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This huge Acacia tree on Moraga Way has been trimmed, but still interferes with wires above it. The trunk is split and the tree is in poor health. Photo Sora O'Doherty

Winter storms lead residents to wonder about tree safety

By Sora O'Doherty

After Lamorinda was battered by unusually wet and windy winter storms, Lamorinda residents, as well as governments and utilities, are wondering about the safety of the many trees that grace, and sometimes threaten, Lamorinda neighborhoods. High winds and saturated ground have already claimed many large trees in the area. Assessing trees for potential problems has become paramount. The Lamorinda Weekly spent some time with the president of East Bay Tree Service, Victor Ghavamzadeh, learning about tree assessment.

Many times a homeowner will notice changes in their tree that make them

afraid that the tree has become a danger. Changes might affect the trunk of the tree, there might be discoloration on the bark, or mushrooms growing near the roots. Soil conditions around the tree may have deteriorated, and the tree might be leaning where before it was straight, or leaning more than it did previously.

Ghavamzadeh explained that there are four classifications of tree danger: imminent, probable, possible and un-possible. A tree is an imminent danger if it has failed or is about to fail. This is indicated by the tree being uprooted or if the roots are not holding, or if the tree is suffering bark inclusions, cracks, or splitting.

Probable danger is indicated if the tree has a good chance of falling, because, for example,

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The heart of Lafayette loses some of its rhythm



Empty storefront in La Fiesta Square

Photo J. Wake

By Sharon K. Sobotta

On a given day, Jennifer McCarthy-Redmond might have dropped off her children at Lafayette Elementary School, grabbed a morning coffee from Tutu's, a snack

from Papillon, dinner from Urban Remedy and then meandered over to the Kinkos Fed Ex store to renew her passport. Now, both Urban Remedy and Kinkos Fed Ex have vacated, along with the gym and other storefronts in what McCarthy-

Redmond and others refer to as the heart of Lafayette are sitting empty. And, many are worried that this may only be the beginning of the vacancy trend.

In May, 2022, SITE Centers, a real estate investment trust, purchased the La Fiesta Square for \$60.7 million and the Lafayette Mercantile for \$42.6 million in what was called a "once in a generation" opportunity by the brokering real estate firm. However, the deal is much less sweet for many of Lafayette's small business owners and loyal patrons.

"That is the heart of Lafayette. It's what makes the place special," McCarthy-Redmond says. "I think if things are just sort of thoughtlessly turned over to the highest paying tenants, it's going to diminish the desirability of the town that's known for green

hills and great schools. There's something unique about this place that distinguishes us from Orinda or Moraga and Walnut Creek and our small businesses are a part of that."

Sam and Betty Sukh are proud to be the third set of owners of Papillon, a coffee shop that opened its doors well over four decades ago, in 1978. "Many of our customers have been coming here for decades and they enjoy meeting their friends here over a cup of coffee. It's like part of their daily life routine and rituals," Betty Sukh says. "It's a community space and a Lafayette icon."

The Sukhs recall being notified late last year about the monthly fee increase for all the tenants in the plaza of 20-30%, depending on square footage of the respective business. "Most of the fees are related to the property tax in-

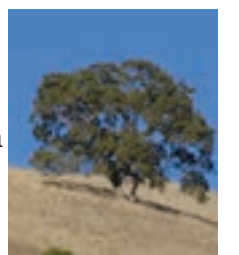
crease. They bought this place (above market rate) and the tenants have to pay the property tax increase. We can deal with an annual 3 or 5% increase but 20-30% is an unhealthy increase. It's unfair."

Betty and Sam Sukh say they're determined not to let their massive monthly fee increase be transferred onto their customers, because they want to stay accessible. "Our customers have already started worrying about us and some are saying that they'll understand if we need to raise our prices, but we really don't want to do that," Betty Sukh says. "The buyer is a big corporation that owns properties across the country so they don't necessarily care about our community of Lafayette (nor do they necessarily know anything about us)."

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Lafayette Police Chief presents 2022 crime stats to council



By Elaine Borden Chandler

Chief of Police Ben Alldritt gave the Lafayette Police Department 2022 Annual Report to the City Council during its March 27 meeting. He started with a summary of the department and the year. Lafayette PD has 25 staff members who dealt with 12,674 calls for service, 1,293 police reports, 259 arrests, and 1,093 citations. Alldritt's report was based on the FBI's Uniform Crime Report which includes eight types of Part 1 Category Crimes: homicide, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, 10851 (joyriding) and arson.

"In a 10-year comparison, for 2022 we had the lowest number of Part 1 crimes," said Alldritt. But he noted certain

categories rose. Assault and larceny went down, while robbery, burglary, and joyriding went up from 2021. Both person crimes, such as homicide or robbery, and property crimes, such as theft or vandalism, were far below the national average.

Lafayette had no homicides in 2022. There was one reported case of assault with a deadly weapon and two cases of kidnapping. The assault was a case where a wife struck her husband and was arrested. The first kidnapping case involved a stranger attempting to abduct a teenager. There are currently no leads. The second kidnapping was a case where a family was restrained after a forced entry. The intruder is currently in custody.

The law acknowledges two kinds of robbery: armed, which involves a weapon, and strong-arm, which does not. There were two armed robberies and six strong-arm robberies, mostly shoplifting that became violent. Suspects were arrested in all cases.

There were two reported cases of rape, one of child molestation, six of felony domestic violence, and seven of mis-

demeanor domestic violence. Alldritt did not discuss details for the sake of sensitivity.

There was one assault on a police officer. Alldritt commented, "The gentleman had a little bird in his hand the entire time during the fight, and as he came to the ground the bird walked away."

Most crimes in Lafayette are property crimes. There were 17 residential burglaries, a jump from 2020 and 2021. Alldritt took responsibility but also asked residents to invest in home surveillance. Commercial burglary increased with 32 cases, 14 of which are solved. While there were 120 auto crimes, ranging from theft from car to stolen vehicles, auto burglaries have dropped significantly from 2019, which Alldritt credited to situational awareness cameras.

Traffic citations rose from 900 in 2021 to 1,039 in 2022. Alldritt stressed that traffic citations should correspond with traffic collisions and that traffic complaints have been very high in Lafayette. Traffic collisions were down from 2021 at 115 cases, and lower overall from the last 10 years. There

were no fatal accidents. Alldritt is hopeful the Lafayette Go Slow campaign will reduce these collisions further.

Code enforcement had 268 calls, including their first house abatement. The majority were for overgrown vegetation. Code enforcement also includes property violations, building and zoning violations, fire hazards, and parking violations.

Recess with a Cop is returning this fall after a pause during COVID. The PD also does active threat training with schools, involving one hour of free training for staff for a situation like a mass shooter. As per a question from Vice Mayor Gina Dawson, Lafayette PD works specifically with teachers, and schools are responsible for drills.

The Emergency Preparedness Commission updated the "Lamorinda Residents Guide to Wildfire Preparedness and Evacuation" and sent it to

every home. The CalOES Grant was used for purchasing radios in schools and school buses, solar panels and a backup generator. Alldritt gave a shout out to the Public Works crew for all their work, especially in the rains.

The written report also notes eight cases of felony vandalism, 35 of misdemeanor vandalism, 30 of identity theft, five of terrorist threats, and one of forgery, and expresses gratitude to the Crime Prevention Commission.

Alldritt ended saying March marked five years of his service in Lafayette. "I love being here, and I love the opportunity to work with this. We have a great community, a caring community, from school administrators to city staff to community members," he said. Council members Teresa Gerlinger, Wei-Tai Kwok, and Susan Candell praised Alldritt and thanked him for his work.

Chief Alldritt's report at the March 27 Lafayette City Council Meeting with can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxDEtp0hKGE&t=3024s. The "City of Lafayette Police 2022 Annual Report" can be found at www.lovelafayette.org/home/showpublisheddocument/7242/638155998995970000.

The heart of Lafayette loses some of its rhythm

... continued from Page A1

Another tenant and business owner in La Fiesta Square who declined to give her name says she fears the worst but hopes for the best. "I heard that the corporation bought the plaza at an above market rate and they're distributing that high property tax rates on all of us who run businesses here," she said. "I hope it's just about making up for the dif-

ference in property tax. We always worry about the possibility of them continuing to raise the rent and make it so expensive and unrealistic for the current tenants that we all get pushed out to make room for big business. I hope that's not the case." The tenant shared that her business also has no interest in raising prices.

"We're one of the only places in town where you can replace a (watch) battery for \$10. The

price has been the same for many years. It's a simple thing that we can do to be of service to our community at an affordable price and we take pride in that."

Parya Suri has lived near downtown Lafayette for the past three years with her husband and her now 2-year-old son. Suri also attended Bentley High School and considers Lafayette her home. Like many renters with aspirations of

home ownership, Suri and her family will soon be exchanging their status as Lafayette renters to Walnut Creek homeowners. "We tried to stay here, but it just wasn't really feasible with the costs," Suri says. To hear that the survival of businesses like Papillon is on the line makes Suri feel sad. "I know Sam, who runs Papillon. My 2-year-old son Jayden loves him. We walk in and Sam immediately knows my son's or-

der," Suri says. "It's nice to have that personal touch in the town that you live in. It's a community. It's comfort. It's home. I love the mom and pop shops. When we have external buyers who don't live here and are raising the rent (and fees) so much, you don't understand that you're literally putting people out of business. I would advocate for small businesses to stay here. That's what makes Lafayette the place that it is."

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Earth Day Festival returns at new downtown Lafayette location



Photo provided

Community gathers for fun at a prior Earth Day Festival.

This is the 16th year Sustainable Lafayette will be organizing and hosting the Lafayette Earth Day Festival, which will be held at a new, central location on April 23 at Lafayette Plaza Park. "The festival will bring the whole community together to celebrate, while connecting with some of the amazing work our local organizations, youth groups and businesses are doing to create a healthy, thriving community," said Surabhi Konkar of Sustainable Lafayette.

"The event will feature inspiration and entertainment for all ages. The Jim Ocean band will be there with their unique brand of Rock 'n' Roll. The band will treat the audience to a live performance of their new album, 'FrankenClime' - a humor-infused rock 'n' roll mash spotlighting the envi-

ronmental challenges of the times," Konkar said. "There will be arts, crafts and games to keep the kids entertained as well as a petting zoo by Lamorinda 4H. Mt. Diablo Beekeepers Association will be there with an observation hive and honey bee education. Sharp Bicycle will be there providing free bike tune-ups. A variety of local and national environmental organizations and youth groups will be there to educate everyone on how to live sustainably and take part in protecting our planet."

The free festival will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, April 23 at Plaza Park, across from Sideboard. For information about Sustainable Lafayette and the festival, visit www.sustainablelafayette.org/2023-earth-day-festival - J. Wake



Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council
Regular Meeting
Monday, April 24, 7 p.m.
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, April 17, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Design Review
Wednesday, April 24, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
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MORAGA

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Moraga Citizens' Network:
www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

Town Council:
Wednesday, April 12, 6:30 p.m.
Planning Commission:
Tuesday, April 18, 6:30 p.m.
Park and Recreation Commission:
Monday, April 24, 7:00 p.m.,
Moraga School District Board Meetings:
Tuesday, April 18, 6 p.m.
www.moraga.k12.ca.us.

Interim Town Manager's temporary gig was an eventful one

By Vera Kochan



Photo Vera Kochan

Moraga's Interim Town Manager Brian Dolan

It was trial by fire, or in this case rain, for Interim Town Manager Brian Dolan when he began his first day on the job, Jan. 3. Even before he became a town employee, Dolan knew what he was about to face when a massive storm struck the Bay Area and unleashed its fury on Moraga during New Year's Eve. Flooding, landslides, downed trees and power outages wreaked enough havoc for Dolan to proclaim a local emergency his second day on the job.

Coming out of an eight-month retirement after working over 35 years for local government as a public employee and consultant, Dolan's most recent position as assistant city manager of Pleasanton saw its share of weather-related issues. "We've had some significant weather events in Pleasanton such as downed trees and flooding. It wasn't that different," he said. "Moraga was challenging, because it happened so soon after I started. The town staff was amazing. Kyle's crew [Public Works/Parks Maintenance Manager Kyle Salvin], with so few people, worked long hours and came in when they weren't even scheduled."

As far as tackling any of

the town's issues of the day, Dolan appreciated how the department heads got him up to speed. Having participated in Housing Elements with other municipalities he wasn't involved with the brunt of Moraga's by the time he started. "I was here for the adoption – the formality. Most of the major decisions had already been made."

Dolan said he really does mean to retire once he's done serving as interim town manager (April 6). "I have no plans to go back to work." His first day will be spent going to a San Francisco Giants baseball game against the Kansas City Royals. Other plans are to visit his daughter who's working in Mexico; and attend a family reunion in Minnesota. "My wife is still working so we can't go too crazy."

"It sounds like a cliché, but I've enjoyed working with the staff and the town council," Dolan said. "I've enjoyed Renata [Sos] as mayor. It's been fun for me to really get to know the people in the community that are most active in Moraga, as well as the full breadth of the issues that the town faces."

Dolan's last town council meeting was March 22, and the three council members in attendance that evening acknowledged his short but memorable contribution to

the town. "We were lucky to have Brian, a Moraga resident and an expert in city government, who is calm and even-tempered, take the helm," stated Vice Mayor and recently discovered to be Dolan's second cousin, Teresa Onoda. "Nature has thrown landslides, Comcast failures, street flooding, staff changes, the Housing Element – and that's just the obvious. Brian is treasured by the staff and council. He has been a champion that Moraga needed."

"What impresses me is that stepping into the seat of the town manager for a short period of time," Council Member Steve Woehleke said to Dolan, "the position of town manager is really broad, and it's deep, and you inherit a lot of these challenges, and it's amazing how calm and deliberate you are in addressing and running the town."

Mayor Renata Sos added, "Brian, you were just the right guy for the moment. You brought a calm and steady hand to a period of transition and uncertainty. You are a terrific collaborator. What I most appreciate is that you had retired for a whole five minutes before you took this job, and you did it out of love for this community, and you served this community extremely well."

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Town Council establishes Design Standards for Rheem Park Area



Aerial view of Rheem Valley Shopping Center

Photo provided

By Vera Kochan

Moraga is inching forward toward the development of the Rheem Park Area with regards to reinvigorating the appearance of an outdated shopping center, and its immediate surroundings, that was first built in 1955.

With substantial input from prior meetings of both the Planning Commission and the Town Council, staff was able to incorporate the suggestions into a presentation given to council members during the March 22 meeting, at which time the council voted 3-0 (Council Members Kerry Hillis and David Shapiro were out of the country) to waive the first reading of the Rheem Park Objective Design Standards Ordinance.

The March 22 staff report was compiled by Moraga Planning Director Afshan Hamid, Senior Planner Brian Horn, Planning Consultant Aaron Welch, and Planning Consultant Barry Miller. Their presentation noted the Town Council's feedback from its Feb. 15 meeting with items such as: the need for a cohesive and integrated design; ad-

ressing of any noise issues; why the ordinance doesn't require public space; water-efficient landscaping requirements; long-term bike parking requirements; bicycle storage requirements; residential amenities as opposed to community benefits; pedestrian safety; and architectural style.

Also discussed was a summary of revisions from the Feb. 23 Planning Commission meeting which clarified that Center Street alignment is flexible; reduced the number of required residential amenities from 4 to 3, with added flexibility for types of amenities that could be provided; clarified that multiple types of glass can be used but will not be counted towards one of the three required exterior materials; limited bright/vibrant color schemes to trim and accent elements; added language that major changes shall utilize a vernacular design and complementary architecture; reduced required long-term bicycle parking from 1 to 0.5 spaces per unit, and clarified that private garage storage qualifies as long-term storage; added requirements for accessible public space for major projects on Park Street or Center Street, or projects with at least 50 units or 50,000 sq. ft.; clarified that landscaping must be water-efficient and fire resistant; and referenced parklets to encourage outdoor dining.

Property owners and developers also had the opportunity to weigh in with regards to any requested revisions which included revising standards for grocery, pharmacy

and retail uses exceeding 30,000 sq. ft. in size or larger, and allow for more flexibility in window glazing; reducing the required depth of ground floor nonresidential tenant spaces from 60 feet to 45 feet and the minimum width of this space from half to 20 feet in width or 35% of the width of the tenant space (whichever is greater); allowing more flexibility for the location of surface and ground floor parking adding additional location and screening options; and allowing more flexibility consistent with current truck loading operations within the Rheem Valley Shopping Center.

Some additional revisions that the Planning Commission requested for the Town Council to consider during its March 22 meeting concerned applicability; site circulation and access; building orientation; massing and articulation; building facades; building space requirements; materials and colors; and public space.

With regards to the architectural style, while Spanish Colonial was discussed as a possibility during several meetings, it was not pinpointed as a required style of design.

Staff recommended that noise be addressed through several means, such as, a City-wide Noise Ordinance update (which is a 2023 Town Council Goal); project-level noise impacts addressed through required CEQA review; and Title 24 of the California Building Code which already requires design for interior space not to exceed 45 decibels.

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Community Meeting held to gather feedback for Corliss Drive Safe Routes to School Project



Corliss Drive Safe Routes to School Project Photo Provided

By Vera Kochan

In an effort to make the trip to school safer for students on their way to Los Perales Elementary, the town of Moraga engaged in community input with its first virtual meeting on March 28.

The event was presented by Public Works Senior Engineer Bret Swain who was joined by Sandis Traffic Engineer Lead/Project Manager Nate Levine and Fehr & Peers Senior Transportation Planner Susie Hufstader.

Approximately 20 attendees viewed the meeting, some of whom participated in the virtual survey involving developing a street design that promotes peace of mind for everyone traveling on the upper Corliss Drive/Sullivan Drive corridor, as well as creating a pleasant environment for the area's residents. Several alternative scenarios were discussed in this first phase of the project's Community Engagement Schedule.

Hufstader served as the moderator, and got the ball rolling by presenting a "Getting to know you" poll. Most participants replied that they traveled the corridor more than four times a day; lived on the corridor in question; and were a mix of students/parents/or not.

Current walking conditions in the neighborhood were discussed, noting that there is a crossing guard at the Corliss Drive/Wakefield Drive intersection during school drop-offs and pickups; however, there is a sidewalk gap

along parts of the corridor forcing pedestrians to walk on the street.

The driving conditions are not optimal with drop-offs and pickups occurring on the street; and the left turn lane exiting the school on Wakefield Drive runs five to nine cars deep. In a 24-hour data collection period, 10-12% of vehicles drove over 25 mph in various areas of the corridor; school zone parking restrictions are basically not observed; and some parents park on the street and walk to the school to pick up their kids.

The corridor's roadway conditions offer a narrow 36-foot width with a 50-foot right-of-way between Warfield Drive and Arroyo Drive that includes two travel lanes and parking shoulders. Decorative and landscaped frontages (trees, mailboxes, walls/stairs, etc.) take the place of an actual sidewalk.

Four alternatives were presented by the team. Tier 1 - Raised Sidewalks (\$800,000 - \$1.2 million) is the costliest option and would involve the continuation of a raised sidewalk from Warfield Drive to Arroyo Drive; include a traditional 4 to 6-foot concrete sidewalk raised above street level; and existing features/conditions within the public right-of-way would need removal or modification.

Tier 2 - At-Grade Pedestrian Lane (\$200,000 - \$400,000) would install a curb in the roadway to provide a curb protected walking area; limit impacts to resident frontages with a curb opening

at driveways; sidewalk width would vary from 4 to 6 feet and fit in the existing roadway; and would convert existing parking or travel lane to provide a 4 to 6-foot walking lane.

Tier 3 - At-Grade Pedestrian Lane - Paint and Plastic (\$75,000 - \$250,000) is similar to Tier 2, but uses striping, plastic cones/bumpers to provide separation. While less costly, it is less permanent and may not be appropriate for pedestrian uses; and it provides less protection than Tiers 1 and 2.

Tier 4 - Striping and Signing (\$25,000 - \$100,000) uses signs and striping to encourage slower speeds; is quick to install and can be adjusted; does not propose a change to any existing uses in the right-of-way; and does not provide physical protection or create spacing for walking or biking.

After presenting the options, attendees were asked to participate in another survey. A large number stated that they either walk, drive or bike along the Corliss Drive corridor. For those who walked, the main purpose was for exercise or travel to and from the school. Just over half stated that they felt safe and comfortable walking in the corridor; and a large number (67%), agreed with the team's assessment of current conditions. The biggest complaint was the amount of traffic followed by speeding, pedestrians straying into travel lanes, parked vehicles and failure to stop. The most important priorities for the corridor project, according to the survey, is to improve pedestrian safety and comfort followed by lowering vehicle speeds; maintaining parking; maintaining landscape and frontage as is; and maintaining traffic flow.

Swain responded to a question about funding, "Right now we would probably have to fund a project out of municipal funds. Some grant funding opportunities, such as the Highway Safety Program, may not be available for major infrastructure and other ones, like Safe Routes to School, because a high percentage of the grant is reliant upon disadvantaged community points."

A question was asked

about limiting drop-offs and pickups to one direction. "It's definitely something that's part of the conversation," responded Levine, "but we're not specifically able to tell the school to change what they're doing as part of this project."

Would it be possible to turn Corliss Drive into a one-way street? While the situation is being evaluated, Levine conceded that doing so would have a variety of impacts on the traffic.

In closing, Swain stated, "We do want to get as much feedback as we can. There is a specific scoping idea for this project that was developed in

the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan), but we do want to hear what the residents have to say who live in that neighborhood, because this would impact you, as much as we want to hear from the school, the students, and the parents who attend the school, and additionally anyone who happens to walk in the area. We want to hear what everyone has to say about this and get a balanced feedback on this project."

It was noted that the website for the survey is still open for community feedback through April (bit.ly/Corliss-SR2S). The address is case sensitive.

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Moraga Community Faire and Car Show returns, April 29

Thanks to an allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from the town of Moraga, the Moraga Chamber of Commerce will once again host the Moraga Community Faire and Car Show, which showcases live music and performances, a gorgeous car show, a robust Kid's Zone with games, battle bots, sporting contests, animal interactions, pony rides and more. The family-friendly event will be held rain or shine from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 29 at the Rheem Shopping Center (580 Moraga Rd.).

"Stroll our talented Artist's Alley while noshing on food truck fare and Loard's Ice Cream or while enjoying a local wine, cider or beer from Canyon Club, Mt. Diablo Cider or area vineyards," Moraga Chamber Executive Director Katie Bidstrup said. "There are so many interesting and interactive booths to see and enjoy this year, from bee keeping and gardening to

spinning a wheel of fortune. You can even bring clothing to the Faire and Sustainable Contra Costa will repair it."

Community members can tour the car show or enter their own vintage ride (deadline April 24) to compete for prizes. "You can even learn about the University of Oregon Ducks, acupuncture, dog training or sign your trees up for fruit rescue and have all that yummy goodness go out to the needy in our communities," Bidstrup said. Multiple live Bands will perform on stage with a variety of music and a DJ, and a magician will also be there for the community's enjoyment.

"In past years, this event has attracted up to 2,500 people for an amazing time," said Chamber board member and former mayor Mike McCluer. "Let's enjoy this wonderful event, our beautiful town and community!"

- J. Wake

Check out the schedule of events at MoragaChamber.org/CommunityFaire

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www.orindachamber.org
The Orinda Association:
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First Orinda Wildfire Prevention and Safety Fair in Community Park, April 22

On Earth Day, April 22, the city of Orinda will host a public event at the Orinda Community Park from 9 a.m. to early afternoon. The First Orinda Wildfire Prevention and Safety Fair is aimed at letting the residents of Orinda meet the agencies and organizations that specialize or can provide resources to help them be less at risk from the damaging and life-threatening effects of wildfire.

There will be representatives from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, California Department of Insurance, Orinda

Firewise Council, Vulcan Vents, and more. The event is free and open to all. Children will be able to see and engage with some of the equipment used by these professionals (wildfire firetrucks, Utility Terrain Vehicles, etc.) There will also be other child-focused activities. Adults will be able to access resources, ask questions, and hear short talks given by local experts.

The fair will also be happening concurrently with the weekly farmers' market and food will be available at the market.

In addition, the Red Cross will be conducting a blood drive from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Community Center for any

who would like to donate. The blood drive is sponsored by the Orinda Teen Advisory Council. - S. O'Doherty

Earth Day is also the Annual Orinda Action Day of Community Service

Orinda's annual action day of service, when community members meet and lend a hand to help clean up and beautify the city, will be held from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 22. A T-shirt, snacks and light lunch will be provided to volunteers. The event is sponsored by the city of Orinda in partnership with the Orinda Community Foundation and Orinda Women's Club. Volunteers can sign up for a slot and meet at the Orinda Library Lower Plaza (adjacent to the community center). For more information and to sign up, please go to: <http://www.orindafoundation.org/>

OIS presents 'Shrek JR,' April 20-22



OIS "Shrek JR" New Day Cast



OIS "Shrek JR" Fresh Start Cast

Photos provided

The year's spring musical at Orinda Intermediate School will prove that beauty is in the eye of the ogre in "Shrek The Musical JR.," based on the Oscar-winning DreamWorks Animation film and fantastic Broadway musical. It's a "big bright beautiful world" as everyone's favorite ogre, Shrek, leads a cast of fairytale misfits on an adventure to rescue a princess and find true acceptance. Part romance and part twisted fairy tale, "Shrek JR." has been described as "an irreverently fun show with a powerful message for the whole family." The OIS performance on

April 20-22 at the Bulldog Theatre, produced by Bay Area Children's Theatre, will feature 48 sixth- through eighth-grade actors grouped into two casts and 12 student tech crew members, according to Shelly Rose, program/event manager of the theater. All six performances (three per cast) will take place in the Orinda Intermediate School multi-purpose room at 80 Ivy Drive, Orinda. Tickets are \$12 and are on sale at www.showtix4u.com/event-details/71860 (Click on "Show Program" at the left to view cast lists.) - S. O'Doherty



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City Council Regular Meeting:
Tuesday, April 18, 6:00 p.m.
Planning Commission:
Wednesday, April 12, 7:00 p.m.
Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
Wednesday, April 12, 6:30 p.m.

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Winter storms lead residents to wonder about tree safety



Photo Sora O'Doherty

The dying treetops on these trees on Camino Pablo are a sign of ill health, which means that these trees might fall in a bad storm.

... continued from Page A1

it is at a 45-degree angle over a house or has structural defects. In the category of possible danger are trees that are fine now, but might fall in the face of strong winds and extensive rains. But there are also trees that are classified as impossible, meaning that even high winds and heavy rains are unlikely to damage the tree, often because the tree is small or young.

So what are the warning signs that a homeowner might

be alert to? Sometimes a tree divides when growing and develops what are known as pre-dominant and co-dominant leaders, which are weaker than single trunks. In a storm, it is more likely that the co-dominant leader will break away from the tree.

The tree's age is also a factor. Some trees, such as oaks and redwoods, have very long lives, while other trees, such as birch and alder are shorter-lived. The years of drought have also affected trees, causing them to have a less exten-

sive root structure and even adversely affecting the molecular and microbial composition of the soil. Lamorinda has a lot of clay soil, which results in more shallow root structures in trees.

Another thing that Ghavamzadeh says affect trees negatively is poor pruning, often by people with little training or experience. For example, he pointed to the practice known as "lion-tailing," in which the limbs of a tree, often a heritage oak tree, are cleared of foliage from the center of the tree outward, leaving a tuft of leaves at the very end, resembling a lion's tail. This practice encourages trees to grow further and further out, and eventually branches will fall. This type of pruning error cannot be easily corrected and may cause the loss of trees that are 300 to 400 years old.

Many trees fell in the winter storms this year across Lamorinda. One thing that readers might not be aware of, Ghavamzadeh says, is that the state of California actively promoted the planting of Monterey pine trees in Lamorinda to help stabilize the hillsides. The Monterey pine seemed to be a good choice because it tolerated

clay soils, which are prevalent in Lamorinda. But drought, insect infestations, and fungus have taken a toll on the trees, which have a much shorter life span than other local trees such as redwoods and oaks.

Public organizations, such as the East Bay Municipal Utility District and the East Bay Regional Park District have been attempting to remove thousands of dead trees on lands that they own to reduce the risk of fire. Last year Marcus Wagner, Caltrans public information officer, spoke to Lamorinda Weekly about the removal of dead and dying trees along Highway 24. He said that the increase in tree mortality was most likely due to stress

brought about by several years of severe drought and invasive pests such as bark beetles. Dead or dying "red-needle" trees are of concern as the needles can become flying embers and help create the conditions for rapid wildfire spread. In their weakened condition, these trees could also possibly fall and obstruct portions of the roadway.

Traverso Tree Service in Martinez offers this advice on monitoring the health of your tree: "The best way to care for your pine is to look up. Make it a habit to look up and observe the whole tree and especially its top. If your pine is starting to decline, the top is generally where it will start."



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Many drivers have forgotten the Rules of the Road



Moraga Police driving on Rheem Boulevard. Photo Lamo archive

By Vera Kochan

This reporter was involved in a rather disconcerting situation along Moraga Road near

Ascot Drive in Moraga at around 4 p.m. March 23. There were approximately 10 or more vehicles traveling south along with mine. All were traveling at the posted

speed limit of 35 mph.

I looked in the rearview mirror only to find that a Moraga Police Department vehicle was behind me with lights flashing, but no siren. I wondered what I was guilty of as I pulled over to the right shoulder, along with another driver who correctly did the same for an emergency vehicle. I was surprised to find that MPD kept on driving past me, so I wound up back on Moraga Road, this time directly behind the officer's vehicle.

The officer was traveling at the same speed as the rest of the cars along Moraga Road, and apparently not giving chase to anyone. "There are calls we may respond to with lights, but not use the siren as

we get closer to the location to avoid having a suspect hear us coming," explained Chief Jon King. "Additionally, it is also possible that when the officer finished a traffic stop, they forgot to turn the lights off, which does happen occasionally."

However, the point of this article is to note that barely any cars pulled over between Ascot Drive and the eventual stopping for the red light at the intersection of Moraga Road and St. Mary's Road (about a mile). Here was a conga line of vehicles, and no one paid any attention to their rearview mirrors and the flashing MPD lights behind them. Granted there was no siren, but the point of all these

mirrors attached to our cars is to use them for more than just checking our make-up or seeing if we have something stuck in our teeth.

Clearly a refresher course in applicable rules of the road is necessary. In California, drivers must yield to any authorized emergency vehicle sounding a siren, flashing red lights, or both. Vehicle code section 21806 states that when an authorized emergency vehicle which is sounding a siren and which has at least one lighted lamp exhibiting red light that is visible, drivers should immediately pull to the right-hand edge or curb of the highway, clear of any intersection.

... continued on Page A10

Moraga Town Council ratifies MOFD Ordinance



Photo courtesy MOFD

The importance of defensible space near your home

By Vera Kochan

The Moraga-Orinda Fire Dis-

trict Ordinance 23-01 was ratified by Moraga's Town Council, which would adopt the 2022

edition of the California Fire Code and the 2021 International Fire Code referencing local amendments deemed essential by the MOFD board due in large part to climatic, geologic, and topographical conditions existing in the district. Orinda has already ratified the Ordinance.

According to a March 22 staff report by Moraga Planning Director Afshan Hamid and Associate Planner Brian Horn, an MOFD report to its board of directors stated, "The proposed amendments are the product of a yearlong effort

carried out by all of the Fire Marshals in Contra Costa County meeting as part of the Contra Costa County Fire Chiefs Association Fire Prevention Officers Committee. The Fire Marshal working group worked to create a consensus on amendments to adequately protect each community and create a standardized template for a county-wide fire code."

MOFD Chief Dave Winkacker's presentation during the council meeting helped to explain the local amendments while clarifying that they don't potentially affect current

homeowners or renters, but serve as a go-forward for new construction.

A summary of local amendments to the 2022 Fire Code include: adding clarity in identifying when operational and construction permits are required; amending and clarifying language for substantial addition and alteration with regards to linear walls and roofs or if the aggregate of the new construction exceeds 3,600 square feet, and removing Exterior Hazard Abatement requirements.

... continued on Page A9



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Letters to the editor

Congratulations to Cathy Chang

I am thrilled that Cathy Chang has been elected the 2023 Moraga Citizen of the Year! Cathy is the most amazing young woman I know in Moraga. In addition to working full-time as a single Mom of two, Cathy has been an active provider of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion education to both Moraga students and adults, through curriculum, movie/discussion nights and numerous library displays. She engages her children and her adult friends in distributing food pantry items to those in need in Oakland, established the Plant it Forward program for local 5th graders, led a program for Moraga elementary students to prepare winter Friday night dinners at an Oakland Senior center (using "ugly produce" gleaned from a local farm), helped lead Girl Scouts in a fun geocaching hunt (learning, aside, about survival compass use and building a survival shelter), and led Girl Scouts in harvesting and packing milkweed seed to give to local residents.... and so much more.

Of the 41 prior Moraga Citizens of the Year, only four have been Asian, and only one other Asian woman has been elected (despite that 20.8% of Moragans are of Asian descent), and none have been from the younger Moraga demographic. Cathy's election is an important statement about who we are as a community and our values. I urge you to join me in attending the Celebration Dinner for

Cathy on April 28 at Holy Trinity Serbian Church in Moraga and meet and honor this extraordinary woman (register at MoragaValleyKiwanis.org).

Proud of our Town, Bobbie Preston Moraga

A point of clarification

I'm writing to acknowledge a complete slip of words in my public comments made at the recent City Council meeting discussing the Pleasant Hill Road Bike/Pedestrian Path project. In reading the March 15 edition of the Lamorinda Weekly, I saw that I was quoted in saying, "No one wants to see the Pleasant Hill and dedicated bike and pathway project done." I immediately listened to the recording of the meeting before reaching out to reporter Lou Fancher. Unfortunately, I was quoted correctly.

But that is absolutely not my view on the project. What I failed to say were three very important words at the end of that sentence: "... more than me."

I have spent the last three years working with Eric Law and others on the project; building a website, managing email and social media com-

munications, designing and selling yard signs, walking door to door publicly advocating for the project, attending public meetings and town halls and also investing my own money. In fact, I spent the bulk of my free time during the day of the meeting writing an email to supporters and a social media post outlining my support of the project.

But when I was finally able to read the public comments submitted by concerned citizens, I realized that now is not the best time to ask for federal and state funding. In my haste to write down and speak my public comment, I forgot those important words. I still believe that we need a solution to create a safer and more environmentally-friendly way for kids and members of our community to travel Pleasant Hill Road without a car. (Not every family can nor should need to purchase another car in order for their child to get to school). But the solution must take into consideration the traffic needs of that section of town. There is more work to be done and I look forward to being part of that process.

Lauren McCabe Herpich Lafayette

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 Police Department Incident Summary Report March 19 - April 1

Alarms	51
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	21
Traffic	93
Suspicious Circumstances	12

Suspicious Subject	15
Suspicious Vehicle	11
Service to Citizen	45
Patrol Req./Security Check	41
Public/School Assembly Check	4
Supplemental Report	27
Vacation House Check	11
Welfare Check	23
Ordinance Violation	0
Vehicle violations	
Dui Misc	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Pleasant Hill Rd.	
Happy Valley Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Hit And Run Felony	
Camino Pablo/Eb Sr 24, Ori	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Moraga Rd./Sky Hy Dr., Mor.	
800 Block Topper Ln.	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./1st St.	
Reckless Driving	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Eb Sr 24	
Deer Hill Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd.	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Pleasant Hill Rd.	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Reliez Valley Rd.	
Tc - Fire And Amb Enroute	
Deer Hill Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd.	
Tc - Property Damage	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Reliez Valley Rd.	
Olympic Blvd./Reliez Station Rd.	
Camino Pablo/Eb Sr 24, Ori	
3500 Block S Silver Springs Rd.	
Morag Rd./Moraga Blvd	
Vehicle Theft	
3700 Block Sundale Rd.	
3700 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Other criminal activity	
Embezzlement	
3500 Block Wilkinson Ln.	

Forgery	
3700 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Fraud False Pretenses	
3400 Block Monroe Ave.	
Grand Theft	
1700 Block Toyon Rd.	
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Identity Theft	
10 Block Maloyan Ln.	
Police Department (2)	
3500 Block Eagle Point Rd.	
3400 Block Moraga Blvd.	
Panhandling	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Moraga Rd.	
Petty Theft From Veh	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
1000 Block Dewing Ave.	
Residential Burglary	
3400 Block Silver Springs Rd.	
Shoplift	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Warrant Service	
1000 Block Carol Ln.	
Nuisance to the Community	
Loud Party	
1000 Block 2Nd St.	
600 Block Old Jonas Hill Rd.	
Public Nuisance	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Camino Diablo/El Curtola Blvd.	
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Vandalism	
3400 Block Monroe Ave.	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Other	
Animal Cruelty	
3700 Block Highland Rd.	
Fire/Ems Response Info	
500 Block Antonio Ct.	
3100 Block Stanwood Ln.	

3300 Block Betty Ln.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
900 Block 4Th St.	
H&S Violation	
Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Harassment	
500 Block Mcbride Dr.	
3600 Block Boyer Cir.	
K9 Outside Assist Request	
800 Block S Broadway, Wcr	
Threats	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Unwanted Guest	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)	
10 Block Roxanne Ln.	
Violation Restraining Ord	
10 Block Roxanne Ln.	
3600 Block Madrone Dr. (2)	
Harassment	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3300 Block Sweet Dr.	



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report March 26 - April 1

Alarms	12
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	12
Traffic	61
Suspicious Circumstances	3
Suspicious Subject	4
Suspicious Vehicle	4
Service to Citizen	28
Patrol Req./Security Check	23

Public/School Assembly Check	3
Supplemental Report	6
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	0
Ordinance Violation	0
Vehicle violations	
Accident Property	
200 Block Glorietta Blvd.	
Ivy Dr./Moraga Way	
Camino Pablo/Ardilla Rd.	
Reckless Driving	
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.	
Miner Rd./Camino Don Miguel	
Camino Pablo/Wb Sr 24	
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.	
Camino Pablo/Via Corte	
Vehicle Theft	
Wb Sr 24 At Camino Pablo	
Other criminal activity	
Battery On Police Felony	
Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way	
Grand Theft Veh Parts	
10 Block Las Vegas Rd.	
Warrant Arrest	
20 Block Orinda Way	
Nuisance to the Community	
Disturbance-domestic	
100 Block Fiesta Cir.	
Disturbing The Peace	
90 Block Brookwood Rd.	
Vandalism	
10 Block Orinda Way	
Other	
Hailed By Citizen	
Moraga Way/Brookside Rd.	
Revocation Of Probation	
Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante	

Moraga Town Council ratifies MOFD Ordinance

... continued from Page A8

Emergency Planning and Preparedness amendments added nuisance fire alarms, aerial pre-plans, and amended standby personnel as well as added access to open space, existing fire trails maintenance requirements, and language for Knox Box content requirements. (A Knox Box is a secure key safe that mounts on the wall of a building with the key available to open the box being in possession of the fire company.)

Spark arrestor requirements for chimneys were also added as well as amending definitions for substantial additions and alterations to existing structures such as requiring fire sprinklers in certain cases, and added an exit discharge surface requirement so there is an uninterrupted flow to leave (i.e. no large rocks underfoot) for people from certain occupancies who will be exiting outdoors during an emergency. Changes also amended monitoring of alarm systems to comply with NFPA 72 (National Fire Protection Association Signaling Code).

Other amendments to the fire code addressed hazardous materials storage and removal, such as explosives, fireworks, and flammable cryogenic fluids.

The chapter on Safety During Construction and Demolition added site safety plan and site security requirements, along with asbestos removal requirements.

Chapter 80, Appendix C, amended requirements for the number and spacing of hydrants and added maximum distance for hydrant locations, while Appendix D amended access and loading requirements; amended D103.2 to bring fire department turn-arounds up to compliance with the 2019 fire code (28-foot width of new roads); amended

grade and angles approach, dead end fire apparatus turn-arounds, and aerial access requirements; and added the number of fire apparatus access roads for new developments.

Winnacker also mentioned real property sales and transfers. The 2019 code amendment requires a certificate of compliance with exterior hazard abatement requirements prior to real property sale or transfer. MOFD has engaged in collaboration with the Contra Costa County Realtors Association to increase awareness of fire code requirements and develop implementation measures. Work can be done in advance of the sale and can be self-reported; and who does the work can be negotiated between the buyer and the seller. The work can be deferred with an escrow account. Any sales between May 1 and Nov. 30 have 30 days following the sale or transfer to complete the required abatement. Sales between Dec. 1 and April 30 have to complete required abatement no later than the annual May 31 compliance date.

MOFD's 2019 abatement code for Existing Parcels and Structures will move the annual compliance date from June 15 to May 31 and extend the abatement period from 10 to 15 days. It bans the use of combustible ground cover (including mulch) within two feet of structures; and requires at least a two-foot air gap between the ground and vegetation within two feet of structures. The clearance for trees will increase from five feet to six feet; require the removal of Eucalyptus and Monterey pine within six feet of structures; require the removal of Juniper and Bamboo within 10 feet of a road by the end of 2023; and require an exterior fire hazard inspection for real property transfers.

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Dr. Matthew Tamplen, who grew up in Lafayette and is a nationally recognized Double Board-Certified Facial Plastic surgeon, opened a private practice in Downtown Orinda to better serve Lamorinda patients. Specializing entirely in the face, Dr. Tamplen's expertise is nationally recognized for providing patients with beautiful, elegant, and natural results.

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Reserve your time. Registration required:
RecycleSmart.org/ICAW

This event is open to: Lafayette, Orinda, Moraga and RecycleSmart residents only.

Saturday, May 6th, 8:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. (registration required)
Event hosted in Lafayette. Register for event information.

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Spring Cookie Decorating Party brings out amateur Rembrandts



Photo Vera Kochan

Family fun at the Spring Cookie Decorating Party

By Vera Kochan

Once again, Moraga's Parks and Recreation Department held a family-friendly event to coincide with the season. The Spring Cookie Decorating Party was held April 1 and partnered with Canyon Club Brewery, where the festivities took place.

Priced at \$50 per family, the cost included four large cookies (baked by "Sugar By Shone"),

multi-colored icing, sprinkles, one adult drink ticket, and an egg hunt for kids under 13. Recreation Coordinator Donald Scully helmed the occasion assisted by Camille Gourlin and Vincent Magagna, both of whom pre-decorated egg, bunny and spring flower-shaped cookies to give the kids an idea as to the possibilities.

CCB's General Manager Kirsten Popcke said, "The family events are always my favorite. It's nice to have a spot where families can come, and Donald sets up the best functions."

First came the Egg Hunt. Eleven families (approximately 50 people), with children ages 2 - 11, were given a basket and told to look for 200 plastic eggs filled with candy and small toys. The kids were very focused in their search for the strategically placed eggs hidden throughout the courtyard. Next time you visit CCB keep your eyes "peeled" for an egg or two that may have been left behind.

After the hunt, the young artists settled into the cookie decorating process. Daisy Bieber, 3, was clutching a small Dixie cup and munching on its contents. "What are you eating?" this reporter asked.

"Sprinkles," replied Daisy, showing me her treat in the cup and all over her mouth.

When asked, "Are you trying to decorate yourself?" Daisy nodded with a smile and kept right on eating. Her twin sister, Ruby, was focused on the job at hand.

Brother and sister, Tommy, 8, and Veronica Przybylski, 5, were artistically decorating their cookies with multi-colored icing in a variety of patterns, when Tommy decided to incorporate some of the candy in his egg hunt stash for a more three-dimensional design concept. Now, that's thinking outside of the box!

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Many drivers have forgotten the Rules of the Road

... continued from Page A8

Once the light turned green, the same group of cars either eventually turned right onto Moraga Way or drove merrily along continuing south until a few, including MPD (with lights still flashing), made a left-hand turn onto Sanders Drive. The point being made is, even if the flashing lights were accidental, every one of those drivers broke the law by not pulling over.

"Unfortunately, there are many times when drivers fail to yield to emergency vehicles that are being driven with the lights and siren activated," stated King. "Drivers are distracted, may

not see the emergency vehicle, or may panic and not know what to do ... or there may be other reasons. Regardless, this slows the response, which may not seem like a big deal, unless we are responding to your house for an emergency. It is also very important for officers, firefighters and EMS personnel to drive defensively when responding to an emergency as while we hope drivers will yield -- and many do -- but there are some who do not or make an abrupt movement that we have to avoid. If we get in an accident, we cannot get to the emergency and help whoever is in trouble or worse."

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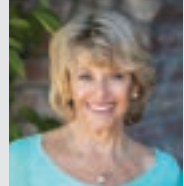
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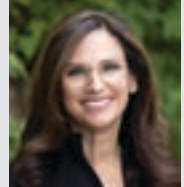
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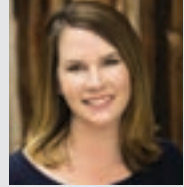
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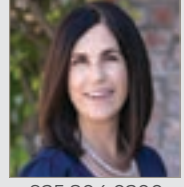
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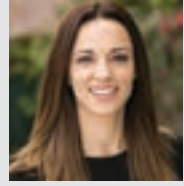
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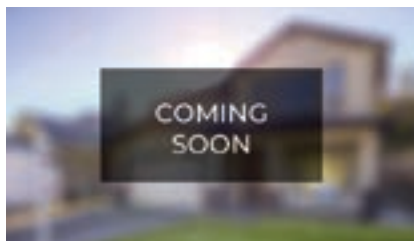


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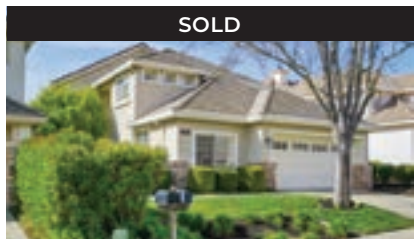
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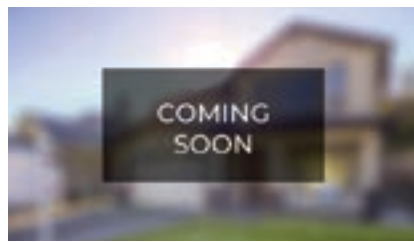
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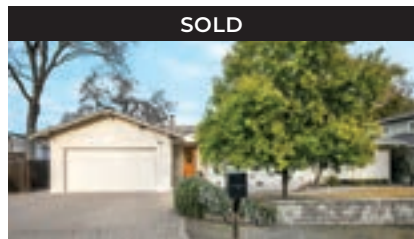
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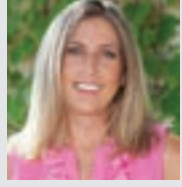
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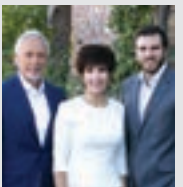
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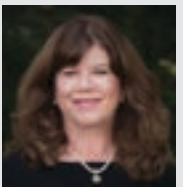
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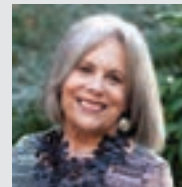
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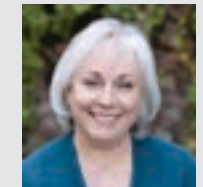
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~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Lafayette mom writes endearing kids' book, 'Good Night, Sweet Peas'



Photo provided

Lafayette author Amy Landgraf reads "Good Night, Sweet Peas" to Happy Valley Elementary School second graders.

By Diane Claytor

Growing up in Southern California, Amy Landgraf had a dream. "I always wanted to write a children's book. After being inspired by so many wonderful children's books when I was young," she said, "I knew I wanted to write books to inspire others. It's been my life-long dream," she says. And with the release of her acclaimed children's book, "Good Night, Sweet Peas," her wish has come true.

A big question could be how did the busy Lafayette mom of three active kids ever find time to write this delightful story? "I'm often burning the midnight oil," she admits. "But when you're passionate about it, you find the time to pursue your dreams." Landgraf is a substitute teacher, second grade teacher's aide, room mom and writes a column for a local monthly publication.

Working a full-time job in sales and marketing for many years, Landgraf was never quite able to find the time to fulfill her childhood fantasy. But she never stopped thinking about it. Then COVID hit and everything came to a halt. She suddenly had the time, but hadn't quite figured out the main character.

With more time at home and a plant donated by a neighbor, the Landgrafs decided to start a family vegetable garden. It turned out that peas became the favorite veggie. "They're easy to grow and my kids love them," Landgraf says. They also became her inspiration.

One day, her then 3-year-old son was enjoying a plate of peas, although, as expected, most inevitably ended up on the floor. Looking at the peas rolling all over the kitchen, Landgraf remembers exclaiming, "Roly-poly peas are everywhere." As soon as she said that out loud, she recalls, "I thought OMG, that could be my story's main character." Thus, Rollie Pollie Pea came to life.

Like most children, Landgraf's kids were always looking for ways to delay their bedtime. With that in mind, and the desire to write a book that was both relatable and humorous, "Good Night, Sweet Peas," a sweet, funny, rhyming story about Rollie Pollie Pea and his siblings trying to avoid bedtime,

was created. Landgraf quickly learned that writing, illustrating, publishing and selling a children's book has many challenges. Once written, she began searching for an illustrator who could match her visions. It took longer than expected. She finally found Carlos Valenti, an experienced Disney animator and illustrator, who had also worked with Marvel Comics, Warner Brothers and Universal Studios. "As soon as he sent me a sample drawing of Rollie Pollie Pea, I knew I had found the perfect illustrator. You just know when it feels right," Landgraf reports.

It was an eight-month process getting the book so beautifully illustrated. The drawings are vibrant. Rollie Pollie Pea and his four adorable siblings, as well as their surroundings, come to life in brilliant color. And Landgraf says she couldn't be happier.

Landgraf had planned to go the traditional route getting the book published until she realized she would lose some control over the creative. She had a vision and knew what she wanted. So she started her own publishing company, Rad Plaid Publishers, and hopes to eventually publish other authors and illustrators.

With boots on the ground, as Landgraf describes, she began selling "Good Night, Sweet Peas." Wanting to support the local community, she went to small, independent bookstores, meeting with store owners and managers, pitching her charming children's book. She succeeded. "Good Night, Sweet Peas" is currently available at Lafayette's Reasonable Books, Bel and Bunna Books, and Orchard Nursery's Lazy K, as well as bookstores in Danville and Berkeley. It's also available on Landgraf's website amylandgraf.com.

Landgraf will be reading and signing books during an Earth Day celebration at 12:30 p.m. April 23 at Hollie's Homegrown in Lafayette.

Lafayette mom Kim Roth read "Good Night, Sweet Peas" to her two toddlers and reports they couldn't stop giggling as they got to the surprise ending of the book and, at their insistence, she read it another three times in a row.

The book reviewer Readers Choice Book Awards wrote, "Beautifully written in rhyme with bright, vibrant illustrations, this book will become a bedtime favorite for children and adults alike!"

"Good Night, Sweet Peas" is the first in a series of Rollie Pollie Pea books. The next one, "Cool to be You," a book about inclusivity and celebrating our differences, is expected out in the fall. There are another six books, mostly written, in Landgraf's inventory, so Rollie Pollie Pea will no doubt become a long-time friend.

And Landgraf has even bigger visions for Rollie Pollie Pea. She hopes he'll become a beloved children's favorite. She has plans for creating merchandise and is even hoping to someday bring Rollie Pollie Pea to life through an animated TV series.

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SUMMER CAMPS 2023

Part 2, Family Camps and Half Day Summer Camps

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HALF DAY CAMPS

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Looking for summer fun? Berkeley Rep's got you covered! Create your own play, musical, or film, perform on Berkeley Rep's main stage, and learn from award-winning professional artists. All levels welcome - the only requirement is an open mind and collaborative spirit! Learn more and register today at www.BerkeleyRep.org/classes.

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Camp Awesome is back this summer. Awesome games, activities and phenomenal summer shows. Open all 11 weeks of summer: Early care 8 a.m., Day Camp 9 a.m.-2 p.m., and afternoon camp 2 p.m.-5:30 p.m. You don't want to miss out on the fun. Registration open. Dates: May 30-Aug 11. www.LafayetteRec.org | (925) 284-2232

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www.LafayetteRec.org | (925) 284-2232

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CCBC offers comprehensive ballet training for beginning-advanced dancers. Ages 5-7 are invited to join Ballet Classics Camp which introduces ballet foundations through classic fairy-tale ballets. Ages 8-19 may audition for our intensive which includes technique, pointe, character, contemporary, conditioning, anatomy, rep and more! June 26-July 21. www.contracostaballet.org | (925) 935-7984

Cougar Youth Football Camp (Moraga)

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

DONS Youth Football Academy (Lafayette)

The Dons Summer Football Academy, run by current Acalanes coaches, will teach fundamentals, develop skills, and help kids with the transition to tackle football in a fun, fast-paced, non-padded and non-contact environment. Both skilled position players and linemen from 4th to 8th grade should attend. Cost is \$200. June 19-22, 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. www.acalanesdonsfootball.com

Eclipse Soccer -Summer Soccer Camp (Lamorinda)

The focus is on developing skills and having a ton of fun in the process. The summer camp is a week-long camp (Monday-Thursday) with 2.5 hours of soccer each day. Players will spend time developing their individual technical skills, while also working together in teams in fun games and competitions. www.eastbayeclipse.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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The Lamorinda Weekly Summer Camp listings are not paid advertising. Our intent is to provide a useful reference guide. In the event we have inadvertently printed misinformation, please let us know. LW is not liable for errors or omissions.

Happy Days Summer Camps (Lafayette)

Join us on fun-filled weekly adventures, as we explore lands and cultures around the world. Dramatic play, art, crafts, games, and music will enhance each exciting theme. Flexible scheduling allows you to sign up for 2 to 5 days per week. Children ages 2-4 half or full days to meet your needs; K-3 full days only. www.happydayslafayette.com | (925) 932-8088

Lamorinda Lacrosse Summer Day Camp (Orinda)

Boys and Girls 6U-14U
Full gear is required. Please bring water and sunscreen. Games, prizes and Lacrosse.
Dates: July 10-July 14, Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Cost: \$450
<https://lamorindalacrosse.leagueapps.com/camps/3809022-2023-summer-camp>

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Boys and Girls 6U-14U
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SUMMER CAMPS 2023

Part 2, Family Camps and Half Day Summer Camps

HALF DAY CAMPS

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 Jr. (Moraga)

Join us for imaginative games, crafts, and songs 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Located at Hacienda de las Flores.

www.moragarec.com | (925) 888-7045

MVPC Vacation Bible School (Moraga)

Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church is offering a week-long camp June 5-9 from 9 a.m. to noon where kids will explore how Jesus shined hope, love, forgiveness, and joy to the world - and how all of us can do the same with His power! Includes skits & music, crafts, snacks, and rec. Register by May 15. www.mvpc.today.org

Orinda Parks and Rec (Orinda)

Make new friends, learn new subjects, and have fun in a safe, engaging environment. Orinda summer camps will run from June 5 - Aug. 11, and there will be no camps on June 19 or July 3-4.

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.smcmenbasketballcamps.com/

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Summer 2023

June 19-22

3-5pm



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or Scan QR Code

\$200.00 for the week

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



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Cardamom: the secret spice that makes these cookies come alive



Photo Susie Iventosch

Daughter Courtney sneaks a Cardamom & Currant Oatmeal Cookie.

By Susie Iventosch

I am a huge fan of oatmeal cookies and these are my absolute favorite! They are full

of currants, nuts, and yummy spices – cinnamon, allspice, and cardamom – the best spice on the planet. Cardamom is the secret ingredient that makes these cookies

come alive. If you're not familiar with it, it's a spice that comes from the seed pods of various plants in the ginger family, but it tastes nothing at all like ginger. It has a distinctly lovely scent and it adds such a wonderful taste to sweet and savory dishes alike. It's a bit pricey, but it also lasts a long time and you can use it in other baked goodies and curry dishes, too. It's a key component to a lot

of Swedish baked goods.

These oatmeal cookies are soft and stay that way even days after baking them. It's funny because I usually like crispy, crunchy cookies, but for me, oatmeal cookies have to be soft. The trick to keeping them soft is reconstituting the currants (or raisins if you prefer them) in boiling water before adding them to the cookie dough. This keeps the cookies soft for days and

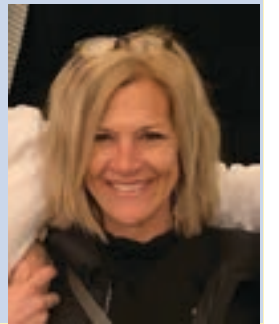
it keeps the currants or raisins from drying out while baking. You are gonna love these gems!

We usually make the cookies to order at our house, meaning we refrigerate the dough and bake a batch at a time. If you like to bake the entire batch at once, these cookies freeze very well, but if you have a flock of people around, they won't last long anyway. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cubes butter (1 cup or 8 oz.) at room temp
- 1 1/2 cups light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 large eggs
- 1 2/3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon cardamom
- 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon allspice
- 2 cups old fashioned oats (can use quick oats, too)
- 1 cup currants (or raisins or a combination)
- 1/2 cup walnuts or pecans coarsely chopped (optional)

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>



Preheat oven to 350 F. Prepare a cookie sheet with cooking spray or parchment paper.

Place currants (or raisins) in a small bowl and pour about 1 cup boiling water over them. Allow them to sit and soak for about 15 minutes. This plumps them up and allows them to stay moist while baking. After 15 minutes, wring out the excess water by squeezing them in cheesecloth or through a strainer. Discard the liquid and set the currants aside.

In a large mixing bowl, beat butter and sugar together until fluffy with an electric mixer. Add vanilla and eggs and beat until thoroughly blended.

Sift dries (flour, soda, salt, cinnamon, cardamom, allspice) and add to butter mixture. Mix well. Add raisins, nuts, and oatmeal.

Drop by large spoonful or cookie scoop onto a greased baking sheet. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on a baking rack. Store in an airtight container.

Saint Mary's Performing Arts presents musical theater mashup, April 20-23

Submitted by Benjamin Enos

The Saint Mary's College Performing Arts Department and Theatre Program proudly present an original musical theater mashup, "Willow and Houston Throw the Grad Party of the F*cking Century."

Conceived, written, and performed by members of the class of 2023, "Willow and Houston..." features original material written by Julian Villegas, combined with songs,

scenes, and monologues from contemporary plays and musicals. Seniors Skyelar Clouse and Gabriella Thomas round out the dramaturgy, playwriting and editing team, and all three appear in the production, which will run April 20-23 at SMC's LeFevre Theatre.

Other senior Theatre majors collaborating on this capstone project include Kenji Costantini, who performs in the production; Kendra Eisenmann, co-costume coordinator and performer; Xavier Romero who performs the title character

of Houston; Torren Valera, sound designer; and Miranda Vega, stage manager.

"'Willow and Houston...' unfolded out of the students' inmost desires," said the faculty advisor for the project, Associate Professor Deanna Zibello. "After years of separation from one another and expectations turned upside down, these seniors wanted nothing more than to create one cohesive project together – and to make audiences forget about their cares, and laugh." In this all-too-relatable

tale, twins Willow and Houston are throwing a graduation party, and Willow needs it to be perfect. But when old high school enemies show up uninvited, nothing goes as planned. Featuring songs from beloved contemporary musicals like "Spring Awakening" and "Jagged Little Pill." "Willow and Houston..." asks the question, how can we cope with an uncertain future in a time of change?

Finally, SMC students are mentored and advised in their work by a team of expert fac-

ulty and professional guest artists, including Directing Mentor Mike DiSalvo, and Musical Director Patrick Burns.

Tickets: \$8 SMC students; \$12 SMC faculty and staff, non-SMC students; \$15 general. Purchase tickets online at www.stmarys-ca.edu/willow-houston. For ADA and other information, contact Performing Arts Coordinator and Events Manager Tara Sundy at 925-631-4670 or tms8@stmarys-ca.edu

Bay Area Studio Artists' exhibit opens at THT Gallery



Photo provided

Submitted by Jenny Rosen

The city of Lafayette's Public

Art Committee invites the public to the exhibit "A Show of Hands" by the Bay Area Studio Artists (BASA). This exhibit of acrylic and oil paintings high-

lights the wonder of hands as explored by the eight members of the BASA, a group of painters who have been showing their work together since

2010. They work in a wide-ranging mix of subject matter and styles. All of the artists are present or past residents of Lafayette and nearby commu-

nities. This eclectic exhibition is on view through May 4 at the Town Hall Theatre Gallery (3535 School Street). BASA has previously exhibited at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library, The Village Theater Art Gallery in Danville, The Marilyn Citron O'Rourke Gallery at the Benicia Library, the Aspen Surgery Center at John Muir Hospital, Orinda Books, Main Street Arts Gallery in Martinez, the Napa City Library, and other wine country venues. More information about the Bay Area Studio Artists can be found at bayareastudioartists.com.

Oscar-nominated international film opens at Orinda Theatre



Photo provided

By Sophie Braccini

It was hard for any movie to beat German film "All Quiet on the Western Front" for the International Film Oscar this year, but contender "Close" also deserves to be celebrated. The movie from Belgium (in French and Dutch) brings an unusual touch of poetry and

finesse to a complex topic. The rhythm, the beauty of the imagery, the remarkable acting by everyone, makes this heart-breaking film a definite must-see. It will show in Orinda from April 21 for at least one week.

The story written and directed by filmmaker Lukas Dhont (his first film, "Girl," won Camera d'Or at the 2018

Cannes Film festival) is a very personal story that paints the friendship between two boys, Léo and Rémi, as they transition between the innocence of childhood and the difficult years of middle school. Two friends, united like two brothers in a communion of spirit, share their games, their joys, their care-free time. But as they enter middle school, the eyes of others are quick to label their closeness and end their innocence. One of them, Léo, will react by joining the hockey team and distancing himself from his friend. The catastrophe that will ensue will change their lives forever.

In an interview for the Hambourg Film Fest, Dhont explained that he wanted to paint a friendship between two young boys that is very intimate and full of love. "We are used to seeing friendships between girls that are very deep and passionate and we are not

used to seeing that in boys," said Dhont, who put a lot of himself in both main characters of this movie. He explained that as a youngster he did not identify with the group of girls or of the boys, but that he created a distance with the boys who wanted to be close to him because he did not want the sexual label. His movie pays homage to the friends he lost. "Friendships define who we are and an abrupt breakage can stay with us for a long time," he added.

"Close" paints the violent reality of middle school pressure to belong with subtlety and elegance. It remains soft in spite of the tough topic it addresses. The closeness to nature, the beautiful rhythm of the seasons that is evoked throughout creates the deep and respectful mood that permeates throughout movie. It is an impressionist movie with a dark serious undertone.

Dhont also has a gift for choosing and leading his actors to inhabit his vision. Eden Dambrine as Léo and Gustav De Waele as Rémy were chosen by Dhont, who asked of them to really get to know each other, so when it came time to act, things were natural. By the same token, once he chose the two mothers – Léa Drucker and Emilie Dequenne – he asked them to do everyday life activities with their "sons," such as baking a cake. The two women are consummate professionals and Dequenne's performance is especially superb. Dambrine, a youngster that Dhont met in a train, is so true, vulnerable and strong, deeply moving.

This beautiful coming-of-age film is brought to Lamorinda by the local nonprofit International Film Showcase and will open at the Orinda Theatre on April 21. Tickets at <https://www.orindamovies.com/>

In Memory

Alice Marian Oliver (“Midge”) Zischke



Longtime Orinda resident Midge Zischke died at her Rossmoor home on March 13, after 90 wonderful years. She was predeceased by her husband of 63 years, Peter Zischke. She is survived by her son Michael, his wife Nadine Sponamore and their daughters Julie and Jessica; son Kurt and his wife Victoria (“Tori”) Adams Zischke and their daughter Alexandra (“Scout”); daughter Marian Baldauf and her husband Hans Baldauf and their son Fritz and daughter Liesl; and daughter Karen Zischke and her husband Bob Hackett and their daughters Alice and Hannah and son William.

Midge spent most of her life in three different Orinda homes, and was active in a wide variety of community and educational organizations, starting with the Garden Club of Orinda and the Sleepy Hollow Tennis Club, where she played tennis with friends for many years. She served on the Orinda School Board in the late 1970s when it faced the property tax reductions from Proposition 13, and later started the Educational Foundation of Orinda to provide additional funding for Orinda schools. She also served on the boards of the UC Berkeley Foundation and the Lawrence Hall of Science. When the California Shakespeare Festival moved from Berkeley to Orinda, she became an active supporter and started the Will’s Weeders group to help maintain the theater grounds. In 1986, Midge was named Orinda Citizen of the Year.

A memorial service is being planned for June 25 at the California Shakespeare Theater. For information please contact midgezischke@gmail.com. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the UC Berkeley Foundation (www.ucberkeleyfoundation.org), the California Shakespeare Festival (www.calshakes.org), Orinda Network for Education (formerly the Educational Foundation of Orinda, www.oneorinda.org), or the Alzheimer’s Association of America (www.alz.org/norcal).

In Memory

Julie Youngquist Fisher



Julie Youngquist Fisher, 92, passed away peacefully at home March 8, surrounded by family in The Villages, Fla.

A graduate of William and Mary in 1953 with a degree in psychology, she moved to New York for work in her early 20s. She eventually met George Fisher and married in 1955 at the “Little Church around the Corner” in NYC.

George’s job led them to reside in Boston, Los Angeles and eventually Moraga where they resided for 50 years. Both George and Julie were involved in the development of the town. Julie was instrumental in bringing emergency services to Moraga with the Rescue One Foundation. She also served on the

Moraga Service League, the Betas, the Moraga Parks and Recreation Foundation and the Moraga Movers. Both George and Julie were honored as Moraga’s Citizens of the Year in 2006.

George and Julie moved to The Villages, Florida to be closer to their family in 2014. The nine years in Florida were a treasure with lots of family trips and many celebrations.

Julie struggled with macular degeneration for over 20 years and never complained about her loss of sight. She was and continues to be an incredible example of a positive and optimistic outlook despite any challenge faced. Although she spent many of her final years blind, it is our belief she is now able to see in full color.

Julie will be missed by many lifelong friends. She touched so many. She was predeceased by son, John Fisher (March 2020), husband, George (June 2020), and daughter, Holly (November 2020). She is survived by her daughter, Ann, sons-in-law, Tim Wright and Jim Baumgartner, niece, Jane (Jeff) Chamberlain, grand-daughters, Casey Fowler (Garrett), Kelly Wright and great-grandson, Isaac.

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.

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



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High school Odyssey of the Mind team sponsored by Moraga Rotary advances to World competition



Photo provided

From left: Sol Dente (Campo), Claire Damiano (Campo), Finley Reid (Acalanes), Nina Damiano (Campo), Lily Thomas (Acalanes) and Valerie Yarve (Campo). They are all juniors.

Submitted by Rich Render

The junior class team of Campolindo and Acalanes students who compete in Odyssey of the Mind under the Moraga Rotary name, their sponsor, will advance from the NorCal State Tournament to World Championships at Michigan State University to be held May 24-27. The team coached by Kathi Dente won first place and also came in first in the Spontaneous portion of the competition.

Odyssey of the Mind is a creative problem-solving program for K-12 kids that engages students in their learning, by encouraging them to think creatively to solve one of five problems of the year. Teams made up of 5-7 members have to solve their selected problem (anything from building vehicles to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics) and present their solution to the problem to judges in an 8-minute skit.

Since 2005, Moraga Rotary Club has sponsored the international Odyssey of the Mind team competitions, held every year beginning in September and completing in May at the World Odyssey Championships at Michigan State University. This year,

Moraga Rotary sponsored four teams from grades 3 through 11, who competed in February at the Bay Regional Tournament, and the High School team advanced to the NorCal State Tournament in March. The teams were supported by Student Leaders Grace Franklin and Shiraz Usmani.

The Classics problem this year is about “The Iliad” and the team had to have a Trojan Horse, a wall, and a character from “The Iliad.” The team did a play on Greece by setting their long-term problem in a “Greasy” Diner and singing parodies from the musical “Grease.” A Cheese Burger and Onion Rings are trying to escape “the mouth” that is trying to eat them by getting to the vegetable drawer where the mouth never eats. To get there they have to disguise themselves as a HORSE radish with the help of “A-TEA-NA” (a play on Athena). There is also a Greek chorus made up of singing milkshakes.

Moraga Rotary is a community service organization under Rotary International that meets every Tuesday at Noon at La Finestra Ristorante. Guests and visitors are always welcome.

Share your love with shoes



By Cynthia Brian

Many people are unaware that 85% of consumer textiles end up in landfills, a practice that is extremely harmful to the environment. For the past 24 years, the nonprofit Be the Star You Are has been increasing literacy and saving trees by collecting thousands of new and used books and donating them to disaster relief efforts around the country. With the Russian war against Ukraine and the unprecedented natural disasters around the world, millions of people are currently experiencing difficult living conditions, and, although books are always an enlightening resource, this year Be the Star You Are pivoted to share the love and assist with a basic need: shoes.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, over 70% of the global population needs shoes. In collaboration with Moraga’s 5 A Rent-a-Space and Mark Hoogs State Farm Insurance, Be the Star You Are volunteers are launching a shoe drive to collect and ship shoes to several countries including Haiti, Pakistan, Ghana, Ukraine, and more to help lift women and families out of extreme poverty by

providing a means for them to create a micro-business.

These micro-entrepreneurs will be able to sell footwear at an inexpensive price from their home, a street stall, or even a tent to enhance their income and support their families.

“We are excited to launch this new micro-enterprise project. Everyone has a few pairs of wearable shoes that no longer serve us. What a wonderful opportunity to give them to those who need them and will repurpose them to

benefit themselves and their communities,” says Executive Director Cynthia Brian. All clean, new, or gently used shoes of all sizes, boots, and work boots are wanted. No ski or snowboard boots, rollerblades, or ice skates can be accepted. “If possible, please keep pairs together by tying laces or putting a rubber band around the shoes,” Brian adds.

Be the Star You Are teen chairperson, Ella Kalpakjian is spearheading the shoe collection at Campolindo High School. Shoes may be dropped in the designated Campo bin beginning on April 17. If you will be attending the April 29 Moraga Community Faire, shoes may be delivered to the Be the Star You Are booth.

Drop shoes at these two locations (May 1- June 30): Mark Hoogs State Farm Insurance (629 Moraga Road, Moraga) (925) 254-3344, www.TeamHoogs.com; and 5 A Rent-a-Space (455 Moraga Rd. #F, Moraga) 925-631-7000, <https://5aspace.com/>

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For more information, visit www.bethestaryouare.org/shoedrive

Family Focus

How to unintentionally sabotage your children's self-esteem, part one

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

Typically, parents want only the best for their children. In order to do our part well, it's a good idea to evaluate our performance as parents from time to time. Parents who are willing to take a personal inventory of themselves and their parenting are on the best possible path for success. But here are some ways we may inadvertently set up roadblocks for our children.

Don't let anything be quite good enough.

Praise your children in some way but always offer a disqualifier: i.e., "You played a good game. You could have tried harder in the last half though." Or, the stereotypical, "That's a good report card. Next time see if you can raise those B's to A's."

Some parents I've worked with say they hold back because they want to motivate their children and avoid having them be complacent or settle for less than their best. This approach is not likely to be motivating. Children respond best to encouragement and positivity. You want them to decide that they may want to try for A's instead of B's and not have this come from you. And if they don't decide this, it doesn't mean they won't be successful in life. Too often parents project into the future and become prematurely worried and anxious. Yes, this worry comes from a place of love and caring, but you need to ask yourself if it's helpful for your children and for your relationship.

Critique your children: their appearance, eating habits, friends, music, failure to be organized or on time or clean up their room.

Even an occasional mild comment can cause hurt feelings. Sara, age 26, still remembers vividly when her mother suggested they go to Weight Watchers together when she was 12. Her mother had already made not-so-subtle comments about how Sara should get more exercise and try not to eat so many sweets. Sara's weight may have eventually become a highly sensitive issue for her anyway, but feeling unaccepted and judged by her mother caused Sara to feel even worse about herself.

It works best for parents to have their children's pediatrician be the one to discuss weight with them, since it's an appropriate medical and

health concern. And sometimes a doctor will refer the child and family to a nutritionist or therapist if there seems to be a potential problem. In this way, parents can remain neutral and supportive. Sometimes medical professionals give parents guidelines to follow. If a child is upset that parents are involved, parents can then say that the instructions came from the doctor or other professionals and that they are just trying to follow their advice.

Of course, a harsh comment ("You're lazy," or "How can you live in such a pigsty?") can cause anger as well as hurt. None of us likes to be criticized. And usually, criticism results in anger instead of change. Some parents complain that their children don't open up and talk much to them. One possibility is that a child is resentful, and is taking a form of control by not communicating, or in psychological terms, withholding. Also, it could be that a child doesn't want a dialogue that may produce more criticism.

To avoid being critical, first ask nicely what you would like from your child – "Will you please remember to put your laundry away after I bring it to your room?" Then, just in case, prepare for your request to be ignored. Following up, you might ask, "What do you think will help you remember to put away your laundry? I don't want to have to have to keep bugging you." See if you can get an agreement. Of course, if anything changes, be sure to throw in some positive reinforcement – "I really appreciate it" or "This really helps."

But if nothing changes, be prepared with a consequence so that you don't have to keep discussing the issue and show frustration (even though, of course, you are most likely frustrated). As I've mentioned in previous columns, reluctantly imposed consequences are the best way to go. For example, for children who are old enough: "I wanted to help you, but it's hard for me to keep doing laundry that winds up wrinkled on the floor. I think from now on it would be a good idea for you to be in charge of doing your own laundry so it doesn't have to be an issue for us." For younger children, you might tell them that they'll need to wait to use their iPad or watch TV or play outside until they've done this chore. Then, be sure to reinforce any posi-

tive behavior by letting them know when they're doing a good job.

Let your children know often how well you did when you were a child or teen.

You may continually mention to your children or let them overhear you talking about how you were first chair in violin, or the lead in a play, or a star athlete, or an all-A student. You're not trying to brag; you merely want to share memories with your children and inspire them by relating your early successes. Instead, your revelations may well set the stage for your children to think they are disappointing you by not living up to your past performance and possible current expectations.

One highly successful dad in a family I see does a good job of minimizing his accomplishments as he was growing up, before he went to college. As a matter of fact, he claims there weren't many accomplishments at all, as he downplays them in order to avoid pressure for his children. He claims that he didn't become a serious student until college. He knows it's hard for his three sons, who are in middle school and high school, to think about trying to match a successful career like his. By pointing out how long it took for him to succeed, he's helping them avoid comparing themselves to him at this time in their lives.

You don't need to deny your childhood successes, but a little goes a long way. Try to limit how much and how often you share your past triumphs while your children are still trying to find their way.



Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a local marriage and family therapist. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com. Her books, "Family Focus: A Therapist's Tips for Happier Families," "Treat Your Partner Like a Dog: How to Breed a Better Relationship," and "Appetite for Life: Stories of Recovery from Anorexia, Bulimia and Compulsive Overeating" are available from Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com and from Orinda Books..

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Art

Lamorinda Arts Alliance Announces the Exhibit "Wellness & Wellbeing" at the John Muir Health Auxiliary Gallery...

Moraga Gallery invites the public to a re-opening celebration. Works by two-dozen painters, print-makers, photographers, and others grace the spanking, freshly-painted walls of the Moraga Art Gallery...

Valley Art Gallery announces new exhibition, "Art Sparks," through May 13. Free, open to the public, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday...

Art show at Orinda Books. April features paintings and collages by local artist Rebecca Lillard, who is an accomplished abstract artist

with a bold vision. Visit the Artist of the Month for a preview at www.orindabooks.com. Orinda Books is located at 276 Village Square, Orinda, (925) 254-7606.

The Lamorinda Arts Alliance presents a Spring Show at the Pappillon Cafe in Lafayette's Fiesta Square, 67 Lafayette Circle. The show will run until June 14 and includes LAA artists who will present a variety of mediums including watercolor, oil, mixed media, encaustic and digital photography.

Music

Barefoot Chamber Concerts presents "Paris - San Francisco, a Dialogue" on Friday, May 5, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Saint Mary Magdalen Church, 2005 Berryman Street, Berkeley. Jerome Hantai, Lynn Tetenbaum, and Lillian Gordis play music for harpsichord and two violins by Schenck, Bach, Marais, Forqueray, and Ste.-Colombe. Cost: \$25. For more info see http://barefootchamberconcerts.com or call (510) 220-1195 or email info@barefootchamberconcerts.com.

Pianist Carlos Vargas performs at St. Paul's in Walnut Creek on Saturday, April 22 at 7 p.m. In-Person - 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!

Berkeley Chamber Performances presents Deborah Pittman and Friends on Tuesday, April 25, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., at Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley. Berkeley Chamber Performances is excited to welcome Deborah Pittman and Friends to our series for a multimedia evening of African American composers. Cost: \$35, free to students through high school, and \$17.50 for Higher Ed students. For more info see https://berkeley-chamberperform.org/ or call (510) 525-5211 or email info@berkeley-chamberperform.org.

Theatre

Orinda Intermediate School Bulldog Theater proudly presents Shrek JR. on April 20-22! The musical, produced by Bay Area Children's Theatre, includes 48 sixth- to eighth-grade actors grouped into two casts and 12 student tech crew members. All six performances (three per cast) will take place in the Orinda Intermediate School multi-purpose room at 80 Ivy Drive, Orinda. Tickets are \$12 www.showtix4u.com/event-details/71860.

Literature

Children's book reading at Orinda Books. Bring in your little book-worms (ages 2-6) and snuggle in for a reading of popular children's picture books (classic and new) on Thursday, April 27, at 11 a.m. Orinda Books is located at 276 Village Square, Orinda, 925-254-7606. Visit www.orindabooks.com.

Other

The Junior League of Oakland-East Bay (JLOEB) invites families to Touch a Truck at Balestrieri Family Farm, Briones. Touch a Truck is a hands-on family event that provides the opportunity for kids to explore vehicles of all types, including public service, emergency, utility, construction, landscaping, transportation, delivery, and just plain cool or unique trucks — all in one place!

Creating Peaceful Schools presents Contest Deadline for Contra Costa Youth - Art & Writing Challenge 2023 on Contest deadline April 21 at Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Topic prompt, contest rules and submission requirements on website. Cost: No Charge. For more info see https://creatingpeacefulschools.weebly.com/ or call (925) 933-7850 or email margli@ourpeacecenter.org.

Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center is announcing the 25th Art & Writing Challenge and Youth Activist Awards for students of Contra Costa County is now open for submissions. Local youth are encouraged to address issues of peace and social justice through fine art (includes visual art, sculp-

ture, photography, video, and music) or writing (creative writing or essay). We are open to nearly all mediums, and are now expanding our categories to include original music into the "Arts" category! Topic/Prompt for 2023: "Young People Making a Difference." Contest website: www.creating-peacefulschools.weebly.com submission deadline: April 21.

Moraga Community Faire & Car Show Saturday, April 29, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Annual family-friendly event put on by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, showcasing live music and performances; a beautiful car show; robust Kid's Zone with games, animal interactions and BIG wheels; an Artist's Alley; Food, Wine and Beer and many interesting booths to tour! Rheem Shopping Center, 580 Moraga Rd, Moraga. CommFaire@gmail.com www.moragachamber.org/communityfaire/

Lafayette Earth Day Festival is coming to Lafayette Plaza Park on Sunday, April 23, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., with fun and inspiration for all ages. There will be a live band - the Jim Ocean Band, arts, activities and games, a petting zoo and free bike tune-ups. Wide variety of educational booths and local environmental organizations will give us tools to live sustainably. Free community event. Learn more at sustainablelafayette.org.

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.

Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour. Online tour: April 15 and 16, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., free, though donations are requested. Doug Tallamy is kicking off this online event! His inspiring talk "Restoring the little things that run the world: Why it matters, and what you can do" will be followed by, among others, tours of seven private native plant gardens, including a tour of my own native plant garden and green home, a presentation on a pollinator pathway that was created in a Berkeley neighborhood, a talk on gardening for monarch butterflies (hint: this goes beyond just planting milkweed) and many more. In-person Garden and Green Home Tour— May 6 and 7, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. 55 beautiful Alameda and Contra Costa native plant gardens—20 of them with green home features—will be open on this self-drive event; choose the gardens and homes you'd like to see, and go at your own pace. Registration required: www.bringingbackthenatives.net/2023-tour-registration

Montelindo Garden Club April 21 to hear "All About Olive Oil: A Tasting" with Amphora Nueva Olive Oil. See www.montelindogarden.com/meetings for information. Lafayette Library Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. 9 a.m. registration. Free.

Lafayette Garden Club monthly meeting begins on April 13 at 9:30 a.m. for social time and munchies before the meeting begins at 10 a.m. It is held at the Veteran's Hall, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. We are lucky to have the design skills of two longtime members, Laurelle Thom and Jean David, giving a talk and floral demonstration called "A Home Full of Flowers." They have done many programs and workshops for local garden clubs over the years and designed exquisite bouquets for Bouquets to Art at the DeYoung for many years. The meeting is free to attend. We welcome new members and if you would like to attend or consider joining, please contact LGCMembership Committee@gmail.com

Lamorinda's Religious Services

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH. SUNDAY SOUL FORUM | 8:30AM SUNDAY WORSHIP | 9:30AM IN PERSON OR FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE / LUTSTREAM. WWW.OSLC.NET | FOLLOW ON FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM 1035 CAROL LANE, LAFAYETTE, CA 94549 | 925.283.3722 | SPIRIT@OSLC.NET

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church 433 Moraga Way, Orinda, 254-3422 www.holyshepherd.org ONLINE WORSHIP SCHEDULE Facebook Premiere Community Worship every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Go to facebook.com/HSLCOOrinda/ WORSHIP SCHEDULE In person worship at 9:30 a.m. Live stream on facebook.com/HSLCOOrinda/ Visit our website to access the current and recent sermons.

ORINDA Community Church 10 Irwin Way, Orinda | 925.254.4906 | www.orindachurch.org "No matter who you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!" Sunday Service 10 am or join us online. Mondays 9:30 am Centering Prayer in the Chapel Wednesday 10 am Contemplative Worship in the Chapel

Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church mvpc JOIN US SUNDAYS AT 9:30 AM OR ONLINE AT MVPCTODAY.ORG

St. Anselm's Episcopal Church An Open, Affirming & Loving Community In-Person & Virtual service Sun. at 9:00 AM If someone would like to be added to our Zoom invitation please call 925-284-7420 or email cathy.w@stanselms.us 682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, www.stanselms.us

Lafayette United Methodist Church 955 Moraga Road 925.284.4765 thelumc.org Sunday 10am in person worship We are a church that strives to love as Jesus loves. Our congregation welcomes, includes, and affirms everyone on their journey of faith regardless of race, ethnicity, age, economic status, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

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St Stephen's Episcopal Church Worshipping, Learning, Serving www.ststephenorinda.org

ORINDA CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH 24 Orinda Way (next to the Library)-925-254-4212 Sunday Services and Sunday School 10-11 am Informal Wednesday Meeting 7:30 - 8:30 pm All are welcome www.christiansciencenorinda.org

LAMORINDA SPORTS

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Cammon named Saint Mary's women's head basketball coach



Jeff Cammon

Photo Jon Kingdon

By Jon Kingdon

After the Saint Mary's women's basketball team finished the season with an interim coach and a final record of 13-18, Athletic Director Mike Matoso wasted little time in hiring Jeff Cammon to be the Gaels' new head coach.

Cammon was a three-year starting point guard at Alcorn State University where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science in 2003 and a master's degree in physical education in 2005. Cammon comes to Saint

Mary's from Long Beach State, where for the last six years he has been the women's head coach, having led the 2021-22 (19-9) and the 2022-23 teams (23-9) to the Women's National Invitational Tournament and was named the Big West Coach of the Year this past season.

Matoso used a search firm and reached out to Cammon and it was Saint Mary's and Matoso himself that won him over. "It's such a great community here and the academics are second to none," Cammon said. "Mike Matoso

wants to win. He's very creative and forward thinking and he's put in the work in creating a high-level athletic department. The facilities and resources for all of the programs are not happening at a lot of schools similar to Saint Mary's. Mike and his staff are willing to do what it takes to compete at a high level. He painted the vision and the potential that he saw here, and my wife and I saw it as well. The men's team under Randy Bennett has competed at a high level and I really believe that the women's program can create that type of environment and culture."

"We are thrilled to announce Jeff Cammon as our new head women's basketball coach. His resume speaks for itself with the success that he's had here in California and everywhere he's been at the NCAA level," said Matoso. "We welcome him into the Gael family and are excited for the future of the program under his leadership."

Cammon sees himself as a teacher in his role as a coach, something which was imbued in him from his parents and siblings. "I come from a family of educators and when you're around it all the time, it's in you," Cammon said. "Both of my parents are teachers, I have a sister who's a principal, another sister who's an English teacher and one who is in childcare. My older brother was a high school basketball coach, and my younger brother is a trainer. It's all about servitude and giving back. Obviously, it's my passion for basketball and sports in general, but it's also a great way to serve, to be able to impact lives through

something that you love."

Cammon was not quick to forget his time and the people at Long Beach State and the first thing he did after accepting the offer to come to Saint Mary's was to contact the people he had worked so closely with the past six years. "I spoke with the administration, my team and staff, the boosters and donors and those conversations were very tough," Cammon said. "I love Long Beach State and I let them know that I'd be taking on a new challenge and opening up a new page in this journey of life."

As for his arrival at Saint Mary's, Cammon is hitting the ground running. "The first thing I did was talk to the team and get to know them a little bit," Cammon said. "We have amazing young ladies in the locker room but there's work to do as far as creating and building the team. We have to put the pieces together and figure out how we can go into next year and be ready to compete at a high level."

There's also the matter of recruiting and putting a staff together. "I want to make sure we're bringing in players that are the right fit," Cammon said. "Right now, we just want to evaluate and assess, and we'll figure out what we need to field a top team this year. I may keep some of the current staff and I may bring in assistants from my staff at Long Beach. I just want to make sure that we're doing our due diligence. I have some great people in mind and we're going to put a great staff together."

Like Paul Thomas before him, Cammon will not be

overlooking Australia as fertile ground for basketball talent: "When I started at Long Beach State, I did not have ties in Australia so I just got myself a ticket and went over there to see the Under 20's and Under 18 teams and I was able to meet some amazing people. I had two Australians on the Long Beach roster last year and had already signed two more for next year's class. Saint Mary's has a brand over there. Coach Bennett has done a great job bringing in some great talent from Australia and I look forward to continuing recruiting over there and showing them that it's a great benefit for them to be here."

Cammon describes himself as a hard hat, blue collar type of coach which can be seen in how his teams played at Long Beach State: "I'm a defensive minded coach. My teams at Long Beach have been really good defensively, particularly the last three years (57.4, 57.3, 59.5 points allowed). I love basketball and I love learning. So, my job is to take all that knowledge and put our players in the right positions. The teams I've coached are gritty, play hard and are not going to be out-worked. The last three years, we used matchups, multiple zones and presses that kept our opponents off balance. We want to dictate the game and that's how we've played since I've been a head coach."

As a team, Long Beach ranked in the Top 10 nationally in steals per game (11.5) and turnover margin (6.1), long an Achilles heel for Saint Mary's.

... continued on Page C2



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Lamorinda softball teams overcome rainouts and unplayable fields



Haley Stripling batting

Photo Jon Kingdon

By Jon Kingdon

As the softball teams are beginning their league games, it has been a hit or miss proposition in being able to play their games prior to spring break. Acalanes has been able to play eight games, Miramonte nine games and Campolindo has only been able to play four games due to rainouts and unplayable fields with the hope that these games can be rescheduled.

Acalanes

Head coach Victor Silva has seen some big wins and tough losses for the 4-4 Acalanes team with only one bad loss to Benicia. "Every game we've been in has been a real nail biter," Silva said. "Our big issue is that we have been making too many errors and that is just so frustrating."

Even more frustrating for Silva was a 10-inning loss to

Las Lomas. "I'm really happy with my team though you're only really as happy as your last game," Silva said. "After our 10-inning loss to Las Lomas, their coach called me and said that might have been the most exciting game he'd ever been involved in and I was really happy to hear that, but it was a tough loss," Silva said.

After winning their first three games, the Dons suffered a big loss when first baseman Tess Gundacker, who bats fourth, suffered a knee injury. "We got off to a very good start and then we lost Tess and hopefully she'll be back in a few weeks," Silva said. "When she was healthy, she was very clutch for us. After she got hurt, everything went downhill. We just have to be patient as she goes through rehab."

The pitching staff is led by freshman Maya Shoenhair (2.74 ERA) and junior Lana Cerejo (4.2 ERA) along with ju-

nior Nicole Parlett (3.5 ERA), who has also seen time on the mound. "Maya has been fantastic which you don't expect from a freshman," Silva said. "She has great control and is starting to mix up her pitches because the batters are always looking for strikes and she is still a freshman going against seniors. Lana is a good complement to Maya and I've been switching them after they go through the order twice so the hitters don't get a feel for each pitcher and this strategy has been working well."

The leading batters for Acalanes have been Emme Young (.600), Haley Stripling (.591), Esa Orman (.407), and Shoenhair (who also plays first base .350). "Haley (who will be playing for Rutgers next year) has been the rock of the team at bat and in the field at shortstop," Silva said. "Esa has been very solid behind the plate and Emme catches everything lining up in centerfield. (Seniors) Emi Cronin and Sophia Alvarado have done fine defensively and freshman Lauren Foster has done well in the outfield and at second base."

Silva is very pleased with the attitude of the team: "After the 10th inning loss to Las Lomas and then a tough loss to Pinole Valley, the top team in our league, I asked the girls if they wanted to practice on Saturday and they all said yes. We're going to get better in that we have such a young team."

Miramonte

For first year head coach O.C. Schott, it's been a matter of building from the bottom up through their nine games. "We have a very hard-working group that is striving for excellence," Schott said. "That's been our motto. We believe that we can do great things and it's measured in various ways. It's not always with wins, but it's with looking to continue to improve throughout." The team has a good mixture of experience and youth with eight seniors, two juniors, three sophomores and two freshmen and is led by four captains, seniors Sarah Michels, Izzy Roy, Maya Paykel

and junior Antonia Lawrence.

"Sarah has been our top hitter and has been great at shortstop, along with taking up pitching, though she had never pitched before," Schott said. "Antonia has done a great job at first base. Aubrie Jalowiec has made a lot of plays for us at shortstop in her first year of playing softball. Pateel Horopian has stepped in as our catcher because we need to use Izzy at first and second base. Julia Quinn-Ferguson has also done well in centerfield."

The Matadors' defense has been playing more consistently with each game: "I've seen the improvement on the defensive side," Schott said. "We're getting more outs in the games, rather than the step offs and we've been able to have games where we're recording true outs in every inning and that's been the biggest thing. We've been able to play full games and that's been the biggest thing."

For Schott, this is just the first step in the growth of the team's program: "We have 14 players on the team this year so our first goal is to grow the varsity first, and then over a course of a few years, maybe get a JV team. To help grow the numbers, we want to create an environment where the players want to come out for the team. This group is at the beginning of that, because their approach has been to play for each other, play for the team, and represent the school, and no matter the score, they just keep playing."

Campolindo

Due to the weather, the Cougars have been particularly limited in the number of games they've been able to play. "We only played four games so far and in one of those games, our main pitcher Lyla Marcus was out sick," Head coach Saul Tallarico said. "We have a great attitude on the team. We're primarily a young team (12 sophomores, 4 freshman) and a group of seniors with good leadership qualities so we're hoping to come back after spring break to get some sun and hit the ground running."

The rain has also limited the team's early season preparation. "Due to the weather, we've had to practice in the small gym for the first time in four years," Tallarico said. "There are only so many drills you can do inside for a softball team."

The leading batters are Keilly Kilpatrick (.600), senior Lyla Marcus (.571), freshman Cassidy Mintz (.444), senior Ashlyn Chin (.400) and sophomore Clara Hwang (.333). Kilpatrick, Marcus, Chin and senior Molly Strohmeyer are the team's co-captains.

"The top of our order has been the strength of the offense," Tallarico said. "Keilly is a strong leader and has started the season well at the plate. Clara is one of our most consistent hitters who lines up at first in the outfield and can also pitch. Lyla has been a force on the mound and as a batter. Cassidy has a strong bat and plays third base and in the outfield. Ashlyn has taken over at shortstop and has done a nice job in the field and at bat. Strohmeyer has been a defensive force in centerfield and freshman Peyton Tallarico has fielded well in right field. Sophomore Lucy Wilson has done a great job behind the plate."

Junior first baseman Kylie Dowdall has been out with an ankle injury. "We miss her bat and her play at first base," Tallarico said. "We're hoping to have her back in time for league play."

With the return of Dowdall and Kilpatrick, Tallarico is confident that having a consistent lineup will be a key to the team's success as league play begins: "Just to be able to get a consistent lineup will help to bolster us. Our attitude is strong, and their spirits are high. Our players see all the games coming up on the schedule, especially our league games and they are looking forward to competing, especially against our rival schools and getting in to the win column."

Cammon named Saint Mary's women's head basketball coach

... continued from Page C1

"We just put a lot of time into it and put the players in situations where we make it harder for them in every practice so when they're put in those situations in a game, they will be composed," Cammon said. "We have to have guards who are tough enough to handle the

pressure and skilled enough to make the right plays on the offensive end of the floor."

On offense, it's a matter of adjusting to the type of personnel on the roster. "We want to share the basketball and play together," Cammon said. "We want to get up and down the floor playing fast but under control. I'm more of a motion

coach but I'm flexible and when I've had some teams where I couldn't run motion, we ran more sets to be able to take care of the basketball and put our players in position to be successful. I've been fortunate enough, on the men's and women's teams where I've been an assistant coach, to have been mentored by some

great coaches so it's not necessarily hard for my teams to adjust if we have to."

What is Cammon looking for from the Saint Mary's players? "It's important that they be coachable. It can be tough when you being told to run harder and be held accountable but it makes you better. There's no secret formula. The

players have to want to put in the work. We're going to create that here and hopefully we can do that sooner than later. I have much respect for all the coaches that have come through here and I'm just privileged and blessed to be able to come in and take on where they left off."

Submit sports stories and story ideas to sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com

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Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 17 Issue 4 Wednesday, April 12, 2023



Sudden Oak Death

... read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

The spirit of spring



Forget-me-nots self-seeded amidst the fluorescent pink cyclamen in the foreground.

By Cynthia Brian

“On the first warm day of Spring, I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth. I can feel its energy, and my spirit’s soar.” ~ Helen Hayes

Do you feel the energy? Did you wake up one morning to witness most of the leaves on your deciduous trees unfurled? After our long, cold, rainy winter, the warmer weather you experience is a salve for your soul. Does your spirit soar when you say: “Today is the day I will be digging in my garden?”

As cliché as it is, spring is the season of rebirth, renewal, and regeneration. Nowhere is this more evident than in the growth we experience in our gardens. The days will continue to get longer until the summer equinox, the air is refreshing, flowers and trees are in constant bloom, and we have a spring in our step. We feel younger and more alive. William Shakespeare in his wisdom wrote, “April hath put a spirit of youth in everything.” William, you are so correct!

Spring is a magical time of year when we can finally get back into our gardens, plunge our fingers into the soil, and instead of planning, we begin planting! How therapeutic it is to scatter seeds, inhale the fresh air



The happy faces of orange and cream daffodils. Photos Cynthia Brian

scented by the flowers, and be immersed in nature. As we stroll through our landscapes, we see what needs to be done and we also learn new things. Plants that have self-seeded are magically popping up in unexpected places. The sky-blue forget-me-nots remind me to remember and record what has happened and what will be happening in each plot.

Observe and interact with your plants. The emotional and mental benefits you will receive by immersing yourself in the wonders of nature will reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and improve your overall mental health. As you wander in your yard, plaster your face with a big smile. Lose track of time as you engage with the nurturing of seedlings in this new reborn growing season.

Feel the satisfaction of watching your tulip bulbs grow into gorgeous, cupped flowers, the pride in picking a bouquet of peonies to display, and the joy in knowing that by summer, you will be harvesting nutritious vegetables cultivated by you. If there are children or grandchildren in your vicinity, provide them with seeds to sow their favorite vegetables or fruits. They will be amazed at the course of nature, and how something so tiny as a seed can mature into something edible and delectable.

... continued on Page D8



TWO SPECTACULAR ESTATE LOTS IN HAPPY VALLEY GLEN

A wonderful location that is walkable down to Glen Road and then to Lafayette's thriving downtown district featuring fabulous restaurants, boutique stores and recreation areas; minutes to Bart and Hwy 24.

Access to the popular Lafayette Ridge Trail, 6.6 miles long, in Briones Regional Park, featuring approximately 6,255 acres dedicated for hiking, biking, and horseback riding.



Build Your Dream Home on this One-Of-A Kind 15.52 acre estate lot and enjoy breathtaking views of tree studded rolling hills, Happy Valley and the Lafayette reservoir. Included with the lot purchase are approved plans for an approx. 10,000 sq. ft. estate home, including an outdoor loggia and pool. 1240 Monticello Road | \$2,985,000



A private, gated entry with picturesque drive to this 7.64 acre estate lot provides privacy and serenity. There are approved plans for a 7,243 square foot estate with 5 bedrooms, 5.5 baths, office, exercise room, 4 car garage, and pool. 0 Monticello Road | \$2,398,000

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	6	\$925,000	\$4,895,000
MORAGA	4	\$568,000	\$1,610,000
ORINDA	3	\$1,550,000	\$3,000,000

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

4 Crest Road, \$1,900,000, 3 Bdrms, 2143 SqFt, 1947 YrBl, 02-23-23
 3376 Las Huertas Road, \$2,270,000, 3 Bdrms, 1800 SqFt, 1952 YrBl, 02-24-23, Previous Sale: \$1,800,000, 01-14-22
 3188 Lucas Circle, \$925,000, 3 Bdrms, 1198 SqFt, 1956 YrBl, 02-22-23
 1268 Redwood Lane, \$4,895,000, 5 Bdrms, 5034 SqFt, 2012 YrBl, 02-27-23, Previous Sale: \$4,000,000, 10-05-20
 3153 Sun Ridge Court, \$1,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 1363 SqFt, 1957 YrBl, 02-22-23
 1104 Via Media, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 3109 SqFt, 1976 YrBl, 03-03-23, Previous Sale: \$305,000, 05-01-87

MORAGA

815 Augusta Drive, \$1,585,000, 2 Bdrms, 2792 SqFt, 1978 YrBl, 02-21-23, Previous Sale: \$824,000, 06-17-14
 1410 De La Cruz Way, \$1,610,000, 3 Bdrms, 1908 SqFt, 1967 YrBl, 03-02-23
 651 Moraga Road #20, \$568,000, 2 Bdrms, 1144 SqFt, 1962 YrBl, 02-21-23, Previous Sale: \$385,000, 07-21-08
 206 Paseo Bernal, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 2117 SqFt, 1979 YrBl, 02-27-23, Previous Sale: \$530,000, 02-07-12

ORINDA

64 Charles Hill Road, \$1,625,000, 3 Bdrms, 1960 SqFt, 1948 YrBl, 02-27-23, Previous Sale: \$56,500, 01-01-87
 59 Donna Maria Way, \$3,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 1474 SqFt, 1954 YrBl, 03-03-23, Previous Sale: \$1,305,000, 08-08-19
 254 Manzanita Drive, \$1,550,000, 3 Bdrms, 1641 SqFt, 1952 YrBl, 03-01-23, Previous Sale: \$915,000, 04-09-04

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*2022 MLS Sales Volume Data

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Sudden Oak Death Blitz planned for May 12-14

By William Hudson

This year's rain is welcome salvation for our parched oaks, but also revives a lethal wet-weather enemy, Sudden Oak Death ("SOD"). SOD spreads to oaks from infected leaves of our Bay Laurel trees (counterintuitively, the oaks are not infectious and the Bay trees themselves do not get SOD), and spring rains in the past allowed it to claim increasing numbers of oaks in larger areas of California. One consequence of the drought, however, is fewer infectious leaves on the Bays, substantially reducing and in some places perhaps even eliminating the risk to the oaks. According to UC Berkeley, this year offers a unique opportunity to learn much more about SOD, and to minimize its re-emergence.

SOD is an invasive, non-native disease, that harmlessly infects the leaves of many plant species, but in our iconic and invaluable California Live Oaks, obstructs the circulation of nutrients in the trunk and typically kills them.

... continued on Page D9



Shown are the results of the Blizzards from 2020-22 in the East Bay. Image provided

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75 Barbara Road - Open Sat and Sun 1-4

This beautifully updated & stunning 3 bedroom, 3 bath + Office and Gym on .22 acres in the heart of Orinda has it all! The open floor plan features a sleek, modern and completely updated kitchen with quartz counter tops, custom marble slab backsplash and top of the line appliances. The kitchen opens to a sizable family room with vaulted ceilings, built-in cabinets, gas fireplace enclosed in a custom stacked quartz façade & sliding doors to the generous deck offering fabulous indoor/outdoor flow & expansive views of the Orinda hills. All three bedrooms are on the same street level including the primary ensuite with custom walk-in closet and slider that leads to a deck with beautiful wooded views. All three bathrooms have been tastefully redone with new tile, vanities and lighting. Enjoy wide plank distressed oak hardwood floors throughout the home, great deck areas for entertaining, a terraced side yard with level turf, professional landscaping and stone work. An additional third level provides a private office and a separate Gym/bonus room. This fabulously updated home in this terrific central Orinda location near shops, restaurants, Hwy 24, BART and K-12 top rated Orinda Schools, makes 75 Barbara Road a wonderful place to call home! Welcome Home!

3 <i>Bed</i>	3 <i>Bath</i>	1 <i>Gym</i>
±2,129 <i>Sq ft</i>	1 <i>Office</i>	100% <i>Amazing!</i>

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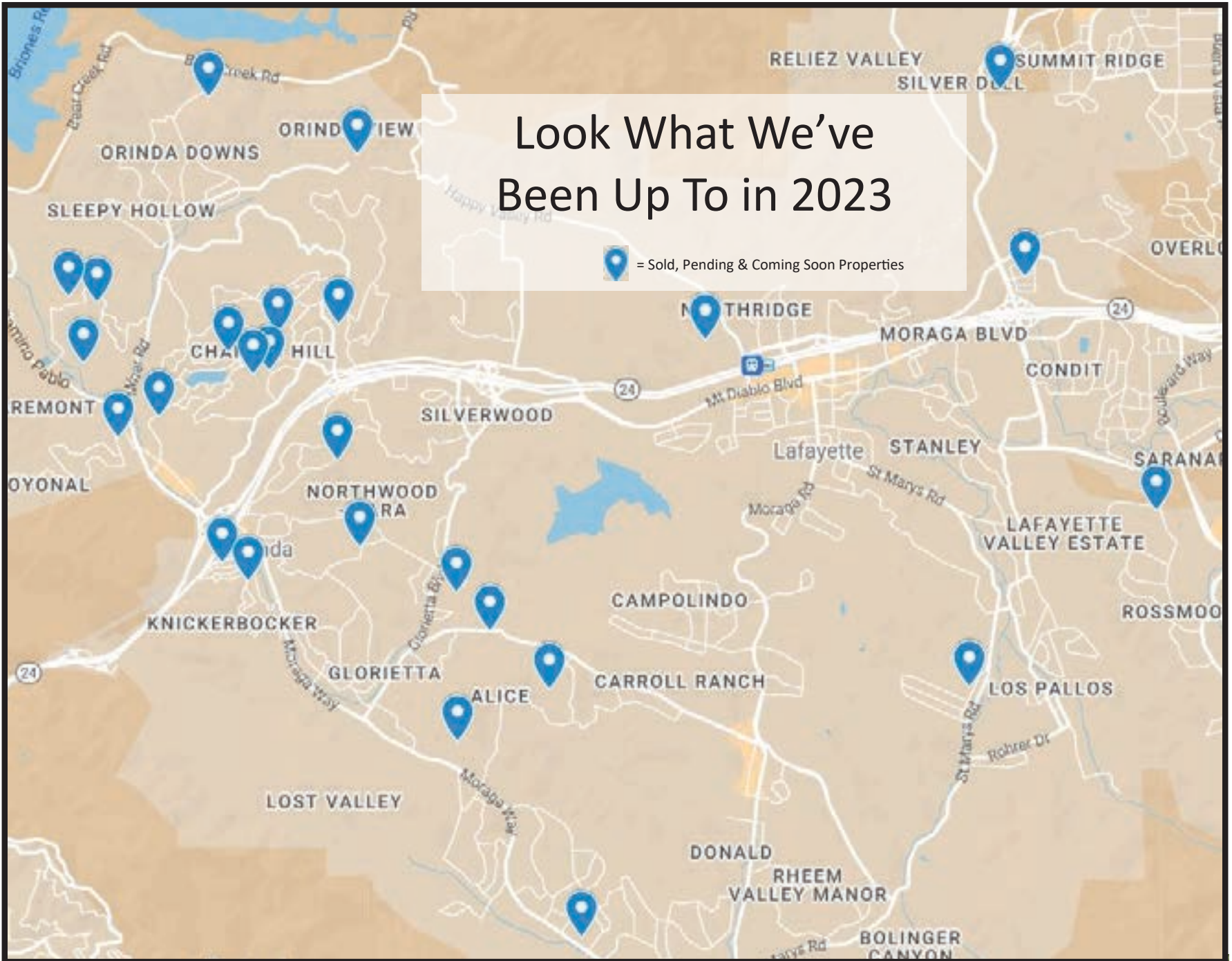


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All information herein deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

The spirit of spring



Pink cluster blooms hang on black currant.



Shades of cobalt blue displayed on hyacinth and periwinkle.



Succulents shine in this container display.

... continued from Page D1

Watch birds building nests. Listen to the frogs croaking their mating calls as they emerge from slumber. Feel the velvety softness of lamb's ear and stick your nose into a fragrant hyacinth blossom. Spirits will be lifted in countless ways and you will be rejuvenated and revitalized.

Is there any better way to welcome spring than by getting your hands dirty and reconnecting with Mother Earth? Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Springtime!



Unique green-maroon hellebore, a harbinger of the spring garden.

Photos Cynthia Brian

Sudden Oak Death Blitz planned for May 12-14

... continued from Page D4

Using the Bay leaves as a vector, it is highly infectious, and has spread from the Bay Area south to just north of San Luis Obispo and north into Oregon, killing millions of oaks. Its “Sudden” name reflects the fact that infected trees exhibit few symptoms until all of their leaves turn brown in a matter of days indicating they have died.

Professor Matteo Garbelotto’s lab at UC Berkeley has been studying SOD and ways to combat it since its arrival in California. A key part of these efforts is the lab’s annual spring SOD Blitz—signifying intense effort in a short period of time—a citizen science survey of Bay leaves with characteristics that are produced by SOD, but also other causes. To determine the actual presence of SOD, the leaves are analyzed over the summer, and in the fall the location and actual infected status of each sample is displayed on a Google Earth map viewable at www.sodblitz.org. There is no cure for infected trees, so the Blitz information is critical to determining the areas most at risk in which to focus efforts to prevent infections; the fall is the best time for the measures to protect the oaks against infection in the following spring.

Last year, following years of drought, SOD was at its lowest level since the Blitz began, and absent or at least undetectable in several previously infected areas in the state. Data suggests the possibility that this year’s wet weather may result in many less infected oaks than expected based on the historical data, and the Blitz this year will have eagerly awaited answers.

Infection rates have fallen from their most recent highs in 2017 to the lowest level on record last year, from 7.4% to 4.4% in locations west of the East Bay hills, and precipitously from 15.7% to 1.3% in areas on the other side, such as Orinda and Moraga. This year’s Blitz data will help minimize increases from these low levels, particularly in Lamorinda, by revealing re-emergent areas where efforts should be focused in the fall to block SOD from entering the oaks in the spring of 2024. The more data from the Blitz this year, the better the chance to keep it contained.

Readers interested in participating in this year’s Blitz can follow the SOD Blitz 2023

Spring Survey – Get Started Here link on the www.sodblitz.org page. Here you learn the Blitz protocol for identifying and collecting symptomatic Bay leaves, which you apply in whatever areas for whatever amount of time you have during your collection weekend, May 12-14 in the East Bay this year.

See www.sodblitz.org for results of past Blitzes, more information about SOD and programs to assess and manage risks for the

public and professional arborists. The SODMAP mobile app described in the “SOD Risk Assessment” shows the risk of infection at the location of the mobile phone, and “3 steps to manage sudden oak death” and “Best Management Practices” cover steps for protection. The OakSTeP program is for professionals; watch the site for SOD Treatment Training workshops for the public in the fall.

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The Goddess Gardner's Gardening Guide for April

AMEND your soil before you begin sowing. Soil is the foundation of your garden. Rich compost will help with adding the nutrients your plants will need to thrive.

CLEAN and sharpen your garden tools by plunging them in a five-gallon bucket of sand mixed with a cup of vegetable oil. The sand will keep them sharper and the oil wards off the rust. Small hand tools can be stored in the sand bucket.

BUILD or buy raised beds lined with wire to make gardening easier on your back as well as protected from digging predators like gophers and rats. Fill with a combination of mulch, compost, and soil.

CONSIDER implementing permeable pavers on a patio for increased water capturing that will support your landscape.

PLANT frost tender plants as the weather warms toward the end of the month. Ground covers, citrus, bougainvillea, and summer annuals including begonia, lobelia, snapdragon, cosmos, and primrose are available for purchase.

SUPPORT peonies or other tall plants that are flopping with a tomato cage!

EXCHANGE rhizomes, bulbs, and seeds with fellow gardeners for a variety of selections.

SOW seeds of scarlet runner bean, sweet peas, star jasmine, or morning glories to climb on fences and wire.

CREATE a palette of striking performance with the many shapes, sizes, textures, and colors of drought-tolerant succulents which require minimal moisture.

ENJOY a successive parade of patterns and painted brushstrokes throughout the seasons by planting plants with complimentary hues and consecutive blooming times.

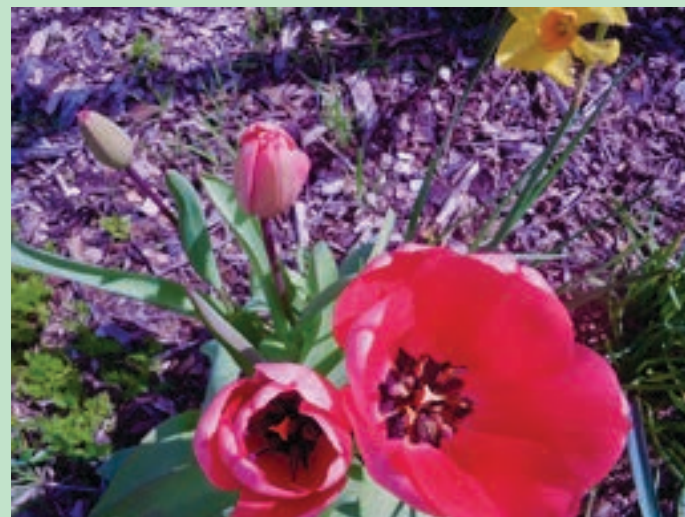
SCRUB your barbecue grill with white vinegar then scrub with half an onion to clean the grates and get ready for outside dining.

COMBINE ornamental and edible plants to create a cottage garden. Make sure your interior design and exterior esthetics flow like water.

RESIST cutting back the dying leaves of narcissi and daffodils. The fronds are gathering their nutrition for next year's blooms. Cut them back only when as dry as potato chips.

CONTROL snails and slugs with non-toxic Sluggo, pick them off by hand, use copper barriers, or bowls of beer. These slimy gastropods hatching now will devour new seedlings.

BUY ladybugs from your nursery or garden center if you see aphids, mealybugs, or other pests on your plants. Remember ladybugs fly to infested gardens.



The spirit of spring is exhibited in tulips.



Peonies add a power punch and make beautiful bouquets.



Because of the rainy weather, moss grows on the brick stairs.

VISIT the Be the Star You Are!® booth at the Moraga Faire on Saturday, April 29 between 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to pick up a bag of complimentary spring potpourri and have your kids plant seeds in our craft area. Bring your gardening questions and I'll be there to answer them.
www.BetheStarYouAre.org/events



After the storms, Cynthia Brian enjoys the green hillsides.

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 <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com
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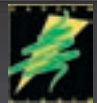
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224 Camino Sobrante
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237 Glorietta Blvd
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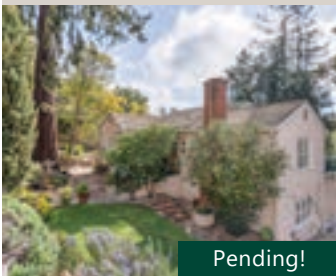


15 Aspinwall Court
Single-story 3 bd/ 2 ba rancher offers an ideal open floorplan in the heart of the Ivy Drive neighborhood!

Pending!

\$1,795,000

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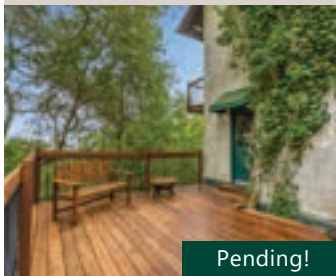


40 Las Palomas
Charming 4 bd/ 3.5 ba home w/ European flair sits on serene .30-acre parcel featuring sunny patios & tranquil seating areas!

\$1,795,000

Pending!

ORINDA



37 La Madronal
Nestled among majestic oaks w/ picturesque views of Mt. Diablo this property includes 3 bd/ 2 ba & 2427 sqft on a .25-acre parcel!

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Pending!

ORINDA



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

\$199,000

LAFAYETTE



3243 Ameno Drive
Spacious 4 bd/ 3 bath home offers spectacular view of light & clouds, with panoramic views of Mt. Diablo!

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WALNUT CREEK



1682 Parkside Drive
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WALNUT CREEK



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