was required for passage. This special election for the parcel tax was the only election in Contra Costa County on March 7. On March 10 the Department of Elections released the first interim update, showing that yes votes stood at 4,925, representing 76.49% of the vote, and no votes stood at 1,514,

representing 23.51% of the votes. Turnout for the measure was high at nearly 43%. The target date for the count to be certified is March 17.

The results of the vote on Measure Z, which it seems will be Orinda's third school parcel tax, were similar to the two previous elections for parcel taxes. In 2003, Measure A, which provides the school district with \$385 per parcel, passed with 5,733 votes, which was a 75% pass rate. In 2009, Measure B, which provides the district with an additional \$124 per parcel passed with a 70.75% pass rate of 5,384 yes

votes. Both measures A and B continue indefinitely.

Measure Z will provide the schools with an additional \$295 per parcel for a limited 7-year period and is anticipated to provide somewhat over \$2 million per year for Orinda schools. Because the district called a special election, they were required to pay the costs of the election, which were estimated by the Contra Costa Department of Elections to be between \$120,000 and \$180,000.

Measures A and B allowed for an exemption for senior citizens over the age of 65 on limited incomes. According to Debbie Jamieson, executive assistant to the superintendent of the Orinda Union School District, there are 194 parcels that avail of this exemption. The total number of parcels subject to the parcel tax is currently 7,920, Jamieson said.

The exemption from the Measure Z parcel tax differs from those for the previous parcel taxes in that there is no

income requirement. Any senior citizen over the age of 65 is entitled to claim an exemption from the new parcel tax. In order to do so, an application must be submitted by May 1, for tax year 2023-24. Along with the application, the applicant must submit proof of age and some documentation, such as a utility bill or property tax bill, indicating that the applicant is the owner of the property and that it is the applicant's primary place of residence.

The form is available at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lq-lZwy_-P8Luj2GA2ITa8NqfKUIT2ws/view

Orinda makes appointments to committees and commissioners, but needs more

By Sora O'Doherty

Ann Parnigoni, chair of the Orinda Planning Commission, has been reappointed for another term. However, the city is still looking for applicants for the remaining two vacant positions on the Planning Commission. There are also two vacancies on the Finance Advisory Committee and one on the County Connection Citizens Advisory Committee.

Other appointments to Orinda committees and commissions include Alex Drexel

and Laura Riley to the Parks and Recreation Commission; Rachelle Latimer, Paula Reinman and Chris Decareau to the Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission; Bill Waterman, Jeffrey Lyon and Jeanne HuangLi to the Historical Landmarks Committee; Rich Thompson to Art in Public Places; Steven Schnier and Nicholas Mitchell to the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, and Shrikant Garde to

the County Library Commission.

If you have an interest in serving in any of the vacant positions, the city encourages you to apply by filling out a Statement of Interest and submitting it to Orinda City Clerk Sheri Smith at ssmith@cityoforinda.org. Interviews will be scheduled with the City Council in early April.

The Statement of Interest can be found at <https://cityoforinda.org/DocumentCenter/View/2320/Statement-of-Interest-Form-Updated-2-15-18>

Trimble likes Bigbellies, 'and he cannot lie'



Photos Sora O'Doherty

By Sora O'Doherty

Director of Parks and Rec, Todd Trimble, waxed lyrical over the success of the Bigbelly trash and recycling receptacles in Orinda, as he presented a staff report on renewing the contract for the highly successful bins. The adoption of the Bigbelly Bins led to immediate improvements, Trimble said. Where previously recycling materials had been contaminated and unusable, suddenly they were uncontaminated and usable.

Trimble also spoke about issues that had occurred and been resolved during the first contract, such as making sure that the receptacles can be lifted by RecycleSmart trucks, as well as replacing the batteries that run the compacting feature. Trimble admitted that he's obsessed with the item called Collection Efficiency, which he looks at every day on his desktop computer, laptop or phone.

Prior to adopting Bigbelly receptacles, the city had a total of 126 public trash and recycling receptacles that needed to be emptied frequently. Only 34% of the locations offered recycling as well as trash collection. For example, there was no recycling service available at the Wilder sports complex, where, the staff report says, thousands of athletes and spectators visit each year.

Other drawbacks to the prior system were that there were no preventative measures against individuals and pests accessing waste material, resulting in rummaging and harvesting of the contents of the bins. Together with wind, this resulted in uncleanliness in the surrounding areas. Further, staff were forced to make contact with virtually every bin on a daily basis, in addition to having to expend time and resources to collect wind-blown and scattered trash.

The city first entered into a five-year agreement with Bigbelly in January 2018. Since then, Bigbelly's "CLEAN" software has allowed city staff and collection personnel to have complete transparency to monitor and track both short and long-term program success. Through 2021, the Smart Waste Operations resulted in over 200,000 gallons of waste and recycling being collected with 81% efficiency, a 44% reduction in monthly collections, and a significant reduction in plastic bag use and cost.

In addition to the great success of the program, staff anticipates that payment for the next five-year service agreement can be covered by funding withdrawn from the Contra Costa County Solid Waste Authority (RecycleSmart) joint powers authority member reserve funds. And, as an added bonus, the bins are a place where Artify Orinda can display artworks by local artists.

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Orinda legislator honored for securing state funding for regional park



Photo provided

Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, who represents Lamorinda in the California Assembly and resides in Orinda, was recognized by the East

Bay Regional Park District and the Regional Parks Foundation on March 3, and granted the 2022 Radke Championing Advocacy Award at a ceremony

at Inspiration Point in Tilden Regional Park.

Bauer-Kahan was acknowledged as having been instrumental in securing \$4 million in the 2019-20 state budget for the restoration at McCosker Creek in Robert Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve in Orinda and an additional \$3.5 million in the 2021-22 state budget for wildfire protection equipment. The \$3.5 million secured for wildfire protection equipment helped the Park District replace its aging helicopter, which is relied upon to drop water on fires burning in inaccessible terrain.

Park District General Manager Sabrina Landreth said that "funding up-to-date firefighting equipment is vital to stopping wildfires quickly, limiting the destruction of property, and, most of all, protecting lives."

Bauer-Kahan serves as the chair of the Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife. She has championed envi-

ronmental legislation and investments during her time in office.

The Radke Championing Advocacy award is named for late Park District Board Member Ted Radke, who advanced state and federal support for park funding and strengthened the Park District's ties in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. Radke served 36 years on the Park District Board of Directors and was the longest-serving board member in its 88-year history.

The East Bay Regional Park District is the largest regional park system in the nation, comprising 73 parks, 55 miles of shoreline, and over 1,300 miles of trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and environmental education. The Park District receives more than 25 million visits annually throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties in the San Francisco Bay Area.

– Sora O'Doherty

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Letters to the editor

Keeping wild animals wild

We see the coyotes in Lamorinda. Often, we see them not only in the early morning and late evenings, but mid-day. We see them wandering in neighborhoods distant from open space.

Seeing a coyote particularly scares me. About two years ago, my mom and sister were taking a walk mid-morning when a coyote viciously ran from behind and attacked my sister. My mom scared it off her, but then it kept on coming back over and over again. I will never forget my little sister or mother's screams when they came back to the house after the at-

tack or the sirens of the ambulance and fire trucks. I will never forget her leaving for the hospital. My little sister is still traumatized.

And since that incident, I often think about what it means to live in this area. An amazing intersection of natural beauty with our mountains and hills, and human development. A place where wildlife and humans coexist. And since we coexist, what is our responsibility to keep wild animals wild.

The months before my sister's attack, local news stories showed a person feeding a coyote near a Starbucks. Was that the coyote that attacked my sister? I will never know. But feeding wild animals will absolutely not keep them wild. Feeding wild animals makes animals accustomed to people, causing them to no longer fear people and in turn act aggressively. It could also lead to public health problems from disease transmission.

There are also other crucial but easy steps we must all take to keep wild animals wild. Make sure garbage containers are fully closed. Bring inside at night pet food and water containers. Pick up fallen fruit from trees. All help keep wild animals wild.

And, if someone does encounter a coyote, yell, scream, act big and scare that animal away. Wild animals should be made scared of humans.

We live in a special place. And with this privilege comes responsibility. The responsibility to act thoughtfully in a way that keeps wild animals wild. Repercussions of not doing so are too dangerous, making wildlife conflicts more common.

Callen Bronson
Moraga

Support for Orinda Workers

As a resident and teacher in Orinda, I am grateful and humbled for the support that the Orinda community showed in passing Measure Z. I hope we consider extending this support to other Orinda workers. How far would a similar parcel tax go towards jump-starting housing for low and moderate income workers? I keep thinking of the recent article that mentioned how the manager of our hardware store lives in his van because there is no affordable housing. Many of our workers have long commutes meaning they lose out time with their families to make our community function. They deserve better. Wouldn't we all benefit from well-designed and sustainable multi-use housing over having dilapidated buildings like Phair's?

Tandra Ericson
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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Lafayette has openings on the following Commissions and Committees

- Capital Projects Assessment (CPAC)
- Community Center Foundation
- Code Enforcement Appeals Board
- Citizen Advisory Committee to CCTA
- Design Review Commission
- Downtown Street Improvement (DSIMPIC)
- Environmental Task Force
- Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Public Art Committee
- Senior Services Commission
- Transportation & Circulation Commission

For additional information on these volunteer positions visit the city's website lovelafayette.org/volunteers or e-mail City Clerk Joanne Robbins, jrobbins@lovelafayette.org

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 Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049
Orinda Police Department:
 22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820
 Chief of Police, Ryan Sullivan
 925-254-6820
 Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Feb. 19 - March 4

Alarms	66
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	25
Traffic	66
Suspicious Circumstances	6
Suspicious Subject	9
Suspicious Vehicle	9
Service to Citizen	29
Patrol Req./Security Check	47

Public/School Assembly Check	2	3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)
Supplemental Report	23	Warrant Service
Vacation House Check	17	2600 Block Hilltop Dr., Ric
Welfare Check	13	Nuisance to the Community
Ordinance Violation	1	Disturbance-domestic
Vehicle violations		3700 Block Sundale Rd.
Dui Misd		20 Block Northridge Ln.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.		10 Block Northridge Ln.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor		10 Block Moss Ln.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.		Drunk In Public
Pleasant Hill Rd./Taylor Blvd.		3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
600 Block Huntleigh Dr.		Loud Music
Brook St./Moraga Rd.		1000 Block 2Nd St.
Reckless Driving		Loud Noise
Withers Ave./Taylor Blvd.		3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Pleasant Hill Cr/Acalanes Ave.		30 Block Lafayette Cir.
Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.		900 Block 4Th St.
Reliez Station Rd./Olympic Blvd.		Public Nuisance
1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.		Happy Valley Ln./Happy Valley
Tc - Property Damage		Rd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)		3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Oak Hill Rd.		Valente Dr./Acalanes Rd.
Vehicle Theft		Florence Dr./Helen Ln.
3300 Block N Lucille Ln.		Golden Gate Way/Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Eb24/Pleasant Hill		Vandalism
Eb Sr 24 At Oak Hill Rd.		50 Block Leslyn Dr.
3600 Block Deerhill Rd.		3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.		3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Other criminal activity		Mt. Diablo Blvd./Dewing Ave.
Fraud False Pretenses		Other
1300 Block Martino Rd.		Brandishing Weapon
1000 Block Leland Dr.		3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Grand Theft		H&S Violation
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.		3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Grand Theft Veh Parts		Harassment
1400 Block Rancho View Dr.		1000 Block Carol Ln.
Petty Theft		K9 Outside Assist Request
900 Block Raintree Pl. (2)		Wb I 80 Jwo Cummings Skyway,
1000 Block Sierra Vista Way		Cro
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.		Terrorist Threats
Shoplift		1000 Block 2Nd St.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (5)		Threats
		3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Unwanted Guest
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Violation Custody Order
 Police Department

Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Feb. 19 - March 4

Alarms	44
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	14
Traffic	110
Suspicious Circumstances	10
Suspicious Subject	8
Suspicious Vehicle	8
Service to Citizen	45
Patrol Req./Security Check	19
Public/School Assembly Check	0
Supplemental Report	11
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	6
Ordinance Violation	1
Vehicle violations	
Accident Property	
Orinda Way/Camino Pablo	
Moraga Way	
70 Block Van Ripper Ln.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
10 Block Dos Posos	
Reckless Driving	
Camino Pablo/Monte Vista Rd.	
Rheem Blvd./Hall Dr.	
San Pablo Creek Jno Camino Pablo	

Other criminal activity
 Grand Theft
 Wilder Sports Fields
 Grand Theft Veh Parts
 10 Block Candlestick Rd.
 10 Block Estates Dr.
 Identity Theft
 30 Block Greenwood Ct.
 70 Block Muth Dr.
 Other Felony
 100 Block Camino Pablo
 Residential Burglary
 70 Block Via Floreado
 Shoplift
 Moraga Way
 Warrant Arrest
 20 Block Orinda Way
 Old Tunnel Rd./Fish Ranch Rd.
 Camino Pablo/El Toyonal
Nuisance to the Community
 Disturbance-domestic
 200 Block Brookwood Rd.
 400 Block Moraga Way
 Loud Music
 200 Block Overhill Rd.
 Loud Party
 200 Block Glorietta Blvd. (2)
 Glorietta Blvd./Martha Rd.
 100 Block Brookwood Rd. (2)
Other
 Failure To Obey
 Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante
 Fire/Ems Response Info
 20 Block Woodacres Ct.
 H&S/Poss Narcotic Sale
 Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way
 Mentally Ill Commit
 Not Available
 Other Misdemeanor
 Orinda Way
 Transient Contact
 Orinda Way/Irwin Way

Lamorinda Volleyball hits new heights

... continued from Page A1

Hammer makes it a point to reward the players' efforts with playing time: "If they put in their full effort during practice, then that's going to come in during the games, so we practice the way that we're going to play in a match," Hammer said. "I want aggressiveness and confidence in my players. If they're confident then it's going to translate into the games and everything else will fall into place."

Seniors Joseph Castelli, Aaron Alvira and captains Liam Hill and Liam Stancik have been leading the offense. "Castelli is a solid player that plays outside and in the front and back row, Hammer said. "Hill is also an outside player that plays all the way around. They're both extremely strong hitters. Stancik is our middle and nothing can get by him. Aaron is a solid setter with great hands, jump and timing."

Douglas Roberts, a junior, is the team's libero. "If a ball is coming anywhere near him, it's going to get up. He's a fantastic defensive player," Hammer said. "Justin Law is also a defensive specialist. He is very good at getting the consistency down with his passing. We still need to improve our serving and receiving and hitting. Our communication is a little bit off but as soon as we get that clocking, then we're going to be unstoppable."

Campolindo

With the loss of nine players to graduation and three others for various reasons, repeating as NCS champions is not going to

come easy for Campolindo. As is his wont, head coach David Chen has set up a difficult pre-league schedule for the Cougars, having played in the Sanger tournament. Campolindo has an 8-5 record and will be heading to Las Vegas for another competitive tournament.

"At the Sanger tournament, we played teams like Jesuit, Clovis and Carlmont who were really tough teams," Chen said. "We're trying to take the guys through the wringer. It's been tough but the guys have been doing a great job."

The Cougars are still familiarizing themselves with each other but the unity of the players is facilitating the process. "The players understand that this is a different year from the past but the camaraderie and the bond is closer than it's been the past couple of seasons," Chen said. "The team understands that we're at a point right now where we really have to play well as a team. We have good pieces, but good pieces don't make up how well a team plays and performs. Ultimately it's having a lot more positive communication and reinforcement while making sure that we always put out our best effort."

The offense is led by senior Andrew Pak who was a setter but was moved to the outside and juniors outside hitter Will Balassi, and middle blocker Will Marusich. Graham Volk has moved from opposite to setter and senior Diego Davila is the team's libero.

"Volk is running the offense and has been getting a lot of as-

sistance from Pak who was our setter the last three years," Chen said. "We're still trying to figure out the pieces that work and where we can maximize everybody's strengths."

Andrew Hanhan, a freshman defensive specialist, has been a pleasant surprise. "Andrew is a very hard worker," Chen said. "There's something about his hunger to learn. He came to the summer open gyms, putting in the time and excelled and showed constant improvement."

The season is more of a marathon than a sprint to Chen. "Ultimately our number one concern is to continue to develop our chemistry and culture, and being in a positive learning environment where success is not necessarily based on wins and losses," Chen said. "We're making short-term goals and I hope the players see the success in that."

Consistency has been the operative term for Chen. "We need to continue to work on our overall consistency, consistency in terms of the basic skills, passing and hitting consistently and being aggressive and building our volleyball IQ," Chen said. "The strongest part of our group is their connection with each other right now. At the end of the day, they still enjoy each other's company and that's going to help propel us when we're successful and when we're not successful. I think right now that's our big push."

Miramonte

After a number of disappointing seasons, Miramonte

hired Andre Badillo, who has come over from the Bay Area Volleyball Club (BAVC). This is Badillo's first time coaching a high school varsity team. "At BAVC, I shadowed some great coaches," Badillo said. "At the recommendation of some parents, I interviewed for the position with Sean Hennessey, Miramonte's athletic director and that's how I got the job."

It was clear to Badillo what needed to be addressed immediately. "I learned that the team was missing a lot of structure and it was kind of a culture shock for the players to have me come in with guns blazing," Badillo said. "I'm a very strict coach and I believe it builds character that will help them get ready for the real world where you have to be on time and come prepared for everything. With that structure and the right coaching, maybe not this year or even next year, but soon after that, we will become a legitimate force in the boys' volleyball world here in Orinda."

The players have taken quickly to Badillo's system and in two games have matched their win total from last season.

With just a varsity roster, the team has one freshman, six sophomores, seven juniors and six seniors. "The willingness to learn from the upperclassmen has been great to see in that every day they come to practice, it's heads down," Badillo said. "I'm trying to perfect my formal drills and with the guys that have club volleyball experience, they're being really good leaders and they're making their voices

heard."

Badillo is taking advantage of the size on the team. "We have a few players over 6'2" which affords me the opportunity to run a slower offense, with a number of beginners on the roster. Right now my focus is getting our passing down so we can pass high and that allows our setters to set their feet to the ball really early. Once they get their footwork down, we can run a faster offense and it should look pretty good by the end of the season."

Leading the offense is senior captain John-Marc Mosher who also plays for PacRam Volleyball Academic and is battling a knee injury but still playing as hard as he can. Sophomore Pierson Smith and freshman Ryan Balonick are also standing out. "Smith is an up-and-coming player that has shown a lot of dedication," Badillo said. "He just needs to keep working on his defense. Balonick has been a force offensively and has shown the ability to step up as a secondary setter. Elliot Boyd and Gavin Terry have also been used as setters."

Badillo is not allowing himself to look back: "I go into every practice and game thinking that our players are going to learn a lot. Every day they've been even more motivated than they were the day before. Nothing's going to be given to us but if we can come out being competitive and aggressive and transformed from beginning to end, that will be a win in my book."

Saint Mary's seeded 5th in NCAA Tournament

... continued from Page A1

"This year we know what it's all about," Johnson said. "We know that there's a lot of stuff that comes with it and we're ready to buckle down, put our seat belts on and go do what we do best."

Assistant Coach Mickey

McConnell knows how different things are from the regular season to the NCAA tournament and will be passing that on to new players. "It requires a lot of attention," McConnell said. "The players may think that during the season we've had success and gotten a lot of attention and a lot of hype, but

once you get into the tournament, it goes up a notch. You got media stuff and just a cool atmosphere and this is why you come to college, getting into games like this. The players need to compartmentalize and just treat it like we're going to play a four-team tournament, taking it one game at a time

and going on from there."

Dick Moore, a Saint Mary's alumnus, who has never missed a Saint Mary's NCAA playoff game, was as excited as the players in hearing the Gaels name called out. "I have a great feeling of pride and excitement," Moore said. "Just walking into the Pavilion, I get

goosebumps seeing the players and their families and the fans."

Before he left the building, Moore and his wife, Linda, had already purchased their tickets, made their room arrangements and set up their flights to Albany.



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MOFD awarded \$800K grant for three-year pilot program



Photo Vera Kochan

New Fuels Mitigation Specialists will be involved in work such as this controlled burn as part of three-year pilot program funded by a new state grant.

By Jennifer Wake

In what the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Dave Winnacker described as a “Hail Mary,” the governing board at a special meeting on Feb. 22 unanimously moved to accept an \$800,000 Grant Subaward from the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services for a three-year pilot program that would fund two Wildland Fire Specialists to work with residents to mitigate fire risk. The motion also authorized a \$60,000 General Fund budget adjustment revenue increase and authorized the FY2023 General Fund Expenditure Budget Adjustment Increase in the amount of \$60,000.

Winnacker worked under the leadership of Orinda City Manager David Biggs in conjunction with Moraga’s town

manager, as well as with Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, to secure the grant. Winnacker made special note of the role both Biggs and Bauer-Kahan played in helping secure the grant, which is part of a new State of California grant program. Director Craig Jorgens asked if the plan was to have these people trained in chipper or inspections or both? Or will they all be trained on everything? he asked.

“We plan to approach this as a pilot to try things out,” Winnacker said. “It will be a real benefit to us to have a plug and play training. We do plan to refine and optimize the use of fuel mitigation specialists.”

In his staff report, Winnacker noted that it is unknown at this time if the grant will reimburse for ad-

ditional costs related to the pilot program or if the grant will allow for a district administrative fee. “Additional costs related to two additional Fuels Mitigation Specialists would include items such as uniforms, vehicle usage, equipment, etc.,” Winnacker stated in his report. “The grant funds are sufficient to cover the cost of a three-year pilot program. Staff will work with the state to determine if any costs related to the pilot program in addition to salaries and benefits are reimbursable in order to maximize District reimbursement.”

Winnacker noted that MOFD had several qualified candidates in the pipeline and was grateful for the board’s quick response regarding this matter. As part of the unanimous vote to authorize entering into the grant subaward agreement, adding the fire prevention specialist positions and making the budget adjustments, the governing board planned to send a letter from MOFD thanking Bauer-Kahan for her assistance and her efforts on behalf of this grant.

“We’re tremendously grateful to Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan for her leadership in this area,” Winnacker said.

“My memory was back when we were applying for this it was a super long shot,” Jorgens said, “but it worked.”

“Definitely a Hail Mary on what a long shot we thought [receiving this grant] was,” Winnacker said.

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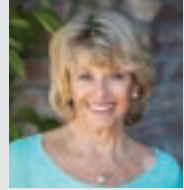
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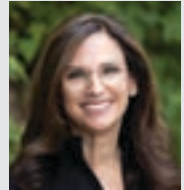
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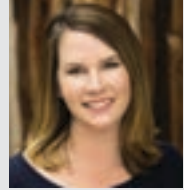
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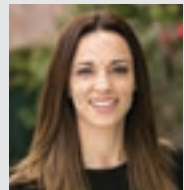
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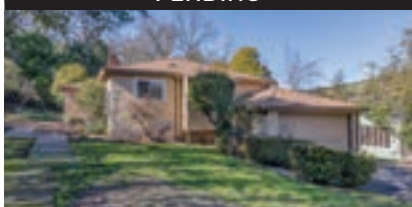
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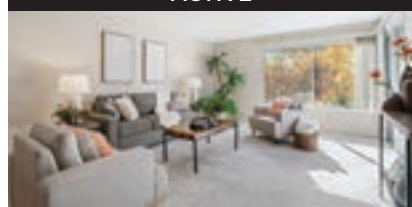
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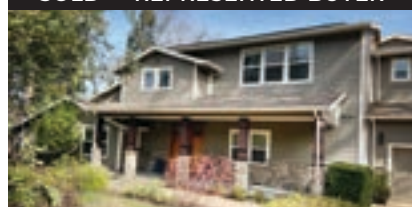
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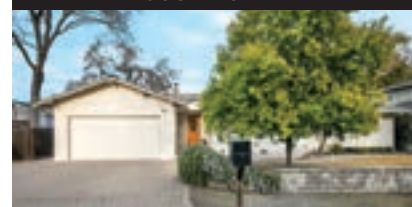
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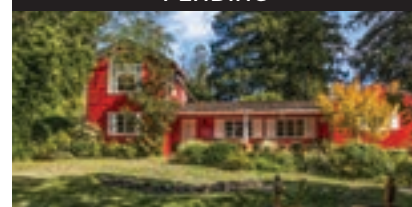
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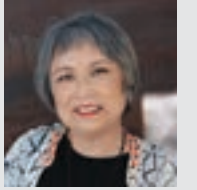
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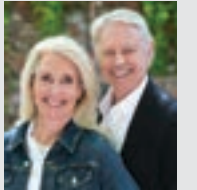
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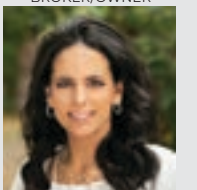
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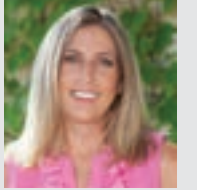
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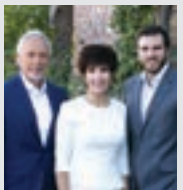
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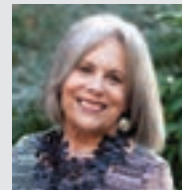
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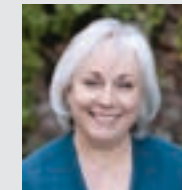
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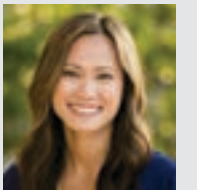
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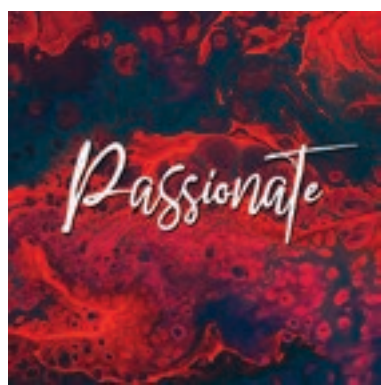
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~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Pacific Chamber Orchestra presents spirited program, 'Passionate'



Submitted by
Leslie Silberman

Pacific Chamber Orchestra (PCO) welcomes audiences to experience the passionate Nuevo tango of Piazzolla's "The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires," an exquisite blend of classical and jazz in its thrilling program, "Passionate," at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 25 at St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Orinda and at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 26 at Livermore's Bankhead Theater.

The performance celebrates the beginning of springtime with exhilarating music such as Telemann's

"Concerto for Oboe d'amore," elevated by Soloist Robin May. Audiences will relish the enchanting sounds of Corelli's "Suite for Strings," and Vivaldi's "Concerto for Four Violins." These four masterful composers revolutionized the traditional music world, by creating timeless works that still captivate and mesmerize audiences today.

Lawrence Kohl, PCO's Music Director and Conductor remarks, "Piazzolla's Nuevo tango draws inspiration from the evocative music of the Baroque era, a critical period during which influential composers like Vivaldi, Telemann and Corelli pushed musical forms and language in an entirely new direction."

Some say that Argentine composer Astor Piazzolla embodies the "Vivaldi of our times" with music that is sensuous, mournful, joyful and brooding, sometimes all at once. While Arcangelo Corelli's music evokes calmness and nobility, he was renowned for his passionate playing, and it was said that he got so deeply involved with his violin that he tried to make it

"speak."

German Baroque composer and multi-instrumentalist, Georg Philipp Telemann, is best known as being history's most prolific composer, and it has been suggested that he may have written more than 3,000 pieces. Kohl also notes, "Each of these composers, in their own way, express an intense passion and energy in their music and created masterful works that highlight the virtuosity of the soloist as both dancer and storyteller. This program, which features four brilliant violin soloists, Igor Veligan (PCO Concertmaster), Iris Stone, Hrabba Atladottir and Lylia Guion who represent the four seasons, culminates with soloists performing together as the dancers and storytellers."

To purchase tickets for the performance at St. Stephens Episcopal Church go to <https://www.pacificchamber-orchestra.org/tickets>. For tickets at Livermore's Bankhead Theater, visit <https://livermorearts.org/events/pco-passionate/>

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'Cairo Conspiracy' – a spy thriller in today's Egypt



Photo provided

By **Sophie Braccini**

Tarik Saleh is the writer and director of the movie, "Cairo Conspiracy," that will be presented in Orinda for at least one week, starting on March 24. Saleh is a Swedish national of Egyptian decent with a keen knowledge of his father's country, as proved in his previous film, "Cairo Confidential." In the current film, Saleh describes Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's Egypt as a country led by a military regime that desires controlling everything, including religion.

The story very aptly uncovers the state plot by focusing on the adventures of Adam, a young man (there are almost no women visible in this movie), son of a simple fisherman, who is selected because of his intelligence and piety to attend Al-Azhar, one of the oldest universities in the world that was founded in Cairo in 970 AD with an international reputation for the excellence of its Islamic studies. There young men from different Islamic countries come to further their religious study. It is a place of knowledge whose intellectual power radiates widely.

When the Imam leading the school dies, the fight for his succession starts among candidates from different obedience, some strongly against the current power structure and one in particular a close supporter of Al-Sisi. The government will try to help that man win the election. The naive fisherman's son will be manipulated and blackmailed into becoming its spy and later its agent.

The movie is a true thriller, full of mysteries, twists and rebuffs. Adam, the central character, is not really charming but he is touching and as the trap closes around

him, the spectator roots for the underdog. Ibrahim, the government representative who manipulates Adam, is an excellent bad guy and a remarkable actor (Fares Fares). He is nuanced, however; he has a conscience, and as a result may also get crushed by the determined state's machinery.

The purpose of the film is certainly to entertain as a very good thriller. The audience will fear that Adam's double game be discovered, and will enjoy the series of dirty tricks and dramatic shifts. But it is also an excellent demonstration of what it is for ordinary citizens to live under a military regime, with the oppression and dangers that come from it.

In an interview, Saleh explained that he understands that the Egyptian government has had to deal with Muslim extremism, which he says is not an easy task. It was one of the promises of Al-Sisi when he seized power that he would dismantle the Muslim Brotherhood, a transnational Islamist organization that Al-Sisi accused of inciting violence and terrorism. In the movie, a small group of the Brotherhood is present and it is one of Adam's jobs to infiltrate and help neutralize it.

The movie was filmed in Turkey since Saleh wanted to avoid what happened with the shooting of his previous film, which was interrupted by the Egyptian authorities and he was forced into a difficult re-organization. "Cairo Conspiracy" was awarded Best Screenplay at the Cannes Film Festival and made the short list for foreign films for this year's Oscars. It is brought to Lamorinda by the International Film Showcase and will open at the Tinketa Theater on March 24. Tickets at <https://www.orindamovies.com/>

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Irish Soda Bread a perfect staple for St. Patrick's Day



Sora's Irish Soda Bread

Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

It's just so much fun working with fellow Lamorinda Weekly writers who love to cook and discover new recipes as much as I do. Sora O'Doherty is just one of those, and she is always sending me fun recipe ideas for dishes that have caught her attention. This latest recipe she shared for Irish Soda Bread arrived just in time for St. Patrick's Day. It's really easy and so delicious and I hope you all give this bread a try!

Sora lived in Ireland for 14 years and has also visited the country many times before and after living there, so she's sampled her fair share of soda bread recipes.

"Every St. Patrick's Day I see a ton of recipes for white soda bread with raisins, which I never saw eaten in Ireland," Sora remarked. "But Brown Soda Bread is eaten daily. It's very healthy — high in fiber and protein, I think."

She fussed around with her recipe from Ireland to adapt it to American ingredients, and now thinks she's got just the right formula. The main problem with using the Irish recipe is that we have very different flour here in the States, so she had to find the right combination of available flours. For extra texture, she also adds bran, wheat germ, and old-fashioned rolled oats. This makes the bread really hearty with a wonderful crunchy crust.

Sora says this bread is delicious with Irish butter, but smoked salmon, and even peanut butter are great on it. Her favorite butter for this bread is Kerry Gold. "I recommend Kerry Gold Butter for spreading on your bread. In the old times in Ireland, you could judge a family's wealth by how thick the butter was spread on the bread for guests," she added.

She also noted that in Ireland you'd eat it for breakfast

with eggs, sausages, bacon, black and white puddings, mushrooms and grilled tomatoes. I think you can use this hearty bread in so many ways.

But, for St. Patrick's Day, Sora says that Irish folks favor dishes that have the colors of the Irish flag, green white and orange. So, upon her suggestion, I served my Irish Soda bread with smoked salmon, Boursin cheese, capers and fresh dill for appetizers recently. It was such a big hit and everyone loved it. This recipe will become a regular in our kitchen!

Happy St. Paddy's Day!



Recipe Notes

- The first time I made the bread, my dough didn't seem like it could handle more than two cups of buttermilk. But, the second time I used a more hearty whole wheat flour and was able to use 2 3/4 cups of the buttermilk, although my dough appeared to be much softer than Sora's, which made it difficult to cut the X into the dough. So, I'd recommend adding just enough of the buttermilk to get all of the dries incorporated and so you can roll into a ball and make a deep cross using a wet sharp knife.
- Sora uses Bob's Red Mill Whole Wheat Flour and I used King Arthur 100% Whole Grain whole wheat flour. If you want to use Irish flour, you'd want to look for Odlums coarse whole meal flour which you can get from Amazon.
- I reduced the amount of baking soda on my second batch to two teaspoons instead of three and my family and I really loved the flavor much more with a little less baking soda.

Sora's Irish Soda Bread

(Makes one large round loaf)

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 lb. Bob's Red Mill Graham Flour (12 oz.)
- 1/4 lb. all purpose flour (4 oz.)
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup bran
- 1/4 cup wheat germ
- 3 tsp. baking soda (I use only 2 tsp.)
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 1/4 to 2 3/4 cups buttermilk

DIRECTIONS

Butter very well a deep, 8-inch pan. Preheat oven to 400 F.

Mix all dry ingredients thoroughly. Make a well in the center and add buttermilk; mix well to make a soft dough. Spoon the dough into the center of the pan, shaping it into a ball with the spoon. Use a sharp knife dampened with water to cut a deep cross in the top of the bread. This allows the bread to rise properly and bake evenly, ensuring that the center is baked through. (Such a great idea ... maybe we should try this with that darn banana bread that never bakes all the way through!)

Bake 40 to 45 minutes. Remove bread from pan and cool completely on wire rack, then wrap in a tea towel or store in an airtight container. Slice thin or thick, and serve with butter or peanut butter, smoked salmon and dill, or with eggs and bacon!



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>



Looking Good in Lamorinda Spring into color



Photo Moya Stone

Dresses in shades of Magenta available at Divine Consign.

By Moya Stone

Viva Magenta is the color of the year, says Pantone Color Institute, the company behind the standardized color matching system. Magenta comes from the red family and it is described by Pantone as a shade with "vim and vigor" and is "expressive of a new signal of strength." Inspired by nature, more specifically the cochineal beetle, Viva Magenta is meant to reflect strength, power, and compassion in our ever more stressful and challenging world.

Magenta is a vivid color that pops any outfit. I see it as

an interesting accent in patterns for dresses, shirts, and accessory pieces such as scarves, gloves, and even socks.

For those sartorial adventurers who want the full color experience, I spotted the perfect Magenta dress at Divine Consign in Lafayette. Made of lace, the dress has a fitted bodice and full skirt and would be a lovely and unique choice for the prom, a wedding, or an elegant dinner party. If you have a taste for vintage, currently Divine Consign has a wide variety of vintage clothing and jewelry as well as decorative items from mid-



Photo provided

From left: Rosylyn and Tom Stenzel from Venture Quality Goods, Joseph Ward from Joseph Ward General Contractors.

century to the 1980s. Open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 1014 Oak Hill Road.

It feels like we're rocking the '90s again with this season's Elevated Basics look: trousers paired with a tank top or a classic white shirt topped with a blazer; relaxed fit denim; cargo pants in all fabrics from silk to leather; the classic pencil skirt with an Oxford shirt or cropped sweater; ballet flats and long drop earrings. Understated (meaning simple structures with no bells and whistles) totes are in, and the bigger the better!

In local fashion news – Venture Quality Goods boutique in Lafayette is moving just one block west of their current location on Mt. Diablo. Co-owner Rosylyn Stenzel tells me that the new space has much to offer. "At the new location," she explains, "we'll be more visible, have more room to show product, as well as a more comfortable experience with the bigger, open space."

And there's better parking, too. Established in 2012, Venture is our local go-to for casual clothing for both men and women. The shop offers California brands including Patagonia, Faherty, and Johnnie-O. A recent addition to the store is the popular line Cotopaxi, which repurposes scraps from other companies to make colorful outerwear and bags. Stenzel says that she's grateful to the people of Lamorinda and the Bay Area. "We started from nothing and now we have a great community that has been really supportive." Venture is still open at their current location, but look for them sometime around late March in their new home at 3599 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Also check out their website: www.venturegoods.com.

Recently, with the rise in the maker's movement, the craft of making Friendship Bracelets has become a focus and London-based crafter Maria Makarova (AKA Masha Knits) is on it! After more than

10 years of making the colorful bracelets herself and offering YouTube tutorials, she has written a book – "The Beginner's Guide to Friendship Bracelets: Essential Lessons for Creating Designs to Wear and Give" (Rocky Nook). The popularity of Friendship Bracelets has ebbed and flowed over the years, but as an endearing sign of friendship they never really go away. New generations of teenagers, young adults, and now even older folks can't resist the charm of a handmade symbol of connection.

In her book, Makarova explains in detail how to make simple and more complex bracelet designs. She covers tools of the trade, basic loops, embellishments, fixing common mistakes, and she even offers "tricks and tips." The instructions are user friendly with lots of diagrams and step-

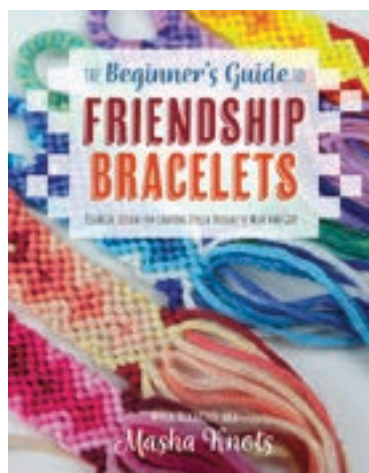


Photo courtesy Rocky Nook, Inc.

by-step photos. Friendship bracelets are a great accessory to play with color. Viva Magenta anyone?

Add some color to your wardrobe and go forth in style. Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at www.overdressedforlife.com.

Orinda Troop 303 honors five new Eagle Scouts



Photo Gina Hageboeck

Submitted by
Angelica Steinmeier

Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Troop 303 of Orinda on Feb. 25 held an Eagle Court of Honor at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church to commemorate the achievement of five Scouts, each of whom recently obtained scouting's highest rank, Eagle Scout. Honorees included Leo Maximillian Streubel, William Theodore Ting Steinmeier, Thomas Griffin Wilson, Aidan Roque Dial and Jon-Marc Alexander Mosher.

Eagle Scout is the highest achievement or rank attainable in scouting with the BSA. To obtain the rank of Eagle Scout, candidates must now earn a minimum of 21 merit badges, including 14 Eagle-required badges, demonstrate leadership and Scout spirit and successfully complete an Eagle service project benefiting the community.

Bruce McGurk, chair of the Briones District of Scouts BSA's Golden Gate Area Council, presided over the Eagle Court of Honor ceremony. Former Mayor of Orinda, Bill Judge, presented each Scout with an official proclamation of the Orinda City Council on behalf of Mayor Inga Miller, de-

claring officially Feb. 26 as Jon-Marc Alexander Mosher Day, Feb. 27 as William Theodore Ting Steinmeier Day, Feb. 28 as Thomas Griffin Wilson Day, March 1 as Leo Maximillian Streubel Day, and March 2 as Aidan Roque Dial Day. County Supervisor Candace Andersen (District 2) as well as representative Aaron Sanchez from U.S. Rep. Mark DeSaulnier (District 10) presented certificates of recognition and congratulations to the Scouts. State Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan and State Sen. Steve Glazer were unable to attend but sent certificates of congratulations and recognition as well. The newly confirmed Eagle Scouts thanked their Scout leaders, community, parents and fellow Scouts who helped them achieve this rank and honor.

Troop 303 is a member of the Briones District of the Golden Gate Area Council of the BSA and has been serving the Lamorinda area since 1964. Scout Troop 303 (303B & 3030G) serves boys and girls in Orinda, California and the surrounding communities. For more information on how your sons and daughters may join the troop, email troop303g@gmail.com or visit www.troopwebhost.org/Troop303Orinda/index.htm

Four outstanding students from Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School honored



Photo provided

2023 Good Character Award Winners, from left: JT Goett, Fatima Ghias, Flore Levesque and Riya Shah pictured with JM principal Mike Plant, Mayor Renata Sos, Rotary President Dan Herbert and Rotary Youth Services chair, Bob Marino.

Submitted by **Robert Marino**

Fatima Ghias, Joseph Goett, Flore Levesque and Riya Shah, all students at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School in Moraga, were honored for their exceptional character on March 8 at a school convocation sponsored by the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club. School administrators, family members, friends and Rotarians were in attendance to celebrate the students' awards.

Moraga Mayor Renata Sos and Rotary President Daniel Herbert presented the honors, including a commendation and cash award for each student. Teachers, counselors, and staff at the school were asked to submit nominations of students who, in their actions and deportment, exhibited the Rotary Club values of Truthfulness,

Fairness, Kindness, and Service to Others. In his brief remarks at the ceremony, Dr. Robert Marino, Lamorinda Sunrise Youth Services Committee Chair, noted that while academic and athletic accomplishments are key for success in the world, only young people with upstanding character will change our world for the better. Dr. Marino noted that "Character can be described as the good things we do when no one is looking."

Nominating faculty related multiple instances for each of these students in which they were observed helping and encouraging their fellow students and treating those they encountered at the school with sincere respect. The Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club hopes to make this event annual. They also support the Leslie Cary Wellness Center at the school on an ongoing basis.

Community Service: We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

In Memory

Gale Gettinger

1951 – 2023



Gale Gettinger passed away peacefully at home in Orinda on Feb. 15 due to pancreatic cancer.

Gale was born to Helen and George Gettinger in New York and moved to Georgia at age 10. She graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh with an English degree and studied journalism in grad school at Temple University.

Gale began her career in corporate journalism, which included some photography, and after a few years switched to photography as a career. She soon had her own flourishing business as a portrait photographer specializing in children and families for the next 30 years. Gale became a master at her craft, producing timeless, heartwarming, and meaningful

portraits for her clients. She had a real knack for engaging children and capturing a client's personality and joy.

Gale met her husband during graduate school in Philadelphia, and they spent three years in Los Angeles before moving to Pittsburgh, Penn., where they lived for 28 years and raised their two children. She always wanted to move back to California – so they relocated to the Bay area in 2009.

Gale was an avid traveler who loved to meet people from other cultures and explore new places. She was a voracious reader and had a deep thirst for knowledge. Outgoing and making friends easily, Gale joined multiple social groups, including book clubs, gardening clubs and mahjong groups. She was an excellent cook who loved preparing real foods from scratch with organic ingredients. She created artistic nature-photo travel note cards to give as gifts, and more recently started producing dried flower art. She enjoyed nature walks, gardening, and loved spending time with her children and grandchildren.

Gale had a strong spirit, great resolve, and a life well-lived. May her memory be for a blessing.

Gale is survived by her husband Richard Ash; daughter Julie Gettinger Ash; son Brian Gettinger Ash (Sharon Sha); grandson Sage and granddaughter Seraphine; brother Glen Gettinger (Cheryl); and many cousins, nieces, nephews, sisters-in law and brothers-in law. Gale was preceded in death by her parents George and Helen Gettinger and her sister Jill Gettinger (who is survived by husband Bob Finnerty).

In lieu of flowers, Gale's family would be grateful for donations in Gale's memory to the charity of your choice, or to PanCAN.org. Interment service for immediate family; celebration of life arrangements pending.

In Memory

James Joseph Putkey

1931 – 2023, Resident of Moraga



James "Jim" Joseph Putkey was born at home in Richmond, Calif. in 1931, and died peacefully at home in Moraga, Calif. on Feb. 14. He is survived by his loving wife of 63 years, Angela, their three daughters and sons-in-law, Jacqueline and Tony Hill, Joanne and John McClellan, and Paula and Chris Kenny, their four grandchildren, Grant, Laura, Pete and Brian, and a multitude of nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and grandnephews. Jim is preceded in death by his parents, John and Anna, and his five brothers, Herbert, John, Charles, Thomas, and Edward.

Jim grew up in Richmond playing stickball in a vacant lot, fishing and swimming in the Bay, and helping his mother cook Slovakian meals. In high

school, he enjoyed illustrating school publications and playing football, later becoming a dedicated fan of local high school and college football teams and working the "chain gang" at Campolindo football games. After graduating Richmond Union High School in January 1949, Jim worked for a year and a half as a merchant seaman on a Standard Oil tanker ship to earn his college tuition. Jim attended Santa Clara University, earning a Bachelor in Civil Engineering in 1954. After graduation, he served in the U.S. Army for two years, stationed in Germany.

In 1956, Jim began his professional career as a Civil Engineer with Bethlehem Pacific Coast Steel Corporation where he oversaw the steel construction of many bridges and buildings throughout California and Oregon, including the Feather River bridge, Oakland's Kaiser building on Lake Merritt, San Francisco's Alcoa building, and the Century Plaza Towers in Los Angeles. After Bethlehem closed its West Coast offices, he joined the University of California in the Office of the President for seven years, then started a business as a private Construction Consultant, which he ran for 30 years. He retired at age 81.

Although Jim worked hard, his proudest accomplishment was his family. He met Angela at a Catholic social mixer, and in 1959 they married at St. Leo's Church in Oakland. They moved to Moraga in 1963 to raise their family. Jim liked to take on any house or yard project, usually with success. He was an active father to his daughters, flying kites and hiking in the hills, cooking breakfast, and singing lullabies at night. He was a proud grandfather who treasured every minute he could spend with his grandchildren, whether it was babysitting, reading books, playing games, attending sporting events, or volunteering at Boy Scout camp.

Jim was a "people person" who could strike up a genial conversation with anyone, and he was a steadfast friend to old and new acquaintances alike. He enjoyed being part of the St. Monica Catholic Church community as a member of the Parish Council and the Men's Club, and as the Charter Organization Representative for Boy Scout Troop 234. He was a lifelong artist, designing holiday cards and perfecting his specialized pun art. Jim was known for collecting and repairing Oriental rugs, playing a sharp bridge game, and being an avid storyteller. He was also known around town for his fashionable walking stick and straw hat.

Jim had a strong faith in God; he lived an honorable life as a dedicated husband, father, grandfather, uncle, granduncle, and friend. His dry wit and generous spirit will be greatly missed.

A Funeral Mass will be held on Thursday, March 30, 2023, at 10:15 a.m., St. Monica Church, 1001 Camino Pablo, Moraga, CA, 94556 with a reception immediately following in the St. Monica Peace Center. During this reception, family welcomes written or shared stories and memories of Jim to celebrate a life well-lived. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to: Hospice East Bay (925) 887-5678, <https://www.hospiceeastbay.org/donations> or to John Muir Cancer Research Center <https://www.givehealthjmh.org/cancernetwork>

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

Four college visit must dos

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

There is no better way to find out if a college is a good match for you than by scheduling a campus visit. Today's busy families make sacrifices in time and money to tour campuses, so make yours count.

First, work closely with the admissions office. The student should register for the visit using his or her dedicated college email account, one used only for college admissions purposes. Registering allows the college to record your interest and to properly schedule your visit. If you have questions in advance, contact the admissions officer assigned to work with students from your area. Most admissions officers will take the time to answer your questions and help you to

make appointments to meet with students who share your interests, speak with faculty in your intended major or meet with a counselor in the career development center. Many keep detailed records of each visiting student's interests. These records might make a difference in an admissions decision.

After the campus tour, tour some more. Walk around and find out where students go to socialize and take breaks from classes. You will want to try a meal in the dining hall, find out where students go for medical care, notice campus safety and how students get around campus. It's easy to walk around a smaller school, but students take shuttles to get around many larger, more spread-out universities.

Next, check out the extended campus community.

There are many differences between a school in a large city versus one in a smaller "college town" including variations in cultural life, school spirit and food and entertainment options. Be sure to notice how easy or hard it is to get into the community surrounding campus. Can you walk right into town? Or do you need to rely on public transportation or a car to get around? As you venture on your own, stop and talk to students. Ask them their likes and dislikes about their school. Was it easy/hard for them to get into the major that they wanted? To transfer to a different major? To see a professor for help on a paper or exam?

Finally, it is hard to remember everything about a college when you visit a couple a day for a week on spring break! So be sure to document

your visit by taking photos and making detailed notes.

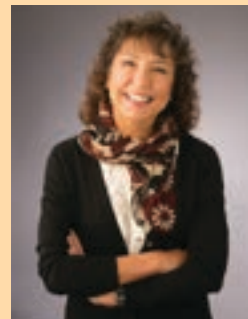
College admissions offices try to make the campus visit experience as pleasant as possible. But it's up to you to make it a truly informative and memorable experience – one when you gather the informa-

tion you need to place a school on your final application list and write strong essays. The time to visit is worth the investment, given the investment that you will make in higher education.

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Elizabeth LaScala, PhD, brings decades of admissions expertise to personally guide each student through applying to well-matched colleges, making each step more manageable and less stressful. She has placed hundreds of students in the most prestigious colleges and universities in the US. Elizabeth attends conferences, visits campuses and makes personal contacts with admissions networks to stay current on the evolving nature of college admissions. She and her professional team offer resume development, test preparation, academic tutoring, value analysis, merit and need-based scholarship search and more.



Orinda students take home Excellence in Acting award at JTF-West



Photo provided

From left: Alice Olson (Miramonte freshman), Ava Dhaliwal (Miramonte sophomore), Hannah Johnson (Miramonte senior), Diego Aguilar (Miramonte junior); Across: Bella Verrico (Orinda Intermediate School)

Submitted by Ingrid Ramos

Over the president's day

weekend, five students from Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School participated in the Junior Theatre Festival (JTF) West. JTF is a three-day festival and the largest celebration of young people performing musical theater. This year there were 38 teams competing and representing 13 U.S. states as well as an international team from South Korea. These kids are part of the Advanced Performers students for Bay Area Children's Theater (BACT) which currently enrolls 24 students. They took home one of the five awards for Excellence in Acting for their performance of "Xanadu JR."

All five kids participate in the arts programs offered by Orinda public schools and have done so since their elementary school days. BACT cast for "Xanadu JR." ranges from sixth graders through high school seniors. It is very impressive to see the camaraderie and support they offer to each other despite the age range, and as they all have described it this has been a life changing experience for them. "Xanadu JR." was presented to the public March 10 and 11 in Berkeley.

Miramonte students volunteer in Chinese New Year Parade



Photo Jarret Zundel

Submitted by Emma Wong

Miramonte students Jarret Zundel and Nicole Guo volunteered in San Francisco's annual Chinese New Year parade held Feb. 4. The event, which included lion dancing and band marching, featured several student volunteers from

Miramonte High School. The procession is the largest Chinese New Year parade outside Asia, occurring yearly at the end of the Lunar New Year's month-long celebration. Depending on moon cycles, the Lunar New Year begins a set of 12 years that, in Asian mythology, corresponds with animal icons, with 2023 the Year of the Rabbit.

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

Art

Art Gallery at Wilder: Hilary Mills Lambert's "Carnival of Animals". Lamorinda Arts Council presents a virtual gallery of original oil paintings by featured artist Hilary Mills Lambert in the Art Gallery at Wilder, Saturday, March 4 through Saturday, April 1. Lambert's life-long love of animals is evident in all her work; it pulls you in. To view her work go to <https://lamorindaarts.org/online-galleries>.

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library 20th High School Visual Arts Competition. The Lamorinda Arts Council is thrilled to kick off the 20th High School Visual Arts Competition through March 31 in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library. The competition showcases and acknowledges art in four cate-

gories: 2D, 3D, Photography, and the Lamorinda Arts Alliance Digital Art category. Student artist reception and awards ceremony March. 16 from 7 – 8:30 p.m. All work is by high school students who live in or attend school in Orinda, Lafayette, or Moraga, including all schools in the Acalanes Union High School District. Learn more at <https://lamorindaarts.org/vac/>.

Art Embraces Words: Saturday March 18, 2 – 3:30 p.m.; Featured Poet & Scientist David Seaborg. The Lamorinda Arts Council features poet and scientist David Seaborg with writers Alvin Ziegler and Quynh Trin; artists Kim and Jeanette Lavoie plus Jennifer Lothrigel at its first program in 2023. Lafayette Library Arts & Science Room, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Reception follows outdoors in the

Library Courtyard. Visit <https://lamorindaarts.org/art-embraces-words/> for more information or call (925) 359-9940.

Music

Pacific Chamber Orchestra (PCO) presents "Passionate," Saturday, March 25 at 7: 30 p.m. at St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Orinda and Sunday, March 26 at 3 p.m. at Livermore's Bankhead Theater. Tickets at <https://livermorearts.org/events/pco-passionate/> and for the performance at www.pacificchamberorchestra.org. (925) 373-6800. See story on Page B1.

Diablo Ballet celebrates its 29th Anniversary with a one-night only performance featuring a mixed bill including the premiere of Con-

fetti by Gerald Arpino in honor of his Centennial Celebration, Paquita and the premiere of company dancer, Amanda Farris' ballet, Elevator Operator. One night only on March 31 at 6:30 p.m. at the Leshar Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive in Walnut Creek. Single tickets (\$25 - \$52) with senior and youth pricing available. Early bird pricing through March 8. For performance tickets, call (925) 943-SHOW (7469) or visit www.lesherartscenter.org or <https://diabloballet.org/anniversary-gala/>

Final Gold Coast Chamber Players concert, "Souvenir." Saturday, April 15, Concert- 7:30 p.m. Pre-concert talk- 7 p.m. Reception follows performance DTCH at Lafayette Library. Purchase Tickets: <https://www.gccpmusic.com/>

Leather jackets, poodle skirts, and Greased Lightnin'! Watch out, Orinda, Rydell High is coming to Miramonte! One of Miramonte High School's most anticipated annual events returns in March when more than 80 cast, crew, and band members will be cruising the halls of Rydell High, dreaming of "Summer Nights" and "Beauty School Dropout" as they perform the rollicking musical "Grease." Since 1999, Miramonte has had a tradition of producing high-quality musicals that are student-centered. Friday, March 17 at 7 p.m., Saturday, March 18 at 7 p.m., Saturday, March 25 at 7 p.m., and Sunday, March 26 at 4 p.m. Purchase tickets here: www.showtix4u.com/event-details/70947

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Music ... continued

“Chromatica,” a popular local chorus that sold out its fall 2022 concerts, will perform the Dvorak D Major Mass with organ accompaniment along with a second half of eclectic vocal music on April 15 at 7 p.m. at Peace Lutheran Church in Danville and on April 16 at 4 p.m., at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church in Orinda. The Danville concert includes a wine reception after the performance. Tickets and other information at www.chromaticachorale.org

The Diablo Symphony and Festival Opera present Tales from the Briar Patch on April 2 at 2 p.m. at the Leshner Center for the Arts. Based on African stories of Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox, this short opera by African American composer Nkeiru Okoye portrays the antics of these archenemies with wit and wisdom. Also featured is “Rhapsody in Blue” with DSO’s Young Artist Competition winner Minna Fu. Visit www.diablosymphony.org for information and a ticketing link.

“Mahler’s Inner Circle,” conducted by California Symphony’s Music Director Donato Cabrera, will be presented Saturday, March 25, 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 26, 4 p.m. at the Hofmann Theatre at Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. A 30-minute pre-concert talk and Q&A

led by Cabrera will begin one hour before each performance. Information and tickets (\$49-\$79) are available at CaliforniaSymphony.org.

Pipe Organ Concert with Poland’s Marek Kudlicki at St. Paul’s in Walnut Creek. Saturday, March 25, 7 p.m. 1924 Trinity Avenue, Walnut Creek. Online broadcast: visit stpaulswc.org/concert-series to receive concert link. Donations graciously accepted at the door (avg. \$20/\$10 Students) and in our online registration. All are welcome regardless of donation!

Literature

Ethical Will Workshop: Join Professional Personal Historian and Soul Forum Podcast Co-Host April Bell on Saturday, March 18 from 8:45 a.m. to noon as she leads a storytelling workshop based on the Ethical Will, offered at Creekside Commons, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Explore, and maybe even share, the stories which have shaped your most cherished values. Refine the legacy you hope to leave. Space is limited, so reserve your spot now. For FAQ and Information, visit www.creeksidecommons.org events tab.

Other

Spring Equinox Celebration and Dance Party: Saturday, March 25,

4:30 to 8 p.m. Creekside Commons of Lafayette hosts a special evening for the whole family. It’s a moment to shake off winter and dive into all the energy of spring. Live music, hula hoop performer, projects for kids, a collective art project, Taco Food Truck, adult drinks, and even a moment of reflection from Soul Forum Podcast host, Dan Senter. It’s a party with purpose! 1035 Carol Lane, Main Hall. For more information visit www.creeksidecommons.org events tab.

The Contra Costa Chinese School, one of the leading and oldest-running Chinese language schools for both kids and adults in the San Francisco East Bay, is holding their annual Open House on Saturdays, March 18 and March 25 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Diablo Valley College, Liberal Arts Building at 321 Golf Club Road in Pleasant Hill. Families can come and learn about the school’s Chinese learning environment and its classroom spaces, as well as meet its teachers. They can also attend demonstrations of Chinese calligraphy and brush painting by its instructors. The school offers kindergarten to 10th grade Mandarin instruction during the school year, as well as a summer program for children, ages 5 to 9. For more information, visit www.cococs.org.

Acalanes High School Color Run

Sunday, March 26 at 9 a.m. The 4th annual Color Run will take place at Acalanes High School. This fundraiser supports the Classes of 2024 and Class of 2025 and is a 1- or 2-mile loop through the Acalanes campus. It is open to the entire local community – elementary, middle and high school students. Each participant receives a white T-shirt to wear through the five color stations where participants will emerge in a rainbow of colors by the end of the run. Get your tickets here: <https://gofan.co/app/events/848768?schoolId=CA22846>

Egg Hunt and Spring Festival: Family fun for all ages! Activities include egg hunt, Easter bunny photo op, games and prizes, arts and crafts, face painting, and more! March 25, 9 a.m. to noon; Moraga Commons. Hosted by Moraga Juniors Women’s Club. Visit moragajuniors.org for ticket information.

Presentation: Ensuring Their Future: Greater Freedom to Teach and Learn in Public Education. This a broad look at how education echoes societal outlook, from Indigenous connection to our great challenges, and how education can help recover well-being. Sunday, March 19, noon to 2 p.m.; Creekside Commons, Room Oak View 3, 1035 Carol Ln., Lafayette; no charge; speaker and optional RSVP: peggyamagilen@yahoo.com.

Norm’s Place presents Norm’s Saint Patrick’s Day Celebration on Friday, March 17, from 11 a.m. to noon, at Norm’s Place, 356 Hartz Avenue, Danville. Celebrate with multiple bar locations, outdoor games, special entertainment, live music, Irish food & drink specials & more! Cost: Free For more info see <http://www.normsgrille.com> or call (925) 552-6676 or email Hayley@normsgrille.com.

Join our rally on March 21 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. on the corner of Mt. Diablo and Main St. in Walnut Creek. We’ll be challenging the Big Banks to stop bankrolling the oil companies. Sign up here to join us or find other events like ours. <https://thirdact.org/national-day-of-action/> We’ll have music, songs, dancing, speakers and signs. Our rally is part of ThirdAct’s National Day of Action. For further information email moneyoutnow@yahoo.com

Sustainable Lafayette, in partnership with Saint Mary’s College, presents a free screening of “The Game Changers: Elite athletes, special ops soldiers, scientists, cultural icons and everyday heroes shift the way people eat and live.” “The Game Changers” makes the case that a vegan diet is not only the most advantageous diet for long-term health, but also for an athletic edge. Among the executive producers are James Cameron (“Titanic” and “Avatar”), Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chris Paul, Novak Djokovic, and Jackie Chan. Lafayette Room of the Soda Center at Saint Mary’s College on Tuesday, March 21 at 6:30 p.m.

Shawl-Anderson Dance Center Queering Dance Festival presents FROLIC 2023 on April 1-2, 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. both days, at Live Oak Theater, 1301 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley. Five new works by commissioned LGBTQ+ dance artists! Saturday-Sunday, April 1-2, 5:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. Cost: \$15-40, NOTAFLOF. For more info see www.eventbrite.com/cc/queering-dance-festival-frolic-2023-1727969 or call (510) 654-5921 or email jessi@shawl-anderson.org.

Mocktails & Cocktails, Sunday, March 26, 3 – 5 p.m. – The Coop, 32 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. Join friends of the Lamorinda Arts Council for conversations about the creative life. Bring whatever artwork, music, digital art, writing, etc., you are working on as a “prompt.” We want to know what is stirring up (or blocking) your creative juices. Look for our Picasso-esque poster of a crazy art lady – that’s us! No host bar. Just show up. Questions? Email literary@lamorindaarts.org.

April 1 at 10 a.m. to noon — RecycleSmart and Moraga Garden Club are sponsoring a worm-composting workshop at the Moraga Library. “Vermicomposting” is easy, perfect for small spaces and what kid doesn’t like a worm? The \$25 registration fee includes plastic bins and composting worms. Registration required and limited to 20 families: www.recyclesmart.org/workshops

Garden

Orinda Garden Club Plant Sale Saturday, April 15, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Orinda Library Plaza. We will have Perennials, Pollinators, Succulents, Drought Resistant, Vegetable Plants (including over 20 varieties of tomatoes) and more. The club also plans to provide informational tables on various horticultural topics. And lastly, there will be a Garden Marketplace with fun, garden-related products. Sale will be located throughout the outdoor plaza at the Orinda Library, located at 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. Open to the public. For more information, see www.orindagc.org/plantsale-public.html or email communications@orindagc.org.

Moraga Garden Club — March 16, 9:30 a.m. “Loving our Trees: Best Practices for Tree Care” is the topic of our speaker, arborist Dorothy Abeyta, California Urban Forests Council. What are beautiful flowerbeds and hard scapes in a garden without well-tended trees? Learn about what to expect from a professional arborist and the difference between good and bad pruning. Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street. We are free and open to the public. Visit us: www.moragagardenclub.com

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Wednesday 10 am Contemplative Worship in the Chapel

National Charity League Lamorinda honors class of 2023



Photo provided

Members of the Class of 2023 are, front row, from left: Megan Stephens, Sofia Vezzali, Ava Garcia, Elle Forschler; middle row: Abigail Weiner, Catie McCauley, Annie Coane, Shayne Clancy, Ellie Belshaw; back row: Caitlyn Haraburda, Haley Metherd, Paige Davis, Shipley Duff, Alexa Carter, Ana Pieper, Lila Waechter, Nicole Lamison, Sophia Lohman, Ava Martinez, Kay Lankford, Ella Hack

Submitted by Hillary Weiner

The Lamorinda Chapter of National Charity League on March 5 recognized

and celebrated its 21 graduating seniors in the first Senior Recognition event at the Contra Costa Country Club, marking the culmination of six years of service to

the community for these dedicated young women. They began their journey in the mother-daughter philanthropic organization as seventh-graders, and have collectively volunteered more than 4,300 hours to local philanthropies, some of which support the arts or the environment, and many that provide health and social services to children, families, and the elderly. The Senior Recognition event provided each member with an opportunity to reflect on philanthropic opportunities, volunteering as mothers and daughters together, and the community built through the organization.

Each year the graduating class of NCL's Lamorinda Chapter selects a local nonprofit organization to support. This year, the 21 girls of the Class of 2023 opted to partner with Grateful Gatherings, an organization that believes that children and adults thrive outside the home if they have a safe, warm, properly equipped and furnished home. Beginning in January, Grateful Gatherings paired the Class of 2023 with a single mother and her 13-year-old daughter living in San Leandro with only two inflatable mattresses, two towels, some disposable kitchen utensils and containers, and their clothes in trash bags.

Together with Grateful Gatherings,

the Class of 2023 identified the necessary donations to fully furnish the home for this family and worked to secure those donations, as well as purchase any remaining special items or furnishings. At the end of January, the seniors cleaned the home, installed and moved all items into the home, right down to making their beds and planting the herbs in their small garden. The best part was watching the mom's and daughter's faces as they entered their transformed home. The seniors allocated \$2,000 of their class funds to this project and plan to donate any remaining funds after Senior Recognition to Grateful Gatherings.

NCL's Lamorinda Chapter supports many local nonprofit organizations through its mission to foster mother-daughter relationships in its commitment to community service, leadership development, and cultural experiences. Philanthropies include 10,000 Lunches, American Heart Association, Blue Star Moms, Cake 4 Kids, Child Abuse Prevention Council, Community Reading Buddies, East Bay Heritage Quilters, Food Bank of Contra Costa County, Grateful Gatherings, Lamorinda Village, Loaves & Fishes, New Day for Children, White Pony Express, and more than a dozen others.

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Campo volleyball coaches Vuong and Chen – a tough pair to beat



Photo Jon Kingdon

David Chen and John Vuong

By Jon Kingdon

When David Chen came to Campolindo as a coach of the boys' volleyball team, John Vuong was already a coach for the Cougars. When Vuong saw Chen working with the JV boys' team, his first thought was "this is a pretty good player." As Vuong related: "When I asked who this was, I was told that he had already graduated and I thought they meant high school and they said, 'No. College.'"

It was 2008 when Chen, who grew up in Moraga and graduated from Campolindo and UC Davis, began coaching at Campolindo. "When I arrived here it was in the spring and I knew that I wanted to help out with the team so the JV coach told me to come by his practice and they were just starting tryouts," Chen said. "John thought I was a transfer student, pointed at me and said, 'You need to be over here,' and that's how our paths first crossed."

Chen's first year with the team did not portend great success for his time with the Cougars. "Our first year was a sobering experience," Chen said. "Our record was 5-17 and one of those wins was off a disqualification by College Park who had played an ineligible player."

It was at that point when Chen and Vuong came together, coaching the boys' and girls' teams. "At that point, we just said, 'Let's coach,' and we've been together ever since. John and I were learning about each other's styles and realized that our philosophies and visions were very similar," Chen said. "The program had gone through so much turmoil and changes that were frustrating. Luckily, John had the vision and said that in a few years, these kids are going to be very good."

That prognostication proved to be a major understatement. From that point until last season, the Chen-Vuong coached boys' team had a composite record of 385-89, 100-13 in league play and 35-7 in the playoffs and the Vuong-Chen girls' teams, starting in 2012 has a composite record of 250-84, 103-2 in league play and 33-15 in the playoffs. The composite record for both teams is 635-173 with a winning percentage of 79% along with NCS and NorCal championship and coach of the year awards.

It was a match made in heaven. "If either of us has to miss a practice, we feel confident with the other leading either the boys' or girls' teams," Vuong said. "It's one of those rare relationships in that everything we do and think in volleyball is alike."

Volleyball was Chen's only sport growing up. "I was a libero in high school and on the club team at UC Davis," Chen said. "I had a great experience there and in my junior year, we went to the nationals and won that year."

After a gap year and attending graduate school in Los Angeles, Chen, besides being a physical therapist, wanted to also be a high school volleyball coach. "It was 2004 and I had no idea how to get into it," Chen said. "So, I opened the phone book and began calling high schools and the only school that called me back was Taft High School and I ran with it until I moved back to the Bay Area in 2008."

Vuong, who grew up in Pasadena, was

initially a basketball and soccer player but soon volleyball was his exclusive sport. "I was a setter though I had 'mad hops' back in the day," Vuong said. "When I went to Notre Dame de Namur College as a biochemistry major, they did not have a men's volleyball team so I helped out with the women's team and then went on to coach at Notre Dame Belmont High School. I just wanted to continue coaching."

Living on the peninsula and coaching at Belmont, Vuong's teams went against Campolindo a number of times. In 2005 Vuong and his family moved to Moraga and he became the girls JV coach in 2006, then coaching the boys 2008 alongside Chen.

"After that I saw how David interacted with the boys' team, I asked [him] to take over the boys' team and I was then able to go back to coaching the girls' team," Vuong said.

Though Chen is listed as the boys' head coach and Vuong as the girls' head coach, with each listed as the other's assistant, Chen makes it clear that the titles don't matter to each of them. "The only reason we're listed as the boys' and girls' head coaches is so that we will get our stipend from the district but we're co-coaches," Chen said. "I definitely wouldn't be here without John."

From the first season when they were coaching together, Chen and Vuong won over the team. "We have a philosophy and a vision and part of it was having the kids prove their credibility because they had many years of coaching turnover," Chen said. "I was just another face and the kids wanted to know what we were going to offer them as the new coaches. It was a matter of gaining their trust and setting the team with our vision."

From the start, Chen took away a great deal from coaching with Vuong. "John had a really specific vision on how to run a team," Chen said. "He can identify exactly what needs to be done to maximize the improvement potential in our players. It's in his type of stability and guidance that's really helped me along to be where I am today. Whenever I get stuck and I can't figure something out, John's always the first one I turn to. I feel like we fill in different roles. John and I have similar demeanors and goals. If one of us is

mad, the other one can play that other side as the peacemaker. That's why we get along and coach so well together without really having to speak about it."

For Vuong, it's a matter of the sum being greater than the whole of its parts. "David has more of a technical responsibility," Vuong said. "I will ask him what we should do for a practice, and he will come up with a drill and how to do things. I'm more overseeing the program and I delegate more of the technical responsibility to David so we don't do the same thing twice. It's a matter of dividing and conquer. That's the way that we complement and adapt to our inputs."

Character of the players on the boys' and girls' team is as important as ability, if not more so to Chen and Vuong. "We share the idea of team players and how their personality and attitude is primary to us," Vuong said. "If you don't have a good attitude along with poor body language, we're not going to have you on our team. It's a team sport so we want the players to play as a team and not as individuals."

Not surprisingly, the relationship between Chen and Vuong is as close off the court. "David has spent a lot of time with my kids since they were babies (now at Syracuse and USC) and has been like an uncle to them," Vuong said. "David's sister, mother and niece always hang out with me and my family. We always have something going on with each other."

Not to be overlooked is John's wife, Theresa. "Theresa has been an important part of John's life," Chen said. "She is behind the scenes but has been integral in allowing our coaching partnership to happen year after year."

In the end, what is their secret to success? According to Vuong, it comes down to two components. "First, you have athletes. No matter how great a coach you are, if you don't have that component, it's going to be a challenge. Secondly you need to have a system and discipline with players that believe in it. We tell the parents that we invest in our players because it's people that makes a team great. The key is for the players to follow our rules by being disciplined and using their skills because at the end of the day, it's them who are performing. It takes two to tango."

EPIC BATTLE

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Ballplayer Olympics (Moraga)

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Contra Costa Ballet Center (Walnut Creek)

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The Cougar Youth Football Camp directed by Head Coach Kevin Macy for grades 5-8 is held at Campolindo High School July 10-14 & July 17-21. Cost is \$500 with all equipment including T-shirt supplied. Registration forms online. Register at www.cougarcamps.com

FireCracker Summer Math Camp (Lafayette)

FireCracker Summer Math Camp for curious and challenge-loving kids ages 6 to 16. Instructions employ math games, projects, and magic tricks, sparking kids' interest in math and boosting their skills and confidence. Morning classes are followed by fun activities in the afternoon. www.firecrackermath.org | (510) 488-4556

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Miramonte Girls Basketball Camp (Orinda)

Miramonte Girls Basketball Camp will take place at Miramonte High School and be run by Miramonte Coaching staff, as well as current and past student athletes. Grades 3 - 8 are welcome. Camp will focus on Basketball Fundamentals as well as team building skills. Dates July 17 -21 and July 24 -28. Please contact michaela99.thomas@gmail.com

Moraga Day Camp (Moraga)

Get ready to rock all summer at Campchella! Join us for imaginative games, crafts, songs, and field trips themed around iconic songs. Ages 5.5 - 11. Weekly sessions June 5 - August 4. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. with extended care available. Moraga Day Camp Jr will run 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. select weeks. Located at Hacienda de las Flores. www.moragarec.com | (925) 888-7045

Cougar Football

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FULL GEAR YOUTH FOOTBALL CAMP

INSTRUCTOR: KEVIN MACY, HEAD FOOTBALL COACH AT CAMPOLINDO HIGH SCHOOL

GRADES 5 – 8, SEPARATED BY GRADE

DATES: July 10-14 & July 17-21 TIMES: 1:30 – 5:00 P.M.
FEES: \$500 (T-shirt included)

FOR REGISTRATION GO TO:
cougarcamps.com

Miramonte Girls Basketball Camp
7/17-7/21 and 7/24-7/28

Miramonte Girls Basketball Camp will take place at Miramonte Highschool and be run by Miramonte Coaching staff, as well as current and past student athletes. Grades 3 - 8 are welcome. Camp will focus on Basketball Fundamentals as well as team building skills.

Please contact
michaela99.thomas@gmail.com

Thank you Advertisers!
Lamorinda Weekly.

SPRING & SUMMER CAMPS 2023

FULL DAY CAMPS

Orinda Parks and Rec (Orinda)

Make new friends, learn new subjects, and have fun in a safe, engaging environment. This year's summer camp theme is Curiosity Quest. Orinda summer camps will run from June 5 – Aug. 11, and there will be no camps on June 19 or July 3-4. Registration will open at 9 a.m. on Thursday, March 30. www.cityoforinda.org/188/Camp-Information

Randy Bennett Basketball Camps (Moraga)

The Randy Bennett Day Camps held at Saint Mary's College in University Credit Union Pavilion are a great way for boys and girls grades K-8th to receive top-class instruction on every aspect of the game, led by Coach Bennett and his staff. Morning, afternoon and full day options available. Day Camps June and July. www.smcmensbasketballcamps.com/

Sienna Ranch (Lafayette)

Sienna Ranch is offering full day 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Outdoor Summer Camps for Kids PreK-8th Grade. Join our Sienna Ranch outdoor instructors for nature exploration, visiting our animals, learning survival skills, nature based crafts and more! admin@siennaranch.net www.siennaranch.net/programs/summer-camp/

Spanish Immersion Summer Camps (Lafayette)

Learn or improve Spanish language skills at Viva el Español through games, music, arts and crafts, science projects and cooking. During each weeklong camp students learn vocabulary related to a specific kid-friendly theme such as Adventures at the Reservoir or Rainforest Expedition. Full day, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Before/after-care available. Half-day options also available. www.vivaelespanol.org | (925) 962-9177

Summer@Saklan Language, Culture and Creativity (Moraga)

Summer@Saklan is the perfect place for your child to discover new passions and cultivate creativity this summer! Our summer camp offers hands-on language experiences (Mandarin and Spanish) and engaging activities such as art, cartooning, chess, coding, and more, all in a fun and supportive environment. www.saklan.org/summer/.

Town Hall Theatre (Lafayette)

Town Hall Education is holding Summer Camps running June-August! Single or multi-week camps are available, get up to 20% off with our summer sibling discount or multi-class discount! Tuition assistance is available. Join us for a summer on the high seas with tales of adventure, theatre intensives, and creative play! <https://www.townhalltheatre.com/summer-2023>

Summer 2023

June 19-22

3-5pm

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Improve your Skills and Have Serious Fun

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Register at: acalanesdonsfootball.com

or Scan QR Code

\$200.00 for the week

Open to boys and girls, grades 4th-8th



Did we miss your favorite camp?

On April 4 we will list all half-day camps and classes. Reach 60,000+ in Lamorinda and advertise with us. Call (925) 377-0977 or email wendy@lamorindaweekly.com.

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Join our In-Person **Spanish Camps!**

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Rising 9-12 Gr - Jun 12-23

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Games, Prizes Lacrosse

Registration is open for our **Summer Day Camp**
Boys and Girls 6U-14U
DATES: July 10-July 14, **TIME:** 9:00AM-2:00PM
COST: \$450.00
Full gear is required. Please bring water and sunscreen
<https://lamorindalacrosse.leagueapps.com/camps/3809022-2023-summer-camp>

Character. Competition. Discipline. Fun.

Congratulations LMYA BASKETBALL 2023 Champions

LMYA Basketball wrapped up the 2023 season with Championship matches for its 3rd-8th grade Girls and Boys Divisions. There was spirited competition on display fueled by fun with teammates and new skills learned and perfected during weekly practices. Congratulations to all of our players and thank you to all of the coaches, refs and parents for making this another great LMYA Basketball season!



3rd/4th GRADE BOYS, EAST - BUCKS
(L to R): Sahej Batra, Hudson Albini, Jonas O'Neill, Coach Evan Anderson, Xavier Anderson, Jacob Pearlstein, and Blake Wendling. (Not pictured): Kabir Tambawala, Marshall Foreman, and Coach Abde Tambawala.



3rd GRADE GIRLS, WINGS
(L to R): Bailey Liston, Makena Lovrin, Blake Floering, Emily Cheng, Claire Young, Stella Long, Sloane Meyer, and Addison Heindl. (Back): Coaches Paul Liston and Joe Young.



3rd/4th GRADE BOYS, WEST - CLIPPERS
(L to R): Coach Jason Voogt, Mateo Beraudo, Colton Whitlock, Keshav Patel, Everett Voogt, Christian Lee, Matt Lordan, Kobie Crowder, Mason Adams, and Coach Joe Lordan.



6th/7th/8th GRADE BOYS, CELTICS
(Front Row L to R): Jackson Greer, Ryan Jahed, Charlie Hoynes, and Luke Fratarcangeli. (Back Row L to R): Coach Mike Fratarcangeli, Mateo Valenzuela, Arav Uttarwar, Austin Sung, and Coach Tony Valenzuela.



4th/5th GRADE BOYS, WARRIORS
(L to R): Daniel Kolovyansky, Coach Vijay Sekhon, Ajay Sekhon, Darius Chun, Breck Millar, Matthew Ragchaagadi, Ruzgar Aydogdu, Lucian Lacrampe, and Leo Goldshtrakh.



Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 17 Issue 2 Wednesday, March 15, 2023



Tips on how to get organized ... read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

March into spring



Tulip magnolias and palms are an uncommon, yet gorgeous combination. Photos Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

"Rain, rain go away. Come again another day!" ~ Nursery Rhyme

Do you remember being a child tired of the winter mud puddles and anxious to go outside to play? As much as California has needed the downpours, I find myself reminiscing about the dreariest, grayest, coldest winter of my childhood when my sisters and I decided to run away from the farm to find the sunshine.

We were all under the age of 5 and on the

first rainless day in March we loaded our big red wagon with the most essential items ... our dolls, dinosaurs, pogo sticks, jump ropes, picture books, puzzles, miniature tool kit, hula hoops, Monopoly money (we thought it was real), rock collections, roller skates, and a shovel. Items like food, water, clothing, and blankets never crossed our minds. Our mom handed us a bag of sandwiches, and Dad suggested we take our dog for protection. We kissed our parents goodbye and told them we were off to wonderland.

My garden is my wonderland, and I am

antsy to start sowing. But, alas, the soil is still too damp and cold, so I have retreated to reading about resources for spring planning and planting. This is my way of marching into spring with increased knowledge while providing you with helpful information.

A book I highly recommend is by Susan Mulvihill, "The Vegetable Garden Problem Solver Handbook," which is chock full of easy-to-understand data on how to identify and manage diseases and other common problems on edible plants with natural solutions. I interviewed her on my radio broadcast, StarStyle®-Be the Star You Are!® where you can listen to her advice (<https://www.voiceamerica.com/episode/142669/the-vegetable-garden-problem-solver-and-garden-guidance>). Filled with hundreds of full-color photographs, many from her garden, and an extensive reference chart of problems with solutions, this book is an essential guide to pinpointing challenges and finding the answers quickly.

... continued on Page D8



Hang a basket of violas for instant color and a pop of excitement.



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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	7	\$900,000	\$2,405,000
MORAGA	4	\$574,500	\$1,650,000
ORINDA	2	\$1,065,000	\$1,689,000

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

3106 Del Oceano Drive, \$1,335,000, 4 Bdrms, 1758 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 02-02-23

607 Laird Lane, \$999,000, 4 Bdrms, 2263 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 01-23-23

839 Las Trampas Road, \$900,000, 4 Bdrms, 1711 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 01-23-23

1141 North Thompson Road, \$1,007,000, 2 Bdrms, 1276 SqFt,
1971 YrBlt, 02-01-23

1064 Via Alta, \$1,280,000, 5 Bdrms, 3170 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 01-23-23

1001 Woodbury Road #201, \$2,405,000, 3 Bdrms, 2468 SqFt,
2015 YrBlt, 02-03-23, Previous Sale: \$2,200,000, 09-28-22

964 Yorkshire Court, \$1,860,000, 5 Bdrms, 2653 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 02-03-23

MORAGA

1966 Ascot Drive, \$710,000, 2 Bdrms, 1234 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 01-30-23,
Previous Sale: \$480,000, 04-14-22

2079 Ascot Drive #239, \$605,000, 2 Bdrms, 1193 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 02-01-23,
Previous Sale: \$517,500, 07-13-18

17 Miramonte Drive, \$574,500, 4 Bdrms, 1762 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 01-30-23,
Previous Sale: \$220,000, 04-01-90

308 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,650,000, 5 Bdrms, 2954 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 01-30-23,
Previous Sale: \$1,475,000, 06-17-16

ORINDA

136 Spring Road, \$1,065,000, 2 Bdrms, 1667 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 01-31-23,
Previous Sale: \$1,120,000, 02-17-22

32 Valencia Road, \$1,689,000, 5 Bdrms, 3202 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 01-24-23

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COMPASS



Help! Why can't I stay organized?



Images Shutterstock

Installing pullouts in cabinets can help you use your space efficiently.

By Jennifer Raftis, CPO

Just in time for spring cleaning, I wanted to share some solutions that will help you stay organized and in control of your belongings.

In my experience, there are three key reasons that we have trouble keeping our homes organized – buying too much for your space, not using your space efficiently, and not maintaining your space regularly.

Are you over buying for your space?

One of the key reasons that most people can't stay organized starts outside the home (or on the computer ... hello, Amazon) when you make a purchase. We live in a culture of shopping and we are constantly tempted to buy things. Words like “get it now before it's gone” and “only on sale for 1 more day” create an urgency that we need to buy. It's a great marketing strategy for businesses and it definitely works. Hopefully, you will recognize it for what it is: a way to make you spend money.

I have read that 80% of us are in debt, carry at least three credit cards and a recent survey of teenagers rated their favorite pastime as shop-

ping. More than ever, the things we own end up owning us.

Think before you buy or better yet, buy with intention. Asking yourself a few questions before you make a purchase might help you save money, the landfill, and the harmony in your home: Do I really need this? Do you have another item that will work instead or is this replacing something you already have? Where will I store it? Are my cabinets and drawers already full? Do I have room to put this away? Am I using my home as a warehouse for storage? Am I buying this because it's on sale? (This is the No. 1 reason people purchase items that they do not need or sometimes don't even want. Note: You save 100% on what you do not buy!) Can I afford this? Am I putting this purchase on a credit card? Do I really need to buy in bulk to save a few dollars? I have written about this before, but it's worth repeating. If you do not have the room to store large quantities of items – and the chaos in your home is making you crazy – is it really worth the savings?

... continued on Page D9

Turning Up the Rock Star Treatment

**Business Person
of the Year 2023**



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COMPASS



Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

March into spring

A section on critters in the garden offers controls and strategies to outsmart the birds and mammals most often encountered.

As a garden communicator, I subscribe to a plethora of different catalogs, newsletters, and digital diaries, each one delivering a different perspective on how to design, create, and implement a cheerful landscape in any season. Reading garden catalogs brings me great pleasure. Most include a parade of pictures of plants in their prime. When perusing these collections, I feel like a kid in a candy store. My mouth is agape, and I can't get enough.

You'll find information on water-wise gardening, pollinators, ground covers, perennials, trees, patio plants, indoor décor, hanging baskets, arrangements, bouquets, seeds, bulbs, roses, azaleas, hydrangeas, shade gardens, herbs, vegetables, fruits, bird houses, ponds, garden accents, pottery, recipes, and more, depending on the publication. Make lists of your favorite specimens and products. Purchase locally at your favorite nursery or garden center, or order directly from the grower. Free shipping is often offered with purchases that total a certain amount of dollars.

... continued on Page D10



The sun shines on a winter view of a Japanese maple with daffodils at the base.

Photos Cynthia Brian

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SUNDAY, MARCH 19 • 1-4 PM

Gorgeous New Saratoga Remodel!

This beautifully remodeled condo captures picturesque southeast views of the hills and valley beyond. Uniquely designed great room shares these highlights: new maple cabinetry, custom stone and marble style counters with stainless touches, new appliances, and built-in desk area.

Additional upgrades include new flooring, lighting, closet built-ins, completely remodeled bathroom, and custom murphy maple wall bed unit in guest bedroom.

Enclosed veranda offers additional living space. Security gate entry, golf course, fabulous event center, theater and crafts studios are some of the many amenities of Rossmoor lifestyle community. **\$549,000**



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Help! Why can't I stay organized?



Images Shutterstock

It's important to edit (decide what to keep and what to let go of) at least once a year.

... continued from Page D4

Are you using your space efficiently?

Look around your home, are you using your space efficiently? Here are a few simple ideas:

- When possible, install pullouts in all lower cabinets. Many items that are in the back of cabinets often die there. If you can't see it or reach it ... enough said.
- Adjust the height of your shelves. If you see empty space above the items on a shelf, can you adjust the shelf height to accommodate the items to use all of the space?
- Use the inside of doors. There are many products that can be mounted to the inside of doors to store products such as shoes, toiletries, cleaning supplies, hats, gloves, and even tools.
- Store like items together and closest to where you use them (so you can find them).

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



Purchase multi-functional furniture that has storage. For example: A coffee table or ottoman that has space to store games and blankets, or a shelving unit that has storage boxes for toys.

Are you maintaining your space by editing consistently?

I don't think our parents knew that editing (deciding what to keep and what to let go of) was something we needed to do. I recommend editing at least once a year. This is even more important if you have growing children. It helps to have a donation box or bag in every closet to keep up with the outgrown clothing, shoes and toys. Here are some items that you can probably edit right now:

- Tupperware (food saver containers) - especially when you don't have the lid, it's not coming back
- Bags, cloth, paper, plastic - you know you oversave these
- Vases
- Linens - you probably don't need 5 sets of sheets for each bed or mismatched items
- Water bottles
- Expired medication, sunscreen, spices, food
- Toys
- Craft supplies
- Coffee cups

Are you wondering where to start? Remember, the answer to your space problem is probably subtraction.

Happy Spring Cleaning!



205 FERNWOOD DRIVE, MORAGA

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- "Down to the studs" remodel and expansion by current owner in 2014
- Pancake flat yard with California Room, Outdoor Kitchen, Pool, Hot Tub, Bocce Court, Lawn
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4 BEDS • 3 BATHS • ±2,640 SF • ±.46 ACRE LOT

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

March into spring



Purple bearded iris glisten in the garden.

... continued from Page D8

Here are a few of my favorite catalogs and newsletters to whet your appetite:

American Meadows: www.AmericanMeadows.com

Baker Creek Heirloom seeds: www.RareSeeds.com

Bluestone Perennials: www.BlueStonePerennials.com

Botanical Interests: www.BotanicalInterests.com

Burpee Seeds and Plants: www.Burpee.com

Brent and Becky's Bulb Growers: www.BrentandBeckysBulbs.com

Green Mantel Heirloom Plant Nursery: www.GreenMantelNursery.com

Gurneys Seed and Nursery: www.Gurneys.com

High Country Gardens: www.HighCountryGardens.com

Jackson and Perkins: www.jacksonandperkins.com

John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds: www.kitchengardenseeds.com

Lilipons Water Garden: <https://lilypons.com>

Monrovia Nursery Company: www.Monrovia.com

Nature Hills Online Plant Nursery: www.NatureHills.com

Nichols Garden Nursery: <https://nicholsgardennursery.com>

Plant Delights Nursery, Inc.: www.PlantsDelights.com

Proven Winners: www.ProvenWinners.com

Raintree Nursery: <https://raintreenursery.com>

Renee's Garden: www.ReneesGarden.com

Seed Savers Exchange: www.seedsavers.org

Territorial Seed company: <https://territorialseed.com>

Urban Farmer Seeds: <https://www.ufseeds.com>



A gorgeous combination of flowering pear and camellia trees.



Azaleas are in full bloom. Photos Cynthia Brian

Wayside Gardens: www.WaysideGardens.com

White Flower Farm: www.WhiteFlowerFarm.com

This directory is by no means exhaustive. Choose a few that speak to you and increase your horticultural education. To elevate your garden savvy even more, dive into the world of gardening for a free live stream of the Great Grow Along Festival happening March 15-19. Whether you're a seasoned green thumb or a new plant parent, you'll have the chance to connect with top influencers, participate in interactive demonstrations and in-garden footage, and even chat live with the speakers. Take advantage of this opportunity to take your gardening skills to the next level. There are several sessions to choose from, covering everything from sustainability to DIY landscaping, first-time and experienced gardeners will get practical advice and creative inspiration from top 'plantfluencers,' garden experts, and industry leaders – all for free. <https://greatgrowalong.com>

Being a gardener means being on a constant learning curve. No matter how much we know, we'll never know enough. We may not be able to work in our gardens in the unpredictable inclement weather, but with the inventory of reading materials and online displays, we won't need to run away to find the sunshine. Sit by the fire with a cup of herbal tea infused with lemon and mint to savor the sweetness of marching into spring. Or, since St. Patrick's Day is nigh, hoist a Guinness and relish the green terrain that evokes the Emerald Isles, land of leprechauns, shamrocks, and banshees, with gratitude to the rain. There will be plenty of time for digging deeply in the next few months.

... continued on next page

You are probably wondering how my youthful runaway quest ended. My sisters and I did find paradise. We spent the day in a field of mustard plants that were taller than us. We created rooms, pretended we were pioneers, picked flowers, and as night descended, were spooked by coyotes as we huddled together stargazing with our dog keeping guard. We were sleeping soundly when our Dad came to get his girls. In the morning we awoke in our beds, the smell of Mom's cooking wafting from the

kitchen. At breakfast, we all agreed we had indeed found the Promised Land far, far away. Our parents listened with rapt attention as we shared stories of our exhilarating adventure to the land of sunshine and flowers. We didn't realize that our enchanted faraway world was only a mile down the road, on our own property. We had never left our farm.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy St. Patrick's Day!



Photo Cynthia Brian

Bright pink *Bergenia* provides a colorful understory to manicured privet along a fence.



Cynthia Brian enjoys playing in the mustard fields!

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>

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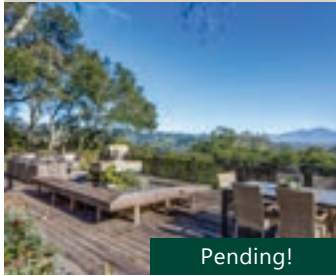
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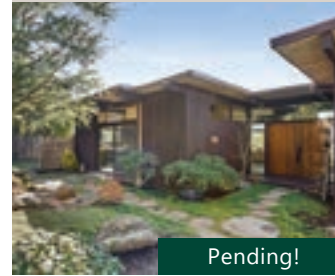
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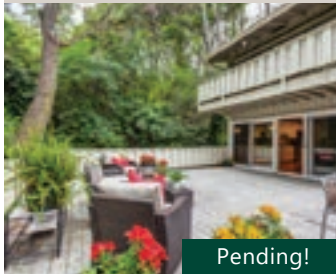
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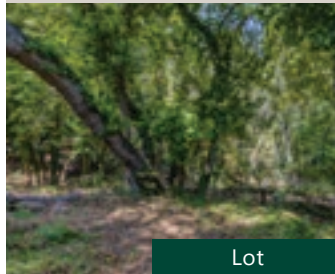
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