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Lots of fresh faces on Lamorinda girls' volleyball teams

By Jon Kingdon

As a rule, there is always a certain amount of turnover with every high school team, mostly through graduation. This is a year that has seen the Lamorinda girls' volleyball teams having lost more than their share of players from last year and having to rely on a large number of underclassmen and first year players up from their JV teams.

Acalanes
With a roster having only two seniors, the Dons are relying on a core of seven juniors and two sophomores this season. So far, so good with Acalanes having a record of 8-4. "In our first few games, it was knowing that it is a growing experience for our players because a lot of them haven't been on varsity," head coach Haley Walsh said. "They were still getting used to the rhythm and the pace of playing at a higher level and after a big win against Rancho Cotate in our third match, it looks like we're just about there."
Both the varsity and JV teams have a lot of size

which has helped in the team's early success. The front line has only one returning player, junior outside hitter MaeLin Mason along with six other juniors and three sophomores. "We're excited about the different front row players on our roster that we have to utilize," Walsh said. "We're also able to use all of them multiple times with multiple positions and it's nice to have that flexibility."
Walsh has made it a point to use every one of her frontline players: "We have a number of players from last year's JV team that had a 21-7 record and none of them seem to be intimidated at playing on the varsity and by playing them all, when we get to the NCS, I will know that I can call on anyone off the bench. We've played some tough teams early and it has helped with the maturation process."
Three sophomores – Sophia Terry, Piper Coy and Kylah Rose Fox – have all been effective players on the front line. "It can be a little bit intimidating to play as sophomores and we saw that in the first set of the first match, but ever since then they've been balling out

and not looking back," Walsh said. "Sophia and Piper have made a great transition. Kylah is injured right now, but we're looking forward to her return hopefully in a couple of weeks. Junior Annie Baker has also stepped up on the right side."
There is senior leadership on the back line led by libero Jade Profilio and defensive specialist Mika Boboco. "Jade and Mika have really stepped up in terms of running our defense and solidifying it so that everyone feels comfortable in their zones," Walsh said. "Junior setter Emma Seelenbacher is also part of the group that has helped players like sophomore Christina Hageboeck in adjusting to the setter position. As a junior, Jade had 540 digs last season and is hoping to conclude her career with over 1,000 digs."
For Walsh, at this point, the strength of the team's offense and its ability to attack from multiple positions and out of system, along with the flexibility helped by having nine players on the front that she has the confidence to use.

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Orinda council discusses proposed new MOFD fire ordinance

By Alison Burns

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) on Aug. 31 announced that a Special Meeting would take place in the Community Center on Sept. 6 in order to "introduce and waive" the reading of Amended Fuel Break Ordinance 23-08. Or to give the document its full name: "An Ordinance of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District of Contra Costa County, California, Adopting Requirements for Fuel Breaks on Certain Parcels in Both the State Responsibility and Local Responsibility Areas within the Fire District, Adopting Findings of Fact Regarding Fire Hazards in the Fire District, Adopting Findings of Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act, and Repealing Ordinance 23-04."

Since the regular Orinda City Council Meeting took place on Sept. 5 – one day before the new fire ordinance was presented at the MOFD board meeting – much of last Tuesday's city council discussion could only be conjecture, although members of the

public who stood at the lectern or called in via Zoom had plenty to say.
At first glance this new ordinance reads almost the same as its previous iteration (Ordinance 23-04, February 2023) but, according to the Orinda residents, the city manager and council members who spoke at the Sept. 5 council meeting, the new requirements appear somewhat more controversial. In the meantime, the previous ordinance has been suspended. The new (19 page) document can be found online at: www.mofd.org/ordinances-resolutions or through the District Clerk at (925) 258-4501.
Leading the discussion at the council meeting, Mayor Inga Miller said that she had asked for the ordinance to be placed on the agenda "in a somewhat unusual format," rather than go through the regular process of having city staff initiate each agenda item first, because there had not been enough time for the council to have a meeting and comment – although Miller had herself spent a lot of time over the holiday weekend studying the docu-

ment and wanted to give some factual background.
The revised ordinance, she said, covers "any area that's a community at risk" – which in this case is defined as all of Orinda and Moraga – with different rules applying according to the size of the land: essentially if the property is under an acre, the whole ordinance applies, but if the parcel is over an acre, the ordinance calls for a 100-foot buffer around the property.
However, Council Member Brandyn Iverson pointed out that as a lay person, she felt that the way the new ordinance reads, "all of Moraga and all of Orinda is a fuel break – every house, every yard ... all landscaping and grass and trees and critters," and that wording of this latest fire ordinance is a real paradigm shift for a city that has so much natural beauty and animal life. She said she understood that a lot of thought was put into exceptions but "it feels that the default is that everything is to be cleared unless you can argue for maybe larger more beautiful trees."

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Public Safety	MOFD offers free gutter guard material – Page A8		



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Changes in Con Fire fire prevention ordinance explained at council meeting

By Lou Fancher

Contra Costa County Assistant Fire Chief Chris Bachman at the Aug. 28 Lafayette City Council meeting addressed the most recent amendments to the California fire code and definitions related to exterior hazard abatement, defensible space, and rules governing the sale or transfer of property, during an update regarding Con Fire regulations.

Fire prevention measures impacting Lafayette residents arising from the county's required ordinance that is reviewed every three years, according to Bachman, includes an amendment removing section 321, which involves exterior fire hazard control, but lacked language about defensible space inspections and other specific details. Bachman said fire officials had been hearing from contractors that the ordinances across fire districts in Contra Costa County were inconsistent. As a result, fire officials along with department supervisors examined the ordinances line-by-line to make sure the language is consistent

throughout the district jurisdictions.

Bachman said that Section 321 information about hazard definitions, control measures, and inspection standards were largely retained and still appear in updated form in the city's ordinance with added details about compliance, zoning, inspections, how to abate weeds, the requirements for creating and maintaining full wildfire breaks and more.

Among other notable updates in the ordinance are improvements made to Section 4, which refers to the sale or transfer of property and in the past has generated considerable questions from residents. Bachman said the fuel mitigation inspection requirements when selling or transferring property are state mandated and under Assembly Bill 38, only apply to properties in very high fire severity zones. Instead of calling out the specific "very high" inspection state statutes, Section 4 language remains general so that if the state changes the rules – for example, next year requiring inspections in low, moderate, or

high fire severity zones – the section will still apply and not need to be modified.

Program updates include the initiation of the Wildfire Mitigation Program. Implemented countywide and funded by Measure X, a sales tax initiative, the program was approved by the county Board of Supervisors to provide \$2 million annually to do mitigation work. Bachman emphasized the initiative uses a community-driven approach and has neighborhoods, fire safety councils, and city staff propose programs to the local fire department. The fire department then grades the proposals, rating the ideas for importance within their communities, and he noted the county will eventually get to all of the proposals.

Examples of mitigation projects, Bachman said, are community chipping days, fire trail cleanup, removal of dead trees, evacuation route improvements, home hardening, low-income exterior hazard control funding, and more. He said 66 projects are currently in the queue and 39 have been completed.

Bachman recommended every resident should review their evacuation zone, subscribe to the Community Warning System to receive emergency messages from the county, and protect their home's defensible space by identifying vegetation hazards and making plans to mitigate them.

Questions from the council began with Council Member Susan Candell, who asked about enforcement and what the city might do. Bachman said an item like removal of dead trees had residents asking about permits for tree removal. "Make sure your city staff is aware of the program," he advised, adding Con Fire would work with staff to clarify how their efforts could be coordinated. Handbooks and flyers with all of the information and the ordinance he said are available to the public on the Con Fire website (cccfd.org).

Other questions from the council led Bachman to reiterate that the county is following Cal Fire standards, which means weed abatement applies countywide and although the

defensible space maps are expected to be updated, inspection requirements currently apply only in very high fire severity zones. As to the inspections required during the sale of a property in one of those zones, Bachman said the district is able to get to them rapidly and in the event there is delay, there is language allowing homeowners to state they are aware of the inspections and wildfire mitigation actions necessary. The requirement will therefore not delay the sale of a property.

A question from a member of the public referred to cleanup abatement at the BART station. Bachman suggested requests or concerns about fire issues should be sent to info@cccfd.org. Checked every morning, the email messages are forwarded to the appropriate department and an email response will be sent outlining the next steps to expect.

Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok said educating the public was vital and coordinating with the county to "get the word out" is a high priority.

Housing Element discussion continues at Lafayette Council meeting

By Lou Fancher

Lafayette City Council members at the regular meeting Aug. 28 heard a report from staff regarding the State Department of Housing and Community Development's comments received in late March and the review and revisions made by staff to the Lafayette 6th Cycle Housing Element and Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Senior Planner Renata Robles, Housing Consultant Diana Elrod, and Planning and Building Director Greg Wolff presented an analysis of the im-

pacts of growth stemming from the housing plan and housing opportunity sites identified to accommodate the mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation of 2,114 assigned to Lafayette. An additional required buffer pushes the totals to approximately 3,000 new housing units between 2023-31. Notably, the Housing Element is required by state law to contain programs to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing.

Robles began with an outline of the review that included revisions adopted based on the HCD comments, a meeting in July with an HCD reviewer, as

well as technical assistance from consultants Veronica Tam & Associates, information about Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing programs, and changes to the opportunity sites inventory. Requests had been made to consider the inventory should include church parcels and the DeSilva South property, if staff should seek an additional CEQA review on the AFFH programs or sites inventory, and various other revisions.

The HE revisions were reviewed on July 10 by the council and received, according to Robles, "extensive public com-

ment." There is no specific deadline to submit the edits to HCD, but staff is working rapidly to complete the revisions and satisfy the requests from HCD to explain the submissions with more detail and clarity. Robles said additional changes await pending inventory decisions from the council.

Speaking of the AFFH program specifically, Robles said effort had been made to expand the opportunities beyond the downtown area. Based on input from council and meetings held, staff research regarding multi-family housing looked at increasing the maximum density

allowed from 17 to up to 30 units per acre, promoting a range of unit sizes, and prohibiting short-term rentals.

In changes to AFFH, short-term rentals were removed; church sites are not obligated, but have opportunity to provide affordable housing and choices about details to best suit affordable housing projects on individual properties; and clarifications were made that led to an improved map illustrating areas within 1/4 mile of downtown boundaries; and creation of and ramifications of allowing a range of unit sizes within a project. ... continued on Page A3



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Housing Element discussion continues at Lafayette Council meeting



Image courtesy City of Lafayette

Comments from the community involved concerns over adding this 1/4 mile area as a downtown buffer.

... continued from Page A2

Elrod reviewed the inventory communication history between the city and the state, which included a denial of the RHNA inventory proposed in October 2021. Revisions made in January 2023 modified allocations according to evaluation site objectives, changes in yield percentages, and alternatives that were considered to meet the RHNA requirements, such as changes to DeSilva South related to density percentages, and consideration of allowing housing on religious or institutional land.

As changes to opportunity sites and to densities will require an additional EIR, Robles noted, the next steps she said are to incorporate any revisions made by council, start the environmental review if required, and return to the council in September with the revised Housing Element draft.

Questions began with Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok asking how many church properties would be impacted, to which Robles said, "less than 10," and he asked Elrod to explain concerns about density from the community about churches that were upzoned and subsequently sold. She said that level of detail had not been examined. Robles said applying the same criteria as is used for senior living facilities could be followed for developing requirements related to religious institution properties.

Public comments and letters received by the council prior to the meeting addressed the inventory list, specifically the lower-income developments; upzoning religious properties, increased density issues, missing middle housing opportunities, objections to the 1/4 mile area added as a downtown buffer area; ADU projections, and residential segregation and environmental and transportation/traffic density impacts – or lack thereof – of low-income housing additions in the downtown, neighborhoods, and remote areas of Lafayette.

In the meeting's most pointed comments, Lauren McCabe Herpich said missing middles will not fulfill the RHNA allocations and she was "taken aback" by the proposals. "We've had three years of volunteers like yourselves who have dedicated time to create a plan that works for our town, our infrastructure, and our mission statement. Any plan that veers away from what the GPAC worked for years to present to this council ... participating in three years of town

halls and workshops; I hate to say (this) is a slap in the face for anyone who has actually participated. I really don't know who would volunteer to participate in this, if this is what's going to happen. This was all for nothing if you go against the GPAC recommendations." Herpich said that thriving communities are not just the result of housing density, but are achieved when attention is given to quality of schools, transportation, access to downtown, and parks.

Returning to council, Council Member Susan Candell inquired about SB4 and whether or not following the senate bill streamlines the process for religious organizations and nonprofit colleges to develop affordable housing. City attorney Mala Subramanian explained upzoning issues and said she would continue to look into the policies council may or may not adopt in the future and the legalities therein.

Asked by Mayor Carl Amduri about the 30 unit per acre density allotments, Robles explained they cannot be included in the RHNA count without upzoning those developments and only if including low- and very-low-income housing. In contrast, adding the DeSilva South area to the inventory list, Elrod said, could potentially increase the RHNA numbers.

In regard to adding AFFH projects north of Highway 24, which includes a very high fire severity zone, Robles said staff intends to use only parcels that offer superior evacuation potentials and constraints. Elrod added that revisions are forthcoming due to information that only recently arrived.

Opportunity sites were clarified by Wolff and new information presently coming in will result in new factors to be brought back to the council with the staff's recommendations in September. Candell proposed council hold another discussion about the Bruzoni shopping center property and possibly expanding the possibilities, an idea supported by the council. Church sites, the council decided, might be included pending additional analysis. Any remaining revisions determined to be necessary will be left to staff to include in the next draft which was to be presented to council Sept. 11, after press time.

The draft Housing Element Update can be found at www.planlafayette.org; the draft and final EIR can be found at www.lovelafayette.org/CEQA.



Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Tuesday, Sept. 26, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall

Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, Sept. 18, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall

Design Review

Tuesday, Sept. 26, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Arts & Science Discovery Room

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Town works to get Rheem Park Area designated as a Connected Community Priority Development Area

By Vera Kochan

With the town recently adopting the Sixth Cycle Housing Element for 2023-31, staff hopes to submit an application to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) with the idea that the Rheem Park Area will receive a designation as a Connected Community Priority Development Area (PDA).

According to the Aug. 23 staff report by Moraga Planning Director Afshan Hamid, "A PDA is a policy designation with a focus on planned areas for new homes, jobs, and community amenities. The vision for a PDA is to create a transit-oriented area, addressing important community needs, such as housing supply and local-serving retail opportunities, consistent with the recently adopted sixth cycle Housing Element." It is expected that transit availability near housing will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as Vehicle Miles Traveled.

With the PDA designation the town will be able to pursue future grant funding for the Rheem Center Realm Plan area and more. However, the design-

ation does not require the town to build any housing. That decision would fall to the individual property owners, the largest of which are U.S. Realty Partners and Saint Mary's College.

During Phase I of the Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative, the town rezoned parts of the Rheem Valley Shopping Center in order to allow for multi-family and mixed-use residential housing.

Staff submitted a preliminary application to MTC for review on July 31. With a unanimous approval of the resolution authorizing submittal of a new PDA during the town council's Aug. 23 meeting, Moraga is on the road to a fully processed application.

MTC has criteria for a Connected Community PDA that the Rheem Park Area qualifies for. "First, the entire area is within half mile of a bus stop with peak service of 30 minutes or less and is beyond half mile of transit service that meets the 'high quality transit' criteria," states Hamid in her staff report. "County Connection currently provides Bus Route 6 with two bus stops at Rheem Park Area with less than 30 minutes service during peak hours."

The report continues, "Second, the Rheem Park Area has



Rheem Park Area red

Image courtesy Moraga Planning Dept

been identified as having at least 50% of the area defined as a High Resource or Highest Resource on a California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) map."

The third qualification explains that the town council has already adopted two policies to reduce VMT.

With the coveted PDA designation, town staff will be able

to apply for future state grants which can be used to make the area more attractive to possible investors. The Moraga Shopping Center has recently been awarded two PDA grants. The first, in the amount of \$87,725 will help to fund amendments to the Moraga Center Development Standards. The second grant, totaling \$600,000 will be used for a School Street rede-

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Moraga votes to reject exorbitant storm drain bids

By Vera Kochan

The 2019 Storm Drain Master Plan Addendum set the wheels

in motion for the 2021-23 Annual Storm Drain Repairs Project budgeted at \$1.7 million through the Capital Improvement Project. The town hired Basis of Design consultants to inspect all of the Corrugated Metal Pipes and storm drain-pipes/culverts belonging to Moraga. In November 2022, the town council accepted BOD's reports and recommended the replacement or repair of 22 priority storm drainpipe segments.

According to an Aug. 23 staff report by Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp and Associate Civil Engineer Edrienne Aguilar, "On July 11, 2023, construction documents were advertised for bidding. Construction documents show the rehabilitation of nine segments for the base bid and two bid alternatives, prioritized based on current budget limitations and degree of risk failure."

Only two bids were received despite the advertising and were publicly opened on Aug. 3. The Engineer's Estimate for the project was \$771,000. However, both of the incoming bids exceeded that amount by substantial sums. Paulson and Cox Construction, Inc. (Concord) submitted a base bid of \$1,830,260, while the second bid from Kerex Engineering, Inc. (Pleasant Hill) came in considerably lower, but not low enough at \$888,500.

Given the vast differences between bids, staff is led to believe that the bidders might have misinterpreted the scope of the endeavor. The town's description of the project stated, "The work to be performed under this contract in-

cludes, but is not limited to: mobilization; demobilization; traffic control and construction signage; installation of water pollution controls; storm drain pipe cleaning and inspection, storm drain pipe replacement and rehabilitation using Cured-in-Place-Pipe (CIPP) lining and open-cut method, surface improvement replacement as a result of the open-cut storm drain replacement; and all other work as shown on the Plans and as described in the Caltrans Standard Specifications and these Technical Provisions to provide a complete project."

"The town went through an analysis of inspecting 30,000 linear feet of storm drain pipe and came up with a priority list of the pipes, and we're trying to get that project out before the wintertime," explained Knapp during the Aug. 23 Town Council Meeting. "It was a short window, and we put it out to bid trying to make sure that we had everything tight in our plans and specs. Unfortunately, because it was at the end of the construction cycle most companies already have their projects and could not do that in the short time frame, and we didn't have a very large - well, two bidders on the project, and so we're going to take it and look at the budget, repackage it and get it out in a spring time frame of work."

Vice Mayor Teresa Onoda asked, "Is there urgency with the corrugated pipes that we have right now, that you know about?"

Knapp replied, "I think we're in fairly good condition right now, and we'll be addressing it next year."

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Town Council Wednesday, Sept. 13, 6:30 p.m.
Planning Commission: Tuesday, Sept. 19, 6:30 p.m.
Park and Recreation Commission: Tuesday, Oct. 9, 7 p.m.

St. Mary's Road on track for multimodal safety improvements



St Mary's Road Multimodal Improvements Project

Photo courtesy of Moraga Public Works Dept.

By Vera Kochan

Since 2007, the St. Mary's Road/Bollinger Canyon Road and St. Mary's Road/Rheem Boulevard intersections have been on the town's radar with respect to safety concerns and traffic flow issues. A dangerous S-curve, poor visibility, the difficulty of merging into traffic during rush hour, in addition to pedestrian/bicyclist safety have all combined to make this small stretch of road a commuter's nightmare.

Three separate studies have been conducted to determine possible improvements, the last one coming from an outside engineering consultant firm whose submitted possibilities included: an all-way stop control; a two-way stop control; a traditional traffic signal control; a roundabout traffic control or mini-roundabout traffic control; or leave everything as is.

The Town conducted several public outreach meetings that included questionnaire feedback, and residents were divided on their opinions with regards to roundabouts versus traffic signals/stop signs. The public did support improvements, especially if the project was primarily grant funded.

According to the Aug. 23 staff report by Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp, roundabouts are no longer part of the project. While a traffic signal with safety lighting will be installed at the St. Mary's Road/Rheem Boulevard intersection, "at the Bollinger Canyon Road intersection,

there are two options being considered for improvements, with both options requiring the widening of the intersection footprint," stated Knapp. "Option 1 includes roadway widening to allow for the addition of a southbound left turn pocket from St. Mary's onto Bollinger Canyon Road, and Option 2 builds upon Option 1 with a traffic signal. In both the north and south approaches to the Bollinger Canyon Road intersection, medians are proposed to channelize and slow traffic."

As a major roadway within town, the project qualifies for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) grant funding and is the highest-ranked Contra Costa County project with respect to safety and congestion relief scoring criteria. This decision was based on the four applications received by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) totaling approximately \$40.3 million in STIP funding requests. Moraga had submitted a \$9.993 million STIP project funding application with a town match of \$1.295 million, and on July 20, the review committee approved to fully fund the grant request. The request funds are expected to become available starting Fiscal Year 2027-28, after the Sept. 20 CCTA Board meeting officially approves the recommendations.

During Knapp's Aug. 23 presentation to the Town Council, he received high praise from its members for his efforts to secure the STIP grant for Moraga, and with a

unanimous vote, was authorized the \$25,000 for Initial Administrative Services Funding during FY 2023-24 and another \$25,000 for FY 2024-25 for the project [CIP Project No. 23-417].

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Orinda appoints first Cal Shakes liaison

By Alison Burns

"It turns out that being the best kept secret in town is not necessarily fiscally sound or a blueprint for financial success," Clive Worsley, Executive Director of Cal Shakes, told the Orinda City Council, when he addressed them at their most recent meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 5.

Under the heading of Policy Matters, the council was meeting to consider appointing additional council liaisons, an arrangement where each council member has a close (but hands-off) involvement with organizations such as the Friends of Orinda Creeks, the Historic Landmarks Committee, and Art in Public Places.

To date, as City Manager David Biggs pointed out, council liaison assignments have traditionally involved nonprofits and other governmental agencies, but the discussion centered around whether Orinda's cultural landscape should also be considered, since COVID has left many of these organizations severely battered.

While making reference to Cal Shakes' current fiscal issues, Worsley was not at that

time requesting financial help (he'd unfortunately met Mayor Inga Miller and Council Member Janet Riley too late to be considered for a grant). Rather, Worsley wanted to explain to Orinda residents, and the council, why the theater company had been forced to take a different direction by transforming itself into a multi-disciplinary performing and cultural arts center. From now on, he said, the Cal Shakes season at the Bruns Amphitheater would involve just one or two classical plays, with the rest of the calendar devoted to activities such as dance, comedy, programming for families and youth audiences, "live music of all stripes," private, civic and corporate events, weddings and memorials.

Worsley, who started working for the California Shakespeare Theater in 2002, as an actor and teaching artist in public schools, was obviously a little weary of hearing people say "Cal Shakes? I drive by it all the time (located just off Highway 24) and I've never been inside." But he also admitted that "in recent years, in our company's desire to be nationally recognized, it may

have to some degree turned its back on its immediate neighbors and I am here to rectify that. We intend to be in good partnership with you all."

The discussion that followed was whether a council liaison should be concerned with only Cal Shakes, or whether to expand that responsibility to Orinda's other iconic cultural institutions.

Council Member Darlene Gee commented that the "excellent idea" of appointing a liaison from the city council "fits into the whole spectrum of our evaluation of our economic redevelopment" but she thought that it would be best to start something "simpler" with just one entity (in this case, Cal Shakes) and one person as liaison.

The motion was then carried to create a liaison to Cal Shakes, with the initial appointment going to Council Member Janet Riley, who later commented that "Cal Shakes adds such cultural value to our community, offering not only traditional theater, but also music, dance, and other live arts experiences. It is right at our fingertips for all to enjoy!"

Council discusses new MOFD ordinance

... continued from Page A1

One of the main areas that concerned Miller (which she had also mentioned back in February when the original ordinance was adopted) was the "landslide potential" in removing vegetation on the hillsides "because here in Orinda these plants are part of our protection against erosion," and now that Orinda is "four or five years into pretty hard work on vegetation removal" she was concerned that "we're seeing a lot of areas that are left bare, and those areas are either getting really dry, which may in part be because of the drought, or it may be because those soils are no longer retaining water."

Miller also mentioned seeing a "ton of invasives"

throughout Orinda, whether it was the broom sweeping through downtown, around Lake Cascade, or weeds on the hillsides. After taking a look at the state code that deals with exceptions for hillsides, she asked City Manager David Biggs to raise these points with MOFD Fire Chief Dave Winnacker.

Winnacker replied that he certainly had no problem proposing to the board that trees less than 15-feet could just be limbed up one third.

Although the discussion about the latest fire ordinance came to no conclusions, the obvious takeaway was that Orinda's residents would be welcomed in sharing their comments with the MOFD board because, as Biggs pointed out, "they're the only ones who can actually make changes to the ordi-

nance." He gave as an example, the time last January when the city objected to a certain element of a fire code update which would have barred any sort of traffic calming in very high fire severity zones. The city was ultimately successful in getting the MOFD board to take that provision out.

Miller also praised the level of interest shown by residents in local matters, saying that "Orinda's public have a great ability to come to meetings in order to comment" and despite the fact that very few people had been able to study the yet-to-be approved Fire Ordinance 23-08, four members of the public, in person and via Zoom, were ready with their opinions.



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City approves lowering speed limit around Glorietta Elementary

By Alison Burns

It was late 2018 when Orinda's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) first received a request from residents living in the Hillcrest Drive neighborhood to install traffic calming measures between Martha Road and Overhill Road, citing the speeding vehicles which had become a daily concern for young children walking to nearby Glorietta Elementary School.

Numerous Level II and III traffic calming measures were reviewed by Orinda city staff, the Neighborhood Advisory Team (NAT) and TSAC, such as adding "No Right Turn" signage onto Hillcrest from Martha Road and Overhill Road, speed cushions, fixed radar speed feedback display and reducing the speed limit.

Five years after receiving

the request to deal with drivers who ignored the speed limit, the NAT reached a consensus to request a review of the existing posted speed limits and designation of a special speed limit in school zones.

On Sept. 5, the city of Orinda signed off on the recommendation that the speed limit on the Hillcrest Drive segment from Martha Road and Overhill Road be changed from the existing 25 mph to 20 mph.

In addition, the city accepted the recommendation of a special school zone speed limit of 15 mph on Hillcrest Drive for a distance of 500 feet from Glorietta Elementary School. City maintenance crews are now due to install the recommended signs.

Speaking after the success of the five-year-long campaign to make that particular area safer for Glorietta Ele-

mentary kids and their parents, local resident Meredith Kreis said that she was in favor of all traffic calming measures that have a good chance of increasing pedestrian safety for children walking to and from school.

"Why do we need extra protections and speed limit reductions around schools?" Kreis asked. "Because most young children are far less capable of navigating moving vehicles, assessing risk, and protecting themselves than adults are."

"Our youth," she added, "are the future of our society and we all have a duty to protect and help them thrive. I can think of no more basic way to prioritize this goal than to increase the likelihood that children make it safely to school, and home from school, each day."

Hopefully, motorists will adhere to the new rules.

Orinda celebrates city's longest serving employee, Jennie Flores



Photo Alison Burns

From left: Jennie Flores, Vice Mayor Darlene Gee, Council Member Brandyn Iverson, Council Member Janet Riley, and Mayor Inga Miller

By Alison Burns

Three former Mayors lined up at last week's Council Meeting to take turns singing the praises of Jennie Flores as she celebrated three and a half decades of working with the city of Orinda, while the current Mayor, Inga Miller, presented Flores with an enormous bouquet of flowers.

Jennie Flores is the city's longest-serving employee ... ever.

It was August 1988, and Orinda was just three years into city incorporation, when Flores joined the city's Finance Department as an accounting clerk, later being promoted to the position of Accounting Technician III. Since then, she has primarily been in charge of the city's accounts payable function where, it is reckoned, she has

processed over 80,000 checks.

Miller also presented Flores with a Proclamation from the city, which heaped even more praise on Orinda's 35-year veteran with words like "unfailing service and loyalty, thorough, reliable," and "always willing to help."

The Proclamation also estimated that since starting work in Orinda's City Accounts Department, Flores has made more than 8,000 BART journeys from her home in Pleasant Hill to her desk at City Hall.

In addition to her own tribute, former mayor Bobbie Landers read out a letter from Tom Sinclair, Orinda's first city manager following its 1985 incorporation, in which he told Flores that her "gentle ways, enduring smile and friendly demeanor are what define you."

All agreed with the City Proclamation that, "Jenny is the rock at the base of the foundation of our city government."

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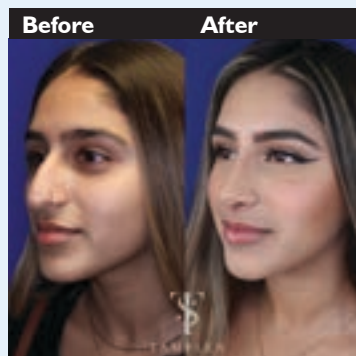
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City Council Regular Meeting:

Tuesday, Sept. 19, 7 p.m.

Planning Comm.:

Tuesday, Sept. 26, 7 p.m.

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Regular Meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 18, 7 p.m.

Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way





Free gutter covering material offered through MOFD

As part of its Home-Hardening Grants program, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District has received a shipment of "Gutterglove- Leafblaster Pro" gutter covering just in time for the worst part of the wildland fire season. According to MOFD, "These stainless steel guards are designed to minimize the accumulation of combustible material in your home's gutters and limit the surface spread of flame for at least 30 minutes. Having gutter coverings has the potential of protect-

ing your home from damage due to flying embers." More information including an online tool to determine the quantity of material you will need, installation instructions, material specifications, how to contact a contractor to complete your installation and more are available at: www.leafblaster.com/moraga-orinda/ District residents can receive this material at no charge by completing the online request form at: https://forms.gle/qzJ4hsQ29sfxQhFr8 - J. Wake

Photo provided

A guide to organizing and concealing your cords

By Jennifer Raftis, CPO®

When did cords become so unmanageable? The answer is when modern society became dependent on electronic devices. In today's world, we literally can't live without them. Research shows the average person can own at least five electronic devices and if you have a household of five, you now have at least 25 cords to organize and plug in. Considering that many devices require more than one cord, the number can escalate quickly.

Every device we own needs a cord, a password and a designated place for charging. Sorry to tell you this, but you

have to manage this or you will end up with the dreaded box-o-cords!

Organizing cords is probably not your favorite pastime activity. It is not mine either, but I have a lot of experience helping my clients organize and hide cords. Let's break this down into steps:

- 1. Gather, sort and purge all the cords you own;
2. Decide on a labeling system;
3. Designate a charging home for your devices;
4. Hide the mess of cords coming from the wall; and
5. Store and dispose cords.

Gather, sort and purge Every client I have owns a

huge box of "I don't know what these are for but I might need it" cords. The reality is that if the item is over five years old, you have probably updated it and the old cord is no longer useful. So, what do you save and what do you send to e-waste?

I recommend going through the box of cords, pulling out the ones you can identify and labeling them. An alternate solution is to take the entire box of cords to e-waste and get on with your life. You can usually purchase a replacement cord, unless the item is so old they no longer make them (in that case, maybe it's time to update the device).

Decide on a labeling system

There are many types of cord labels you can purchase. It's important to label all cords, especially the cords for devices that need to be charged frequently. I suggest using the same color of label as the cord. For example, a white label for a white cord and so on. It will be more aesthetic looking if it's the same color. You can search "cord labels" to see all of the options. Another way to label the cords is by the type of cord such as charging cables versus audio cables, and so on.

Designate a charging home Years ago, we designated a charging spot for all of our devices. Now, every room has a charging station and our devices are usually within arms reach. Even devices that are used less frequently, like power banks, should have a designated storage place.

Hide the mess of cords

Cable organizers are a must! They come in various forms, such as clips, ties and sleeves. They help to bundle cords together neatly, preventing them from becoming tangled and creating a safety hazard. Velcro ties are helpful, as they can be easily adjusted and reused. Many furniture pieces come with built-in cable management solutions with hidden



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compartments which will keep the cords organized and out of sight.

Storing and disposing of cords

After your cords are labeled, I recommend storing them with care to increase the longevity.

When you are storing cords, use the coiling system to prevent kinks and damage. Coil them into a loop, making sure it's not too tight and tie it with a cable tie or Velcro strap.

You can purchase cord containers that keep the cords separate and protect them from dust. In some cases, using a simple drawer divider or small containers within the drawer can be a great solution.

A vertical solution is another way to store the cords. You can mount command hooks on the inside of cabinets if you don't have room inside the drawer.

Disposing your cords properly is crucial. E-waste can contain hazardous materials, such as lead, mercury and other toxic waste. Republic Services offers free electronics pickup at its bi-annual Reuse Day or you can schedule pickup for a fee. Proper disposal prevents environmental harm, so it's worth the effort to follow the guidelines.

The key is to keep your cords updated, grouped, labeled, stored and disposed of

in an organized way so you don't end up with the dreaded box-o-cords.



Professional Organizer, Jennifer Raftis, CPO® founded Efficiency Matters, LLC to help you with all of your organizing needs for your home and business. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and an active board member with NAPO, National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals. She is also an independent representative for The Container Store and has expertise in designing closets, garages, pantries, playrooms and more. In addition, she is a Corporate Organizing and Productivity Consultant and has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the U.S. Another large part of her business is move management especially working with seniors who are downsizing. She and her husband have lived in Moraga for 30 years, raising 3 kids and working countless volunteer hours with many local non-profit organizations and schools. Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com, 925-698-3756 www.efficiencymattersllc.com

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Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Aug. 20 - Sept. 2

Table with incident categories and counts: Alarms (29), 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) (8), Traffic (69), Suspicious Circumstances (9), Suspicious Subject (15), Suspicious Vehicle (8), Service to Citizen (34), Patrol Req./Security Check (32), Public/School Assembly Check (8), Supplemental Report (17), Vacation House Check (9), Welfare Check (16), Ordinance Violation (4), Vehicle violations (3200 Block Apache Ct., 500 Block Bavarian Ct., Hit And Run Misdemeanor (3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd., 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd., 700 Block Tanglewood Ln., 3500 Block Boyer Cir., 4000 Block Los Arabis Dr., Taylor Blvd./Pleasant Hill Rd., Reckless Driving (Mt. Diablo Blvd./Dewing Ave., Reliez Valley Rd./Herмоса Way, Pleasant Hill Rd./Reliez Station Rd., Mcgraw Ln./Reliez Valley Rd.,

St Marys Rd./Acampo Dr. Pleasant Hill Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd. Taylor Blvd./Pleasant Hill Rd. Acalanes Rd./Eb Sr 24 Happy Valley Rd./Deer Hill Rd. Pleasant Hill Rd./Eb Sr 24 Tamper With Vehicle 3200 Block Sweet Dr. Tc - Fire And Amb Enroute 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 4000 Block Los Arabis Dr. Tc - Property Damage Deer Hill Rd./1St St. Moraga Rd./Scenic Ln. Acalanes Av/Pleasant Hill Rd. 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Golden Gate Way/Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Vehicle Theft 900 Block Hough Ave. Other criminal activity Commercial Burglary 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Fraud Credit Card 1500 Block Silver Dell Rd. Misc Burglary 3500 Block Plaza Way Petty Theft 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3) Iverson Dr./Moss Ln. 3100 Block Somers Dr. 1200 Block Summit Rd. Robbery Armed 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Shoplift 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (7) 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3) 3200 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3200 Block Stanley Blvd. Warrant Service 4000 Block Fiora Pl. Nuisance to the Community Disturbance-domestic 3500 Block Deer Hill Rd. Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd. Loud Music 20 Block Diabolo Cir. Loud Noise 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Public Nuisance Highland Rd./Sundale Rd. 4000 Block Marianne Dr. 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Acalanes Rd./El Nido Ranch Rd. Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd. Pleasant Hill Rd./Wb Sr 24 3400 Block S Silver Springs Rd. Vandalism 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 800 Block Reliez Station Rd. 3400 Block Orchard Hill Ct. 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 1200 Block Panorama Dr.

Other Fireworks 700 Block St. Mary's Rd. H&S Violation 1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd. Harassment 900 Block S Thompson Rd. 10 Block Moss Ln. 3200 Block Old Tunnel Rd. Phone Harass 800 Block Mountain View Dr. Terrorist Threats 900 Block Dewing Ave. Threats 90 Block Silverwood Dr. Unwanted Guest 3600 Block Walnut St. 200 Block Lafayette Cir. 50 Block Lafayette Cir.

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report Aug. 22 - Sept. 4

Table with incident categories and counts: Alarms (8), 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) (5), Traffic (51), Suspicious Circumstances (2), Suspicious Subject (2), Suspicious Vehicle (6), Service to Citizen (21), Patrol Req./Security Check (21), Public/School Assembly Check (5), Supplemental Report (11), Vacation House Check (0), Welfare Check (6), Ordinance Violation (5), Vehicle violations (4000 Block Fiora Pl., Moraga Rd./Ivy Dr. (3), Rheem Blvd./Fernwood Dr., Moraga Rd./Campolino Dr., Moraga Way/Eastwood Mor Rd./St Marys Moraga Way/Coral Dr., Ori (2), Rhemm/Park St Marys College (2), St Marys/Morga Rd Moraga Way/St Andrews Dr. (4) Police Department Canyon Rd./Sanders Dr. Moraga Way/School St. (5) Moraga Way/Moraga Rd. Reckless Driving Miramonte Dr./Moraga Way School St./Country Club Dr.



Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd. Moraga Way/School St. 300 Block Rheem Blvd. Moraga Rd./Via Granada Vehicle Theft 100 Block Shuey Dr. 800 Block Camino Ricardo Other criminal activity Fraud False Pretenses Police Department Grand Theft Police Department Identity Theft 3800 Block Via Granada Petty Theft Osh Homegoods Petty Theft From Veh 1900 Block St Andrews Dr. 60 Block Corliss Dr. Shoplift 400 Block Center St. Theft Access Card Rheem Theater Nuisance to the Community Disturbance-domestic 2000 Block Ascot Dr. Disturbing The Peace 30 Block Broadmoor Bollinger Canyon Rd./St Marys Rd., Loud Music 300 Block Rheem Blvd. Canyon Rd./Country Club Dr. 1500 Block St Marys Rd. Vandalism Moraga Commons Park Other Animal Cruelty 20 Block Hour Fitness Fire/Ems Response Info 900 Block Country Club Dr. Mentally Ill Commit 1900 Block Ascot Dr. Phone Harass Police Department



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Aug. 20 - Sept. 2

Table with incident categories and counts: Alarms (40), 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) (4), Traffic (60), Suspicious Circumstances (6), Suspicious Subject (8), Suspicious Vehicle (9), Service to Citizen (48)

Table with incident categories and counts: Patrol Req./Security Check (32), Public/School Assembly Check (3), Supplemental Report (20), Vacation House Check (0), Welfare Check (10), Vehicle violations (100 Block Lombardy Ln., Orinda Way, Dui Misd 100 Block Crest View Dr. Reckless Driving St Stephens Episcopal Church (2) St Stephens Dr./Las Vegas Rd. Moraga Way/Stein Way Camino Pablo/Brookwood Rd. Miner Rd./Honey Hill Rd. Camino Pablo/Wildcat Canyon Rd. Glorietta Blvd./Moraga Way Tc - Property Damage Moraga Way/Orchard Rd. Vehicle Theft Wb Sr 24 At 1st St, Laf 100 Block Las Vegas Rd. Other criminal activity Commercial Burglary 80 Block Davis Rd. Warrant Arrest Brookwood Rd./Camino Pablo Orinda Way Camino Sobrante Nuisance to the Community Loud Music Valley View Dr./Woodland Rd. Loud Noise 200 Block Lomas Cantadas Loud Party 10 Block Dias Dorados Rd. Public Nuisance Camino Sobrante Vandalism Camino Pablo Other Failure To Obey Camino Pablo Loma Vista Dr./El Toyonal Area Check Forgery 200 Block Sundown Terrace Police Department H&S/Pos Paraphernalia Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way Litter Camino Pablo Loitering 20 Block Orinda Way Mentally Ill Commit 10 Block Rabbie Rd. Threats 500 Block Miner Rd. Transient Contact Moraga Way Trespass Orindawoods Dr./Kite Hill Rd. El Ribero/Camino Sobrante

Lamorinda Jiu-Jitsu and Kickboxing women's self-defense class empowers participants

By Emma Wong

The Lamorinda Jiu-Jitsu and Kickboxing studio hosted its bimonthly women's self-defense class on Aug. 20. The 90-minute session taught participants strategies to confront potential predators and prevent assaults.

Eighteen female participants – including middle and high schoolers, college students, and adults – attended this month's class, including Colbie Freese, a sophomore at Campolindo High School. "I came here to learn more about self-defense," Freese said. "Self-defense is super important for all women and girls to become empowered and be able to fight back when the opportunity arises."

According to the Lamorinda Jiu-Jitsu and Kickboxing website, class attendees learn "dynamic striking skills from any position, effective strategies for any attack, [and] the ability to stay calm in high-stress situations."

Coach Stephanie Moon, owner of Lamorinda Jiu-Jitsu and Kickboxing, led the class alongside Coach Melissa Quintana-Velete. Moon is a Gracie Jiu-Jitsu black belt and a lauded MMA, boxing, and Muay Thai champion. Quintana-Velete is an active coach and a Muay Thai-kickboxing specialist with over 20 years of experience.

"People ask what the most effective way to defend yourself is," Quintana-Velete said. "I think any martial art can be effective because it gives you confidence to say 'back up, what do you want?' and 'I can handle myself.'"

Participants learned core concepts of self-defense, including the four stages of assault. In stage one, the attacker identifies a subject. To initiate stage two, the attacker grabs the subject. During stage three, the attacker tackles the victim to the ground. In stage four, the assault is committed.

Moon's class aims to prevent women from entering stage one by teaching awareness.

"It's always important to be aware: make eye contact and stay off your phone," Moon said. "It's been statistically proven that when women fight back, they fare better." The National Institute of Justice reports that more than half of women who use physical resistance prevent sexual assault.

During the early stages, the class stresses escaping an attacker at first contact. "When someone grabs you, you have to start fighting back right away. Don't get into their car or go anywhere with them," Moon said.

Should the assault progress to stage two, the women learned how to re-

spond to physical threats, from an assaulter grabbing their wrist to being caught in a headlock. "We teach things like wrist escapes and ponytail grabs, which we have participants practice at home," Moon said. "[The moves] become visceral so you don't have to think about them."

In stage three, when an attacker pushes the victim to the floor, ground exercises are critical for escape. The women practiced breaking their falls and returning to a fighting stance. If pushed back down, they rehearsed a "guard get-up," an exercise stemming from jiu-jitsu. The last exercises dealt with stage four. Participants turned the tide against their attackers with techniques such as arm-bars – a type of martial arts hold.

The women formed a tight-knit community, partnering up to rehearse each tactic. "The community is really important, with all these girls gathering together for the same purpose," Stanley Middle School student Zoe Freese said.

In addition to a good workout, women across grade and age levels gained training and knowledge from the class. "I loved how educational the class was," Colbie Freese said. "We learned the techniques, but we also learned why we performed them and how they can be more effective. Not



Photo provided

only was it very hands-on, but we also learned what happens in a self-defense situation."

Statistics on assault in the United States highlight the need for self-defense, especially among women. According to the U.S. Department of Justice's 2022 Violence Against Women report, 91% of sexual assault and rape victims are female, with cases often involving intimate partners or other acquaintances. Additionally, the CDC reports that more than 1 in 2 women and nearly 1 in 3 men have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.

The importance of self-defense is not limited to women. "We want this class to be available to all people, not

just girls and women," Moon said. "You can fight back. Unfortunately, a lot of victims are attacked by someone they know. It's never the victims' fault."

"The key takeaway is that you can believe in and stand up for yourself," Quintana-Velete said. "There are a lot of dangerous people out there. Even just using your voice and telling people to stay away is very powerful."

Lamorinda Jiu-Jitsu and Kickboxing also offers jiu-jitsu, Muay-Thai kickboxing, adult wrestling, and kids' martial arts classes. Women's Brazilian jiu-jitsu sessions are held every Saturday at 9 a.m. For more details, visit <https://lamorindajiujiitsu.com/>.

Lamorinda girls' volleyball

... continued from Page A1

"For us to be successful, we have to improve our serving and passing," Walsh said. "We've been working hard to improve our overall consistency in our serving and our side out percentages."

Miramonte

Miramonte head coach Leslie Ray doesn't beat around the bush. "We're in a rebuilding phase," Ray said. "I lost 10 seniors from last year, seven of whom were the top killers on offense, so last year's underclassmen are stepping into big shoes that they have to fill."

With a roster of six seniors, four juniors, four sophomores and two freshmen, this is a team that is building for the future. "We're working hard and striving in every practice to get better," Ray said. "We're trying to figure out what our DNA is and what defines us as a team and all that will all come with the growth of the team."

Being a little undersized, Ray is working hard to put together the right combination on the front line. "It's about building the mentality that they can get out there and compete with anybody," Ray said. "We're going to work more on making sure that we're more control driven and taking our swings when we need to and just being smart with the ball."

The front line is led by co-captain Sadie Symonds, Hannah Rush, junior Amanda Roach, and freshman Sena Hens. "Sadie has been one of my top hitters and Hannah who played in the back line last year is now playing opposite and has one of the best arm swings as a lefty on the team. Amanda has been playing very well and Sena has a nice swing and has been doing very well as an outside hitter. I'm not afraid to play freshmen and in a year like this, I have to get them on the court."

The strength of the team is on the back line led by co-captain and four-year starter, libero Nicole Tuszynski and senior setter Keira Elliot. Also being used in the back line are senior co-captain Tara Dao, sophomore libero Ava Burton and freshman setter Maddie Yun.

"Nicole is one of the top liberos in our league and with Keira are a strong pair," Ray said. "Tara who is listed as an outside hitter will also be

playing as a defensive specialist along with Sadie Symonds. Ava Burton should also see a lot more time as a libero as the season develops. Maddie, who played club prior to entering high school, plays so calm and is really mature for a freshman and is playing a lot behind Keira."

Having coached for so many years, Ray knows what it takes to put together a winning team. "For us to be successful it's just not letting any team that comes your way win, or lose, but knowing how to deal with it. It's up to us to grow from every experience and our ultimate plan for every game is to get better."

Campolindo

It's accepted that every team will lose players to graduation but for the Campolindo team, there were other key losses for the team that had not been expected. Charlotta Bell, the team's MVP last season, is coming off knee surgery and is out for the beginning of the season, Makenna Crosson moved with her family to San Jose and another starter simply opted to no longer play high school volleyball which has led to Campolindo having an uncharacteristic 3-4 record.

"When you lose three starters that had Division I college potential, you have to build with what you've got," head coach John Vuong said. "We're improving and progressing but with those losses, that's why we are where we are at today."

At this point, Vuong is looking for the chemistry on the team to develop. "We've had a lot of unforced errors which is showing that the girls don't have the necessary understanding of each other on the court," Vuong said.

Right now, our leader in the front court is Aveya Stone who is getting a lot of looks," Vuong said "We also have Hanna Bjornson, Gwen Koplun, and Charlotte Eirich on the outside. Mia Walloch and Ava Rogers are up from JV and we have a junior transfer that came in from Texas, Gia Okulicz, who is an athletic, well-rounded player who will be playing on the outside."

Things just don't come together that quickly with so many new players. "It's going to take about a half a season for these guys to come together," Vuong said.

Things are also in a bit of flux on the back row as well.

"At this point it's still wide open as to who among six players is going to establish themselves as the starting libero and another five who are competing for the defensive specialist position," Vuong said. "We don't have a true, established lineup and we're still trying to figure out whether to run a 5-1 or 6-2 lineup. There is a lot of uncertainty right now for us to define who we are."

Rachel Andre is the Cougars' senior setter along with sophomore Cassidy Woo who is up from last year's JV team. "It's a challenge now," Vuong said, "and I believe that it is going to be wide open in our league and anybody can win it, so it does make it more

interesting and exciting."

Vuong's advice to his players is simple and succinct: "I tell them to accept who you are. You can't be last year's team or other teams from the past. You have to be who you

are. Be better than yesterday and set small goals. That's what I am asking of them, and I've seen it in practice."



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Letters to the editor

A dissenting view on Lafayette's hillside 'memorial'

I first saw the hillside crosses opposite the Lafayette BART station in February 2005, immediately after returning from a yearlong tour of duty in Baghdad as a Medical Service Corps officer in the US Army. When I saw them, I became angry as it seemed to me that the sacrifices of my fellow servicemembers, Coalition forces and countless Iraqis were being exploited for a cheap political end. The intervening 20 years have not changed my opinion, that it serves no useful purpose and should be removed. Real people with real families lost their lives in Iraq, and in Afghanistan, and in countless other places. The impersonal and anonymous nature of the Lafayette crosses underscores that the people who erected them did not know or care about the victims or the parents, siblings and children who suffered, as individuals. The crosses provide no comfort to the families of the fallen and are not meant to.

Ask any soldier, if you should be fortunate enough to meet one, and they will tell you that wars are bad, especially for the people in them. But they will also tell you that their comrades who gave their lives, and their families, deserve personal recognition for their sacrifices as people, and not as faceless unknowns. There are better examples of war memorials, the Vietnam War Memorial for one, and even Lafayette's own Veterans Memorial Building, where the builders took the trouble to find out who they were memorializing, and why.

John Donnelly
Moraga

Crosses: Overrated impact, dilapidated, kinda creepy. Not Iconic anymore

I've been meaning to write regarding the crosses for several months. Now is the time.

First, I live two blocks away, and have passed by the hillside thousands of times in my residency, maybe tens of thousands of times. I recently brought the young one there, under two years old, on a walk. We hovered near the center of the exhibit, but our stroll there was short lived as up close, the hillside reveals the crosses are dilapidated, lacking paint, often falling apart, and in general kind of a beside the point exhibit. Certainly nothing profound is felt upon seeing them. I remember the names on some religious memo-

rials but the mass above these names added nothing.

The weathered notion of a non-cemetery hill of crosses is off putting, up close, in their current state. The region has moved on. A small group of Mt. Diablo club members may show up for events, with a camera-seeking politician ready to microphone (verb) on the big days, but I would wager the crosses are a puzzle to passersby. It is not an interesting place. The call of the 2000s is long past, regarding such a visual. I appreciate Karen MacMichael doing a world peace sermon, but many residents may have a military connection, even if a generation removed, so it is sometimes already on the radar. We do have a Purple Heart winning Iraq War veteran housed near the corners of Monroe and Moraga Blvds. He, like the current owner of the hillside, shall remain anonymous. I tend to think one of these nameless folk would be more publicly embraced than the other. The grateful city that we are, I assume many of the Acalanes graduating classes near 2001 knows this veteran's travails and triumphs.

Time moves on. The crosses have had their day. Maybe in the case of the hillside, I would favor 400 units of low-income housing, yes, in my backyard. Let's do it! As long as the overseeing housing authority is not derelict and does not misdirect its funding, the wood of these 400 will not chip and crack, nor split and fray, as has the currently embedded material.

Dad did a tour or two, or was it three. Yes, his aunt, and parents, and wife, and children, know the costs. I heard it said recently, no need to be sanctimonious or preachy. Often a picture is worth a thousand words.

Jim Rule
Lafayette

Regarding East Bay Sea Serpents story

I was delighted to read Asha Spitzer's piece on the East Bay Sea Serpents' participation in this summer's Orinda Moraga Pool Association swim meet. It is rare to find a

news story with such in-depth coverage of a Special Olympics event, complete with athlete comments. Spitzer does an exemplary job of treating the athletes as athletes and bringing the event to life.

Anyone interested in swimming or volunteering with the East Bay Sea Serpents can visit the team's site at <http://www.ebss.team/>.

Jennifer Reid
Lafayette

50th Anniversary of Orindawoods

Orindawoods is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Thanks to our Firewise volunteers, Orindawoods is a Firewise USA community. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars maintaining our 187 acres (about 4% of Orinda!) and complying with MOFD regulations. Last year, we removed 40 dead and dying large trees. We clear our large open spaces every spring to minimize fuel for a fire. Orindawoods Drive is a major evacuation route in case of a natural disaster. Orindawoods also clears the route for our first responders and neighbors.

We have no gates or barriers. Lamorinda residents can jog or stroll along on our sidewalks and enjoy our lovely gardens and parks. We do ask dogwalkers to please clean up after your dog and remove all waste. Please don't leave a bag of dog waste on our sidewalks! We love the steady procession of dogwalkers and pets, but note we don't have anyone to clean up after your pet!

Our lovely pond is home to waterfowl and fish. We welcome visitors to enjoy the pastoral scene, but we cannot permit fishing due to insurance restrictions. Please pass the word, as some anglers apparently can't read the "No Fishing" signs!

Orindawoods takes seriously its charge as the steward of this beautiful community. We extend a warm welcome to our fellow Lamorindans to enjoy a lovely walk through Orindawoods in its golden anniversary year.

Dick Rogan,
President, Orindawoods Association

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With concerns regarding proposed toll hikes on bridges, SB-532 is put on hold

By Vera Kochan

Seven members of the House of Representatives, led by Mark DeSaulnier (D - Walnut Creek) and Anna G. Eshoo (D - Menlo Park), had written and signed an Aug. 4 letter to Gov. Gavin Newsom, State Senate and Assembly Leaders Toni Atkins and Robert Rivas (respectively), expressing their concern over SB-

532 - a bill that, if passed, would have raised tolls on seven Bay Area bridges (operated by Bay Area Toll Authority) by \$1.50, resulting in drivers paying \$9.50 to cross one bridge as soon as 2024. This would not apply to the Golden Gate Bridge, which is operated and maintained by Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District.

SB-532 was written by State Senator Scott Wiener and Assembly Member Lori Wilson (D - Suisun City) with the intent of giving Bay Area transit agencies enough time to continue services while seeking a reliable source in the form a possible ballot measure.

During an Aug. 22 interview on KTVU FOX 2 Wiener stated, "We had a lot of support in our Bay Area legislative delegations, but there was opposition, too. So ultimately, we ran out of time to try to build consensus, so we are going to work over the fall recess to try to build more consensus around a funding solution."

If SB-532 had passed, Lamorinda residents who commute to work five days a week over bridges could have expected to pay approximately \$2,470 in annual toll fees. Hardest hit would have been low- and moderate-income residents who don't have the luxury of working from home.

"Data from bridge toll transactions shows that 59% of toll payers on the Bay Area bridges come from just three East Bay counties: Alameda County (27.5%), Contra Costa County (19.7%) and Solano County (11.8%)," stated the letter. "On the San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge alone, where over 31 million toll transactions occurred in one year, 52% of the toll payers came from Alameda County and Contra Costa County. Further, the percentage of bridge drivers originating from Contra Costa County, San Mateo County, and Santa Clara County has increased since 2015, and now

accounts for almost 31% of toll transactions."

The letter also acknowledged that COVID-19 had an adverse effect on transit systems to the point that financial sustainability took a hit, and ridership complaints pointed to lack of safety, security, reliability, and filthy conditions.

The members of congress also felt that additional information was needed to warrant such a toll hike. They requested a cost-benefit analysis of the impact of the proposed increase in bridge tolls on the average daily driver of these affected Bay Area bridges, a plan for independent oversight of both the distribution of funds by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to the Bay Area transit agencies and the usage of funds by Bay Area transit agencies, as well as an analysis of which transit agencies will receive support from these funds and their areas of service, compared to the drivers that pay the tolls. They also wanted to know the impact of this type of short-term funding source on finding sustainable long-term solutions, without substantial external aid/bailouts (including emergency federal aid), to support the operations of Bay Area transit agencies, and requested an impact analysis of low-income or car-dependent commuters.

According to DeSaulnier's website, "The letter has received support from The Bay Area Council. 'The Bay Area Council, which has led and supported numerous major investments in transportation over the generations strongly opposes SB-532,' said Jim Wunderman, Bay Area Council President and CEO. 'Before yet again asking motorists to dig deep and pay more tolls, let's have a complete and honest review of our region's transit system, and ensure that we are delivering on reliability, efficiency, safety and connectivity among the 27 operating agencies. The public deserves nothing less.'"

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Acalanes alum wins award at Cannes Film Festival



Photo Jacqueline Rosenthal

Acalanes alum and "Waves Apart" cinematographer, Jack Lattin (right) and "Waves Apart" director, Josh Greene (left), walk the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival.

By Diane Clayton

As Jack Lattin approached the end of his four years at Acalanes High School, he faced the dilemma that most graduating high schoolers do: what's next?

A self-described math and science kid, Lattin considered pursuing engineering as the "safe route," he said. But as someone who loves movies, had been making short films throughout high school and fondly remembers using his flip camera to film in his neighborhood when he was only 7 years old, he also dreamt of a career in filmmaking.

Film school won out and, as he walked the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year, there was no doubt that he made the right choice.

After graduating from Acalanes in 2018, Lattin went south to attend the University of Southern California (USC) School of Cinematic Arts, considered the best film program in the world.

In his freshman year, Lattin met fellow student Josh Greene and the two have been collaborating on films ever since. In their senior year, Greene asked Lattin to work with him on his thesis documentary, "Waves Apart." Greene served as the director while Lattin was the cinematographer of the short subject documentary.

The 24-minute film is about antisemitism in surfing, particularly in the California surfing history and culture. Greene is a surfer and has personally witnessed, as well as faced, anti-

semitism. He serves as the narrator and interviews other Jewish surfers and surfing experts, learning of their similar experiences.

Lattin credits his years as a swimmer at Acalanes and a junior coach at Lafayette's Sun Valley Pool for helping prepare him to film one of the final scenes in "Waves Apart" when seven surfers paddle out and say a prayer in Hebrew, all while Lattin is treading water, holding his camera and filming the emotional act.

"Waves Apart" has been entered in numerous film festivals and competitions and has received glowing reviews as well as several very prestigious awards. Shortly after Lattin and Greene graduated, the film was a finalist for the 2022 Student Academy Award, sponsored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as a platform for emerging global talent.

It premiered at the well-regarded Santa Barbara International Film Festival, where it had two screenings and Lattin and Greene participated in a question and answer session. It has been selected to be shown at the upcoming San Diego International Film Festival as well as the Paris Surf and Skate Film Festival. Following its showing at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, a reviewer wrote, "'Waves Apart' is a short documentary that leaves a deep lingering impression."

Perhaps the most impressive award came from the Cannes Film Festival's Emerg-

ing Filmmaker Showcase, considered one of the most important events on the international film calendar. A jury of agents, producers and industry members presented "Waves Apart" with the award for Best Student Documentary.

As significant as this award is, Lattin notes that "one of the most rewarding experiences with the film is being able to show it in more private screenings," as they did at Lafayette's Temple Isaiah recently. "It's interesting to hear the conversations that take place following the viewings," Lattin says.

Lattin and Greene hope to find a distributor so that "Waves Apart" can reach a wider audience.

"I love documentary cinematography," Lattin proclaims, "because of the improvisational nature of it ... it's you and the camera, very stripped down crew, equipment and it's like you're a fly on the wall. You can be creative in a real time setting, an aspect that has always been exciting to me."

Following their 2022 graduation, Lattin and Greene briefly went in different directions. However, they quickly realized that they both wanted to "develop their own artistic voices and manage both their creative control and their schedules," Lattin explains. So they again teamed up, forming their own film production company, Landport Productions. The company is doing branded commercial projects as well as working on both independent documentaries and scripted narratives.

And Landport just hired their first intern: a fellow Acalanes graduate, Brooke Westphal. Described by Lattin as an educational program where interns can "learn and participate in all aspects of outreach, development and production," Westphal will direct a commercial under the Landport banner this month.

Westphal isn't the only Acalanes alum that Lattin is working with. For the past several years, he has been writing a script with longtime friends and former classmates Kahren Eloyan and Karl-Erik Mills. Lattin describes the movie as a coming-of-age action film that "features a variety of iconic East Bay locations and highlights the area's Armenian community." Greene will produce the film and they are hoping to shoot around the Bay Area within the year.

Lattin hopes to direct films in the future. "What I'm trying to do now," he reports, "is develop skills in all areas because knowing all the jobs and understanding the collaboration process will only make me that much better as a director."

To view a trailer of "Waves Apart," go to: youtube.com/watch?v=Vw1_g6syyWY.

The art of birdwatching highlighted in book of poetry



Image provided

By Alison Burns

In 2020, as the world learned to adjust to the COVID-19 lockdown, wild bird seed suddenly began to disappear off pet shop shelves, while sales of birdbaths and hummingbird feeders almost doubled. The rest of the world had discovered what Jim Roethe, long-time member of the Golden Gate Audubon Society, had

known for decades: the BP-lowering, stress-relieving, endlessly fascinating art of birdwatching.

Roethe, a semi-retired attorney, has spent around 50 years hiking and birding in the East Bay Regional Park system, and on Aug. 5 he was joined by a rapt audience at Orinda Books to present "Poetry Takes Flight: Birds of California."

This latest book is Roethe's sixth, and the first to showcase his self-penned poems, which feature alongside the photographs and captions of the 77 birds featured in the book – each of which has been spotted by Roethe either on his NorCal walks, in his Orinda backyard or during the Audobon Society's North Orinda Christmas Bird Counts that he sometimes leads.

Roethe spoke of waking in his boyhood home to the

sound of birdsong and discovering that his morning soundtrack came from the Red-winged Blackbird. Roethe's accompanying video clip, borrowed from the internet, featured a mile of trees, on whose bare branches sat half a million blackbirds in full-throated song, "like a river of birds flowing."

Anna's Hummingbird came next, with a PBS video clip that will probably make it hard to glimpse this demure little bird ever again without recalling the male's kamikaze mating ritual: traveling at 400 times its own length every second, he dives toward his mate so fast that the air produces a sound which the female apparently finds irresistible, lending a whole new meaning to the idea of "speed dating."

... continued on Page B2

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Photos Susie Iventosch

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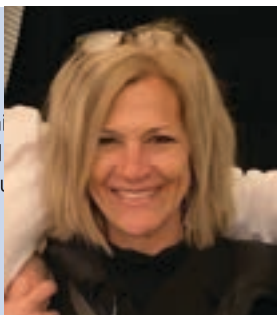
Here's a fun little autumn twist on the classic pineapple upside down cake using seasonal apples in place of the pineapple slices. The caramelized apples pair beautifully with this delicious vanilla cake for a fun fall dessert. You can use green or red apples but be sure to use apples that hold up well in baking. I've made this cake with both Granny Smith and Honeycrisp apples and really enjoyed both. If you want a little more color to the top of your cake, use red apples and leave the skins on. You can also make this cake in a round pan instead of square and that will give you different options on the apple pattern you choose for the eventual top of the cake. I arranged the apples in a quilted pattern for this square cake. You can arrange

the apples any way you like, but if you use a square pan, this pattern seems to work very well. If you choose a similarly sized round pan you can arrange them in a circular fashion like a swirl or a flower.

One key thing to know about upside down cake, is that when it is done baking, you should remove it from the oven and let the cake cool for 10 minutes (not more and not less) before inverting it. This seems to be just the right amount of time to allow the cake to flip perfectly. Then, leave the pan over the inverted cake for a few minutes to allow all of the topping to work its way out of the pan. This way you won't miss any of the delicious gooey topping.

We have also made this cake with plums and peaches in the summer and that is a great summertime version, too!

Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. Our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to see the recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



INGREDIENTS

Apples

3 medium apples Granny Smith, Braeburn or Honeycrisp
2 oz. butter, melted (1/4 cup or 1/2 stick or 4 tbsp.)
1 cup (packed) light brown sugar
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. cardamom (use 1/4 tsp. nutmeg or allspice if you don't have cardamom)

Cake Batter

1/3 cup butter, at room temperature
1/3 cup light brown sugar
1/3 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs, separated
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups cake flour can use all-purpose, but cake flour makes the cake a bit fluffier
1 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
1/3 cup apple juice
1/3 cup milk

DIRECTIONS

Apples:

Grease or spray an 8x8 inch baking pan. Preheat oven to 350 F.

Core apples and slice into thin (1/4 to 1/2-inch) wedges. You can peel the apples too, if you prefer, but we like the color from the red apples, so we leave the peels on. Gently toss the apples with the cinnamon and cardamom.

Mix 1 cup brown sugar with melted butter and spread evenly on the bottom of the prepared baking pan.

Arrange apple slices in whatever pattern you like on top of the brown sugar. Set aside while you make the cake.

Cake Batter:

Separate eggs into whites and yolks. Keep the yolks handy for adding to the cake batter. Place whites in a mixing bowl and, using clean, dry beaters, beat until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

Mix flour, baking powder and salt together in a small bowl. Set aside. Mix milk, apple juice and vanilla together and set aside.

Cream butter and sugars together in a large mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks and beat well. Add flour and liquids alternately beating well after each. Begin and end with dries. Gently fold beaten egg whites into the batter just until incorporated.

Spread batter over the apples in the prepared baking pan. Bake for 30 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean.

Remove from oven and allow to cool for 10 minutes. Then, place a cake platter or a serving plate upside down on top of the cake. Holding tightly to both the cake pan and the serving dish, invert the cake. Leave the baking pan on top of the inverted cake just until most of the good stuff drips down over the cake, about 3-5 minutes. Remove the cake pan.

Serve apple upside cake with a dollop of whipped cream or your favorite vanilla, cinnamon, caramel or praline ice cream or frozen dessert. We also love yogurt-whipped cream with this cake. Simply whip 1 cup of whipping cream and fold in 3/4 cup nonfat Greek (thick) yogurt. Flavor with a teaspoon of vanilla and one tablespoon of powdered sugar.

Note - don't wait too long to invert your cake after it comes out of the oven. We find that 10 minutes is plenty of time for the cake to cool enough to flip it. If you wait too long to invert the cake, the caramelized apple topping can get crystallized and stick to the bottom of the cake pan. This can mess with your apple pattern and makes it harder to make a beautiful cake presentation!

International film in Orinda: 'The Eight Mountains' a touching fresco of two interwoven lives



Photo provided

By Sophie Braccini

Between two boys, growing into maturity and adulthood, the long path of their intertwined destinies unfolds in "The Eight Mountains," a lyric Italian movie opening in Orinda on Sept. 15.

The title of the movie comes from a Hindu metaphor: Inside a circle that represents the world are eight mountains and seas; at the center of the circle is the highest mountain. Who is the person who sees most? The one who travels the eight mountains, or the one

that takes the time to climb to the summit of the central one? This is the existential question at the heart of the movie co-directed by Felix Van Groeningen and Charlotte Vandermeersch, adapted from the Italian best selling novel by Paolo Cognetti.

In a magnificent setting in the heart of the Italian Alps, as well as other places around the world, "The Eight Mountains" tells the story of two friends, almost brothers, and their quest for meaning and belonging. This long saga, over two hours, contrasts the very different life choices made by the two young men. One stays true to his roots, what he feels is his true nature, going up an arduous path that makes him one with the mountains he loves. The other one is the wanderer, lost sometimes, but always seeking. At the center of the friendship that was born in childhood and will almost never falter, is the figure of a

father, and what he wanted to transmit to the two boys.

Along the way, many topics are touched upon. The difficulty to make a living as a small mountain farmer, the fantasies people have about returning to nature, the commonality between people around the world that live precarious traditional lifestyles. The movie does not present the return to nature as the ideal choice to find authenticity again. It is not that simple and the choices of following in one's parents' footsteps or breaking away from it are shown in all their complexity, as well as their uncertainties as far as consequences.

Luca Marinelli as Pietro and Alessandro Borghi as Bruno have been cast perfectly. The two actors offer nuanced performances portraying the evolution of their characters, making them infinitely likeable.

The co-directors are from Belgium, but they decided to

film in Italian in the Aosta Valley (in the Italian Alps) that had inspired Paolo Cognetti when he wrote his novel. They learned Italian and moved there ahead of filming. During an interview given to Franceinfo before the 2022 Cannes Film Festival, the directors indicated that they had chosen a square visual format to be able to better portray the mountains' height. They also explained their choice of creating a very linear film to reinforce the feeling that there is no going back in life.

This beautiful and touching fresco will open at the Orinda Theatre on Sept. 15 for at least one week. "The Eight Mountains" won several international prestigious awards including the Jury's Prize at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival. It is brought to Lamorinda by the local nonprofit, the International Film Showcase. Tickets at www.orindamovies.com/

The art of birdwatching

... continued from Page B1

Roethe told a tale of walking the Orinda Country Club golf course and, seeing an empty hollow in a nearby tree, drew close to look inside. His poem begins: "Hollow tree I see up yonder, what could be its use I ponder/Might the tree be sick I wonder, or just a slight on tree's décor?"

His head in the hollow, our plucky poet was forced to leap back several feet when an enormous Mama Turkey Vulture shot out straight into his face. However, once over the shock, Roethe braved another inspection and discovered two fluffy fledglings staring back at him, photos of which appear in the book.

Stanza three concludes with the words "Mother watching patiently/Wants me gone forevermore."

Roethe spoke about his varied writing style throughout the book, revealing that in this case he was aiming to write "to the meter of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Raven.'"

He also took a stab at writing Japanese haikus, the three-line unrhymed poem with a five-seven-five syllable pattern. It's a difficult poetic form to master but Roethe obviously studied it well, ensuring that his final line concluded with the traditional "cutting word" and bestowing this unique cadence on America's national bird, the Bald Eagle.

This time, Roethe showed a video of a Bald Eagle hovering over water, its eye on a huge hake below. Seamlessly, the bird dives down, grabs the massive fish (estimated to be the same weight as the eagle) and soars back up into the sky. Apparently there's fast food ... and

then there's not-quite-fast-enough food.

There are many more fascinating birds in this book, each with its own unique story. Why, for instance, is the Common Poorwill unfairly labeled a "goatsucker"? Which well-camouflaged bird possesses the unique talent to put itself into a state of torpor for minutes or even months? And whose elongated white and orange bill has earned him the moniker "Skunkhead Coot"?

Jim Roethe's passion for his subject is evident on every page, and that passion surely ignited the same feeling in his audience: one woman asked how to get started with birdwatching. After several moments, Roethe replied "get out of the house ... get onto the trail, buy a pair of 'not too expensive but not cheap' binoculars - and just be observant."

As Seen in Lamorinda



Photo Bernard Martin

This photo of the Super Blue Moon resting on top of the Lafayette Reservoir tower, trying to hide behind a curtain of smoke, was taken at 6:41 a.m. Aug. 31 by Bernard Martin of Orinda.

Temple Isaiah hosts JCRC 'Here I Am' initiative to unite against antisemitism

Submitted by Rebecca Norton



Photo provided

Numerous officials gather on Aug. 25 at Temple Isaiah in Lafayette for JCRC initiative.

Following a growing trend nationwide of antisemitism attacks by swatting, hate speech, and hate crimes to members

within this marginalized community, Temple Isaiah on Aug. 25 hosted the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) "Here I Am: Communities United Against Antisemitism" initiative to unite against antisemitism. The conference included numerous Contra Costa County and California elected officials, including U.S. Representative Mark DeSaulnier, State Senator Steve Glazer, Assembly member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, Assembly member Tim Grayson, Walnut Creek Council member Kevin Wilk, El Cerrito Mayor Pro Tem Tessa Rudnick, Hercules Mayor Alex Walker-Griffin, and Contra Costa County District Attor-

ney Diana Becton.

Community leaders, including Temple Isaiah's Senior Rabbi Jill Perlman, Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church Rev. Jaime Polson, and JCRC Bay Area CEO Tyler Gregory spoke in response to the growing antisemitic hate crimes in California, and highlighted that all members of the convening were providing a demonstration of solidarity and support of the Jewish community.

"Today's gathering is all about us proclaiming 'Here I

am" as we acknowledge the deep pain of antisemitism in our midst," Perlman said. "We are bound together; each one of us, as human beings, to create the world that we all deserve. A world where folks of all heritages, all ethnicities, all religions, can show up exactly as who we are without fear of bias and discrimination. We stand here today with one foot in the world as it is and one in the world as it should be. Bridging the gap with our witness, accountability, and love."

For more information about JCRC's "Here I Am: Communities United Against Antisemitism" please visit their website at [JCRC.org/blog/here-i-am](https://www.jcrc.org/blog/here-i-am) To watch the conference through the recorded livestream, visit: <https://youtube.com/live/iyXKb5DFk24?feature=share>

Lafayette elementary students spend 2 weeks studying in the Czech Republic

Submitted by Martina Heithoff



Lukas (left) and Adam (right) pose with books signed by their classmates during their last day of school.

Photo provided

Lukas (9) and Adam (7) from Lafayette Elementary School spent two weeks in June studying alongside Czech students in their respective grades in the small wine-making village of Brumovice in the south east corner of the Czech Republic, which is where their mom was born and raised and where their grandparents still live. Being half Czech and speaking Czech made it easier for them to adapt and understand the subject; nevertheless, it takes a lot of courage and

bravery to enter new classrooms that have already been meeting since September. Their family was proud of them for wanting to take two weeks out of their summer vacations to go back to school in a new environment where they did not know anyone. They were also very appreciative of the school director and all of the school staff for enabling this opportunity, particularly for them taking on an additional two students during the busy end of the school year period.

Lamorinda community donates over 1,500 pairs of shoes

By Cynthia Brian



Photo provided

From left: Campo Key Club Officers Suraya Mathai-Jackson, Claire Damiano, Chloe Cheung, Nina Damiano, and Zarah Thomas.

Moraga nonprofit Be the Star You Are, in partnership with 5A Rent-A-Space and Mark Hoog's State Farm Insurance, want to thank all the supporters who donated to its shoe drive to support micro-entrepreneurs, mostly women, in developing countries to help them build self-sufficiency, and to benefit their local communities by supplying much-needed affordable shoes.

With the help of the community, BTSYA was able to collect 1,575 pairs of shoes which will be shipped to countries in poverty. Teen chairperson, Ella Kalpakjian, who spearheaded collecting

shoes from local schools commented, "Although we didn't reach our goal of 2,000 pairs, the amount we collected is insanely impressive!"

George Burnz, manager of 5A was pleased as he believes that this effort epitomizes the meaning of "community caring," and Mark Hoogs stated, "Thanks to the generosity of so many people in our community in Lamorinda, 1,575 people will have shoes that may not have otherwise had them - allowing them to work and go about their daily life activities more safely - something we're fortunate to be able to take for granted."

Kiwanis announces Campolindo Key Club Service Award winners

Submitted by Steve Woehleke

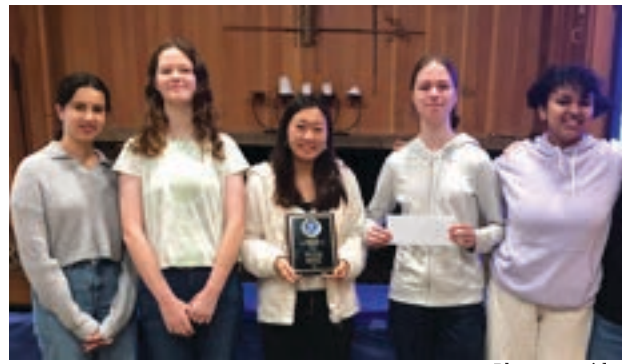


Photo provided

From left: Campo Key Club Officers Suraya Mathai-Jackson, Claire Damiano, Chloe Cheung, Nina Damiano, and Zarah Thomas.

The Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley is proud to announce this year's Campolindo Key Club Service Award to Chloe Cheung ('24), their Key Club Fundraising Coordinator, who was chosen by the Campo Key Club Officers Suraya Mathai-Jackson, Claire Damiano, Nina Damiano, and Zarah Thomas.

In the words of these impressive officers: "We chose Chloe to receive the Key Club Community Service Award because she has gone above and beyond her role as Fundraising Coordinator, taking initiative in planning events and showing up to every Key Club meeting with enthusiasm and new ideas. She was incredibly helpful in our

garage sale fundraiser, organizing supplies, transporting donations, and leading volunteers, and the success of the garage sale was in large part, because of her dedicated time and effort. Chloe has been a very supportive officer, always ready to contribute her time or her ideas, and it has been an honor to work with her this year!"

The Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley sponsors Key Clubs at each of the Lamorinda high schools and coordinates with these clubs on various service projects and leadership efforts as they offer great service to our extended communities in Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

Students raise money for Red Cross with Leis for Lahaina fundraiser

Submitted by MSD Superintendent Julie Parks



Photo provided

In the Moraga School District, a commitment to service learning is a priority. Community service helps to build empathy and connectedness for our students - and hopefully a lifelong commitment to giving back and supporting a healthy community! As students came back to school after a tragic disaster in Maui, it was an obvious next step to mobilize into action. Under the fantastic direction of Clare Fallon, Camino Pablo fifth-grade teacher, the vision for Leis for Lahaina emerged. Ms. Fallon collaborated with her fellow leadership teach-

ers throughout the district, Brett Lorie (JM), Jessica Labasco (LP), and Kelly Cavellero (Rheem) to develop a plan for leadership students to make leis in support of the victims of the Maui wildfire. The leis were made by students for students to purchase and wear on Sept. 1. All proceeds from the Leis will be donated to the American Red Cross. We are so proud of our Moraga students for supporting this effort and working so hard to ensure that Moraga can be part of the support for victims of this terrible tragedy.

In Memory

Ruth Caroline Dyer

July 13, 1921 – March 22, 2022

Covid-delayed services will be held 11 a.m. Saturday, 23 Sept. 2023, at St Anselm's Episcopal Church for Ruth Dyer, a resident of Lafayette for over 70 years.

Born in Oakland July 13, 1921, she grew up in Tulare County where her father grew oranges and olives. She died at home March 22, 2022.

The holder of B.A. and M.A. Degrees in History and a Teaching Credential, all from U.C Berkeley, Ruth taught at Acalanes High School for 30 years.

After her 1951 move to Lafayette, Ruth immersed herself in the community. At various times, she served on the St. Anselm's Vestry, the Lafayette and Contra Costa County Historical Societies, the Lafayette Sign Commission, the Lafayette Design Project, and the Alamo-Lafayette Cemetery District.

Ruth was predeceased by her parents Ephraim and Zoe Dyer, brothers Ephraim and Peter Dyer and their wives, and niece Carolyn Dyer.

She is survived by nephews Stephen, Peter, and John Dyer, and nieces Susanne Dyer and Jane Dyer Cook and their families.

Ruth's ashes will be interred beside those of her parents in the Old Pioneer Cemetery section of Hayward's Chapel of the Chimes Cemetery.

The family suggests memorial gifts to the Save the Redwoods League, Attn Alder Creek Grove Restoration Project, 114 Sansome St, San Francisco, CA 94104.

In Memory

Avonia "Vonie" Marsh Dondero

Feb. 12, 1929 – Aug. 30, 2023

Avonia "Vonie" Marsh Dondero passed away on Aug. 30, 2023 at the age of 94. She was born in Berkeley, California, on Feb. 12, 1929. She attended Berkeley High School, fall class of 1946; University of California, class of 1951, and married Raymond Stevenson Dondero on Dec. 20, 1952. She was an Orinda resident from 1955 to 1997 and a Rossmoor resident since.

Vonie was a devoted mother, Chi Omega Sorority leader, accomplished ice skater, judge, and accountant, enthusiastic traveler, skilled weaver and seamstress, golfer, gardener, family genealogist and member of Daughters of the American Revolution.

Vonie was predeceased by her husband, Raymond Stevenson Dondero and her son, Steven Battaglia Dondero.

She is survived by her sister, Marilyn Marsh Wilson, daughter, Denise Dondero Schaffer, and son, David Edward Dondero, three grandsons, and five great-grandchildren, the most recent born just seven days before in a lovely reminder of the endless circle of life.

A private interment ceremony will be held at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Orinda at a future date.

In memory of Vonie, contributions may be made to the "UC Davis Foundation," directed to the George Marsh Scholarship Fund (Department of Food Science and Technology) at: UC Davis Gift Administrator, 202 Cousteau Place, Suite 185, Davis, CA 95618.

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 200 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations or Remembrances" in the subject line.

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

Not to be missed

Art

East Bay Artists Guild announces: Local artists will display and sell their works on Saturday, Oct. 7, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Celebration Center, located at 1601 Mary Drive in Pleasant Hill. All are welcome to explore the array of art and enjoy refreshments.

The Lafayette Public Art Committee is excited to present "The Morning Bell Project," an exhibition, featuring a community quilt and moving drawings by children, that raises awareness around keeping schools safe from gun violence. The show is on view now until Jan. 9 at the Library Public Art Gallery located in the Don Tatzin Community Hall, adjacent to the Lafayette Library and Learning Center (3491 Mt Diablo Blvd). The venue is only open during public events at the Community Hall. A reception will be held on Oct. 10 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. Families and children are welcome.

The September exhibit at the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library is Native American Sand Paintings, watercolor paintings by Rita Skyler, oil and watercolor paintings by Jane Raymond, and encaustic/resin art and paintings by Claudette McDermott. The gallery is at 26 Orinda Way and is open Monday to Saturday.

Music

Fall Music Series: Vibes at the Veranda. An exciting season of music featuring larger bands with a much more robust sound. Join us every Wednesday from Sept. 13 through Oct. 18, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Fountain Pavilion Park (Diamond Boulevard, Concord). This free 6-week Fall Music Series is the perfect way to celebrate the arrival of autumn with phenomenal food, delightful entertainment, and a fantastic atmosphere. The 2023 Vibes at the Veranda lineup includes: Sept. 13: Ariel Marin Band; Sept. 20: Jonah Melvon Band; Sept. 27: Hella Fitzgerald; Oct. 4: Jazz Mafia ft. Erin Honeywell and Solas B Lalgee; Oct. 11: Feed the Kitty and Oct. 18: Grupo Nostalgia

Internationally known pianist Randall Benway returns to perform Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 with the Diablo Symphony Orchestra on Sunday, Sept. 17, at 2 p.m. at the Leshner Center for the Arts. Jean Sibelius's Symphony No. 1 and his majestic tone poem "Finlandia" are also featured. Benway, a longtime Lafayette resident before moving to Washington State, has performed extensively in the US, Europe, and Asia. Visit www.diablosymphony.org for details and a ticketing link.

Ensemble Mirable performs the first concert set of San Francisco Early Music Society's exciting 2023-24 season from Sept. 29 to Oct. 1, in a concert that unearths and brings to light lesser-known early music gems. "Beyond Bach and Handel" showcases buried treasure in that it highlights less familiar Baroque composers such as Salamone Rossi, Dietrich Becker, Biagio Marini, and Jean Zewalt Triemer, who rub shoulders in this concert set with their more famous colleagues such as Bach, Vivaldi, and Handel. Friday, Sept. 29, 7:30 p.m., in Palo Alto; Saturday, Sept. 30, 7:30 p.m., in Berkeley; Sunday, Oct. 1, 4 p.m., in San Francisco. Tickets between \$30 and \$40 per ticket; attendees are encouraged to pay more if they are able to. <https://www.sfems.org>

Classical Voice and Nature Songs, Local Opera Stars Perform at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Walnut Creek. Saturday, Sept. 16, 7 p.m. 1924 Trinity Avenue, Walnut Creek, or online broadcast: visit stpaulswc.org/concert-series for the concert link. Donations graciously accepted at the door (avg. \$20/\$10 Students) and in our online registration. All are welcome regardless of donation! (925) 934-2324

Theatre

Laurie Roldan has partnered with Town Hall Theatre Co. in Lafayette to bring back her popular Cabaret series, "Laurie Sings a Song for You: A Cabaret Concert Inspired by the Music of Karen Carpenter." Sept. 15 and 16 at 2 p.m. Featuring special guest vocalists Anita Colotto and Michelle Ianiro, musicians Scott Welsh and Devon Minser, and Town Hall Education students. Happy hour from 1-1:30 p.m. during the matinee performances. Town Hall Theatre Co, 3535 School Street, Lafayette.

Not to be missed

Tickets: general, \$45. senior/youth, \$40. www.townhalltheatre.com/lauriesings

Town Hall Theatre Company: "The Turn of the Screw," adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher, story by Henry James. Sept. 28 and 29 (Previews), Sept. 30-Oct. 21. Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School Street, Lafayette. Tickets: \$20-45, Pay-What-You-Can tickets will be available at all performances at the door. www.townhalltheatre.com/turnofscrew

Free performances of San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's production of Cymbeline take place at the Bruns Amphitheater, 100 California Shakespeare Theater Way, Orinda on: Sept. 16, 17, 23 and 24. All shows are at 4 p.m. No ticket or reservation is required. More info at <https://sfshakes.org/free-shakespeare-venues/#orinda>

Orinda Starlight Village Players present Malcolm Cowler's adaptation of Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio. Follow the adventures of a wooden puppet, Pinocchio, who longs to become a real boy. Fridays and Saturdays, at 8:30 p.m. through Sept. 30, Sunday, Sept. 17 and 24, 4 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 28, 8 p.m. Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. www.orsvp.org. Tickets at Box Office or call (925) 528-9225 or email info@orsvp.org

Literature

Join the Sweet Thursday Author Series on Thursday, Sept. 21 at 7 p.m. in the Don Tatzin Community Hall at the Lafayette Library to hear author Ingrid Rojas Contreras discuss her newest book, "The Man Who Could Move Clouds: A Memoir." This is a free event, but registration is required at

Tinyurl.com/sweet-Sept23. The doors will be open at 6:30 p.m. for coffee and treats. The program is sponsored by the Friends of the Lafayette Library.

Camille Minichino, Jo Mele, Claire Johnson, and Billie Dupree will be at Reasonable Books (3645 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette) Saturday, Sept 16 at 11 a.m. Bring your questions about writing and meet four, funny, female authors and their characters. Show your support of an independent bookstore and local authors by attending. Free.

Other

Janelle Davis, the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions will appear in Moraga on Thursday, Sept. 21 to speak about the college admissions process in general and of the UC system in particular. Parents of high school juniors and seniors are encouraged to attend. The cost is \$10, and it will be held at the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the program will be 6 to 7:30 p.m. Bottled water will be provided, but no food will be served. For information and registration, please link to: moragataryevents.com

The 2023 Lafayette Art & Wine Festival will be held Saturday, Sept. 23, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 24, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Downtown Lafayette. Featuring 4 stages with 20+ bands, 300 artist / craft booths, 4 kid zones, wide selection of California varietals and craft beers, local dining + shopping! Free Admission. View music schedule and learn more at <https://lafayettefestival.com>. Produced by the Lafayette Chamber.

Not to be missed

Lafayette Sustainable Sunday 2023. Oct. 1, 3-6 p.m. Community Center at Jennifer Russel Building, 500 St. Mary's Rd., Lafayette. Amazing local speakers who will share their experiences in green building concepts for your home, how to add permaculture to our gardens, and how to live a more sustainable life. Tickets at www.sustainablelafayette.org

Lafayette Community DEIB Webinar Oct. 12, 7 - 8 p.m. "Education about LGBTQI+ - Beyond the Binary." Hosted by the Rainbow Community Center in Concord. During the webinar, participants will learn the foundational concepts of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression, identify current outcomes of rigid gender norms in our communities, and devise ways we can begin to break through dominant narratives around the gender binary. There will be a facilitator and a moderator provided by RCC as well as a Lafayette DEIB committee moderator for the session. To register and post questions for the webinar, go to <https://tinyurl.com/lafayettedeib>

Wine and Tapas Speaker Series Presents: Sacred, Secular, and the Shifting Boundaries of American Religion - Featuring: Professor of Religion and Society, Jerome Baggett. Sunday, Oct. 1, 4:30 - 6 p.m. Main Hall at Creekside Commons; 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette, Entry B. Bring a bottle of wine and/or a small plate to share. Register to attend at creeksidecommons.org/upcomingevents

The Moraga Community Service Day will be held Oct. 6-8, with the goal of bringing the townsfolk together to assist those in need, and


help beautify our schools and town. Sponsored and led by a Steering Committee of Moraga Community groups. Moraga families and individuals are encouraged to sign up and volunteer 1-3 hours to help. To view all the projects and sign up for your favorite one or two, visit <http://moragaserveceday.org/>

Garden

Moraga Garden Club welcomes the owner of Hollie's Homegrown of Lafayette. Hollie Lucas-Alcalay will talk about how to grow, harvest and create your own blend of Lamorinda herbs. In addition, there will be a hands-on segment which will give attendees the opportunity to create their own blend. A \$10 fee will cover cost of a glass jar, lid, label and herbal mixture. A reservation for you and your guest/s is required (regardless of participation jar-filling activity) and need to be emailed to Ellen.beans@gmail.com by Wednesday, Sept. 13. Holy Trinity Church, 1700 School Street. Moraga, 9:30 a.m. for social time. Presentation to follow. We are free and open to the public. www.moragagardenclub.org

Lafayette Garden Club monthly meeting begins on Sept. 14 at 9:30 a.m. for social time and nibbles before the short business meeting begins at 10 a.m. It is held at the Veteran's Hall, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette and is free to attend. Our speaker will be Jenny Papka from Native Bird Connections. She will have an owl for her presentation "Owls and Friends." There will also be a horticulture presentation by our Master Gardener, Liz Whiteford on planting onions and garlic. www.lafayettegardenclub.com.


Lamorinda's Religious Services


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

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

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


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


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

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

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
 SUNDAY SOUL FORUM | 8:30AM
 SUNDAY WORSHIP | 9:30AM
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 1035 CAROL LANE, LAFAYETTE, CA 94549 | 925.283.3722 | SPIRIT@OSL.C.NET

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 A welcoming and loving community of faith that learns, grows, and serves
TOGETHER

Sundays 10:00 a.m. 49 Knox Drive • Lafayette, CA
 In person & Livestream **LOPC.ORG**


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 "No matter who you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!"
 Sunday Service 10 am or join us online.
 Mondays 9:30 am Centering Prayer in the Chapel
 Wednesday 10 am Contemplative Worship in the Chapel

LAMORINDA SPORTS

Optimism abounds for the Lamorinda girls tennis teams

By Jon Kingdon

If there is one thing that all of the tennis teams can agree on, it's that it's nice not to have to find a time to practice early or late when it's not 114 degrees. Talent and character abound with all of the teams, and each are pointing to making it to the North Coast Sectional Tournament this year.

Miramonte

Coming off a very successful season where they made it to the NCS championship, ultimately losing 4-3, head coach Riki Sorenson is excited about the prospects for this year's team already having defeated Foothill, the fourth-place finisher last year, 8-1 and Bishop O'Dowd 7-2.

"It is too early to know a lot about our team, but I've learned that a good chunk of our girls invested a lot of time in their games from last season until now," Sorenson said. "We have a number of girls that played all year round and it showed at the tryouts where they played that much better than last season. It's a good core group that can play both singles and doubles."

Caitlin Chan who played number three as a freshman last year is now the lead singles player. "Caitlin has really made extraordinary improvement from last year," Sorenson said. "Her strength had been consistency, but she has become more powerful in her serving and ground strokes and has already had two big wins over the top players at Carondelet and Piedmont."

With the loss of last year's No. 2 player, Soleil Skjorshammer, who transferred to another school, it's created opportunities for many of the 17 players on the roster. Already set as singles players are Maddie Silveira, and co-captains Nicole Hui and Nicole Guo. "Everybody is out there working hard, and our goal is to get more of our girls able to play

both singles and doubles and they've been pretty good about doing that," Sorenson said. "Charlotte Weston, Jessica Hui and Emily Suh are all playing well."

Sorenson is looking for improvement with her doubles teams. "Our goal this year is to get stronger in doubles as we have been so strong in singles the last two years," Sorenson said. "Co-captain Ali Rhee and Aurdrey Kosla are just a really potent partnership. This is the fun time of the year in that we are trying all types of partnerships. Our only freshman, Maddie Essner, has already played in two of our matches and has looked very good."

Sorenson is confident in the team's ultimate performance though she does qualify it a tad. "It all depends how things shake out, but we are very strong and very deep with a good core group that plays singles and doubles," Sorenson said. "Our advantage over last year is our depth in terms of having quality players up and down the line. If all goes well, we should be in the top two in the league, hopefully winning the league, being one of the top five seeds for the NCS and making a deep run in the tournament."

Campolindo

Campolindo has started off strong with victories over College Park, Bishop O'Dowd, and San Ramon Valley, only losing to Davis High School "on a really hot day."

Head coach Sunan Faulkner appreciates the character of the team. "We are really gelling together," Faulkner said. "This is a good group to work with and we have four very good senior captains, Dilara Basegmez, Jamie Kelly, Alyssa Muller, and Caroline Obsitnik."

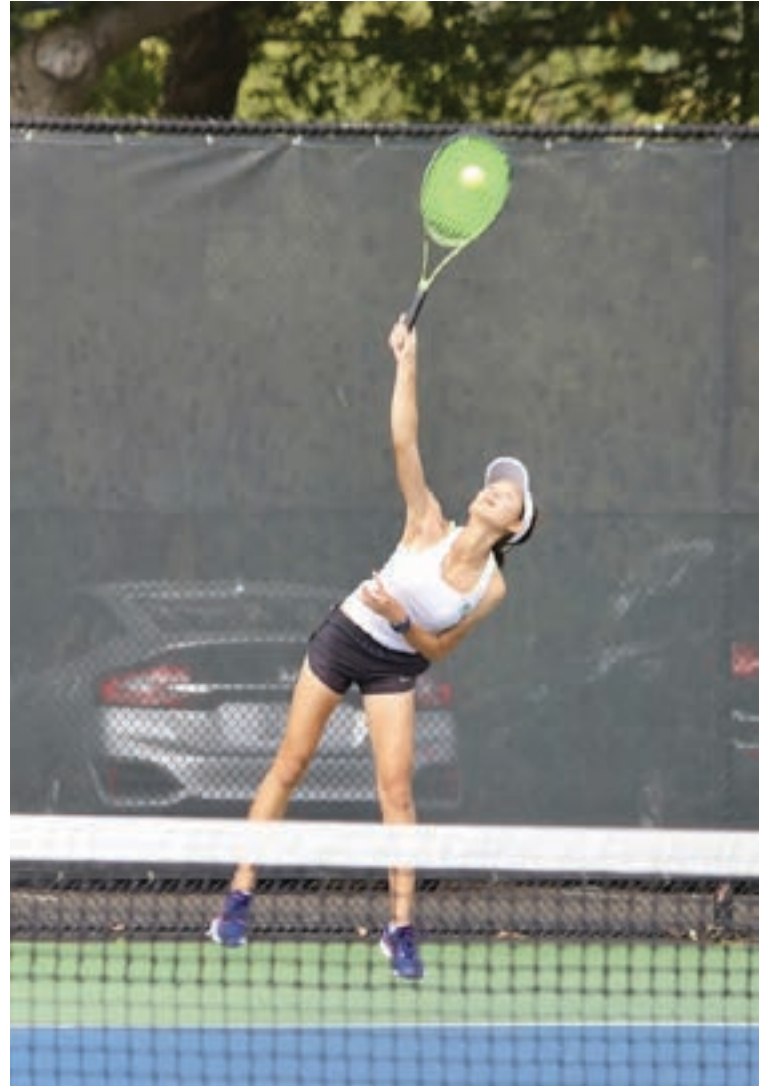
The strength of the singles players is the depth that reaches down to the sixth player. "Our lead singles

player is Sophia Raldugina-Zhu, No. 2 is Basegmez and No. 3 is a sophomore Summer Chang," Faulkner said "Sophia is a player that will elevate her game against the better players and has the ability to wear down her opponents and in one case, led her opponent to retire. All three are very competitive and are going to be facing a lot of tough opponents."

Playing fourth singles is sophomore Rebecca Tanner, fifth is Caroline Obsitnik, and freshman Madison Watkins is sixth. "Our strength has always been our depth," Faulkner said. "Becca is in her first year on the varsity, Caroline is the leader of this group and Madison, 'my little freshman' has shown that she can really play. She has really good fundamentals and her ground strokes are great and is really coachable. She just needs more experience. I'm expecting them all, as a group, to do really well."

The top doubles team from last year graduated but this still remains a strength for Campolindo. "Our doubles teams should do well against any team," Faulkner said. "Nola Coane, who teamed with her sister last year, is now teamed with Annie Cooper as our No. 1 team. They are a very strong pair that are gelling well. Our No. 2 team is Alyssa Muller and Jamie Kelly who are best friends and really enjoy playing together. Our third doubles pair, Eva Canales and Clara Hwang, have also played very well."

Faulkner has a strategy to keep the team fresh. "I make sure that they warm up with somebody different every day to prevent them from only practicing with people that they are comfortable with, which avoids there being cliques on the team," Faulkner said. "We also have a sister program where the girls will pair off and bring each other



Miramonte's Caitlin Chan

Photo Larissa Kosla

snacks at the matches to take care of each other."

To ensure the improvement of the players, Faulkner, and assistant coach (and the boys varsity coach) Jimmy Scott evaluate each player after their matches and determine which areas of their games need to be addressed at practice. "We will each do 15-minute 'mini clinics,' working on the specific areas of their game where they did not do well in their match the very next day."

One last change Faulkner has made has been to practice on Friday. "I always thought it was a good day for the girls to take care of any personal needs," Faulkner said. "How-

ever, I believe that taking Friday, Saturday, and Sunday off is too long of a break. It's turns out that everybody has been embracing the Friday practice and that's been kind of nice."

Acalanes

There are two new co-head coaches for Acalanes this year - Joe Schottland and Sharon Langtry - who have worked well, complementing each other. "As a social studies teacher at Acalanes, I can deal with the paperwork and I'm used to dealing with teenage girls," Schottland said.

... continued on Page C2

Miramonte football game canceled after drive-by shooting at Skyline HS

By Jon Kingdon

After a 2-0 start, Miramonte was looking forward to continuing their winning streak against Skyline last Friday. Unfortunately, there was a drive-by shooting at Skyline on Sept. 5 and they were more than adamant in their desire to cancel the game. According to reports, no one was hurt during the shooting and three juveniles have been arrested.

"We called Skyline the day of the shooting and they were locked down," Miramonte head coach Jack Schram said. "They had canceled their practices and at that point, their coach said that they did not think that they were going to be able to play the game. At that point, in talking with their coach, I could tell that they absolutely did not want to play us. We talked again later in the week and confirmed that the game was going to be canceled and the next day, our

athletic director, Sean Hennessey talked with Skyline's administrators and confirmed that they did not want to play the game."

Hennessey was disappointed at the cancellation but understands why Skyline felt it had to be done. "Starting our season 2-0, we certainly did not want to have a bye but it's an unfortunate situation and the decision was made by their staff to do what's safe for their student body," Hennessey said. "We feel the same way and don't want Skyline to be in a bad situation over there so that's why the decision was made to cancel the game."

This was hardly the first game that Schram has seen canceled; those were due to a major earthquake, 9/11 and the pandemic. "It was unfortunate that this game had to be canceled because this would have been a good game for us which would have al-

lowed us to get a number of our backups more playing

time," Schram said. "Now, we're just preparing for our

next game against Pinole."



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Reliving our experiences in nature

By Toris Jaeger

As we move from summer to fall, we can remember all of our special connections in nature – maybe it was a hike on your favorite trail, along your local creek, a visit to the mountains or the ocean or just sitting in your backyard enjoying watching the birds and other wildlife enjoying the food, water and cover you have provided.

Deciduous flora is beginning to change color from green to yellow, red and brown. The Buckeyes and Elderberry are the first to let go of their leaves to conserve water until the rains return. The

evergreens are also shucking off their spent leaves to make room for new growth.

Many of the Conifers have really felt the three-year drought and are dying despite a wet winter. These connections with nature heal us and help us understand life better. As Albert Einstein once said, “Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better.”

The issues of climate change are ever present and we must work together as communities locally, statewide, nationally and globally to find solutions.

Sitting Bull Hunkpapa Lakota put it best: “Let’s put

our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.”

The indigenous systems approach offers answers to the climate crisis by sharing resources, working with the flow of nature’s cycles, not wasting them, and going with the seasons of nature.

“Indigenous people know what it takes to save our planet and the life-giving resources it provides,” said Jade Begay, the director of policy and advocacy at NDN Collective, an Indigenous-led organization dedicated to building Indigenous power.

It begins with our neighborhoods; we can make this



Backyard photo of bird feeders

Photo Toris Jaeger

happen if we have hope and we work together.

May nature touch you today.

Optimism abounds for the Lamorinda girls tennis teams

... continued from Page C1

“Sharon is better suited with the more technical side of tennis and understands and is much better understanding the clinics and drills and in the end, it has shifted the burden a little bit from both of us.”

“It’s a big-time commitment so it’s good for each of us to have the other as a backup,” Langtry concurred.

Both have come to appreciate the quality of the team as athletes and their character as

individuals. “They are really good as a group,” Langtry said. “We had a nine-hour tournament playing in 90-degree heat out in Oakland and it was tough, and the girls really pushed themselves and I think they learned a lot. They’re all friends and they have all come together as a group.”

“This is very much a team and they have bonded and genuinely like being with each other,” Schottland said. “They all cheer for each other to the end and that says a lot about

our team, and it also makes it special for us as coaches.”

The singles are led by co-captain Aamena Shipchandler, the team’s line one singles player followed by Piper Duff, freshman Grace Colaco, sophomore Emily Roberts, junior Siena Moise, and senior Nicole Parlett. “We’re definitely younger than last year,” Schottland said.

“Aamena plays competitively all year round,” Langtry said. “She has a high skill level, and she is a fighter and more

tactical on the court. All of the girls have played well and even though she is only a freshman, Grace is very strong and plays with a tremendous amount of endurance and grit.”

This is the time of year that all the schools are trying to find the right combination of doubles players and Acalanes is no exception. “We’re still working on finding that perfect coupling,” Schottland said.

The leading doubles players are Olivia Dawkins and co-

captain junior Lucy O’Brien. “Olivia is a great net player and Lucy is also a line one doubles player,” Langtry said.

There is a unity that carries over to off the court activities. “The girls will pick a theme to dress up to on matches days and also go together to cheer for other girls’ sports,” Langtry said.

If the team is going to be ultimately success, they need to improve in two areas – “Strength and consistency of serve and rallies,” Schottland said.

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Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 17 Issue 15 Wednesday, September 13, 2023



Handyman's toolbox tips

... read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Roots



Clipped topiary with blue hydrangeas

Photos Cynthia Brian



Bright impatiens are perfect in fall borders.

By Cynthia Brian

"The Land! That is where our roots are. There is the basis of our physical life." ~ Henry Ford

As a gardener, I spend copious amounts of time thinking about roots. Healthy roots are critical indicators of the overall health and survival of plants and trees.

Why are roots essential?

Anchorage: One of the primary functions of roots is to anchor the plant firmly in the soil so that it is not uprooted by wind, water, or other forces of nature.

Absorption: Roots absorb water and nutrients essential for growth

and development. The extensive network of roots maximizes the plant's ability to access these resources.

Storage: The root system also stores energy in the form of starches and sugars which can be utilized during periods of drought or new growth.

Transport: The vascular system extends from the roots to the leaves to the stems facilitating movement of water and nutrients.

Stabilization: Roots reduce erosion by binding the soil particles together making the plant strong and stable.

Microbial Support: Roots con-

tribute to improving soil structure by promoting microbial activity and organic matter decomposition. Mycorrhizal fungi and nitrogen-fixing bacteria enhance nutrient uptake and protect plants from pathogens.

Aeration: Roots create tiny channels in the soil as they grow. These channels allow oxygen to penetrate deeper into the soil, which promotes a healthier ecosystem. Roots also prevent soil compaction which aids in better water infiltration and growth.

Drought Resistance: Periods of drought are survivable because of deep root systems and taproots.

Without healthy roots, all plants would struggle to survive.

Human roots are also important.

Recently friends invited my husband and me to a picnic and a private wine tasting at Beringer Brothers in St. Helena. "How fun," I responded. "It will be great to be back in my stomping grounds."

Although we had been friends for years and they knew that I'd grown up in the vineyards, they didn't know the story of my roots. I'll share a snippet of my heritage with you.

... continued on Page D12

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	14	\$1,410,000	\$4,201,000
MORAGA	6	\$955,000	\$2,260,000
ORINDA	7	\$1,575,000	\$4,152,000

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

- 3176 Bradena Lane, \$2,150,000, 4 Bdrms, 2517 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 07-31-23, Previous Sale: \$1,700,000, 12-23-22
- 406 Castello Road, \$1,410,000, 3 Bdrms, 1388 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 08-11-23, Previous Sale: \$578,000, 07-05-12
- 3600 Deer Hill Road, \$1,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 3179 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 08-02-23, Previous Sale: \$795,000, 11-21-16
- 726 Las Trampas Road, \$1,775,000, 4 Bdrms, 2452 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 07-31-23, Previous Sale: \$170,000, 05-01-79
- 3372 North Lucille Lane, \$1,495,000, 4 Bdrms, 1496 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 08-10-23, Previous Sale: \$747,500, 09-27-05
- 4033 Marianne Drive, \$1,820,000, 3 Bdrms, 2371 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 08-04-23, Previous Sale: \$525,000, 07-05-01
- 4061 Marianne Drive, \$2,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 2897 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 08-07-23
- 3921 Quail Ridge Road, \$2,900,000, 5 Bdrms, 3350 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 08-10-23, Previous Sale: \$1,699,000, 09-24-07
- 216 Seclusion Valley Way, \$2,900,000, 5 Bdrms, 3562 SqFt, 2018 YrBlt, 08-04-23, Previous Sale: \$2,343,000, 06-17-19
- 6 Tofflemire Drive, \$4,201,000, 5 Bdrms, 6664 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 08-09-23
- 1064 Via Alta, \$3,350,000, 5 Bdrms, 3170 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 08-03-23, Previous Sale: \$1,280,000, 01-11-23
- 11 Vista Viax, \$2,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 1572 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 07-31-23, Previous Sale: \$1,510,000, 03-29-22
- 35 Woodbury Highlands Place #21, \$1,580,000, 3 Bdrms, 1892 SqFt, 2022 YrBlt, 08-08-23
- 3320 Woodview Court, \$2,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 2827 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 08-04-23, Previous Sale: \$1,430,000, 07-28-15

MORAGA

- 1382 Camino Peral, \$955,000, 3 Bdrms, 1360 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 08-07-23, Previous Sale: \$702,500, 10-28-16
- 694 Camino Ricardo, \$2,260,000, 4 Bdrms, 2464 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 08-09-23, Previous Sale: \$1,500,000, 03-19-18
- 1183 Cedarwood Drive, \$1,637,000, 3 Bdrms, 2115 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 07-31-23
- 1254 Larch Avenue, \$2,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 2446 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 08-07-23
- 17 Miramonte Drive, \$1,126,000, 4 Bdrms, 1762 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 08-11-23, Previous Sale: \$574,500, 01-09-23
- 35 San Pablo Court, \$2,100,000, 5 Bdrms, 3406 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 08-10-23, Previous Sale: \$235,000, 06-01-78

ORINDA

- 46 Crestview Drive, \$4,152,000, 5 Bdrms, 4626 SqFt, 2022 YrBlt, 08-03-23
- 8 La Fond Lane, \$2,300,000, 6 Bdrms, 2922 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 08-11-23
- 5 Rita Way, \$1,660,000, 3 Bdrms, 1935 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 08-01-23
- 18 Sycamore Road, \$2,548,000, 4 Bdrms, 3067 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 08-11-23
- 308 Village View Court, \$2,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 2541 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 07-31-23, Previous Sale: \$1,200,000, 06-17-13
- 311 Village View Court, \$2,620,000, 3 Bdrms, 2165 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 08-07-23, Previous Sale: \$1,550,000, 09-07-10
- 615 Watchwood Road, \$1,575,000, 2 Bdrms, 2203 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 08-11-23

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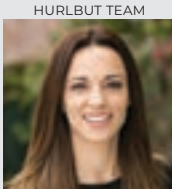
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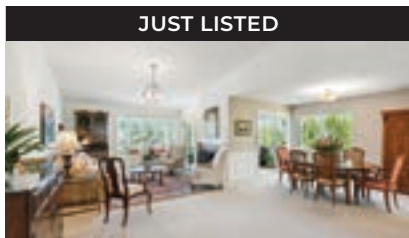


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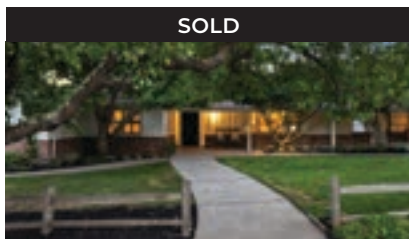
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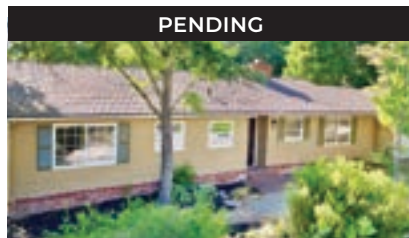
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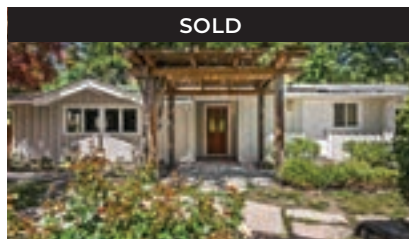
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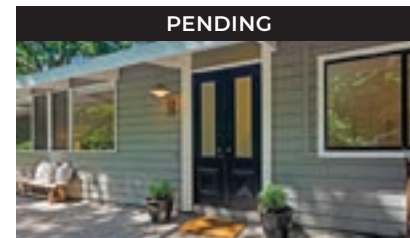
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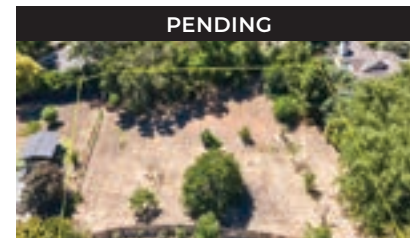
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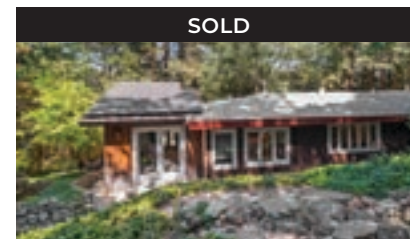
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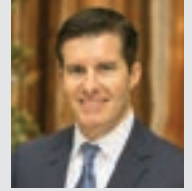
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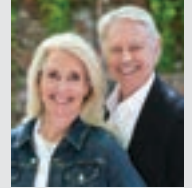
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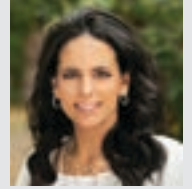
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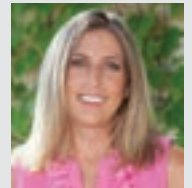
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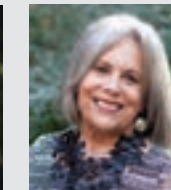
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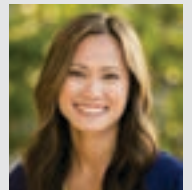
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Best tools to include in your basic toolbox



Toolbox

By **Jim Hurley**

It is essential to have the right tools for the job. Sure, there are times I have made it work, but it is not good to use a table knife from the kitchen drawer to tighten a loose screw.

My high school graduation gift to my son was a basic toolbox. I never expected him to follow my line of work since it was always clear he had zero interest in the work I did around our house. Yet I



Screwdrivers and pliers

felt that everyone can benefit from having good basic tools on hand should an urgent repair job arise. When summer was over and I was helping to move him into his college dorm, I suggested that he take his modest toolbox too. He seemed confused about why until two young ladies from down the hall asked if anyone had a Phillips screwdriver. I looked at him and said, "You do." He grabbed his toolbox and happily went off to help.



Allen Wrenches

Photos Jim Hurley

What basic tools should you have in a beginning toolbox? I love tools and have a whole pickup truck filled with them. Of course, you don't need all the tools I have but you should own enough basic hand tools for simple repairs around your house. I will limit this article to hand tools and discuss power tools in the future. A basic toolbox must contain a hammer, pliers, screwdrivers, and Allen wrenches. Each of these items needs a little explanation. ... continued on Page D6

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Best tools to include in your basic toolbox

... continued from Page D4

Hammers. Choosing a hammer is not as simple as you might think. On your visit to the hardware store, you will find more than a dozen different hammers on display. Little tack hammers, finish hammers, framing hammers, roofing hammers, ballpeen hammers, and sledgehammers. But what do you really need? Your first hammer should be a 16-ounce finish hammer with a straight claw (not curved). It will handle most common tasks. Start with a wooden handle hammer. Don't waste your money on any hammer with a tubular metal handle because these inevitably end up with a nasty bend in the shaft.

Pliers. There are a huge variety of pliers. To start, definitely get a pair of needle nose pliers, get an adjustable wrench, and a pair of lineman pliers. If you want to be better prepared, add a pair of diagonal pliers for cutting wire. The adjustable wrenches (formerly known as Water Pump Pliers), come in different lengths; get a 12-inch pair, and if you sense bigger trouble ahead, get a bigger size for backup. Most needle nose pliers come with a wire cutter built-in, but that is not always convenient for nipping wires. It's useful to have wire cutters and you may also want a pair of wire strippers as well. These, combined with a good set of screwdrivers, will get you through most household issues.

Screwdrivers. Screwdrivers come in multiple sizes and tips. You will save money buying a set with a selection of types. Flathead and Phillips screws are most common, but now many screws require Torx bits (different size star-shaped slots). You may want a Torx set (one driver handle with multiple, interchangeable tips). Be sure to buy quality screwdrivers, as cheap ones tend to bend or break on screws that are unwilling to come out. I don't usually recommend a brand name, but I will say that Sears Craftsman is the only screwdriver that I have in my tool bag. Sears usually has packaged sets for Christmas sales (which somehow start in October now). Once you have your quality screwdrivers, never use them as a chisel unless you want to buy new ones.

Allen Wrenches. Allen Wrenches (or Alvin Wrenches for those of you who saw "A Man Called Otto") have hexagonal tips of various sizes which are typically required for set screws. They come in Metric and American Standard sizes. You should buy a set of each to avoid being frustrated when the wrench you have almost-but-doesn't-quite fit the slot and slips instead of loosening the screw.

There you have your starter set. As you progress in your DIY adventures, I hope you won't hesitate to buy the additional tools you may need for a specific job. A pipe wrench for plumbing, a crescent wrench for nuts, a level for hanging art, a good 25-foot tape measure, and a pry-bar or nail puller may be handy. As I mentioned earlier, buying quality is important if you plan to reuse your tools frequently.

Most important be sure to get a toolbox to keep them all in one place. This way you can leave the table knives in the kitchen drawer until mealttime.

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 Roots



Winemaker, Fred Abruzzini with Clark Gable in front of the famous carved Beringer cask.



The map from 1939 with a delightful one-day trip from the Bay Area.



Zinfandel grapes are ripe.

Photos Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page D1

My paternal grandfather, Fred Abruzzini, was the son of Italian immigrants who emigrated to America via Canada at the turn of the century. As a boy, he began working with my great uncle at Cribari Winery in Madrone where he became the winemaker.

Between Prohibition and the Great Depression, many California wineries closed. Beringer Brothers was faltering. Federal agents suggested to Bertha Beringer that she hire someone with integrity and knowledge, someone like Fred Abruzzini. He motored up to St. Helena and when he saw the caves, he believed that he could make some excellent wine. In 1932 at the age of 28, in exchange for free rein, he was hired to be Beringer's manager, winemaker, and chief promoter. He gambled that Franklin Delano Roosevelt would be elected President and end prohibition, so he began crushing more grapes, making wine and port.

Prohibition ended in 1933 and in 1934 Grandpa had the innovative idea to open the cellars to the public for tours, and on special occasions, free tastings. For the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition, a World's Fair held at Treasure Island, he created the first colorful map of "one of California's most delightful one-day trips" where all roads led to Beringer.

He, my grandmother, father, and uncles would drive the 60 miles every evening to hand out maps. The tourists came. He sent boxes of wine to Hollywood celebrities inviting them to stop over and made certain that local and national newspapers reported these events with photos in front of the carved cask. Clark Gable, Carol Lombard, Charles Laughton, Tom Mix, Ginger Rogers, Roy Rogers, Abbott and Costello, Max Baer, Rudy Vallee, and a bevy of other luminaries visited often and became friends. Fred became a legend in Napa Valley with his publicity for the wine industry and put it on the map.

As children, we rode horses, barbecued, roamed the caves, and played at the winery. For many years, the grapes from our vineyards were crushed into Beringer wines. Grandpa was killed in 1988 when a gigantic elm tree toppled on him while he mowed his lawn. He would be proud to know that the roots he planted as the first person to offer tours and tastings to the public have grown into Napa Valley being the beautiful and renowned wine destination it is today.

Cuttings from those first grape canes planted by my grandfather are rooted and thriving in my garden. His children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren have continued his legacy.

Roots. Yes, they are the basis of our physical life.

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The Goddess Gardener's September Gardening Guide

- **DEEP SOAK** roots of trees in need with a soaker hose during dry spells.
- **REMOVE** aphids on plants by mixing into a spray bottle two tablespoons of dishwashing liquid. Spray affected plants daily to smother the aphids.
- **HARVEST** apples, Asian pears, Bartlett pears, grapes, blackberries, tomatoes, prickly pear, and quince.
- **CUT** and dry big heads of hydrangeas for indoor bouquets.
- **PLAN** to plant cover crops to add maximum benefits to your soil over the winter. Fall mixes can include seeds of legumes, grass, grains, brassica, vetch, rye, clover, and radish. These will suppress weeds, add aeration, and increase soil aggregation.
- **SEND** a plant off to college with your student to keep the indoor air clean while offering memory and concentration improvement. Prayer plants, peace lilies, pothos, and snake plants are easy-to-grow specimens that will acclimate well to dorm rooms.
- **SAVE** seeds from your favorite perennials.
- **DEADHEAD** roses for several more flurries of blooms before January.
- **PRUNE** a shrub into a creative topiary!
- **ENJOY** the bright colors of impatiens in borders and beds.
- **RELISH** your roots!

Happy Gardening! Happy Growing!



Chinese fringe flowers with a spiral topiary.



Continue to deadhead roses for continual blooms.



Prickly pear fruits are delicious. Wear gloves when peeling.

Photos Cynthia Brian

Mark Your Calendar:

On Saturday, Sept. 30, Be the Star You Are!® will host a booth sponsored by the Lamorinda Weekly Newspaper and MBjessee Painting at the Pear and Wine Festival in Moraga. Stop by to plant seeds and pick up bags of free potpourri. More info at <https://www.bethestaryouare.org/events-1/2023-pear-and-wine-festival>

**Cynthia Brian**

For more gardening advice for all seasons, check out Growing with the Goddess Gardener at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books>. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Her newest children's picture book, Family Forever, 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 <http://www.GoddessGardener.com>

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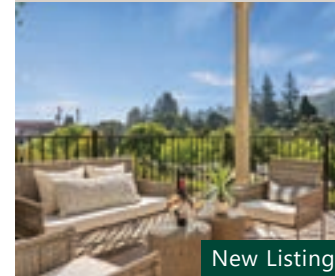


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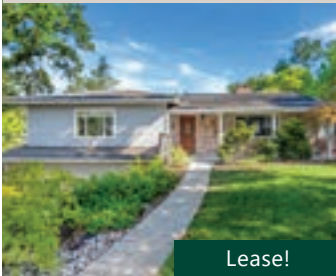
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