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Last year's Fourth of July parade in Orinda featured marching bands, horse-drawn wagons, stilt walkers and much more.

Photos Sora O'Doherty

# Plans in place for another festive Fourth in Lamorinda

By Sora O'Doherty and Vera Kochan

The 36th annual Orinda Fourth of July parade has the theme of Earth Kindness, and the Grand Marshal will be The Friends of the Orinda Nature Area, who recently won the William Penn Mott Jr. environmental award for 2023. The parade is put on every year by the Orinda Association, with the help of the city of Orinda and many, many volunteers. In fact, the OA is still looking for volunteers to help with the parade this year.

The competition to design a T-shirt for the parade was won by Wagner Ranch fifth-grader Aavya Khanna (now a rising sixth-grader.) T-shirts bearing her design can be ordered from the Orinda Association. The design in red, white

and blue, depicts Theatre Square and elements of Independence Day and is printed on light blue fabric.

Following the pattern of previous years, the event will begin with a pancake breakfast on the Library Plaza at 7:30 a.m. At 7:55 a.m. there will be a flag raising, followed at 8 a.m. by a fun run to raise funds for and awareness of the Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood Foundation.

At 9 a.m. there will be an Orinda library book sale, and the parade itself will start at 10 a.m. on the Theatre District side of town. The parade route will lead through the Theatre District and wend its way to Orinda Village. Parade participants will stop and perform musical numbers and provide other entertainment.

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## Varellas one of two from Lamorinda inducted into USA Water Polo Hall of Fame

By Jon Kingdon

Like so many who grew up in Lamorinda, Peter Varellas – who was inducted into the USA Water Polo Hall of Fame on June 9 along with Swimming and Water Polo Coach Ron Richison – began swimming at a young age. “I started at the age of three at Moraga Tennis and Swim Club and that was my summer programming for the next 10-12 years,” Varellas said. “My dad (Larry) had been a swimmer at Cal-Berkeley, and they wanted me and my sister to get in the water early.”

Water polo was not something that was readily available as it is today. “I did not start playing until high school at Campolindo,” Varellas said. “There were not a lot of clubs for kid’s pre-high school age, and I did not know much about it. When I

was starting high school, I had no plans to play any sport in the fall and anticipated playing basketball and baseball.”

Once again, it was at his father’s suggestion that he give water polo a try. “I resisted it initially, but he said I should try it for a week and if I don’t like it, I could quit,” Varellas said. “Even though the first week of water polo was pretty hellish, I didn’t quit. It was when I was a sophomore when I really started loving it. I was very fortunate to have two very good coaches – Boyd LeChance and James Lathrop – both of whom were super influential for me in teaching me the sport and allowing me to see where it could take me.”

It also helped that Varellas had a natural affinity for the pool. “It was the combination of the water, and

the strategic portion and team feel of a ball sport. I love swimming but you just don’t get that in swimming, and it put all the pieces together and it just clicked for me.”

From Campolindo it was on to Stanford where he earned both athletic and academic accolades. Varellas competed in four NCAA championships, winning his freshman year, was a two-time all-American, was named the PAC 10 male athlete of the year and earned an NCAA post-graduate scholarship.

Then it was off to Italy where Varellas played for Rari Nantes in a little town called Saona, in the northwestern part of Italy on the beach. “It was so amazing,” Varellas said. “I went there right after I graduated from Stanford. I didn’t know anyone there and I didn’t speak the language. ... continued on Page A10



Peter Varellas

Photo provided

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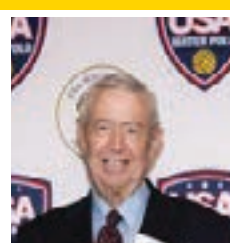
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## Lafayette council receives staff update on proposed municipal budget

By Lou Fancher

The Lafayette City Council on June 12 received a report and recommendations from staff for the proposed FY2022-23 municipal budget. Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson and City Manager Niroop Srivatsa highlighted and explained the background for changes and the most recent updates to the plan.

The council was tasked with adopting Resolution 2023-35, a next-step process involving appropriating specific revenue and expenses; confirming the city's investment policy; determining the appropriation limits for FY2023-24; determining fees for city services, and authorizing transfers and expenditures related to the 2023 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Robinson directed the council members' attention to key points, including unfunded special projects requests, sinking fund items that should be funded annually to avoid large "surprise" expenditures in the future, and a \$1 million annual shortfall in CIP funds that, if left unaddressed, would sharply curtail investments in road repair and parking lot pavement

conditioning beginning in FY2025-26.

Notably, two capital programs slated for FY2023-24, the Buckeye Patio and Community Center Play Area projects, require new and additional funding to reach completion. Because parking at city-owned lots has not been raised since 2006 and stands at \$1 per hour – while private parking lots in the downtown are charging \$2 per hour – the parking fund that has not recovered from COVID continues to be a net loss and a significant drain on the city's overall budget revenue. In FY2018-19, the last full "pre-pandemic" year, net parking revenue was \$158,000. In the last 3 years, net parking revenue has been negative – ranging from a loss of \$182,000 in FY2020-21 to a projected \$115,000 loss in FY2023-24.

Srivatsa's summary memo stated Lafayette's ending reserve for FY2022-23 is estimated at \$14.5M or 81% of General Fund expenses. For FY2023-24, the ending reserve is proposed to be \$14M, or 72%.

The council remains committed to four ambitious goals related to wildfire prevention; improving pedestrian and traf-

fic safety and multimodal mobility, tasks along the Mt. Diablo corridor and downtown, and developing a fiscally sustainable plan for meeting the city's short-term and long-term needs. Because the current 5-year model shows the deficit starting to increase in FY2026-27 and the reserve likely dipping below 60% in FY2028-29, the staff report included mitigation strategies such as balancing the budget for the next five years and funding current requests by applying the remaining second tranche ARPA funds.

Following Robinson's presentation of the proposed budget and work plan, Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok asked about the parking fund deficit and about real estate acquisitions that had been approved by council but did not appear on the proposed budget.

Robinson encouraged the council to consider raising city lot parking fees and on Kwok's second point, said money set aside in the last fiscal year in anticipation of buying two properties was not needed when only one property was purchased. The unused money designated for the second prop-

erty was transferred back into the General Fund and therefore not included in property acquisitions.

Council Member Susan Candell inquired about unfunded items on the proposed budget and next steps. Robinson said the council can adopt or add any items and submit them to staff for presentation at the next meeting. She advised council to keep in mind that anything added to the budget would require finding additional sources of revenue or paring back the budget to avoid overruns. "Ongoing deficits are not customary for Lafayette," she noted.

An extended discussion was had with Planning Director Greg Wolff about unfunded requests related to affordable housing. The city's Housing Element states that "The City has an existing Housing Trust Fund with limited funds and needs to find ongoing sources of revenue to provide meaningful financial support towards the production of affordable housing to meet its RHNA goals and affirmatively further fair housing through increased access to housing and high resource areas." Wolff said the state of California has identified housing as a crisis and imposed more restrictions in high resource areas like Lafayette. Although the city is meeting all the programs required for affordable housing, state cuts to certain types of tax revenue and how they can be used has created a "new environment" that since 2012 means funding sources for housing are reduced. "If tax increment financing were to be allowed in the future, it would cover the costs, but without it, cities and towns are tasked with being responsible for raising their own/additional re-development funds allocated to affordable housing," he said.

Public comments were largely addressed at funding for school crossing guards, financial support for Chamber of Commerce expenses involving police presence, lighting and other expenses during the annual Art and Wine Festival and Reservoir Run.

Returning to the council, budgeting for park facilities, capital improvement projects, recreation programs, and parking programs received rapid approval.

Unfunded expenses were discussed, with staff directed to update the budget plan with an additional \$40,000 for crossing guards (Council had previously committed to paying half of the cost up to a maximum of \$100,000); resurfacing of the city parking lots over next three years (\$500,000); using \$60,000 of ARPA funds to extend the contract for the Economic Development Manager for six months at 20 hours per week; among other items. Mayor Carl Anduri requested more information on how the housing appropriation would impact the budget moving forward. Council members directed staff to look into tax revenue sources and the processes required to approve any changes to policy, along with the details of applying ARPA funds to bridge any gaps before new sources of revenue are defined.

Robinson said she and staff will apply all the changes, explore council suggestions, "run the numbers," and bring the item back to council for continued public hearing on June 26.

A detailed staff report, memo from Srivatsa, and the complete budget along with graphics of the plan can be found at the city's website: ([https://lafayette.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=&event\\_id=1209&meta\\_id=169155](https://lafayette.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&event_id=1209&meta_id=169155))

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# Council honors White Pony Express founder, Sufism Reoriented spiritual director



Photo provided

## Dr. Carol Weyland Conner

During the June 12 Lafayette Council Meeting, council members recognized in a Proclamation Dr. Carol Weyland Conner, spiritual director of Sufism Reoriented and founder of White Pony Express and Following Francis who passed away on April 22.

In recent years Conner won national prominence and numerous civic awards for the volunteer service programs she founded which seek to help those on the margins of society move closer to the mainstream. According to a press release, Conner was tireless in her efforts to care for the underserved, downtrodden and homeless, who she saw as her own family. Following Francis, founded in 2011, staged colorful outdoor "fares," musical plays, and other activities for nearly 15,000 children throughout the nation, with the aim of nurturing feelings of kindness, courage, and self-worth in children. In Contra Costa County, she formed White Pony Express in 2013 to gather surplus fresh food from markets and restaurants and de-

liver it to service agencies that feed the hungry in the county. White Pony Express is now one of California's largest food rescue programs and distributes new clothing and other goods to the underserved.

The Proclamation not only outlined Conner's contribution to society, but made note that Lafayette is home to the largest number of White Pony Express volunteers. "Every single day, 364 days a year, White Pony Express picks up and delivers 12,000 pounds of high quality, largely perishable surplus food for our neighbors in need," the Proclamation noted. Thousands of pounds of this nutritious food have been delivered to and benefited low-income seniors in Lafayette and hundreds of thousands of pounds of fresh food have been donated to White Pony Express collectively by Lafayette schools and businesses, including Acalanes High School, The Meher Schools, Trader Joe's, and Whole Foods Market.

"In this model or new paradigm of life," Conner was quoted in the Proclamation, "responsibility for helping the family of man is assumed by everyone, or in the phrase the White Pony Express often uses, 'All of us taking care of all of us.'"

Conner has been honored with the "Jefferson Award" from San Francisco TV station KPIX, the "Threads of Hope" Award from Diablo Magazine, she was named a "Hometown Hero" by the Contra Costa Times, and on April 8, two weeks before her passing, she was given the Soroptimist "Ruby Award for Women Helping Women."  
- J. Wake

# Signs go up for newest Firewise Community



Photo provided

## A new North Bart Firewise USA Community sign goes up.

In Lafayette, the families living

on Orchard, Oak Hill, and N. Thompson roads and their tributaries have received approval of their application to become the North Bart Firewise USA Community.

"We have received our signs which are now mounted in two locations in our community," said Lafayette resident Jack Baker. "Now that fire season is approaching, we are working together to mitigate the risk by following guidelines to decrease fuel especially in the 5 feet closest to our houses, remove branches on trees 10 feet from the ground, and plan evacuation routes in case of emergency along with having a 'Go Bag' with important papers along with some clothes, food and water."

For information about how to become a Firewise USA Community, visit [www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/commissions-committees/emergency-preparedness/firewise-and-wildfire-preparedness](http://www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/commissions-committees/emergency-preparedness/firewise-and-wildfire-preparedness)  
- J. Wake

# Lafayette Library garage temporarily closed

Due to damage to the Lafayette Library's parking gate, the garage is temporarily closed. The gate was recently damaged by a vehicle and it will take several weeks for the parts to arrive and repairs to be completed, according to an announcement by the Library. If you plan to visit the library

there is street parking nearby on Mt. Diablo Blvd, Golden Gate Way, First Street and Second Street.

For questions or updates on the repairs, please contact the city of Lafayette at [city-hall@lovelafayette.org](mailto:city-hall@lovelafayette.org) or (925) 284-1968.

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Lafayette Public Meetings

## City Council

Regular Meeting  
Monday, June 26, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

## Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, July 3, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

## Design Review

Wednesday, June 26, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube  
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**Chamber of Commerce:**  
 www.moragachamber.org  
**Moraga Citizens' Network:**  
 www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

**Town Council:**  
 Wednesday, June 28, 6:30 p.m.  
 Wednesday, July 12, 6:30 p.m.  
**Planning Commission:** Tuesday, July 4, 6:30 p.m.  
**Park and Recreation Commission:** Monday, July 10, 7:30 p.m.

# Major 2022 Pavement Rehabilitation Project work involves several Moraga street closures

By Vera Kochan

The phrase “Your tax dollars at work” couldn’t be truer as evidenced around parts of Moraga this summer. Thanks to the 2012 Measure K sales tax initiative, along with funding from the Gas Tax and Refuge Vehicle Impact Fees, the town is able to supplement its pavement management program.

“The Town is responsible for the maintenance and repair of 58.6 centerline miles of paved streets,” according to a statement from Director of Public Works/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp. “This includes 13.8 miles of arterial, 15.8 miles of collector, 26.3 miles of residential streets, and 2.6 miles of bike paths or service

roads.”

Knapp added, “In 2013, the Town leveraged \$600,000 annual repayment loan of Measure K funds to yield an upfront funds of \$7.7 million to spend on a three-year intensive pavement program, which significantly increased the Town’s Pavement Condition Index (PCI).” In 2015, the PCI went from 49 to 67, and by 2020, had climbed to 74, putting Moraga in the top 25% of all 109 municipalities within the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Pavement Rehabilitation Project, also known as the “Worst First Approach,” is expected to take three years to complete, beginning with streets ranked as Very Poor and Poor. The Town is currently budgeting \$13.5 million for this three-year project without bonding/borrowing any funds. “We had to save a bit of monies in the previous years and have benefited with additional Pavement Management Program funding sources,” Knapp said. As an example, he mentioned that “Measure K sales tax revenues have increased from approximately \$1 million to \$3.6 million per year, not accounting for annual \$0.6 million bond repayment.”

The current project involves rehabilitating 22 streets throughout Moraga. This phase of the project was expected to begin June 19 and should be completed June 29, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday with some variances.



Photo courtesy Moraga Public Works

### Asphalt repaving on Tia Place in Moraga

Moraga’s contractor, De-Silva Gates Construction, will begin a process called Rubberized Chip and finish the project with a Microsurface Seal. This will entail lane and street closures. Approximately 1,600 affected residents have been mailed construction work notices, and “No Parking” barricades have been placed.

The Town also requests that residents keep children and pets away from the street while the treatments are being done as large equipment is involved; drive slowly – the new cape seal treatments can be slippery because of the loose rock prior to removal; do not drive on the treatments until the lanes are reopened to traffic and obey the posted “Loose Gravel” and “15 MPH” signs; warn your children to be careful while riding bicy-

cles or have them refrain from riding altogether until the loose rock is swept up; continue to park your car(s) off the road or cover them as necessary until the initial sweeping is completed; check your shoes before walking into your house – the loose rocks can track onto carpets or scratch wooden floors; respect construction areas and workers – do not drive on the treatments or cross over closed lanes to access or exit your driveway to avoid damage to your car; and make sure that your sprinklers are turned off during the Chip Seal and Microsurfacing Seal treatment hours.

“The Town very much appreciates your patience during this important project,” stated Knapp. “We apologize to residents in advance for any inconvenience.”

For continuous updates to the project visit the town website: [www.moraga.ca.us/2022pavementrehabilitation](http://www.moraga.ca.us/2022pavementrehabilitation). To reach Town of Moraga Construction Manager Sunny Jhutti call (415) 246-4920 or email: [sunny@substrateinc.com](mailto:sunny@substrateinc.com). For additional info contact Moraga Assistant Engineer Yao Miao (925) 888-7028 or email: [ymiao@moraga.ca.us](mailto:ymiao@moraga.ca.us). Moraga Director of Public Works/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp (925) 888-7027 or email: [sknapp@moraga.ca.us](mailto:sknapp@moraga.ca.us).



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## MPD holds well-attended Town Hall



Photo Vera Kochan

### Moraga Police Chief Jon King updates residents during Town Hall

By Vera Kochan

The Moraga Police Department’s Town Hall invited residents to the Council Chambers on June 5 to update attendees on the latest crime statistics, trends, scams, and equipment policy, followed by a question/answer session.

Chief Jon King gave his slide presentation with several MPD staff and officers included in the crowd of approximately 40 residents. It was noted that the 13 officers employed within the department includes the chief, a lieutenant, supervisors, a dedicated detective and patrol officers. Two support services personnel handle records, finance, evidence, training, administrative support, fingerprinting, front desk and more. There are also reserve officers who volunteer to patrol and assist.

King noted the many achievements for MPD during 2022. The department obtained a grant to fully fund an additional police officer for three years; successfully lobbied the town council to ban the sale of flavored tobacco and vape devices; collected over 700 pounds of prescription drugs for destruction at no charge to residents; hired

and trained a new police lieutenant and three new police officers; conducted virtual evacuation drills and worked closely with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District on emergency planning; collected toys for the United States Marine Corp Toys for Tots campaign to benefit underprivileged kids; made 122 arrests (13 of which were local and 109 were out-of-towners) and issued over 800 citations for a variety of offenses; and continued the partnership with Moraga’s schools and other Lamorinda agencies.

As of June 4, the year-to-date Crime Statistics for the midway point of 2023 show an overall decrease in crime totals (54), as compared to the entire four previous years of 2019 (155), 2020 (162), 2021 (150), and 2022 (199). The crimes are the same for all five years. With regards to 2023, these statistics are: homicide (0), sexual assaults (1), robbery (0), assaults (7), burglary (9), larceny (33), and vehicle theft (4). One alarming statistic showed an increase in traffic citations. For the entire year of 2022, there were 272 citations; while only 6 months into 2023, the figure has nearly doubled at 428. Traffic accidents reported for

2022 were 22; while at the midway point for 2023, there have already been 13. King stated that new policies require police departments to report all incidences, thereby accounting for the possible up-tick in statistics. He added that with the additional forensic equipment available to the them, MPD is able to collect more evidence against perpetrators.

Another topic during the presentation was scams. King noted that most scams come in the form of phone calls or emails, and he warned that anyone can be a victim to the seemingly realistic and clever scammers. Some of the currently popular scams are from people claiming to be a government agent (from the Internal Revenue Service or Social Security); Pacific Gas and Electric representatives; someone pretending to be a family member in trouble; Zillow Rental; and a private party internet purchase.

King gave several tips of advice to avoid being taken in by a scam: nothing should be secret – always ask family/friends for help; neither the IRS or PG&E will hound you out of the blue by phone for payment; police don’t collect warrants over the phone; no one has you pay with a gift card or Green Dot card; if government agencies need your help, they will make an official request – not a secretive phone call. And if it seems too good to be true – it probably is; if it is a good deal now – it will be tomorrow, too; and don’t click on an internet link.

MPD has taken advantage of Assembly Bill 481 which was approved in September 2021, and allows law enforcement agencies to purchase military equipment for its use. Currently the department has a backup generator and less lethal shotguns that use bean bag projectiles.

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# Community offers additional opinions on Housing Element via two recent surveys

By Vera Kochan

In a continuous effort to keep residents informed and participating in Moraga's Housing Element, the Planning Department conducted two recent surveys in order to gather more feedback concerning hopes and expectations related to housing, safety and growth within town.

Staff's booth at the April 29 Moraga Community Faire and Car Show attracted approximately 30 residents. Additionally, a May 18 Community Housing Meeting at the Hacienda de las Flores had seven residents in attendance.

According to a June 14 staff report presented to the town council by Moraga Planning Director Afshan Hamid and Consultant Barry Miller, the results of both outreach events mirrored each other quite closely. "There were continuing concerns regard-

ing issues such as wildfire mitigation and public transit," the report stated. "The majority of comments seemed to support more amenities linked to housing, such as a desire for more retail, another grocery store, medical facilities, restaurants, and supporting mixed-use development."

Also, "there were additional non-Housing related comments, such as wanting more sports fields. Although some residents have concerns regarding more density and housing, most residents wanted to see the commercial shopping centers redevelop."

The Planning Department continuously updates the town's website with information on affordable housing, as well as resources for developers. For more information visit: [www.moraga.ca.us/make-moraga-home](http://www.moraga.ca.us/make-moraga-home).

Moraga's current Housing Element status update with regards to the State of Califor-

nia Housing & Community Development (HCD) was in a holding pattern after its third submission. However, on the afternoon of the Town Council's June 14 meeting, the Planning Department finally received comments back from HCD. Hamid was able to confirm that staff will meet with HCD in the coming week to discuss any changes, and then report back to the council with revisions.

Most of the revisions have to do with Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH), which according to Hamid "comes as no surprise." She assured the town council that everything looks doable and insubstantial, so it appears that Moraga is heading for the Housing Element home stretch. The staff report noted that as of June 6, only three of the cities in Contra Costa County (Oakley, Orinda, and San Ramon) have been found in compliance.

# SMC's River of Words 2023, a youth art and poetry competition, sparked dramatic results



Photo Vera Kochan

"Made for Each Otter," Joy Y., 5th Grade, Georgia, Category II Grand Prize Winner

By Vera Kochan

Although the Saint Mary's College art exhibit, "River of Words: The Natural World as Viewed by Young People," closed a few days ago, the winning entries that were on display left an indelible mark in the artistic world with regards to the imprint left by today's youth and their perceptions of our planet.

River of Words (ROW) was founded in 1995 by Pamela Michael, a writer and activist, along with Robert Hass, a former U.S. Poet Laureate and SMC alumnus. The program belongs to the Center for Environmental Literacy and is a part of the Kalmanovitz School of Education, pioneers in the field of place-based education. The ROW art and poetry competition is conducted in affiliation with the Library of Congress Center for the Book, is free to entrants, and is open internationally for children in kindergarten through the 12th grade. There are four categories with regards to age range: K-Grade 2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12. A panel of 10 judges poured through more than 2,500 entries from all over the world.

According to the SMC exhibit description, "As the world continues to evolve, it is crucial that we nurture a deep understanding and appreciation of our natural environment in the hearts and minds of the next generation." The exhibit offered "a unique glimpse into the perspectives

of young people, presenting their visions of the natural world through a diverse array of artistic mediums and poetic expression. These young artists and poets remind us of the wonders of nature and the importance of preserving our planet for future generations."

On display were the works of more than 10 artistic finalists along with a binder of the winners in the poetry category. The entrants were asked to thoughtfully consider specific ideas, images or language; "show" the reader something either through a picture or with words; use images/words that will take people on a journey; have fun with forms and textures; feature a specific aspect, formation, ecosystem or organism of nature that resonates with you; show your scientific knowledge; get your inspiration from the outdoors by using all of your senses; and display an awareness of your global community.

A few of the artistic pieces were geared toward the ocean and its inhabitants with a visual commentary regarding pollution and the destruction of the ecosystem. On the other hand, most of the younger poetry finalists wrote about the beauty found in nature and the hope of its continuance; whereas the older finalists' poems expressed elements of sadness with the things mankind has done to create environmental disasters. Even in art, the innocence of youth gives way to the realities of the older and wiser.

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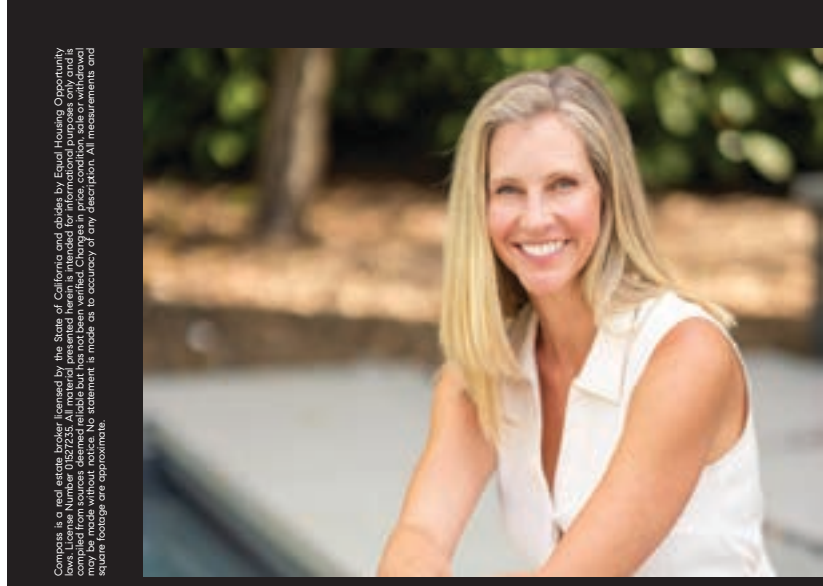
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## Orinda Historical Society bounces back

By Sora O'Doherty

While the COVID-19 pandemic dampened many businesses and organizations, the new president of the Orinda Historical Society (OHS) Alison Burns took advantage of the enforced closure by bringing on new board members and volunteers who worked hard to completely turn around the organization, sorting through decades of documents and artifacts, rearranging the Museum's layout, and, according to the annual report Burns presented to the Orinda City Council on June 6, "presenting ourselves as the kind of historical museum that Orinda could be proud of."

In recognition of the many accomplishments of the OHS, the city council presented Burns with a Proclamation.

The refurbished museum is now officially open every Thursday afternoon from 3 to 5 p.m. and the last Saturday of the month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Burns is seeking to take advantage of the maximum foot traffic, capitalizing on the Thursday food truck event and

the Saturday farmers' market, in addition to opening whenever other events take place in and around the library, such as the Orinda Garden Club's plant sale and the Friends of the Library book sales.

New board members include Vivian Ricci, recording secretary, who recently retired from a career at the Federal Reserve Bank, and Cheryl Cechvala, a product manager for an online educational publisher who has recently agreed to serve as vice president.

Last August saw the publication of Burns' book, "Images of America: Orinda." The book has proved to be an excellent tool for promoting the Historical Society, Burns told the council. She has made a number of presentations that have helped raise awareness of the OHS. This appears to be much needed, as Burns found out that the OHS was listed by the Contra Costa Historical Society as a "dead/dying" organization. A dismayed Burns told them to "watch this space," as she goes about revitalizing the OHS. For example, last November OHS joined with the Lafayette Historical Society and the Moraga Historical Society for a presentation in the Orinda Library Garden Room to an overflow crowd of over 90 participants.

The OHS is taking maximum advantage of its display windows that many pedestrians view when walking between the Library garage and Cafe Teatro, the Library or the Community Center/Park. Burns has received favorable public feedback. In May, for example, the windows focused on Memorial Day and Orinda veterans. Burns and the OHS welcome the submission of photos from Orinda residents, but only those that relate to the city.

OHS has also been successful in obtaining a number of grants. OHS received a \$1,000 grant from the Orinda Community Fund to be used for a plaque for Orinda Motors. Orinda Women's Club granted OHS \$1,500 which is intended for desperately needed new



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Orinda Mayor Inga Miller presents proclamation to Orinda Historical Society president Alison Burns.

software and other computer updates, Burns says. Another grant, applied for by OHS Archivist Teresa Long, is being used to digitize the Society's collection of Orinda Sun newspapers. Long and Burns delivered half the collection, covering 1948 to 1959, last May and will deliver the rest of the collection this year. The old newspapers were donated to the OHS when the Orinda Sun went out of business.

In addition to being open to the public, the OHS has resumed its Schools Program, kicking off with a kindergarten class from Sleepy Hollow. The presentation was at the OHS and ventured as far as the mural in the Community Park, but OHS hopes that in the next school year they will be able to recommence taking third grade students on a historical walk of downtown Orinda. Board member Laurie Smith, teacher at St. Stephens and the OHS schools specialist, is in

charge of the schools program.

Burns also reported that in February of this year the OHS was approached by the Orindawoods committee to help with their 50th Anniversary Celebration in May. Archivist Long scanned many documents for them to display at the event as well as over 100 slides provided by Orindawoods.

Monthly OHS board meetings take place on the third Wednesday of the month from 2 to 5 p.m. in the May Room. The society is seeking new members. Council Member Janet Riley is the Council liaison to the society.

Burns gratefully acknowledged the assistance provided to the society by the city, including Public Works and Parks and Recreation.

More information about the society can be found on their website, <https://orindahistory.org>

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## Monthly celebrations remind us that every day can be Earth Day



San Pablo Creek

Photo Sora O'Doherty

By Toris Jaeger

In April we celebrated Earth Day and remembered all of the Earth's gifts of water, air, land and flora and fauna. The rains continue to replenish the creeks and ponds for the riparian flora and fauna which includes native trees, shrubs and understory plants like the Horsetail, Yerba Buena and Native Blackberry.

The creeks provide water for the native fish to travel

along and lay eggs for the next generation of fish. The trees and grasses are also given the water they need to grow and send their roots deeper into the Earth. The rains also fill our ponds for the Red Legged Frog and Western Pond Turtles, Salamanders and Newts. They can begin to come out of hibernation to mate and lay eggs. The adult aquatic insects can lay their eggs for the future Dragon Flies, Damselflies, May Flies and so much more.

We discovered a rare

species in the Orinda Nature Area pond called a Phantom Midge Fly larva that becomes a Midge Fly.

In May we celebrated Mother's Day, remembering and celebrating all our mothers have given us, the greatest being love. We also celebrated our grandmothers and great-grandmothers that have shared their wisdom and love. In May we also reflected on the gifts from the Mother of life, Mother Earth. And this month we honor our fathers who provide security and strength to be who we are destined to be.

We have a saying: Father Time. We can reflect on the time we have been given to heal the Earth and celebrate our freedom on the Fourth of July. The theme of this year's Fourth of July celebration in Orinda is "Earth Kindness" and the Orinda Association is honoring the Friends of the Orinda Nature Area as the Grand Marshal this year.

Let's hope everyone who lives on Earth will also be free and have all they need to survive and thrive.

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## Outpouring of affection for former Miramonte coach, holder of Boston Marathon title



Photo Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda City Council and former Mayor Amy Worth, left, joined Vice Mayor Darlene Gee and Mayor Inga Miller in honoring former Miramonte teacher and coach Patty Hung, third from left, holder of the record for most consecutive completions of the Boston Marathon by a women.

By Sora O'Doherty

The mood at the Orinda City Council meeting on June 6 can only be described as joyous when the council presented a proclamation honoring former Miramonte High School Coach Patty Hung. Hung, holder of the record for most consecutive completions by a women of the famed Boston Marathon, literally bounced with energy and delight, accepting the recognition from the council and former Orinda mayors Amy Worth and Eve Phillips.

Phillips, who was coached

by Hung at Miramonte, has also completed the Boston Marathon, and currently serves on the board of the Orinda Union School District. She brought her four children to the council meeting to join in honoring her former coach.

Hung, who retired from teaching and coaching at Miramonte, is 77 years old. She recently completed her 37th consecutive Boston Marathon, which was reported by many major news and sports publications, including Lamorinda Weekly. The Orinda proclamation states that she "has inspired thousands of students to dedicate hard work to

reaching their athletic potential through her inspired coaching and personal dedication to the sport of running."

In her years at Miramonte, Hung touched the lives of hundreds of students. Phillips and Mayor Inga Miller were running pals on the cross country team. Miller says that she has vivid memories of Hung both as her math teacher and her coach, running alongside the team. "As a teacher and coach she made a point to learn what encouraged us and made us ready to learn," Miller notes. "That balance of drive and acceptance is a central element of our struggle as humans and Patty not only gets that but embraces that struggle." Hung also coached former Mayor Worth's daughter, Betsy.

The proclamation also cites Hung for bringing "great pride to the City of Orinda and its many residents for her incredible accomplishments, both as a beloved coach and dedicated competitor of the Boston Marathon."

Read more about Hung at <https://lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1706/Orinda-Patty-Hung-77-completes-record-setting-37th-straight-Boston-Marathon.html>

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Photo Vera Kochan

Memorial photographs of MPD Officer Mary Anne Doyle-Borden (left) and Detective Kevin P. Mooney

# Moraga Police Department 'memorial wall' honors two officers

By Vera Kochan

Although the narrow wall within the small lobby to the entrance of the Moraga Police Department doesn't have an official name, its new purpose could now be considered a "memorial wall."

Since MPD was formed in 1979, two officers have passed away while serving the community. The town did not lose them in the line of duty (which refers to being on actual duty at the time), but rather they were taken by illnesses while still a

member of the force.

A framed official, departmental photograph of Officer Mary Anne Doyle-Borden had originally hung within the "station" itself. Doyle-Borden joined MPD on Oct. 1, 1981. She passed away from a brain tumor on Oct. 6, 1988. Chief Jon King, while working for the East Bay Regional Park District, knew her in passing thanks to the occasions when their paths would cross. "She was an active officer working to protect our community and keep it safe. It was an incredible loss."

Detective Kevin P. Mooney began working for MPD on July 21, 2013, until he succumbed to a COVID-related illness on Aug. 21, 2021. "Kevin was an incredible guy," stated King. "He had a special spot for this town because he was a resident – absolute salt of the earth. He was a good cop for all of the right reasons."

King decided to honor both officers by putting their framed photos on the "memorial wall" where they are now visible to the public that they once served.

## Letters to the editor

### Lafayette Community Day shows our city at its best

Lafayette residents again showed the power of coming together on June 3rd during the 2nd annual Community Day. After coffee and bagels, and the annual Pride flag raising, dozens of volunteers joined teams to clean, paint, pull weeds, and beautify our neighborhoods. It was a wonderful day spent with people of all ages, political leanings, and occupations. Lafayette has never felt or looked better. Unfortunately, a small clique of protesters unsuccessfully attempted to hijack the festivities, even "booing" during the flag

raising celebration. These are the same faces that bully the community with protests at our elementary school and school board meetings. Their sole goal is to agitate the public by imposing their conservative nationalist views on children and adults in the most disruptive way possible.

We can have worthy discussions around bike lanes, budgets, housing developments, roundabouts, speed bumps, etc. In contrast, there should be NO debate regarding human rights for all individuals, especially historically marginalized and vulnerable members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Lafayette stands together as an inclusive, accepting, and compassionate community that values everyone. Yes, even those who choose to fester in bigotry and hate. Next time I hope they join the community with a paintbrush instead of a picket sign.

Michael Dawson  
Lafayette

### Response to letter on bigotry

In your last edition Matthew Fogarty made an impassioned plea to stop bigotry against the LGBTQ community, which I respect. However, in the course of

making his argument he took a completely unnecessary swipe at the Catholic church. Arguing against small minded behavior with small minded behavior is going to get us nowhere. If he truly wants an inclusive community he should not demonize a large group of people by focus-

ing on the actions of a small subset of that group. In fact, that is exactly what he was arguing against in his letter. Maybe Mr. Fogarty should familiarize himself with the pot and the kettle.

John Campbell  
Moraga

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](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) for submission guidelines. Email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, 1480 Moraga Road STE C #202, Moraga, CA 94556

## MPD holds well-attended Town Hall

... continued from Page A4

With fire season fast approaching, coupled with living in an earthquake-prone state, King reminded everyone to be prepared for emergencies. Have a plan for your family; sign up for the Community Warning System ([cwsalerts.com](http://cwsalerts.com)) and Nixle ([nixle.com](http://nixle.com)); prepare a Go Bag for yourself and pets; have a neighborhood phone tree (at least for your next-door neighbors); and make sure

that your house is emergency ready. Check with [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) to make certain that you are fire safe, and visit Zonehaven Aware ([www.zonehaven.com/aware](http://www.zonehaven.com/aware)) to learn your zone evacuation number. Be aware of the possibility of future Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) by updating your contact information with PG&E ([pge.com/mywildfirealerts](http://pge.com/mywildfirealerts)) or call 1-866-743-6589.

In closing, King discussed Senate Bill 553, by Senator

Dave Cortese, which is progressing to the State Assembly. The bill would ban retail staff from interfering with thieves in the process of stealing from a store by protecting them from workplace violence. In an interview with Fox 2/KTVU, California Retailers Association President Rachel Michelin stated, "This bill goes way too far, number one, where I think it will open the doors even wider for people to come in and steal from our stores." Most recently in the news was

an incident at the Home Depot in Pleasanton where a 26-year-old security guard was shot to death while trying to prevent a theft.

The point King was trying to make to residents was that little things like locking your car and home; not leaving valuables in plain sight; not discussing vacation plans in public; and most importantly being aware of your surroundings would lead to a safer Moraga and discourage trouble from coming into

town, because "they know we are complacent. Ninety percent of crimes can be prevented. You know your neighborhood better than anybody. Bad guys look for an easy mark."

To contact Chief Jon King call (925) 888-7049 or email: [king@moraga.ca.us](mailto:king@moraga.ca.us); to contact Lieutenant Steve Borbely call (925) 888-7052 or email: [borbely@moraga.ca.us](mailto:borbely@moraga.ca.us); MPD business line call (925) 888-7055 or general email: [police@moraga.ca.us](mailto:police@moraga.ca.us).

## Plans in place for another festive Fourth in Lamorinda

... continued from Page A1

Favorite marching bands will be returning, including St. Gabriel's Celestial Brass Band, MJ Brass Boppers and the Orinda All-Volunteer Marching Band. The popular stilt walkers will also participate in the parade.

The entertainment will continue in Orinda Community Park from 11:30 a.m. onward. A new addition to the parade day celebrations, Taste of the World Market will be providing food trucks this year, and beer booths will be provided

by the Tabor Sister City Foundation and Orinda Rotary in the park.

The four food trucks will be: Golden Gate Gyro, serving Middle Eastern cuisine including halal gyros; El Gran Taco Loco, serving Mexican food, including tacos, burritos, and more; Ike's Grill, serving burgers, chicken, sides, and more; and Ceviche & Co. serving fresh ceviche, chicken, steak skewers, and more. Families may bring picnics into the park to enjoy rock and roll band Tin Man performing.

On the sidewalk in front of

the Community Center, 15 non-profit organizations will have tables to introduce the public to their work. These will include the Orinda Nature Area, Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe, Orinda Network for Education, Orinda Rotary, Orinda Women's Club, Republic Services/Recycle Smart, the Parks & Rec Foundation, Orinda Watch, Orinda Firewise Council and the Art in Public Places Committee, among others.

The fun run, formerly known as Haley's Run for a Reason, includes both a 5-mile run or a 2-mile walk. The 2-

mile walk is paved and stroller/dog friendly. The 5-mile run continues on from the 2-mile course onto East Bay Municipal Utility District trails, usually only accessible by permit.

The Celebration of Independence Day will also be happening at the Moraga Commons Park, at the corner of St. Mary's Road and Moraga Road, beginning at 11 a.m. with the Dog Parade (registration is at the bandshell). There will be Community Booths, Inflatable Jumpies, and Family Activities between 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Food,

wine and beer booths will be open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Later in the evening, on stage at the bandshell, the National Anthem and Mayor's Welcome starts at 6:45 p.m., followed by a 7 p.m. concert performed by House Rockers. With an estimated time of 9:30 p.m., the magnificent fireworks display is expected to begin.

The community is hoping to raise \$30,000 to defray the cost of the fireworks. Those who wish to support the fireworks can Buy-a-Rocket at [www.moragarec.com](http://www.moragarec.com).

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**Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report May 28 - June 10**

Alarms	38
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	22
Traffic	59
Suspicious Circumstances	7
Suspicious Subject	21
Suspicious Vehicle	10
Service to Citizen	23
Patrol Req./Security Check	17
Public/School Assembly Check	0
Supplemental Report	8
Vacation House Check	43
Welfare Check	20
Ordinance Violation	1

**Vehicle violations**

Auto Burglary	1
1100 Block Camino Vallecito	
1100 Block Glen Rd.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
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Reckless Driving	900 Block Moraga Rd.
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	Pleasant Hill Rd./Wb Sr 24
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	Taylor Blvd./Pleasant Hill Rd.
	Reliez Valley Rd./Silver Dell Rd.
Tc - Fire And Amb Enroute	St Marys Rd./Cattle Chute Rd.
Tc - Property Damage	900 Block Hough Ave.
	Pleasant Hill Rd./Olympic Blvd.
	10 Block Wallabi Ct.
	3300 Block Moraga Blvd.
	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Vehicle Theft	900 Block Janet Ln.
	500 Block Merriewood

**Other criminal activity**

Fraud Credit Card	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Fraud False Pretenses	3300 Block N Lucille Ln.
Petty Theft	Police Department
	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
	3300 Block Berta Ln.
Petty Theft From Veh	1400 Block Eagle Point Ct.
	1000 Block Windsor Dr.
Shoplift	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
	3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (4)
	3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**Nuisance to the Community**

DDisturbance-domestic	1000 Block 2Nd St.
	800 Block Rosedale Ave.
Disturbing The Peace	50 Block Lucas Ranch Rd.
Loud Music	Monticello Rd./Glen Rd.
	1100 Block Upper Happy Valley Rd.
	Rowe Pl./Moraga Rd.
Loud Noise	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
	Mt. Diablo Blvd./Dewing Ave.
Loud Party	700 Block St Marys Rd.
Public Nuisance	Mt. Diablo Blvd./Dewing Ave.
	900 Block Brown Ave.
	Mt. Diablo Blvd./Brown Ave.
	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
	El Curtola Blvd./Eb Sr 24

Vandalism	1000 Block Stuart St.
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**Other**

H&S Violation	1000 Block Dewing Ave.
Harassment	Mt. Diablo Blvd./Moraga Rd.
K9 Outside Assist Request	Wb Sr 24 Jwo Sb I 680, Wcr
Loitering	3400 Block Mcellen Ct.
	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Rescue-vehicle	50 Block Lafayette Cr
Threats	3500 Block Brook St.
Trespass	1200 Block Rose Ln. (2)
	1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.
Unwanted Guest	3600 Block Deerhill Rd.
	3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
	3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Violation Custody Order	1300 Block Summit Rd.
	1400 Block Tichenor Ct.

### Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report May 30 - June 5

Alarms	7
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	5
Traffic	36
Suspicious Circumstances	1
Suspicious Subject	1
Suspicious Vehicle	1
Service to Citizen	11
Patrol Req./Security Check	0
Public/School Assembly Check	2
Supplemental Report	0
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	1
Ordinance Violation	1

**Vehicle violations**

Accident Injury	Moraga Country Club
Accident Property	Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr.
Dui Misd	Moraga Rd./Mt Diablo Blvd., Laf



Excessive Speed	Fernwood Dr./Rheem Blvd.
	Moraga Way/St Andrews Dr. (5)
	Moraga Way/Eastwood Dr., Ori
	Ivy Dr./Moraga Way
	Moraga Way/Harvey
	Moraga Rd./Moraga Way
	Moraga Rd./Donald Dr.
	Moraga Rd./Devin Dr.
Reckless Driving	Canyon Rd./Country Club Dr.
	Moraga Way/Canyon Rd.
	Ascot Dr./Moraga Rd.
Tc - Property Damage	200 Block Corliss Dr.
	Moraga Country Club
	100 Block Oxford Dr.

**Other criminal activity**

Identity Theft	Police Department
Warrant Arrest	Tj Maxx

**Nuisance to the Community**

Disturbance-domestic	100 Block Donald Dr.
----------------------	----------------------

**Other**

Fireworks	Donald Dr./Moraga Rd.
H&S/Pos Paraphenalia	1400 Block Moraga Way
Revocation Of Probation	400 Block Center St.



**Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report May 28 - June 10**

Alarms	28
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	12
Traffic	107
Suspicious Circumstances	6
Suspicious Subject	7
Suspicious Vehicle	5
Service to Citizen	60
Patrol Req./Security Check	26
Public/School Assembly Check	1
Supplemental Report	14
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	6

Ordinance Violation	5
Vehicle Violation	
Auto Burglary	Hall Dr./Donald Dr.
	20 Block Moraga Via
	20 Block Orinda Way
	80 Block Via Floreado
Dui Misd	300 Block Glorietta Blvd.
Reckless Driving	Ivy Dr.
	Moraga Way/Hall Dr.
	Camino Sobrante
	Moraga Way/Overhill Rd.
	Bear Creek Rd/Camino Pablo
	Rheem Blvd./Hall Dr.

**Other criminal activity**

Fraud Credit Card	20 Block Irwin Way
Grand Theft	40 Block La Campana Rd.
Identity Theft	10 Block Shadow Creek Ln.
	20 Block Irwin Way
Petty Theft	Camino Sobrante
Warrant Arrest	Orinda Way
	Orinda Way/Santa Maria Way
Nuisance to the Community	Loud Music
	Theatre Square
	40 Block Oakwood Rd.
	30 Block Barbara Rd.
Loud Noise	Orinda Way
Loud Party	10 Block Oakridge Ln.
Public Nuisance	Bart Orinda Station
	10 Block Theatre Sq 106

**Other**

Failure To Obey	Orinda Way/Santa Maria Way
	Wb Sr 24 At Wilder Rd.
Revocation Of Probation	Orinda Way
	Glorietta Blvd./Acalanes Rd., Laf
Trespass	60 Block Brookwood Rd.
	Camino Sobrante
Unauthorized Possession	Camino Pablo
Unwanted Guest	10 Block Lost Valley Dr.



# Where does it go after Lamorinda flushes? A tour of Central San explains it all



Primary Sedimentation process

Photo Vera Kochan

By Vera Kochan

On a recent tour of Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, more commonly referred to as Central San, this reporter tagged along with about 20 other members of the public who were also interested in finding out where everything goes after you flush.

For Central San, located in Martinez, it all began in the 1940s when the area contained mostly farms, orchards and ranches. Waste was disposed of through septic tanks which became inefficient due to the heavy adobe clay soil. During a general election in 1946, the County Board of Supervisors approved the creation of the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District. By the end of 1948, wastewater flowed into the 4.5 million-gallons-per-day treatment plant.

The system was designed to last 30 years, but by 1952, when the area turned suburban rather than rural, Central San was operating at capacity. Plans for expansion and improvements quickly came into play.

During the 1960s, Central San became a trailblazer throughout the state of California when it came to innovative pipeline construction, inspection methods, and energy-saving engines that ran on gas from decomposed bacteria.

In the 1970s, environmental awareness prompted the new California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Clean Water Act to instill stronger regulations with regards to discharging wastewater. Halfway through Central San's building of an advanced treatment facility, the powers that be decided that it was unnecessary after all, so the design was modified to provide a secondary treatment

plant that processed 35 million gallons per day.

Growing pains once again prompted Central San to turn to computer technology in the 1980s with the utilization of trenchless sewer construction methods for municipal pipelines and the pioneering of a curbside collection recycling program.

In the early 1990s, Central San's chemists found that toxic household compounds were detected in the wastewater causing a harmful influence on marine organisms. A Pollution Prevention Program was launched to keep toxins from entering the sewer system from both residential and commercial customers.

With the 2000s came national consciousness about stock market woes, overspending and layoffs. Central San concentrated on customer service, full regulatory compliance, responsible rates and high performance from all employees. It now covers 1,540 miles of underground sewer pipes; operates 18 pumping stations; some of its largest pipes are 102 inches in diameter; functions 24 hours per day; cleans an average of 800 miles of pipe per year; recycles 600 million gallons of water each year; and treats 13 billion gallons of wastewater per year.

All of this back-history is vital in order to appreciate how Central San operates today. Our tour guide was Community Affairs Representative Ben Lavender who made certain that everyone wore a hard hat and was equipped with a headset that served as both earphones and speaker-system in order to be heard above the noise of machinery during the 90-minute, all-outdoor experience.

The first stop was the Headworks. Lavender explained that each day 35 mil-

lion gallons of wastewater flows, by gravity, through the 1,500 miles of underground pipes. The wastewater then flows through bar screens on conveyor belts where large objects are screened and raked from the sewage. The debris is ground up and returned to the treatment process. This treatment also provides odor control through hydrogen peroxide. Foul air from the Headworks is removed by a ventilation system and scrubbed with a sodium hypochlorite shower. A truck picks up the solid waste and delivers it to a landfill, while the pumps send the wastewater to Primary Sedimentation.

At this point in the tour, Lavender was asked if "flushable wipes" really are flushable. He replied in the negative, stating that they don't degrade enough in the pipes and can often get snagged on something and block solid wastes in the system, causing an expensive visit from a plumber. He also stated that there is legislation in the works to remove the term "flushable wipes" from packaging.

Lavender also noted that Central San has backup generators in the event of a power outage to keep the plant running 24/7, all year long.

The Primary Sedimentation process uses several physical and mechanical methods to remove additional solids from wastewater. The collection system that brings the wastewater to the plant is designed to keep the water moving swiftly enough to continually mix the wastewater. Once it reaches the Primary process, the speed is reduced to minimize turbulence and allow material to separate from the flow by floating or settling. The floatables are gathered and removed using a recycled water spray system, revolving conveyors, and scum pumps. The sludge that settles is mechanically scraped from the bottom and removed for processing.

Secondary Treatment uses a biological process to further remove organic material which is pumped into aeration tanks where bacteria will absorb these as food and break them down into simpler substances such as carbon dioxide and water. These billions of naturally occurring bacteria that consume the organic matter and other nutrients in the wastewater are known as activated sludge. Air is added to the activated sludge to encourage the growth of aerobic bac-

teria. The water then travels to secondary clarifiers where the sludge settles to the bottom of the tank and is removed. Most of this sludge is pumped back into the tanks to repeat the process. These tanks are located outdoors, and it is interesting to note that several ducks did not seem to mind what they were swimming on.

The Ultraviolet Disinfection process uses thousands of ultraviolet light bulbs to disinfect secondary liquid waste before it's discharged into Suisun Bay. The bulbs are submerged in concrete channels to treat the wastewater that flows around them. The UV light disrupts the DNA chain in bacteria and viruses and destroys their ability to reproduce and

then kills them, making the water safe to discharge. Central San has a permit for this process. Lavender noted that during COVID the labs were constantly checking samples of water before releasing it into Suisun Bay.

A portion of the treated secondary flow is diverted to the filter plant where it receives additional treatment and disinfection before being used for landscape irrigation, industrial process cooling and other recycled water needs. Customers are also encouraged to bring receptacles to fill and use in watering their own landscapes at home, free of charge.

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# Varellas one of two Lamorinda natives inducted into USA Water Polo Hall of Fame



Photo provided

From left: parents Larry and Robyn, wife Amanda, Peter, sister Betsy, brother-in-law Kyle, his nieces Scotti and Finley

... continued from Page A1

I had not gotten the chance to study abroad because I was always training, and this was all that and so much better. I learned the language and I really learned about water polo because there are so many different styles played in Europe and I got exposed to both. We won the LEN cup which was the secondary European league behind the champions league

and two of my years we finished in second."

Varellas would go on to earn his MBA at Stanford and is the Vice President, Global Real Estate Strategy & Operations at WeWork and is living in New Jersey with his wife and two young daughters.

In Varellas' acceptance speech, he shared with the audience his perspective that stressed the process more than his personal accomplishments.

"I kept coming back to the same concept," Varellas said. "It's a bit cliché, but it's all about the journey and not at all about the destination."

It was Varellas' experience with the Olympic team that made the greatest impression: "You go away with a group of guys for some number of weeks and years, all to come to an event that's on the calendar four years later and then you go play what you hope turns out to be eight games. When you look at the balance of the time spent training and preparing versus the time spent competing, it has to be about what you take from the journey and getting up to that point."

Varellas shared the process in how the U.S. Olympic Water Polo team came together. The team finished ninth at the World Championships in 2007 making the team's motto "Back to the Podium" seem somewhat unrealistic. "It's great to set big and lofty goals and that's an important part of being an athlete but it's really critical to pair that with a kind of step-by-step plan to get there," Varellas said. "In sports, right belief is an obviously critical element but belief in your own belief is like a secondary level of commitment, understanding confidence and again, mapping that small step plan really can elicit far more belief than just thinking for 12 months. For my team that played a huge part in our big run."

When coaches Terry Schroeder and Robert Lynn shared their plan of "incremental improvement," the success of the team seemed more realistic. "It started with Navy SEAL training, stripping us down with a hard reset and a clean slate going into the new year," Varellas said. "We were making small steps and getting closer and closer. From there we went into the Olympic Games, having a critical element which was belief in ourselves, and it was a product of that small step-by-step progression that our coaches had put into action." The team would go on to earn a silver medal losing to Hungary in the finals.

It was a journey that for Varellas began in high school, and he shared what was most important in being successful for both coaches and players starting with "The Team."

"You want a team that motivates the right daily actions," Varellas said. "The right team makes you stretch yourself and actually makes you want to stretch yourself which is an important distinction. Build yourself a team that motivates the right daily actions. When it comes to bringing people close together, there's really nothing that I found that can replace shared experience and specifi-

cally, difficult shared experiences and years of tough training. The important lesson for me and I think for others can be that doing those difficult things not only builds personal strength, but it really builds strength of interpersonal relationships with others. So, when that adversity does come your way, and it will, you expect it and you embrace it as an important, and frankly, formative part of the process."

Just as important for Varellas was "the team behind the team." Varellas refers to them as "the enablers – the vast, vast set of people that make it all possible whose names aren't on the final roster and who supported the team all along the way."

Varellas singled out his coaches from high school, college, the Olympics and professionally: James Lathrop, Randy Burgess, John Barnea, and John Vargas. His "post graduate coaches" Ricardo Acevedo Gavin Arroyo, Terry Schroeder and Robert Lynn and Claudio Mistrangelo, his coach in Italy.

The list for Varellas goes on and on. "These are the players that didn't make the roster but were alongside you in the pool, the high school teachers, college professors, financial backers of this organization are all very important. These are the groups that are easy to forget."

Still, it all began at home for Varellas. "While coaches can mold and develop, I also have come to learn with no uncertainty that it's family that sustains me," Varellas said. "My mom, dad, wife, sister along with many other members of my extended family, have done so much for me and in no particular order, convinced me to try the sport I was not at all going to play freshman year; supported me financially, sustained me emotionally, a very important part of the equation, aided in important decision making, grounded me in humility and in general taught me to be first a good person and now a patient and good parent."

Varellas then made it clear how important it can be to be a role model and hopefully the youth can learn from his experiences. "It's balancing school and sports, living abroad, learning languages, suffering injuries, and battling back to health, on and on," Varellas said. "The Olympic silver medal really just represents the journey that I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to follow. My hope for what I've been able to contribute is simply that our team's obvious, tangible, and visible accomplishment, can serve as a bit of inspiration for a few young kids, a few young adults, a few men, and women to either embark on or continue along their own journey and no matter their ultimate destination, I hope that journey for them can be just as formative, independently valuable, character defining as it's been for me. It's truly both an unexpected and overwhelming honor for me to say in this setting, to this audience and frankly in this half of the state, Thank you guys for having me."

See the story on Ron Richison, Page C1.

# ~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

## Orinda photographer has natural affinity for Animal Rights activism



Jen Frase

Photos courtesy Jen Frase Photography

By Lou Fancher

In countries around the world, people during the third week of June annually celebrate Animal Rights Awareness Week. This year, the global event takes place June 19-25 and as it has since it was established in 1991, the weeklong tribute provides opportunity for respecting animals, as well as raising the awareness of animals subject to exploitation.

The concept of animal rights traces its roots all the way back to the founding principles of Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain beliefs that uplift the embedded value and dignity of all sentient beings. With non-violence as a guiding principle, these ancient philosophies and spiritual and life practices lay the foundation for human beings' moral obligation to protect, defend, and preserve the safety of all animals.

The first animal rights legislation arose in 1635, when tearing wool off of live sheep was prohibited. In 1824, Richard Martin, William Wilberforce, and Reverend Arthur Broome founded the

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the first animal welfare charity. These steps, among others, were the precursors to the first Animal Rights Awareness Week launched in 1991 by In Defense of Animals, an international animal protection organization with over 250,000 supporters founded by veterinarian Dr. Elliot Katz. Since 2011, the organization has been led by Dr. Marilyn Kroplick, a medical doctor and psychiatrist. Dr. Katz died in March 2021, but the In Defense of Animals remains a bright light on the animal rights landscape.

Animal rights activists come in all sizes and from all directions, and continue to be active, motivated in part by incendiary animal rights abuse statistics. For example, in 2019 in the United States alone, 15 billion land animals and 50 billion sea animals were killed for food; 15 million animals died in laboratories; 8 million were killed for their skin and fur, and 250 million were killed by hunters, according to research cited on the National Animal Rights Day website.

Here in Lamorinda, animal

rights activism appears in grassroots clubs and "I could do this too" individuals. Lafayette resident Jen Frase is a longtime lover of dogs and a professional photographer with a studio in Orinda who specializes in making images of pets and the humans who are their caretakers.

Frase says that although her naturally left hemisphere-dominated, analytical brain led her to obtain a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Oregon and an MBA from UC Davis before pursuing a career in business, she always loved photography – and dogs. "I never thought to go into a creative field, but I ended up going into grad school at Academy of Art University and got an MFA in photography after having my twins (a boy and a girl, age 15). I got into dog photography because dogs have always been a passion. I'd do a wedding photo session that had dogs involved and I'd end up with more pictures of dogs than of anything else."

Clients who visit the Theatre Square studio, which Frase opened 10 months ago, upon entering will come upon photographs not shot by Frase – the first clue she extends her interest in making images of dogs to actively protecting them. A large display presents the story of the galgos, the Spanish greyhounds that were among the first dogs ever domesticated but today are tragically abused in Spain.

In an industry outlawed throughout the rest of Europe, the Spanish hunting dogs are valued for their high speed and as fast hunters, are overbred for the "hare coursing" season during which they are used by hunters to chase down hares in competitions. Neglected and abused throughout their "work terms," the galgos are disposed of when they no longer serve their purpose. It is estimated that over 50,000 galgos are slaughtered each year.

Frase says she became aware of the galgos and their plight when she saw an image made by a Spanish photographer on Instagram. "I had never heard the term 'galgos' and when I Googled it, I came up with awful information. They're abused, treated like a tool, used until they are nearly destroyed, and then actually disposed of."

Frase donates a portion of her profits every month to supporting SOS Galgos, a rescue organization in Barcelona. On her website and in conversations with people in her studio, she provides suggestions and links to organizations actively supporting galgos rescues, adoptions, and efforts to create legislative protections currently lacking. She also encourages people to accept and act upon a realization she herself had

about activism.

"There are so many causes related to animals one could donate to or build awareness of, it can be overwhelming. There's only so much one person can do. I realized I can support all animal rights and volunteer at animal shelters, but to talk about it on my website and in the studio, it's best if I focus on one thing. The galgos was a story that just moved my heart and hit close to home."

Although Monk, the six-year-old dog Frase and her family hope will "remain with us for a long, long time," is not a galgo, Monk is well-loved, safe and respected. Frase says that is simply something all animals desire and deserve.

For more information about Frase, visit <https://jenfrase.com/> For more information on how to help the galgos, visit <http://www.galgorescue.org/>



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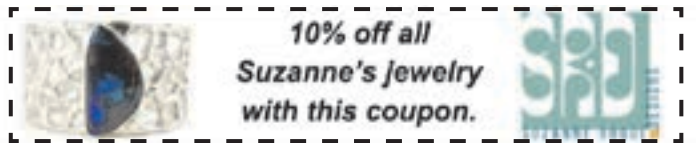
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Some of Jen Frase's work



## 'The Steed' – An epic adventure in the steppes of central Asia

By Sophie Braccini

The story of Chuluun, the young boy, and Rusty, his horse, is an engrossing tale of love, courage and loyalty. This epic film coming to Orinda from Mongolia on June 23 is also a universal reflection on the connection to roots and homeland. Director Erdenbileg Ganbold fervently defends the vanishing nomadic culture of his country and the powerful bonds that have linked his people to the horses for centuries; a bond that once made the Mongols masters of an Empire.

Rusty and Chuluun live in Mongolia at the turn of the 20th century. Rusty is a Mongolian horse, the breed that is supposed to have been unchanged since Genghis Khan. It is a very resilient breed that lives outside all year long withstanding temperatures from -40 F to 86 F. Mongolian horses are stocky and are used to support the nomads' daily workload as well as compete

in races. There are 3 million horses in Mongolia who live much like wild horses, with hooves that are untrimmed and unshod. Rusty and Chuluun were raised together, the bond between them is strong and the loyalty and intelligence of the horse is shown from the very first scene. In fact, the way the horse character is developed in the film is so skillfully done that the spectator feels its every emotion.

The story unfolds in a suspenseful drama as Rusty and Chuluun are separated. They are caught in the whirlwind of the 1917 Russian revolution that's unfolding at the Northern border of Mongolia and spilling over the Altai Mountain. Each on his separate side and facing very different challenges, boy and horse will fight to find each other again, but also to find a way home.

In an interview with the Golden Globe director Erdenbileg Ganbold said that the movie was adapted from the award-winning poem, "Brown

Horse," written in 1962, by Mongolian National poet laureate Ch. Lkhamsuren.

... continued on Page B3

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# Create a delicious summer garden with these fun sunflower cupcakes



Sunflower Chocolate Cupcakes

Photo Susie Iventosch

## By Susie Iventosch

Our friend Mariela has a beautiful website called The Hungry Dragonfly, and while she creates all sorts of savory, sweet and vegan recipes, she is a fantastic cake decorator. Recently, she posted a video of how to make these fun sunflower cupcakes using her favorite buttercream frosting. We fell in love with them, especially since we had wild sunflowers blooming all over our neighborhood for the past month or so. I have to admit, I'm still a novice when it comes to using cake decorating tips successfully, but I think these turned out pretty well and they looked so cute up against our real sunflowers in the garden. We used our favorite chocolate cake recipe for these cupcakes along with Mariela's buttercream frosting, and they were delicious.

When it comes to cake decorating, there are many different tips available. For these flowers, I used a #352 leaf tip for both the petals and the leaves. Also, you want to make sure your frosting is not too hot or too cold. We were having a heat spell when I made these, so I had to keep putting the cupcakes in the refrigerator in between the different layers of petals. I did the same thing with the frosting, but had to be careful not to get it too cold or too firm. It takes a little bit of practice, but you'll get the hang of it. I like to point the tip so that the first circle of petals is vertical and the second circle of petals is horizontal, which makes the flowers look nice and full.

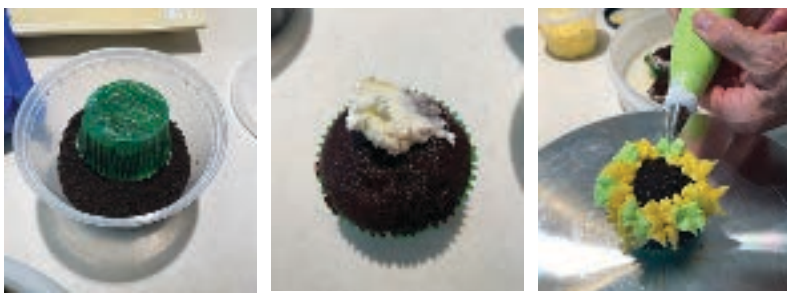
The center of the sunflower is made from crushed Oreo Cookies, and you simply take a little frosting and

spread it in the center of the top of the cupcake and then immediately dip the top in the crushed cookies. Be sure to leave at least a quarter-inch edge of the top of the cupcake with no frosting or cookie crumbs. I inadvertently covered the entire top of the cupcake with frosting and crumbs at first, but the yellow petals did not adhere very well. I had to scrape some off to leave a cake edge around the top of the cupcake. Learning from my mistake, be sure to have just plain cupcake around the very outside circle of the cupcake.

You will need two bakery piping bags and two leaf cake decorating tips (#352 is a good one for this) with complementary couplers for decorating these cupcakes with the sunflowers. All of these should be available at your local craft store and you can certainly order them online. Wilton is a great line of cake decorating supplies.

I really like using gel food coloring best, and you can get a variety of colors at Michael's, Hobby Lobby or on Amazon. We mixed our yellow with a little bit of orange to try to match the color of the real flowers in our garden. You can certainly use regular liquid food coloring too, but you can get a much larger variety of colors in the gels. Wilton offers a nice set of 12 different colors for \$16.99, (see link) and from that you can make nearly any color you like for future baking projects, too. They are also available on Amazon.

If you have any questions as you make your sunflower cupcakes, please be sure to email me and I'll do my best to help you make some beautiful, festive sunflower cupcakes!



### Sunflower Chocolate Cupcakes

(Makes 24 regular cupcakes)

#### Frosting

##### INGREDIENTS

1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature (2 sticks or 8 oz.)  
4 cups powdered sugar, sifted  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. cream of tartar  
2 tbsp. heavy cream or milk  
1 tsp. Vanilla  
Gel food coloring in yellow and green (and maybe orange if you like a more golden yellow)

#### DIRECTIONS

Sift powdered sugar with salt and cream of tartar. Set aside.

Place the butter in the bowl of your standing mixer and using the paddle attachment, beat butter for 3-5 minutes, or until light and fluffy. Beat in vanilla. Gradually add powdered sugar alternately with milk or cream, and continue until you have the consistency you like for your frosting. I always save a little extra powdered sugar aside in case the frosting gets too soft.

Dye one quarter of the frosting green and three quarters of the frosting yellow. Use the yellow to spread on top of the cupcake and for the sunflower petals and the green for the leaves.

#### Cupcakes

##### INGREDIENTS

3 cups all-purpose flour  
2 cups granulated sugar  
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
2 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. salt  
2 cups cold water  
1 cup canola oil  
2 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips  
1 cup pulverized Oreo Cookies (for the center of the flowers)

#### DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 F.

Line cupcake tin with cute cupcake liners that are appropriate for the occasion. Lightly spray the inside of the liners with cooking spray. We used green and yellow liners for these sunflower cupcakes. You will either need a cupcake tin that holds 24 or use two tins with 12 each. You can make half a recipe, too, if you only want 12 cupcakes or you can bake these in two batches if you only have one tin. (The frosting stores well in the refrigerator for a couple of weeks.)

Place all dries (flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda and salt) in a large mixing bowl. Blend well with a wire whisk.

Add oil, water and vanilla to dries and mix well to incorporate. Stir in chocolate chips. Divide batter evenly among the prepared cupcake tins. Bake for about 15 minutes, or until the tops of the cupcakes hold their shape when you gently push with your finger. (Using a cake tester is tough because the chocolate chips will remain goopy until the cupcakes are completely cooled.) Remove from oven and cool completely before frosting.

When ready to frost, spread a little circle of frosting in the center top of each cupcake and then immediately invert the cupcake into the bowl of crushed Oreos. Set each cupcake aside after doing the Oreo centers.

Working around the edge of each cupcake, use the yellow frosting with the leaf tip to make your petals. I like to make vertical petals all the way around the edge, and follow up with horizontal petals just inside of that. When you're happy with your yellow petals, make a few green leaves here and there. Store in an airtight container and refrigerate frosted cupcakes until ready to serve.



Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://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>

#### Find Mariela's creations on Instagram

@thehungrydragonfly Or, her website: <https://thehungrydragonfly.com/2023/05/30/the-best-buttercream-frosting/>  
How to make frosting leaves: <https://youtu.be/Bw1X8NOR19k>  
How to make sunflower petals: <https://wilton.com/how-to-pipe-a-sunflower/witech-139/#:~:text=Switch%20to%20a%20bag%20fitted,to%20create%20a%20fuller%20look.>  
Wilton 12-piece Food Coloring Gel set: <https://wilton.com/edible-gel-food-coloring-set-for-baking-and-decorating-6-oz-12-piece-set/191007589/>

# What is dementia?

By Linda Fodrin-Johnson

My mother cannot remember anything. She must have dementia! This might be wrong. Just because someone is past a certain age and having problems with short-term memory does not necessary mean she has a dementia; it could actually be an infection, dehydration, depression or another reversible cause. That is why a good evaluation is necessary before you just accept her deficit without a real diagnosis.

#### What else could it be?

Often an individual gets a diagnosis of "cognitive impairment" because their thinking and remembering is not in the observable normal range. This issue can be the result of a high fever, infection, medications, brain tumor or a progressing neurological condition. This might be a temporary condition called delirium.

MCI or mild cognitive im-

pairment is often a precursor to Alzheimer's disease. In order to have this diagnosis one must have been given a test (such as the "MoCA") that shows impaired thinking ability and this is observable by family and friends. Many individuals with this diagnosis never progress to Alzheimer's disease, and they seem to learn to live with the short-term memory loss.

All individuals with MCI should look at changing their lifestyles to preserve their cognition, if possible. That change means adopting a healthy brain diet. The Mediterranean Diet, MIND diet or an anti-inflammatory diet are favored. Before making, any changes consult with your physician.

The other four areas needed for a healthy brain are: 1) Exercise: Get moving at least 30 minutes a day. 2) Mindfulness: in any form will do. 3) Socialization: If possible should be something that has the individual interacting with

others - volunteering, classroom learning, and lectures are some to consider. 4) Brain games: Examples include Sudoku, word searches, Lumosity, and more. When we learn new information, it becomes the catalyst for "neurogenesis" - gaining new brain cells.

#### From MCI to Dementia

Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) moves into Dementia once the individual needs help with one of the activities of daily living - this could be anything from personal care to getting lost while driving. So, now the individual is having trouble with memory and thinking and has one other deficit. This move does not necessarily tell medical providers what type of dementia or illness is occurring, which could be important to know for planning and treatment. That level of diagnosis will take further evaluation and testing.

This disease poses a challenge for everyone in the fam-

ily as well as for the person with MCI or early dementia. It is important to get coaching and guidance early in the process. An Aging Life Care Professional ([www.aginglifecare.org](http://www.aginglifecare.org)) could be a helpful resource for everyone. We want to focus on the quality of life and living each day with joy, despite a progressive illness. There are support groups for caregivers, as well as those with the diagnosis - your local Alzheimer's Association is a great resource. My book, "The Empowered Caregiver," available on Amazon, is a resource adult children of aging parents need in order to be prepared to address the challenges to come, especially if you are dealing with any cognitive changes in a parent.

My next free Zoom class will be at 11 a.m. Friday, Aug. 11. The subject: "Dementia: From Diagnosis to Family Care." This is one of five free Zoom classes for families where dementia is a concern.



Linda Fodrin-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989. Eldercare Services is now a division of Home Care Assistance and continues to provide Bay Area families with care management, advocacy, counseling, support groups and education.

To register for my classes or newsletter enroll at [www.LindaFodrinJohnson.com](http://www.LindaFodrinJohnson.com).



## Moraga 8th-graders meet Congressman in D.C.

Submitted by Kena Hudson

The graduating class of eighth-graders at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School traveled to Washington D.C. the week of

June 12 with their teachers Ms. McDevitt and Ms. Warmboe and met with U.S. Congressman Mark DeSaulnier. These students will be headed to Campolier High School as incoming freshmen this fall.

Photo provided

# Young musicians bring classical music to life at Moraga backyard concert



Photo provided

From left: Grace Liao, Henry Stroud, Claire Topper, Jonathan Altman, Liam Young-Skeen, Marilyn Jia, Arianna Muse. Photo: Courtesy of Fangran Zheng

## Submitted by Nadia Liu & YPSO parents

On a sunny and warm Sunday afternoon on April 30 in Moraga, music enthusiasts were treated to a delightful outdoor concert hosted by a Moraga resident. The event featured talented young musicians from the Young People's Symphony Orchestra (YPSO) and the Young Chamber Players (YCP), and was jointly organized by the two organizations. The concert provided a wonderful opportunity for families with young children and neighbors to enjoy high-quality classical music in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

The program for the joint YPSO/YCP chamber concert was a diverse collection of musical pieces,

ranging from works of classical pieces by Arcangelo Corelli (arranged by Arianna Muse for flute and violin, performed by Ms. Muse on flute and Marilyn Jia on violin), Antonín Dvořák (Henry Stroud on Violin 1, Jonathan Altman on Violin 2, Liam Young-Skeen on Viola, and Claire Topper on Cello), and a world premiere of a piano piece titled "Dream" (composed and performed by Grace Liao).

Attendees from ages 4 to 94 came to relax and enjoy the classical music in the beautiful garden filled with blooming native California flowers, which created a serene and intimate experience.

All agreed that the concert was a success. "It is so wonderful to see these young people enjoying classical music," said the hostess. A mother com-

mented, "I have longed to take my daughter to a classical music concert, but she can never sit still. Today is the first in-person concert my daughter gets to experience classical music in such an un-intimidating and enjoyable way."

Following the concert, a small reception was held where community members and YPSO/YCP musicians could meet and mingle. The musicians echoed similar enthusiasm as the attendees: "It is very fun for me and for all of us to play this famous piece," said Mr. Young-Skeen, who started viola when he was 11 and piano when he was 2.

YPSO, the oldest youth orchestra in California, and the oldest independent youth orchestra in the nation, was founded in 1936 by Jessica Marcelli, a woman who forged her own path, because female conductors were not as accepted as normal in these roles back then. Her journey echoes the journey of every YPSO student, finding the strength to believe in oneself and creating something beautiful along the way. YPSO is now in its 86th season, and continues to foster the talents of its 102 young musicians, who are also hard-working, dedicated students in the midst of AP exams, sports and debate club events, auditions, community service activities, and multiple music performances.

YCP was established as a student-led chamber music organization by Grace Liao, a Campolindo High School

sophomore and a former student of Pamela Freund-Striplen, founder of the Gold Coast Chamber Players established in 1987. Freund-Striplen supports YCP as their artistic mentor. Carrying the torch passed down from Gold Coast, with its legacy of service to the community, YCP is now leading the way to ensure that classical music continues to thrive in younger generations, by bringing chamber concerts to local homes and communities in the Lamorinda area. This was YCP's second concert and first concert collaborating with YPSO.

At the end of the concert, Freund-Striplen applauded the young and talented musicians. She pointed out what a huge undertaking it was for YPSO and YCP to turn these outreach community concerts into a reality. She hoped for continued support from the community to bolster these high schoolers' endeavors to enrich Lamorinda. This support could include attending concerts, contributing financially, donating refreshments, and helping to organize events.

To find upcoming events, including the upcoming YPSO Spring concert and the Summer Music Camp for third- to eighth-graders jointly organized by the YCP and Campolindo High School instrumental music program, visit their respective websites: ypsomusic.org (YPSO) and <https://sites.google.com/view/youngchamberplayers> (YCP).

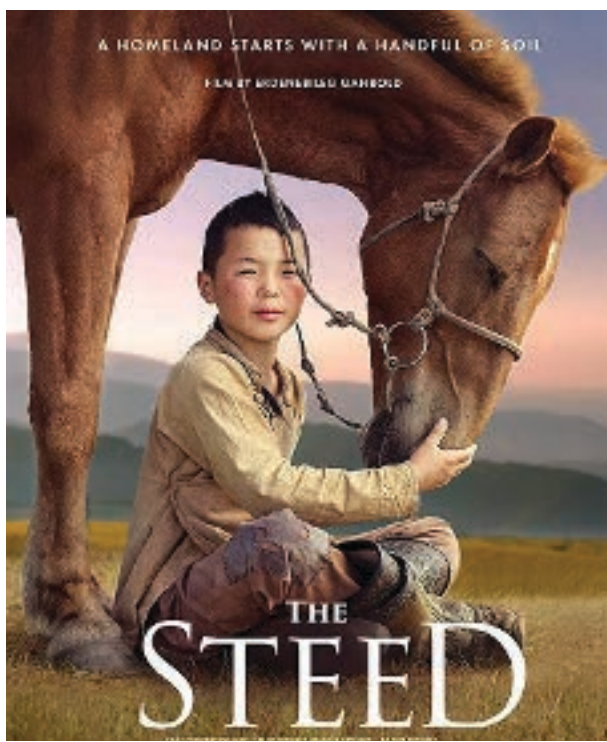


Image provided

# 'The Steed' – An epic adventure in the steppes of central Asia

... continued from Page B1

"This poem was taught in school during the socialist era and learning it in high school gave me a lot of inspiration," Ganbold explained, reminiscing the lyricism and realism of the poetry of that era.

Ganbold, as well as producers Alexa Khan and Trevor Doyle have a passion for the traditions and uniqueness of the Mongolian nomadic culture. Mongols are one of the few nomadic, or semi-nomadic civilizations existing today – with the Tuareg and the Maasai in Africa – and are rabidly moving away from nomadic life. Climate change is also affecting livelihood and pastoralism and Ganbold also stressed

his desire to remind individuals and the world's youth to love the environment and be good caretakers for animals and the land or they won't have a future worth living.

The movie took three years to make. Three thousand horses were on set brought by local herders. Ganbold explained that animal wranglers were not required, as every crew member was an experienced horseman and herder, often stepping in to wrangle during the course of shooting. Rusty himself was, in fact, played by three horses: one that was affectionate and emotional, one that was exceedingly athletic and one that was more aggressive in nature. All three were

specifically trained for their aspect of a role that would have asked too much from one individual horse. The horses were trained from birth. Ariunbold Erdenebayar, who plays Chuluun is not a trained actor; he lives in the countryside in very much the same lifestyle as the boy he portrays. This beautiful and emotional movie is suitable for all audiences.

"The Steed" opens at the Orinda Theatre on June 23 for at least a week. It is part of the International Film Showcase that presents a different acclaimed foreign film almost every month. Tickets at <https://www.orindamovies.com/>

# Stanley OM team takes first in Spontaneous competition at World Finals

## Submitted by Sejal Choksi-Chugh

Seven Stanley Middle School seventh-graders – Sanika Khamkar, Lauren Brekke, Shriya Lind, Sophia Moore, Raini Chugh, Aleah Mathai-Jackson and David Siu – were big winners at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in East Lansing, Michigan held at the end of May. The

Stanley Middle School Team B took first place in the Spontaneous portion of the competition and took fifth place overall. While the long-term problem requires months to solve, the spontaneous problem involves solving a surprise verbal, engineering, or combination problem in under 10 minutes. Fifty-four international teams competed against Stanley in their division and problem. Congratulations!

Photo provided



# Moraga Lions present Achievement Awards

## Submitted by Raymond Casabonne

The Moraga Lions again gave out its annual Achievement Awards to the local middle schools: Joaquin Moraga, Saint Perpetua, Stanley and Orinda Intermediate.

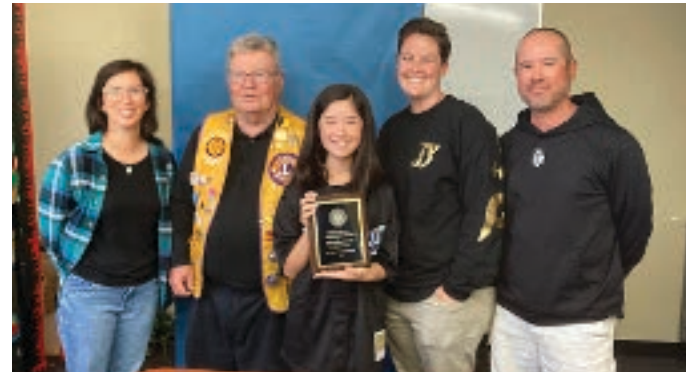
Photos provided



St. Perpetua: Amy O'Connor, Dan Hagan, Emma O'Connor, Ben O'Connor



JM: Gabriela Alvarez (counselor), Jessica McDevitt, Debbie Standing, Dan Hagan, Anika Kesiraju, Christy Marin, Kristen Anderson, Mike Plant



St. Perpetua 2: Nicole Damhesel, Dan Hagan, Emily Damhesel, Heather Aguiar, Anthony Damhesel



Stanley: Alice Cyr (science), Victoria Shegoian (history), Brian Mangold (Principal), Tobias Leung (parent), Antonia Lau (parent), Leo Leung (sibling), Eddie Leung (Moraga Lions Award winner), Dan Hagan, Layla Epperson (Moraga Lions Award winner), Liana Epperson (parent), Jen Montague (school counselor), Tiffany Sullivan (school counselor), Aaron Baker (home ec)



OIS: Suzy Kisch (teacher), Derek LaMarche, Kayla LaMarche, Dan Hagan, Martine Catherine Neasmith, Warwick Neasmith, Michelle Meyers (counselor)

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## Not to be missed

### Art

**Lamorinda Arts Alliance** is proud to present our "Summer" Show at the Papillon Cafe & Gallery in Lafayette. The exhibit runs until Sept. 12. Fifteen member artists will be showing a selection of paintings, collage, encaustic and prints. In lieu of a reception, we will gather for a Coffee Klatch at the cafe on Saturday June 24, 2 p.m. to discuss the current art exhibit and any other art topics of interest. Papillon Quality Gourmet Coffee & Tea is located in La Fiesta Square, at 67 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette.

### Music

**The Rotary Club of Orinda** and the City of Orinda, with Festival Opera, proudly present their 13th Annual Opera in the Park on Thursday, June 22 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Orinda Community Park. Bring the entire family, a blanket, a chair or two and enjoy a picnic from home or delicious food truck offerings. This is an evening of best-loved opera pieces and musical theater favorites performed by first-rate professional musicians. Free admission - BART and handicapped-accessible - Free parking.

## Not to be missed

**Rock the Plaza Concert Series.** Free live music in Lafayette Plaza Park, 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, June 23: Lamorinda Arts Council's Lamorinda Idol Contestants. Plan your picnic in the park by ordering takeout from Lafayette's restaurant row. Lawn chairs, blankets, and air guitars are welcome! Stop by vendor row for kids' activities, to meet local nonprofits, and see and buy local art! Learn more at <https://lafayettechamber.org/rock>.

**Freight & Salvage presents** Ivo Dimchev's Top Faves on Wednesday, July 5, from 8 to 9:30 p.m., at Freight & Salvage, 2020 Addison Street, Berkeley. Queer singer songwriter and provocateur Ivo Dimchev returns to the Bay Area for a one-night-only show of his greatest hits. Cost: \$15 - \$34. 18+. For more info see <https://secure.thefreight.org/12884/ivo-dimchev>

### Theatre

**Orinda Starlight Village Players** present "The Secret of Chimneys." Directed by Laura Martin-Chapin through July 1 Fridays and Saturdays 8:30 p.m., Sunday June 25 - 4 p.m. and Thursday June 29 - 8 p.m.

Tickets are available at the Box Office, call (925) 528-9225 or email [info@orsvp.org](mailto:info@orsvp.org)

**Town Hall Theatre Company** announces Staged Reading "Starlight." An original piece written by San Francisco-based playwright Christian Wilburn, "Starlight" will have a one night only staged reading on Saturday, July 8 at 8 p.m. Tickets: \$15. Pay-What-You-Can tickets will be available at the door. 3535 School Street, Lafayette, [www.townhalltheatre.com/starlight](http://www.townhalltheatre.com/starlight).

**Town Hall Theatre Company & Front Porch** announces: Front Porch Presents: A Folk Music Showcase. July 7 at 7 p.m. Town Hall Theatre Co., 3535 School Street, Lafayette. Tickets \$15 [townhalltheatre.com/front-porch](http://townhalltheatre.com/front-porch)

### Literature

**July events at Orinda Books:** Saturday, July 1, 2 p.m. Dorothy Lazard will introduce her memoir, "What You Don't Know Will Make a Whole New World." Lazard, now a librarian and a distinguished historian, connects her early intellectual pursuits to the career that made her a community pillar—as well as exploring her

## Not to be missed

trajectory into adulthood, animated by curiosity, careful reflection, and deep enthusiasm for life. To register, go to [www.eventbrite.com/e/dorothy-lazard-author-of-what-you-dont-know-will-make-a-whole-new-world-tickets-611554314417](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/dorothy-lazard-author-of-what-you-dont-know-will-make-a-whole-new-world-tickets-611554314417).

**Orinda Books Pat's Book Club** will read and discuss "Foster" by Claire Keegan Thursday, July 6, at 11 a.m. Claire Keegan's piercing contemporary classic "Foster" is a heart-breaking story of childhood, loss, and love. All readers are welcome.

**Orinda Books Story Hour:** Bring in your little bookworms (ages 2-6) and snuggle in for a reading of popular children's books with Megan Thursday, July 13 and Thursday, July 27 at 11 a.m.

**Tuesday, July 25, 6 p.m. Ethan Scheiner** will introduce "Freedom to Win: A Cold War Story of the Courageous Hockey Team That Fought the Soviets for the Soul of Its People—And Olympic Gold." During the height of the Cold War, a group of small-town young men would lead their underdog hockey team from the little country of Czechoslovakia against the Soviet Union, the

## Not to be missed

juggernaut in their sport. As they battled on the ice, the young players would keep their people's quest for freedom alive, and forge a way to fight back against the authoritarian forces that sought to crush them. This is a free Orinda Books event—register at [www.eventbrite.com/e/ethan-scheiner-author-of-freedom-to-win-tickets-647664581197](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/ethan-scheiner-author-of-freedom-to-win-tickets-647664581197)

### Other

**Knit a cap or scarf for a child** or adult undergoing chemotherapy, a debilitating illness, or experiencing homelessness! As part of Community Service Day, new knitted items will be distributed to patients at John Muir Hospital, Kaiser Hospital, Hospice of the East Bay, Warm Winter Nights and Safe Parking. Items knitted over the summer will be gathered in late September to distribute to the agencies. Any size, style, color ... let your imagination guide you! (Items for pediatric oncology patients need to be from a pet-free home...please label them as such; other children's items do not need to be.) Contact Bobbie Preston at [barbarampreston@comcast.net](mailto:barbarampreston@comcast.net) to arrange drop-off of your gifts in September.

## Lamorinda's Religious Services

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[www.holyshepherd.org](http://www.holyshepherd.org)

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Letters to the editor (max 350 words): [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com)  
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**Publishers/Owners:** Andy and Wendy Scheck; [andy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:andy@lamorindaweekly.com), [wendy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:wendy@lamorindaweekly.com)  
**Editor:** Jennifer Wake; [jennifer@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:jennifer@lamorindaweekly.com)  
**Sports Editor:** [sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com)  
**Advertising:** 925-377-0977, Wendy Scheck; [wendy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:wendy@lamorindaweekly.com)  
**Staff Writers:** Vera Kochan; [vera@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:vera@lamorindaweekly.com), Sora O'Doherty; [sora@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sora@lamorindaweekly.com), Jon Kingdon; [sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com), Digging Deep: Cynthia Brian; [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com), Food: Susie Iventosch; [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com)  
**Contributing Writers:** Conrad Bassett, Sophie Braccini, Diane Clayton, Jenn Freedman, Moya Stone, Margie Ryerson, Linda Fodrini-Johnson, Elizabeth LaScala, Lou Fancher, Sharon K. Sobotta, Ashley Dong, Jim Hurley, Casey Scheiner, Toris Jaeger  
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Phone: 925-377-0977; email: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)  
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# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Ron Richison – coach, teacher, advisor and leader inducted into Hall of Fame



Photo USWPA/Cathryn Hayne

Top row, from left: Russ Stryker, Brent Layng, Ron Richison, Andy McDonald, Brian Monte, David Curry; bottom row: Seb Englert, Zach Rogers, Jeff Bergholt

By Jon Kingdon

In only describing Ron Richison as a coach, it's damning him with faint praise. His success as a coach and in developing so many players with the Aqua Bears, The Concord Water Polo Club, Campolindo and Acalanes high schools speaks for itself, having produced 22 high school All-Americans, 24 eventual NCAA champions and nine Olympians along with his influence on the overall growth of water polo in the Bay Area cannot be underestimated. Richison was inducted into the USA Water Polo Hall of Fame on June 9.

"I consider Ron to be one of the pioneers of water polo in our area," said former Campolindo head coach Bill O'Brien. "He and Pete Cutino, as coaches of the Aqua Bears Swim Team, introduced water polo to the swimmers every couple of weeks. As a result, the schools in Lamorinda started water polo in 1957 and if it weren't for Ron, it would have been years before water polo would have come into our area."

It was the players that were most important to Richison, but he was never one to be braggadocios about his accomplishments. "He always tried to downplay what he did," his son Charles said.

Richison was a water polo player at Whittier High School and went on to study and play at the University of California at Berkeley. "Four of my teammates and I went to Cal where we all played water polo for George Schroth who was a fantastic man and had more patience than any coach I ever met."

After serving two years in the army, Richison returned to the Bay Area. "Pete Cutino offered me a job coaching a swim team in Orinda called the Aqua Bears and that was probably one of the biggest breaks of my life," Richison said. "It was a fantastic team with tremendous athletes."

Richison was not one to hold back his feelings when things were not done by his players. Was he a gruff guy? "That's one way of putting it," Cal head coach Kirk Everist said, laughing. "He was definitely tough but entertaining. He was one of my favorite and best coaches I ever had. He was great at teaching the game

and he is someone that I think of fondly often."

Richison used words that would not be acceptable today. "He was loud and tenacious and if you didn't give your best year, you were walking up off the pool deck," his son said. "Every one of his players will tell you now that anything that was said or done, they knew where it was coming from, and they knew where he was trying to get them."

Olympic swimmer Peter Rocca also played water polo for Richison and benefited in both sports. "Ron was a tactician in water polo and a technician in swimming and both were really important in my development," Rocca said. "He was tough and demanded a lot. He didn't mince any words and was incredibly direct but however it came out, we knew that he really cared, and it motivated us. After I won two gold medals at the Pan American Games, I gave one to Ron because of the impact he had on my life."

Russ Stryker, an all-American who also went on to be a head coach at Acalanes concurred that Richison was more than just a coach to him and his teammates: "Ron impacted a lot of our lives. He was a big presence and he taught us a lot, not just about water polo but about life and being good people and Ron became a second father figure to look up to, someone you knew that had your back."

Once you played for Ron Richison, he was always there to help even when you were playing for another school or team, according to Everist, who initially played for him at the Concord Water Polo Club. "At tournaments when we worked on the same side of the bracket or if Ron's team was eliminated, We would consult with him and ask how we could exploit an opponent that had defeated him earlier," Everist said. "We picked his brain as to how we could find a way to get an edge on that team. He was someone that I would always consult with and respected his opinions and tactics on the game and how the game should be played."

"That's how my dad saw his players," Charles said. "They remained colleagues and there was no favoritism. He wanted to make the players better, the coaches better and ultimately the sport better."

For All-American and Olympian Matt Biondi, the effort demanded by Richison and the results worked together. "Ron had recognized my talent and I respected him and worked hard for him," Biondi said. "We feared him, and I remember going to practice at 5:25 in the morning and dreaded seeing Ron's green Honda hatchback, knowing it was time to get into the pool. He never missed a day, and he taught us good fundamentals. Ron was a percentages guy. If you would score a goal and there was someone that had been more open than you were, you would hear about it."

Everist ascribes the success that so many of his players had to what they took away from Richison: "He was really good at teaching the technique and he was really good at motivating us and pushing us," Everist said. "He made us work really hard which prepared us for water polo after high school and a number of us went on to play at Cal and Stanford and had great careers. A lot of our development came from playing club water polo for Ron after our high school seasons and that was a big reason for our athletic development."

John Schnugg, who played water polo at Miramonte and Cal, was both a player and assistant coach for Richison. "I started at Concord Water Polo at 15 when he was coaching there with Pete Cutino," Schnugg said.

When Schnugg's son began at Acalanes, Richison was coaching the Frosh/soph/JV team of about 30 players and Schnugg offered to work as his assistant coach and Richison readily accepted, and they coached together for three years.

"I had a lot of fun," Schnugg said. "When I played for him, he was a gruff task master type coach. Some of the Acalanes players were making mistakes and I said to Ron, 'You would never let us screw up the way these kids are playing, and if we did, you would make us do butterflies.'"

... continued on Page C2

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Finalist: **Adam Jenkinson** (at left)



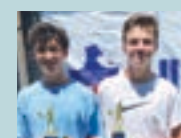
G10s Champion: **Celine Sun** (at right)  
Finalist: **Sofie Sponsler** (at left)



B12s Champion: **Michael Conway** (at left)  
Finalist: **Owen Horton** (at right)



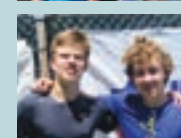
G12s Champion: **Madeline Stout** (at right)  
Finalist: **Mina Lin** (at left)



B14s Champion: **Blake Marshall** (at right)  
Finalist: **JJ Thorne** (at left)



G14s Champion: **Lindsay Foster** (at right)  
Finalist: **Maggie Rossini** (at left)



B16s Champion: **Cole Acevedo** (at right)  
Finalist: **Jake Kernstedt** (at left)

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# NorCal Queens Wrestling Club wins California Greco State Wrestling Championship



Photo provided

Isabel Zabronsky, Camila Baxter, Piper Lalli, Coach Freeman, KT Thompson, Iris Fan, Patricia Davila Gil

By Jon Kingdon

After the Campolindo girls wrestling team finished 11th out of 70 teams at last year's North Coast Sectional Tournament, head coach Phil Freeman was already looking forward to next season in that he

was only graduating one senior. "Our girl's program is only getting better and better, and my goal is to eventually win it all," Freeman said.

Like so many other sports, Freeman has been coaching a number of girls from Campolindo on his off-season team,

the NorCal Queens Wrestling Club. In early June, for the second consecutive year, the team won the California Greco State Wrestling Championship. "We brought six wrestlers down to Fresno and they all came back with awards," Freeman said.

Five of the six girls go to Campolindo, and they competed at the Cadet (fresh/soph) and/or the Junior (junior/senior) level. Piper Laurie (152 - 1st junior), K.T. Thompson (132 - 2nd junior), Camila Baxter (142 - 2nd junior), Patricia Davila Gil (127 - 4th cadet/5th juniors) and Isabel Zabronsky (8th - junior). Iris Fan (122 - 3rd cadet/5th junior) attends Monte Vista High School and all will be competing next season.

Greco wrestling is used exclusively in the Olympics and outside of North America. It's a style that forbids holds below the waist and places an emphasis on throws because a

wrestler cannot use trips, nor can they hook or grab the opponent's leg to avoid being thrown.

Whereas during the wrestling season at Campolindo, Freeman's main focus is in getting the wrestlers in good cardiovascular shape, with the club team, there is much more teaching. "Greco is way more technical, making big, flashy moves and learning how to throw your opponents," Freeman said. "It's learning how to score with this new style for the wrestlers and it really translates over to the high school 'folk style' where you can use all of the moves and touch your opponent's legs."

Freeman was very forthcoming in his praise of the wrestlers: "It was great to see Piper on the top of the podium. I can all but guarantee she will earn her way into the state tournament next season. I was

proud of the way KT wrestled against tough competition and I expect to see her earn a section medal next season.

"Cammy has really improved and gotten stronger and anticipate her making it to the state tournament. As an upcoming sophomore, Patricia has been growing in leaps and bounds and I see great things from her in the future. Isabel suffered an injury in the tournament but continued to help me in coaching her teammates. Iris, who just began wrestling showed a lot of athleticism and was very coachable."

Freeman was once again prescient in his anticipation of the team's performance. "This is our second year in a row being the top junior girls Greco team in the state," Freeman said. "I told the girls that we were going to do it again, only bigger and better, and we did exactly that, winning by a larger margin than last year."

# Ron Richison – coach, teacher, advisor and leader inducted into Hall of Fame

... continued from Page C1

He looked at me and picked up his whistle and said, 'You're right' and he blew the whistle and started making them do butterflies. We had some very good teams that eventually provided a lot of good players for the Acalanes varsity."

As Ron's son, Charles saw

up close the depth his father took in his coaching: "What was unique about my dad was that he didn't care if you were the best or the worst player, he was going to make you a better player. His ability to make the players better would make the practices better and the team better. For Dad, it was strength in numbers and he would have

more bodies to throw at his opponents. Water polo was like chess to my dad. He was able to think six moves ahead and he would know what you were going to do before you did it."

Just as he did as a coach, Richison was direct in his acceptance speech: "My family and I really appreciate all of you coming and I want to

thank my former athletes and coaches that wrote letters of support for me with this honor. I was very fortunate to have plenty of top athletes and support for the teams that I coached over 45 years and I appreciate all your efforts. Lastly, I want to thank my son for helping to coordinate all this video stuff and last but not

least, I want to thank my wife, Marilyn. We've been married almost 52 years and she is famous in her own right for her Mrs. R's Bars and there were many of our guys that had to have their Mrs. R's Bars before they could play."

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# Lamorinda

# OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly

Volume 17

Issue 9

Wednesday, June 21, 2023



Handyman tips on caulking

... read on Page D4

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

### Nature talks



A hedge of Bonica roses is vibrant with long-lasting blooms.



Passionflowers are delicate and fascinating. Photos Cynthia Brian

#### By Cynthia Brian

*“Stop, look, and listen. Nature is what you may be missing.” ~ Cynthia Brian*

When I was telling my husband that I had deep watered one of our magnolia trees, his response, was “Why did you do that? Don’t you think the tree had plenty of water this past winter?” I retorted, “If you drink three glasses of water on Saturday, don’t you think you’d be thirsty by Thursday?” It was an “aha” moment because he really thought that just because we had experienced a very wet winter, the trees were sufficiently satiated and wouldn’t need additional moisture in the summer. “You better write about this in your garden column,” he said.

And so, I will.

Probably like many people, my husband doesn’t know much about gardening or beneficial natural practices. Although he appreciates a beautiful landscape, he prefers to fill the green

bin with leaves and grass clippings, while I’m an advocate for composting the matter. He’ll pull a “stick” out of the ground believing that it is dead, whereas the peony was just dormant. We are forever engaged in a battle of the bins.

Having grown up on a farm and ranch, I have the advantage because I was taught to listen to the calls of nature from babyhood. My mother told me that when I was only a few weeks old, she would put me on a blanket under an orange tree canopy as she worked in the orchard. Evidently, I was mesmerized by the rustling leaves, babbled at the birds, and cooed at the changing light. My formative years encompassed a deep connection to the land that has trained me to respect and admire the natural world throughout my life.

Nature doesn’t communicate with humans in our language. But nature does indeed talk to us with its own language. By observing and understanding the cues in nature, humans gain

insights, knowledge, and inspiration. We must learn to utilize all our senses. The sounds we hear from the buzzing bees, the chirping birds, the gurgling creek, or the whirling wind convey information about the environment, species interactions, and weather conditions. The scents we smell are plants and animals communicating with one another about mating, territory marking, food availability, or even danger.

Nature gives us signals when plants, trees, shrubs, or flowers require essential resources. There are visual cues, physiological changes, and even interactions with the surrounding environment.

When addressing the needs of your garden, be aware of these signs:

1. Wilting. When plants lack water, as an adaptive response, their leaves or stems will droop, fold under, go limp, and even drop.

... continued on Page D8

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**Lamorinda home sales recorded**

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	6	\$1,475,000	\$3,000,000
MORAGA	3	\$650,000	\$2,355,000
ORINDA	5	\$1,604,500	\$3,850,000

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**

23 Benthill Court, \$2,220,000, 5 Bdrms, 3437 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 05-03-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,385,000, 09-24-14

1294 Candy Court, \$1,805,000, 4 Bdrms, 1834 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 05-01-23,

Previous Sale: \$705,000, 07-21-02

644 Glorietta Boulevard, \$2,345,000, 4 Bdrms, 3675 SqFt,

1979 YrBlt, 05-09-23

3188 Lucas Circle, \$1,475,000, 3 Bdrms, 1198 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 05-09-23,

Previous Sale: \$925,000, 02-16-23

1108 Martino Road, \$2,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2409 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 05-11-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,525,000, 01-20-22

631 Murray Lane, \$3,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 3171 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 05-04-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,825,000, 04-08-15

**MORAGA**

2133 Donald Drive #3, \$650,000, 2 Bdrms, 1368 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 05-10-23,

Previous Sale: \$260,000, 01-19-09

12 Merrill Drive, \$2,355,000, 5 Bdrms, 2993 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 05-12-23

1056 Sanders Drive, \$2,058,500, 4 Bdrms, 2067 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 05-04-23,

Previous Sale: \$975,000, 07-01-14

**ORINDA**

28 Ardor Drive, \$1,604,500, 3 Bdrms, 2016 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 05-12-23,

Previous Sale: \$780,000, 02-17-04

75 Barbara Road, \$1,850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1796 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 05-09-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,460,000, 05-29-19

35 El Toyonal, \$3,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 3511 SqFt, 2001 YrBlt, 05-05-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,716,000, 04-23-04

61 Moraga Viax, \$1,705,000, 4 Bdrms, 2164 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 05-04-23,

Previous Sale: \$2,245,000, 03-08-22

53 Oak Drive, \$1,725,000, 3 Bdrms, 2416 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 05-09-23

25 Tappan Lane, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2644 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 05-10-23,

Previous Sale: \$750,000, 11-03-00

121 Van Ripper Lane, \$3,850,000, 5 Bdrms, 3653 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 05-09-23,

Previous Sale: \$2,850,000, 09-02-21

27 Wood Acres Court, \$2,275,000, 2 Bdrms, 1148 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 05-01-23,

Previous Sale: \$606,500, 09-01-87

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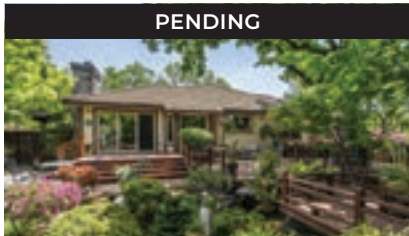


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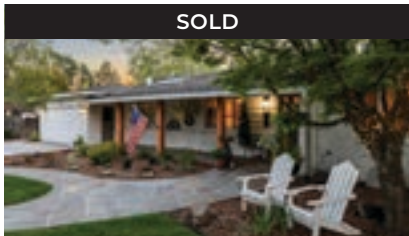


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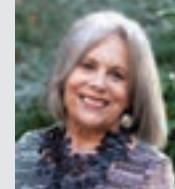
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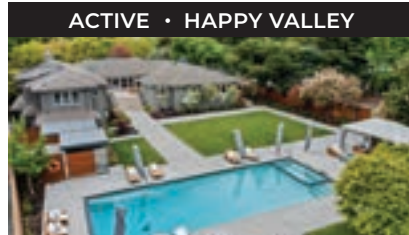


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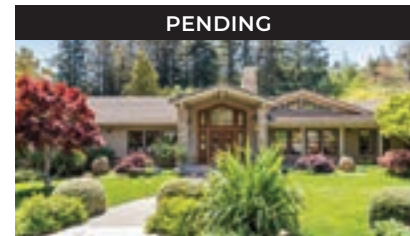
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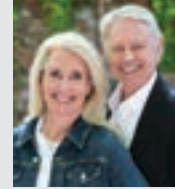
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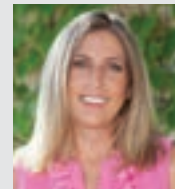
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There are lots of buyers looking for homes in our area. If you're thinking of making a move, contact me to discuss the best strategy to get your home sold.

**JUST SOLD** 289 Birchwood Drive, Moraga



This stunning four bedroom, two bath home in the Rheem Valley Manor offers amazing views of the Moraga hills and Mt. Diablo from almost every room. Sold for \$1,879,228; represented the buyer.

**Michelle Holcenberg**  
CB Top 20 East Bay

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## Hints to help caulking go smoothly



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By **Jim Hurley**

Have you ever watched an artist work? I mean closely watch as they prepare the palette, carefully mix the color they need and then apply it so beautifully to their canvas in a smooth fluid stroke of the brush. Yeah, I can't do that. My real talent seems to be demolition, tearing out the wall of a room or removing tile floors. But, as a professional handyman, I am sometimes called upon to create a beautiful finish as well as smash things. That is where my love/hate relationship with caulking begins.

New construction ends with a perfect finish where there are no gaps or cracks in new tile or along the trim moulding. Over time though, things do move and shift and little cracks appear. One of the most frequent items on the "Handyman To-Do" list in homes is caulking. Caulking for the shower, around the tub, around the sink, or gaps around the house can be a DIY item for you, provided you want to try it. Here's what you need to know. Warning: there are some supplies to buy and it will take time.

First prepare the surface: Use a razor knife to cut away old caulking. A painter's tool or putty knife can also scrape off excess caulk. On tile or counter tops, a one-sided, safety razor blade (in the paint department of the hardware store) will also work to remove old caulk. After scraping away the old caulk, clean the surface with acetone to remove any remaining residue. The time and care you take to prepare the area is directly proportionate to the quality of your finish.

Next, choose the right caulk: You have two choices, Silicone or Latex caulk.

... continued on Page D6

# NEW LISTING in the Moraga Country Club!

863 Augusta Drive | 2 bedrooms | 2 bathrooms | bonus office | 1552 sqft | \$1,295,000



863AugustaDrive.com



710MinerRoad.com



## A Hidden Gem!

710 Miner Road, Orinda | \$2,295,000

5 bedrooms | 3 baths | 3088 sqft | 1.15 acres

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Listed By:

Shannon Conner, Molly Smith and Amy Rose Smith

For More Information Contact Shannon Conner

925.980.3829 | Shannon@shannonconner.com



villageassociates.com | @villageassociates | 925.254.0505 | It's Village. Of Course.

Shannon (DRE 01885058) | Amy (DRE 01855959) | Molly (DRE 01498053)

All information herein deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



## Contra Costa Market Continued to Improve in May 2023

There have been multiple news articles about falling prices. It just isn't true in the East Bay, specifically central Contra Costa. Numbers don't lie (go to [www.YourContraCostaRealtor.com](http://www.YourContraCostaRealtor.com) for city specific data for May).

The numbers continue to trend in the upward direction. There are a couple of significant data points supporting the upward trend. Over the last 3 months, the Average Asking Price compared with the Average Sale price has been 1.94% (March), 4.25% (April) and 6% (May). Not a coincidence that the average sale price in the more affordable cities of Concord and Martinez has risen back into the high \$800K range. The month of May also saw a sharp increase in the number of sales in central County. It was up from 270 in April to 365 in May. There was even a positive increase (albeit slight) in Active Inventory from 354 in April to 365 in May. However, I don't expect the active inventory to keep up with buyer demand. That's why 66% of all sales in May had multiple offers. The minor negative trend was that days on the market marginally increased from 12 days in April to 13.73 days in May.

The increase in the number of sales, despite interest rates still being in the 7+% range, is indicative of an increasing number of buyers who believe rates will eventually come down by year end or early next year. With the Rate of Inflation continuing to drop each month (now 10 consecutive months), lower interest rates are likely. Remember, interest rates track directly with the Rate of Inflation. Better to buy now and refinance in 12 to 18 months than wait until the rates come down, buyer demand increases and prices continue to rise, but at a faster pace than today.

If you would like a private consultation regarding your current plans to either buy or sell, please reach out to me by phone or email.



**Cary Amo,**  
**REALTOR**

DRE #01104264

C: 925.818.0880

200 Pringle Ave. Ste 100  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

[cary@caryamo.com](mailto:cary@caryamo.com)

[www.YourContraCostaRealtor.com](http://www.YourContraCostaRealtor.com)



## Hints to help caulking go smoothly

... continued from Page D4

Use 100% Silicone caulk for areas that need a 100% waterproof seal; bathroom tubs and tile, kitchen counter tops and backsplashes, and gaps around sinks and counters are prime examples. The one thing to remember is that 100% Silicone caulk cannot be painted. Paint just beads up and runs off Silicone caulk. Silicone caulk comes in a few colors. Besides clear and white, you can find black, tan or almond at better hardware suppliers. Silicone caulk is challenging because it requires mineral spirits (paint thinner) to clean up any excess. Be sure to have some paint thinner and disposable rags on hand. Wrap the thinner rags in newspaper and seal them airtight in a baggie for disposal. Let's not have any spontaneous combustion.

For projects next to a wall or trim that requires paint, use Latex caulk. I use Latex caulk around doors, windows, baseboards and for small cracks in walls. I love this caulk because it is water soluble for cleanup. It is also paintable, so color does not matter as much, but it does come in clear or white.

Purchase a good caulking gun. With the cheaper guns you must remember to release the piston whenever you set the gun down. Better caulk guns come with a little spring-loaded tab which will release that pressure without having to reset the piston.

Applying the caulk: Here we go with the artistic part. When I was a beginner, it seemed like the caulk would randomly squirt out of the gun and smear itself all over me. Before you start caulking, be sure you have clear access to the area.

Nothing spoils a line of caulk like bumping into things as you move the gun down the line.


You want to cut the tip of the caulking tube at an angle so that the caulk comes out of the tube in a flat line. You also want to cut open the tip just enough to give you the size of line you need. Cut off a big chunk if you need to fill big gaps, cut off a small amount if you just need a thin line. Be prepared to waste caulk. Lay down the line of caulk and use your finger to gently smooth the line. Wipe the excess caulk off your finger frequently to minimize clean up on the surface.

Bottom line: Caulk is cheap! That tube you've been saving for years in the garage, (especially if it was opened), is probably not going to work as well as a new tube that costs around \$5. Be sure to use fresh caulk.

That's about all the info I can share. I love a smooth, clean line of caulk but it takes care and effort to achieve that. As with learning any new skill, be prepared to have some adventures with lots of restarts, you will improve with practice. Don't be afraid to try though, it all cleans up in the end and you can check a project off your to-do list.

Jim Hurley is an independent handyman with over 25 years of experience in residential repairs. Hopefully this free advice is helpful to someone attempting Do-It-Yourself home repairs. The information presented is intended for informational purposes and for use by persons having appropriate technical skill, at their own discretion and risk.





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## *Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

### **Nature talks**



A salmon-hued geranium complements the pool setting.



Close-up of pink single-petal peony.



Bing cherries are being harvested early as the birds are feasting on them daily.

Photos Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page D1

2. **Color and Texture changes:** When plants experience a deficit of nutrients, they will exhibit distinct changes in the leaves. Nitrogen loss results in yellow or very pale green leaves. Iron and manganese deficiency will show yellowing between the veins of leaves, called interveinal chlorosis. Chlorosis means a lack of chlorophyll which is the pigment responsible for a healthy plant's green color.
3. **Slow growth:** When plants have insufficient nutrients, minerals, and food, plant growth is stunted.
4. **Flower and fruiting patterns:** Again, nutrient deficiencies or water stress affect flowering and fruiting. There could be a reduction in production, smaller flowers or fruit, or even lower quality.
5. **Root development:** Roots provide valuable insights into the needs of a plant. If roots are

shallow, brown, mushy, too dry, or lack fine feeder roots, this could indicate poor soil conditions, too much water or waterlogging, lack of moisture, or the necessity for fertilizer.

6. **Interaction with pollinators and wildlife:** When plants lack resources, their normal characteristics may be modified to attract pollinators or seed-dispersing animals. They may produce additional fruit, pollen, or nectar to entice animals and insects to stop by to help with reproduction. If you've ever walked through a patch of forget-me-nots after flowering, you'll remember how your socks or pants were covered with sticky seeds ready to be deposited elsewhere.

The more time we spend outdoors in nature, the deeper sense of connection and knowledge we will acquire. Our association with the natural environment is a direct source of stress relief, inspiration, peace, and reflection. This leads to greater understanding and

appreciation for our earth while cultivating a harmonious relationship with nature. We become intuitive to the needs of our plants and trees.

This past year at the Biodiversity Conference in Montreal, more than 190 countries committed to protecting 30% of their lands, oceans, and inland waters by the year 2030. Biodiversity loss is one of the top threats to humanity. Humans have the ability and the responsibility to assist the health and longevity of our planet.

The leaves on my magnolia tree were drooping, furling, wilting, and dropping. All it took for it to bounce back to its elegant beauty was a deep soaking.

Nature is talking to all of us. We need to stop, look, and listen.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Summer!



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## Cynthia Brian's June Digging Deep Gardening Tips

**EMPTY** vessels of water to eliminate mosquito larvae from hatching. Add DUNKS or a few drops of bleach to any standing water such as a bird bath or non-recirculating fountain. Do not add bleach where fish or frogs reside.

**ADD** brilliance to your porch or patio with containers filled with petunias, geraniums, or other summer bloomers.

**CUT** all grasses surrounding your home to three inches or less and remove junk and debris from the perimeter to create a defensible space from fires.

**MAKE** a rich potting mix by mixing equal parts of good soil, compost and sand. Add leaf matter and liquid fertilizer.

**NET** your fruit trees or pick the fruit early to prevent hungry birds from devouring your summer crops of cherries, peaches, apricots and apples.

**CELEBRATE** the summer solstice by creating an upscale, yet casual table arrangement with a variety of roses.

**PLANT** a passionflower vine to climb a pole for a fascinating futuristic flowering showstopper.

**DEEP SOAK** any trees with wilting, drooping, or dropping leaves. If you have magnolias, the large creamy white flowers dazzle after a deep soak.

**ATTRACT** butterflies and honeybees by planting nectar-rich specimens including zinnias, butterfly bush, and scarlet runner beans.

**SUPPORT** your sprouting tomatoes with wire cages or teepees to prevent them from toppling over to sprawling on the ground. The fruit will rot when in contact with soil.



The leaves of potatoes resemble tomato plants. Both are in the Nightshade family.



The magnolia tree bursts into flower after a deep soaking.



The containers of colorful petunias add charm to the view from the deck.



Support sprouting tomatoes with wire cages.

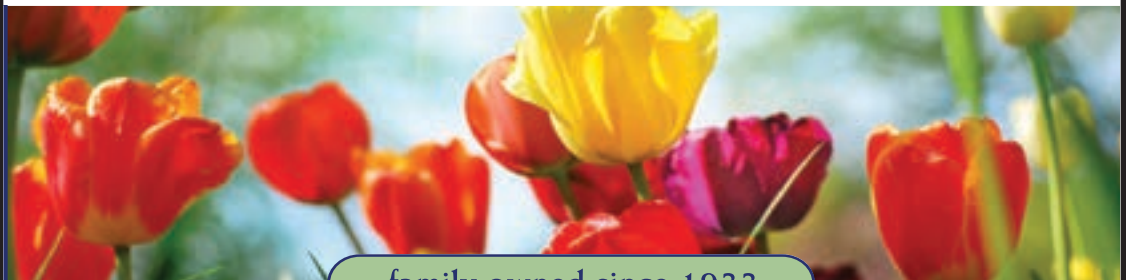
PS: Shoe Drive for Be the Star You Are!® extended to July 30th as our goal is 2,500 pairs. Shoes may be dropped off at <https://5aspace.com/>, 455 Moraga Rd. #F, Moraga or [www.TeamHoogs.com](http://www.TeamHoogs.com), 629 Moraga Road (next to 7/11), Moraga. For more information, visit <https://www.bethestaryouare.org/shoedrive>



**Cynthia Brian relaxes amongst carpet roses.**

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](http://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](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) <http://www.GoddessGardener.com>

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## ORINDA



**1 Valley Court**  
Quiet 5 bd/ 3 ba single level Glorietta ranch on a .55-acre cul de sac!

Pending!

**\$2,595,000**

## ORINDA



**710 Miner Road**  
Peaceful 1.15 acre knoll setting w/ sunset views! 5 bd/ 3 ba, 3088 sqft home w/ spacious open floor plan & exceptional separation of space!

**\$2,295,000**

## ORINDA



**14 Hacienda Circle**  
Fully remodeled, light-filled 4 bd/ 2.5 ba, contemporary home w/ soaring ceilings, walls of windows & truly amazing outdoor spaces!

**\$2,195,000**

New Listing!

## ORINDA



**631 Watchwood Road**  
Impressive, detached 3 bd/ 2.5 ba Orindawoods home with stunning spaces and gorgeous views!

**\$1,595,000**

New Price!

## LAFAYETTE



**3732 Happy Valley Road**  
Treasured Happy Valley Estate, premier loc, 5 bd/ 4.5 ba, covered, flat lot. Stunning pool, cabana & views!

**\$4,750,000**

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**3158 Withers Avenue**  
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Pending!

## LAFAYETTE



**9 Redwood Circle**  
Situated down a private lane, surrounded by majestic redwood trees is this spectacular 5 bd/ 3 ba home!

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