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Moraga Teachers Association members hold a Feb. 21 rally at the Rheem Boulevard/Moraga Road intersection.

Photo Vera Kochan

Moraga's teachers rally for fair wages

By Vera Kochan

The Moraga Teachers Association (MTA), who are members of the Classified School Employees Association (a labor union), held a very vocal rally at the busy intersection of Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road during evening commute hours on Feb. 21. Its purpose was to bring attention to the current wage negotiations between MTA and the Moraga School District (MSD).

"We really hope to raise awareness to the community and parents about where we are at with our negotiations," explained MTA president and Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School teacher Christina Marin. "We would love for parents and community members to email board members on our behalf, and we feel like we need them to inform more folks of the situation if we want them to stand with us."

Educator rallies were simultaneously scheduled in Orinda, Dublin, Pleasanton, Byron, Antioch, Pittsburg, Rodeo, Concord, Pleasant Hill, and Martinez. "There are so many locations doing this on the same day so that we can stand in solidarity with each other and support each other in our effort to fight for the best for our students," added Marin. "We are a coalition, and we want all students in the East Bay to have the best education and teachers. The rally is to raise awareness. We're not on strike yet."

For over an hour, drivers passing through the intersection honked their horns in support of the over 100 educators who were holding signs and passing out statistic-laden flyers. At one point, approximately 20 Campolindo High School athletes, out for a training run to the other side of town, had to pass through the assemblage and began to recognize teachers they'd had while in the MSD system. As both teachers and former students glimpsed each other, the volley of joyful greetings between them spoke volumes.

"After four sessions of negotiations this fall and progress on many areas of mutual agreement in contract language, the District and MTA were not able to reach an agreement on compensation," MSD Superintendent Julie Parks stated in a Feb. 12 email message to parents. "In December MTA declared an impasse. An impasse is the next step in the negotiation process and includes working with a state-appointed mediator to help the parties navigate the negotiations process."

The email continued, "Prior to declaring an impasse, MTA's last salary proposal to the District was an 11% increase in salary for the current school year and ongoing."

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Poll workers prepare for March primary

By David Scholz

There's more than counting ballots at stake with elections these days; trust in the process that voters engage in is under scrutiny too.

On the front lines of that endeavor in Contra Costa County are thousands of poll workers who in February have been involved in required online and in-person training to help democracy go forward during the March 5 Primary Election.

Doug Ewert was among several dozen poll workers from the Lamorinda area who were on hand at the Veterans Memorial Building in Lafayette on Feb. 14 for one of the Elections Division's many hour-long training sessions being held around the county.

The fundamental idea of democracy motivated Ewert, participating in his first election as a poll worker, to

step forward. "I wanted to be part of the process," he said.

Lori Everett, another newcomer, expressed equal excitement about serving.

"Our volunteers are dedicated to doing their part in the community and are grateful to be a part of and learn more about the election process," said Jessamyn Hazzard, the county's Elections Services Supervisor.

The Election Division's goal is to have all 147 polling places in the county staffed with one inspector (the lead poll worker) and six clerks, bringing the total to 1,029 poll workers for the upcoming primary.

"We are on target to meet our goal; however, we do have vacancies in parts of the county," she said. "There are a wide variety of reasons,

but it's mostly due to volunteers not interested in traveling far from their residence or unable to commit to a full 15-hour shift."

Hazzard also has been mindful of the news coverage about threats to poll workers and county and state election staff since the last election.

"We have not received a lot, but a few poll workers have shared their concerns about security. Mostly, poll workers are more interested in how to deescalate a difficult situation, which we do train [on] and remind them that their safety is our main priority," she said.

With the number of qualified political parties, with their own ballot and rules, and the variety of ballots having increased, Hazzard noted poll workers following procedures on Election Day is important.

... continued on Page 3

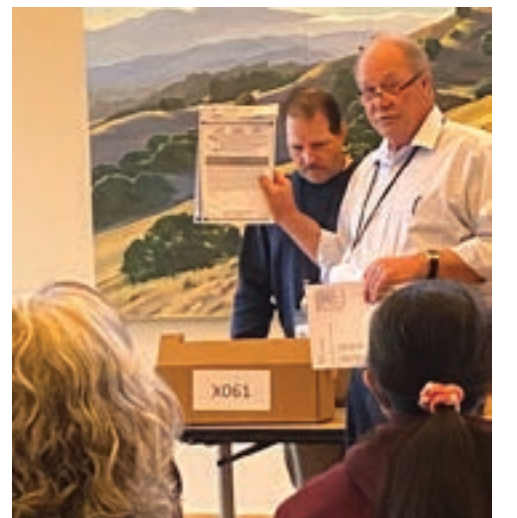


Photo David Scholz

Seasonal clerk Bill Cahill tells poll workers about organizing the different ballot types available at the polls during a training session Feb. 7 at Veterans Memorial Building in Lafayette.

Civic News

Orinda council member will not run for reelection – Page 6

Public Safety

Orinda police chief discusses low property crime – Page 6

Life in Lamorinda

Moraga man continues effort to clean up the town – Page 8



Sports

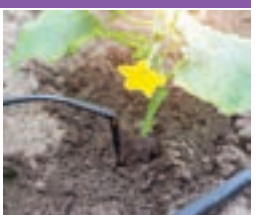
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Our Homes

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Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting: Monday, March 11, 7 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall

Planning Commission Meeting

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

Design Review

Monday, March 11, 7 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Arts & Science Discovery Room

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Lafayette's Transportation Circulation Commission presents long list of accomplishments

By Lou Fancher

Presenting to city council the Transportation Circulation Commission's highlighted 2023 accomplishments and 2024

work plan, committee chair Bart Carr on Feb. 12 said, "Probably our biggest accomplishment in the year was the Local

Road Safety Plan, which is really the centerpiece action supporting our Vision Zero approach to traffic safety."

Commissioners Greg Brown and Stella Wotherspoon had volunteered to sit on the staff's Local Road Safety Plan task force, providing expertise prior to the plan being reviewed and discussed at two TCC meetings. The plan received updates and was adopted by the council in August 2023. Carr emphasized Wotherspoon's considerable contribution of time to the effort and thanked her for also participating in General Plan Advisory Committee activities and providing monthly verbal updates to the commission.

Among initiatives the TCC focused on in 2023 was the local zoning included in the Engineering and Traffic Survey conducted last year that allowed the city to reduce speeds by five mph on select high volume roads in Lafayette. The Burton Valley Elementary Traffic Calming Pilot Project was created by a task force of 18 residents and reached its conclusion in 2023. Carr said the task force's work had resulted in a "great plan" that is currently in use. Information about the traffic calming project is available for residents to view at the city's website. Additionally, the TCC provided updates to a guidebook online where new, streamlined

information and formatting makes the program's features more useful for residents in other neighborhoods interested in implementing similar traffic calming measures.

The TCC last year continued to prioritize and oversee all Lafayette school safety programs, including those at private schools. An initiative that started in 2021 to make roadways safer, especially for parents, caretakers, and kids making their way to schools, had the Commission reviewing and evaluating Rapid Implementation Plans for Schools reports prepared by Toole Design Group in 2022. Recommendations for priority measures to be implemented around each school were provided and TCC commissioners spent time on-the-ground to better identify ongoing safety issues and offer recommended solutions. Carr said work on near- and medium-term school safety projects begun in 2022 will continue in 2024. He made specific note of traffic calming measures put into place around Burton Valley School that have received "an energetic response from residents" in relation to added speed humps, high-visibility lane striping, and improved signage, among other measures taken.

Concluding his comments on achievements in 2023, Carr said the council's approval in January in response to staff's request to move in a more efficient, timely manner to capitalize on grant opportunities for projects that are strong matches for county and state funding will be helpful. Grant announcements often arrive with tight deadlines and the flexibility and pre-approval to enter the application process will help the TCC—and the

city—to not lose opportunities to other regions.

Outlining the 2024 work program and priorities, Carr referred to a matrix the committee has prepared in a staff report, which includes projects and programs the commissioners will be addressing throughout the year, viewable on the city's website. Instead of reviewing the details, Carr provided what he called a "high flyover" of the most important elements, beginning with the Connecting Lafayette Project. The Downtown Pathways and Schools Safety Project focuses around Stanley Middle School and Lafayette Elementary. "What we want to do is improve the connections for youths, pedestrians, parents, families, and cyclists in that area," Carr said.

Improvements to pathway connections to Moraga Trail and the downtown core, he said, would increase the safety of the area for anyone walking or biking. "The project also includes an expanded drop-off location on St. Mary's Road for drivers choosing to drop school children off in that location." He said the commissioners would look closely at speeds on roads adjacent to local schools to see if new issues need to be addressed in order to support the City's efforts to reduce speed limits in school zones via the School Zone Speed Limit Study.

Transportation Program Manager Patrick Golier's staff report lists the TCC's continued review and input related to two Pleasant Hill Road Pathway projects (center-median and east side alignment) and the design for the Pedestrian Pathway Near Springhill School as part of the 2024 work plan. These

projects are in different stages of planning, design, and public engagement, and the commission expects to bring comments to the council in the coming months. Additionally, the TCC will be working on three larger projects related to improving multi-modal travel in Lafayette's downtown: the Downtown Parking Management Planning Study, an update to General Plan's Circulation Element, and the Mt. Diablo Boulevard Corridor Plan.

Responding with input regarding the EBMUD Aqueduct Pathway that currently constitutes a short length on the western side of the city, Carr said the TCC would like to see it expand — a measure that would require EBMUD to obtain added funding. Similarly, participating in the Contra Costa Transportation Authority-led multi-jurisdictional Olympic Boulevard Corridor Plan (Lafayette-Moraga Trail to Iron Horse Trail) is dependent on grant funding.

Speaking on a most general topic, transparency, members of the commission expressed that they are "wrestling" with the subject and aiming to find ways to make their processes and projects more available to the public. They thanked residents and others who have provided input because it alerts them to the highest concerns and exceptions of the community they serve. Questions from the council and two public comments made clear that clarification and updates about the Mt. Diablo Boulevard Corridor Plan and the Downtown Parking Management Study are priority interests and more transparency would be welcome.

The full staff report and 2024 Transportation Work Plan can be found at https://lafayette.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=7115&meta_id=179462

Discussion continues regarding Housing Element and Res Tower

By Lou Fancher

City Manager Niroop Srivatsa in her bi-weekly update at the Feb. 12 council meeting, said the city had received the third review letter from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The six-page response indicated Lafayette's sixth-Cycle Housing Element requires additional revisions.

The city in January of 2023 adopted and submitted the first iteration. Two months later, HCD notified the city that additional analysis and revisions were necessary to

comply with state law. The updates supplied by staff were subsequently reviewed by the planning commission and city council in late summer and early fall. Once again, further clarifications and metrics were added and the revised HE was submitted to HCD on Dec. 14, 2023.

Upon receiving HCD's latest notice that the city has more work to obtain a certified HE, Srivatsa said the city immediately contacted HCD to request a meeting. She said face-to-face contact was integral to under-

standing the deficiencies and specific actions staff and the council could take that will allow HCD to deem the HE is substantially compliant with state law. The council planned to discuss HCD's letter and the results of any meeting that has taken place at its next regular meeting on Feb. 26. (Information on the Housing Element Update process can be found at www.Plan-Lafayette.org or email GeneralPlan@love.lafayette.org.)

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Town Hall Theatre presents film in honor of International Women's Day

By Sharon K. Sobotta

International Women's Day is on March 8 and Town Hall Theatre is honoring the day with a 7 p.m. screening of '100 Years from Mississippi' with Director Tarabu Betserei Kirkland and Nobuko Miyamoto, who appears in the film. Miyamoto will be signing copies of her book "Not Yo' Butterfly" ahead of the show between 6-7 p.m.

Kirkland's film centers around the life of his mother, Mamie, who, at the age of 108, travels back in time and space to Mississippi, the place she fled at the age of 8 due to the threat of lynchings. Kirkland weaves together the threads of Mamie's life as a woman who, after being widowed at a young age, provided for her children as an Avon lady, and the lived history that seeps back into the ugliest part of America's

past.

Kirkland says this is an important film to watch while celebrating International Women's Day.

"There are countless 'sheros' in towns and villages around the world whose lives and everyday legacies form the backbone of powerful movements through their extraordinary commitment and vision of how the world should exist and walk that reality every single day. It is an honor to celebrate the life of one of those sheros (my mother)."

Town Hall Theatre Managing Director Dennis Markam says that it's important to honor ordinary yet extraordinary women like Mamie Lang Kirkland, the star of Kirkland's film and others within our own community. "It is important to remember that

women's lives intersect with all the other elements of who they are. Their life and identity is also affected by their race, their nationality, their religion, their gender expression, and countless other things. I think as we recognize International Women's Day in our own ways, we also have to recognize the complexity and diversity of the lives of women."

Miyamoto will read an excerpt from her book "Not Yo' Butterfly" dedicated to Mamie Lang Kirkland to start the film and Tarabu Betserei Kirkland will engage in a Q&A following the film. There will be a no-host bar and time to mingle with the guests as well as a chance to buy signed copies of Miyamoto's book.

To reserve your seat, visit www.townhalltheatre.com/100-years

Poll workers prepare

... continued from Page 1

"Our primary focus for poll worker training in the Presidential Primary Election is to ensure poll workers understand and know how to issue the correct ballot to the voter," she said, as well as returning the ballots received and casted at the polls securely back to Martinez.

County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar Kristen Connelly, appearing at the Feb. 12 Lafayette City Council meeting, further affirmed the significance of the upcoming election.

"In my first year in office, there was one message that I got over and over again from my counterparts around the state: that the March 2024 presidential Primary in California is going to be the most complex in the history of the state because it is the first we are mailing a ballot to all registered voters in a partisan presidential primary," she said.

Connelly has undertaken a significant outreach effort to enlist council members in 18 cities and jurisdictions throughout the county, like the visit to Lafayette, to raise awareness about the upcoming election.

The youth voter, notably the 16- and 17-year-olds, is one category she hopes to make inroads. This includes an exten-

sive effort to pre-register them, which is allowed under California law, which her staff undertakes when visiting schools during High School Voter Education Week each September.

"Research shows that if you can get a person to vote three elections in a row, they are more likely to become a lifetime voter," Connelly said.

Early voting and drop box info

Now that ballots have arrived in the post to registered voters, there are options to cast them before March 5.

There are 704,567 registered voters in the county, and 90-95% of ballots are cast as Vote-By-Mail (VBM) ballots. Return of these is split evenly between secure drop boxes and United States Postal Service.

Early voting options include putting them in 24/7 drop boxes located in Moraga (1500 Saint Mary's Rd.), Orinda (22 Orinda Way), and Lafayette (3477 School St.), or sending ballots through traditional mail.

An early voting polling station will be open at Walnut Creek City Hall on March 1, 2 and 4.

On Election Day, all area polling places are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Where your polling place is located can be found at www.contracostavote.gov and clicking on My Voter Information under the Services tab.

John A. Coleman is 73rd Lafayette Citizen of the Year

John A. Coleman marked 50 years of service to Lafayette this year, since in 1974 he earned the rank of Eagle Scout from Scouts BSA Troop 243, launching him into a life of community service.

The Lafayette Chamber's volunteer selection committee chose Coleman as Lafayette's 73rd Citizen of the Year for his decades of service to our community.

The 2024 Citizen of the Year Dinner honoring Coleman will be held on Thursday, March 28 at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. Reception with no host bar from 6 to 7 p.m.; dinner at 7 p.m.; evening ends by 9 p.m. Seating is limited. Dinner ticket link and more information can be found online at <https://lafayettechamber.org/coy>. - provided by Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

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- Citizens Advisory Committee to CCTA
- Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District
- Crime Prevention Commission
- Emergency Preparedness Commission
- General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)
- Planning Commission
- Public Art Committee
- Senior Services Commission
- Transportation & Circulation Commission

For additional information on these volunteer positions visit the city's website lovelafayette.org/volunteers or e-mail cityhall@lovelafayette.org

Positions open until filled.



MORAGA

See public meetings schedule on these pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

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www.moraga.ca.us
Phone: (925) 888-7022
Chamber of Commerce:
www.moragachamber.org
Moraga Citizens' Network:
www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

Town Council Meetings
Wed., Feb. 28, 6:30 p.m.
Wed., March 13, 6:30 p.m.
Planning Commission:
Tuesday, March 5, 6:30 p.m.
Park and Recreation Commission:
Monday March 11, 6:30 p.m.

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Moraga officials attend 'Mayors and Council Members Academy'

By Vera Kochan

The League of California Cities held its annual "Mayors and Council Members Academy" in Monterey, Calif. this year. Mayor Teresa Onoda, Vice Mayor Steve Woehleke, and Town Manager Scott Mitnick attended the Jan. 24 - 26 conference, which was intended to give attendees access to various sessions designed to help them run their municipalities more efficiently.

According to the League of California Cities' website, "The academy covers the legal, financial, and practical fundamentals to your job as an elected city official. Sessions also include an update on key legislative issues and an overview of your Cal Cities Services."

"While the annual 'Mayors and Council Members Academy' was initially set up to serve as an orientation and training session for newly elected mayors and council members," explained Mitnick, "the Academy has been

broadened over the years to also serve as a 'refresher training' for those who have been in their roles for a number of years. It is not unusual for city managers to also attend, especially with newly elected officials."

A "Harassment Prevention Training for Supervisors and Officials" session focused on current and emerging issues, while teaching officials and supervisors how to identify, prevent, and properly respond to workplace harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and abusive conduct in order to avoid liability.

Another session, "Developing an Effective City Council and City Manager Team: The Key to Good Governance and City Success," discussed the importance of a good working relationship guided by open communication.

"Your Legal Powers and Obligations; Open Government and Conflicts of Interest" session helped attendees learn

the breadth and limitations of their powers as city officials by acquiring a basic understanding of the legal authorities and restrictions under which cities and their officials operate. The course focused on open government laws, such as the Brown Act and Public Records Act, and laws pertaining to conflicts of interest.

The "Policy Role in Land Use Planning" course was designed to teach the tools and processes in land use planning, such as the general plan, zoning, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as well as the role of regional agencies and the state.

"Effective Advocacy and Key City Issues" shared ideas for establishing practical skills to develop persuasive arguments and testimony that would serve a city's interests.

"Social Media/Digital Communications and Civic Engagement" ex-

plained that as misinformation increases, elected officials need to be quick on their feet and have the necessary skills to proactively manage public perceptions about local government concerns.

"Financial Responsibilities, City Revenues Workshop" dialog centered around local government financial cycles, elected official financial oversight duties, state and local funding relationships, and the four stages of fiscal meltdown.

The last session centered around "Understanding Public Service Ethics Laws and Principles." State law requires elected and appointed officials to receive two hours of training in specified ethics laws and principles every two years.

During the Feb. 14 Town Council meeting Onoda said, "Imagine if you had to run an obstacle course and you could look at it from up above, from a helicopter, you could see all of the se-

quences that would arise. You would manage the course in a much more quick and effective way, and that's pretty much what this gives you."

"I found it very valuable," added Woehleke. "I attended an earlier version of this in 2019, and this was a whole lot more useful, partially because it was perhaps my second exposure to some of it, but some of the topics addressed were far more mature." He also enjoyed the opportunity to network with other city officials from various parts of California.

"Of all the national, state, and regional conferences," stated Mitnick, "this Academy is the one that many find to be an effective primer as to how California local government works, with a timely summary of current challenges effecting cities and towns. This year's Academy was extremely well done with sessions directly applicable to the Town of Moraga."

SMC Museum of Art features three new art exhibits

By Vera Kochan

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art has introduced three new exhibitions: "Harmonia Rosales's Omega Alpha", "The Decisive Moment: Photo Urbanism in San Francisco Bay, 1930s - 1960s," and "Vignettes -- Select Views of SMC-MoA's Permanent Collection."

Marking her first Northern California debut is Afro-Cuban artist Rosales's Renaissance-inspired, "Omega Alpha" collection. Her six works on display offer a re-imagining of Western myths and Catholicism through the Black body, which are combined with tales of the Lukami religions and focusing on Black female empowerment while using layers



Photos Vera Kochan

"Yemaya with Ibeji" by Harmonia Rosales

of oil, pigment, and gold in her pieces.

"Rosales's paintings seamlessly blend religious and cultural belief systems," stated SMC Academic and Engagement Curator Britt Royer. "Her work challenges Western discourse yet

pulls from these traditions to re-envision Greek heroes and Catholic saints. By intertwining the stories, histories, and beliefs of the African diaspora, Rosales casts visibility on Afro-Cuban heritage. It is an honor for Saint Mary's College to host her debut in Northern California."

In "Yemaya with Ibeji," African people of the Yoruba ethnic group experience a high birth rate of twins. This is interpreted as a sign of good luck, happiness, and prosperity. The common belief is that a single soul was split into two, which represents a balance in the physical world. Yemaya is considered the mother to all and the protector of the Ibeji.



"High-rise Construction and Coit Tower from Russian Hill, San Francisco" by Pirkle Jones

"The Decisive Moment" exhibit includes 26 black and white photographs by Ruth-Marion Baruch, John Gutmann, Pirkle Jones, Peter Stackpole, Brett Weston, and Max Yavno. The images represent historical moments in Bay Area history by capturing what French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson called the "decisive moment," which according to SMC is "a coalescence of the camera's mechanical or 'innate honesty' with the observer's intuitive insight."

"Vignettes" includes over 40 works of art from SMC's permanent collection. Most prominent is the college's landscape collection of William Keith paintings. Additional works on display

include modernist European prints by Georges Barque, Marc Chagall, Ursula Fookes, Kathé Kollwitz, Maries Laurencin, and Jacques Villon. Works dedicated to California waterways include pieces by Armin Hansen, Louis LaBrie, Bertha Stringer Lee, Goardo Piazzoni, Lundy Siegfriest, and Mireille Piazzoni Wood. There are pop art pieces by Corita Kent and Andy Warhol; Abstract Expressionism by Seong Moy and Ruth Wall; and contemporary art by Joe Doyle, David Maxim, Diane Rosenblum, and Kal Spelletich.

"Omega Alpha" and "The Decisive Moment" are on display through June 23. "Vignettes" is on display through May 12.

For more information visit: www.stmarys-ca.edu/museum.

Lafayette-Moraga trail's mini 'Waterfall'

By Emma Wong

Towering over fenced-in pavement and surrounded by greenery, a cascading mini-waterfall is picturesque for residents strolling on the Lafayette-Moraga trail, especially after recent storms. The waterfall is located just beyond the trail's crossing of Rheem Boulevard and St. Mary's Road, near the Saint Mary's College campus.



Photo Emma Wong

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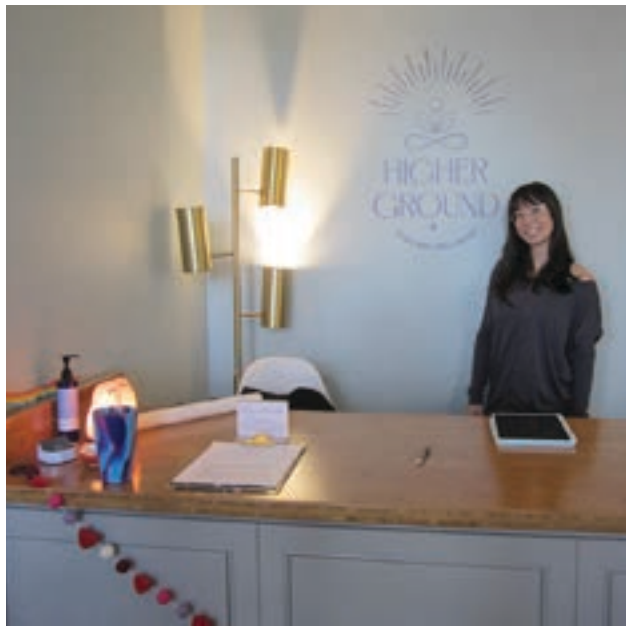
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Higher Ground's new wellness center offers something for every 'body'

By Vera Kochan



Higher Ground owner, Dr. Andrea Jang Photo Vera Kochan

When Higher Ground first opened its doors in the fall, it became an extension of Jang Acupuncture. Owner Dr. Andrea Jang, DAOM, with over 10 years experience, received such positive feedback from her acupuncture patients that she decided to offer wellness-based classes -- and so Higher Ground was born.

Before moving her practice to Moraga, Jang's office was located in San Francisco's Financial District. Already a resident since 2017, she decided to open her facility in town when COVID saw her S.F. clientele dwindle from over 30 a week down to three.

Licensed to practice not only in the state of California, but nationally, Jang is recognized as a Primary Care Provider. She studied Neuroscience at the University of California at Berkeley as an undergrad, which triggered her interest in pursuing a medical career.

Word of Higher Ground's existence has spread. "We asked people for feedback -- what classes they wanted and the times," said Jang. "We try to cater to the community and offer what they are interested in. We started with 14 classes and now offer 30."

The various classes are held throughout the week with time slots to accommodate busy schedules. Chair Yoga and Gentle Yoga are recommended for those with arthritis, injuries, or seniors with low mobility. Active Kids Yoga is geared toward youngsters and is a 45-minute session that introduces mindfulness and breathing techniques. "It's not meditation," Jang stated. They also offer Mat Pilates, Yoga Fundamentals, Vinyasa Yoga, Flowing Movement and Meditation, Candlelight Yoga, Core and Stretch, Strength and Sculpt, and more. She plans on adding massages to her offerings and is in the process of finding someone who will be a perfect fit for her criteria.

"We also have instructor-led and hosted workshops that are meant to promote well-being like Healing Circles and Sound Baths," added Jang. "It's all a learning experience. You may not know what you need, but you could find something that works for you. We are here to support the community."

This reporter opted for an hour-long Introductory Acupuncture session to help alleviate the decades-long neck and shoulder pain attributed to carrying a purse that contains everything (including the kitchen sink). Prior to the session, questionnaires were filled out so that the doctor could determine how best to treat the issues. The first 20 minutes of the treatment involved discussion. "I like to explain everything when I do acupuncture," Jang

stated. Because many are afraid of needles, they often use acupuncture as a final and last resort, and as such Jang likes to show the patient the needles while explaining that they are nothing like a hypodermic needle, but rather as thin as a human hair and flexible to the touch. At Higher Ground, patients lie on a heated table and are given a "call button" to push in case they are uncomfortable during the procedure.

Out of approximately 10 needles, placed on my face, ears, hands, legs, and feet, I only felt two of them go in, and even those were momentary and not uncomfortable. The depth of placement wasn't deep enough to draw blood as was evidenced by the clean cotton ball that was shown to me upon removal. Actually, the entire experience was more like going to a spa thanks to the dim lights, meditation-inducing music, and warm bedding. While patient experience will vary, when I placed my offending purse back over my shoulder, I felt like I was carrying a pillow rather than cinder blocks.

When Jang needs a treatment, she turns to Myra Bautista, Higher Ground's other licensed acupuncturist, who has a decade of clinical experience in pain management and advanced techniques with a Master of Science degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine. "You can't do acupuncture on yourself, so we treat each other,"

explained Jang. "I am offering a New Patient Discount to see Myra on Fridays and Saturdays."

Keeping things in the family, Jang's mother Karen (whose background is kinesiology), works as the office manager. Her friendly demeanor confirms why clients have started calling her "Mom."

Higher Ground does accept insurance and various types of coverage should be discussed beforehand. "As a community I want to make sure that we are affordable. It's all an investment in our health."

Higher Ground is located at 920 Country Club Dr. For more information visit: highergroundmoraga.com or call (925) 596-5317.

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- Nominees should be persons who: (1) have given their time, talent and treasure to help make Moraga a vibrant community, one where people want to live, work and shop; and (2) bring the community together and make us proud to be residents of Moraga;
- Cannot be a current elected member or paid staff of the Town Council, the Town or any other local public agency (e.g., School District or Fire District).

Please email your nomination to nominations@lamorindaweekly.com or mail it to Moraga Citizen of the Year Nominations, Lamorinda Weekly, 1480 Moraga Road, Suite C # 202, Moraga CA 94556.

The deadline for receipt of nominations is Friday, March 8.

A celebration will be held on Sunday, April 14, at the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church to honor the winner. For a list of past recipients visit: www.mcnmoraga.org.



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See public meetings schedule on these pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:
www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:
www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:
www.orindaassociation.org

Orinda Public Meetings

City Council Regular Meeting:
Tuesday, Feb. 20, 7 p.m.
Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission
Tuesday, Feb. 27, 7 p.m.
Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way

Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
Wednesday, Feb. 14, 7:00 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way

Orinda Police Chief gives update on low property crime in the city

By Sora O'Doherty

Compared to 2019 and 2020, property crime is down in the city of Orinda, according to Orinda Police Chief Ryan Sullivan, who gave a report to the City Council Subcommittee on Public Safety on Feb. 13. The report did not include crimes against the person.

In 2023 there were 23 residential burglaries, 12 commercial burglaries, and 20 automobile burglaries. Higher numbers were reported in 2019, when there were 29 residential burglaries and 46 automobile burglaries, although the high for commercial burglaries was 19 in 2021. Sullivan reported that the department has a good closure rate, with many burglaries solved and some still in court. The rate of stolen

vehicles was down from a high of 32 in 2021 to 24 in 2023, although 2019 and 2020 saw lower rates of 17 stolen vehicles for each of those years. Although the chief reported that five stolen vehicles were recovered in 2023, he added that not all of those vehicles had been stolen from within Orinda.

In 2023, 151 suspects were arrested in Orinda. Most were not Orinda residents. Sullivan spoke about an arrest in a case where a check was stolen, washed, and cashed. The search warrant in that case yielded a lot of check equipment.

Sullivan also provided an update on personnel and equipment. Orinda has two new police officers, officer Nicholas Callejas and Officer Christopher Hamblin. Total staffing of the OPD includes the chief, a senior administrative assistant, an administrative sergeant, an investigations sergeant, a detective, a traffic officer, eight patrol officers,

and a reserve officer. Patrol officers work three days a week for 12 hour shifts, day or night.

In 2023 the office purchased two Chevrolet Tahoes to replace two 2016 Ford Explorers, and another two older vehicles are being replaced this year as well.

Sullivan also talked about automatic license plate reader (ALPR) cameras in the city. Orinda, which has several ALPA cameras around the city, both mobile and stationary, is purchasing additional cameras for better coverage. There are also several privately owned ALPR cameras scattered throughout the city, Sullivan added. OPD vehicles are equipped with cameras and officers wear body-worn cameras.

Sullivan stressed the importance of good relations between the community and the police department. He spoke about the efforts being made by the department to have positive interac-

tions with citizens. In 2023, the OPD hosted a National Night Out event at the police station and a Coffee with the Cops at the community center, in addition to participating in a campus safety and safe gun storage education night at Miramonte High School.

OPD has similar events planned for 2024, including a Lunch with Cops event at Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School, and "Recess with the Cops" at the elementary schools. OPD will again host National Night Out and is planning monthly Coffee with the Cops events.

Orinda law requires that firearms be stored safely, and OPD offers free gunlocks. OPD will also take possession of and destroy any unwanted firearms and/or ammunition. An officer can come to your home to receive unwanted items, or you can bring them to the police department, but if you choose to bring them to

the station, leave the items in your car until instructed otherwise by an officer.

Sullivan stressed the importance of neighborhood involvement. OPD Officer Johnson is assigned to Neighborhood Watch, and can be contacted at (925) 254-6820 by any neighbors who wish to form a Neighborhood Watch group. Neighbors looking out for any unusual activity, such as garage doors open when you know your neighbor is away, can help to prevent crimes or lead to the arrest of criminals.

Most importantly, Sullivan and the subcommittee members urged the public to communicate with OPD if they see anything suspicious, rather than posting to social media. For times when a member of the public doesn't feel it is appropriate to use the 911 emergency call line, Sullivan urged them to call the non-emergency dispatch number, (925) 646-2441.



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Inga Miller announces she will not run for reelection on Orinda City Council

By Sora O'Doherty



Inga Miller Photo S. O'Doherty

Having been asked by a member of the public if she planned to run for city council again, Council Member Inga Miller gave it some thought and decided that she would not run, with the intention of leaving the field clear for others interested in stepping up. She announced her decision at the conclusion of the Feb. 20 city council meeting. To her surprise, she almost immediately discovered that someone was interested in replacing her, and she is enthusiastically endorsing Cara Hoxie, whose term as president of the Orinda Union School District Board expires at the end of the

year.

First elected in 2016, and serving as mayor of Orinda twice, Miller reflected upon her eight years on the council. She recalled that the 2016 election was a very charged one nationally, and it was her goal to maintain the charm and friendliness of Orinda, to preserve the city's sense of community and caring. She considers her contribution to that goal her main achievement as a city council member.

Before becoming a city council member, Miller served on the Parks and Rec Commission. Raised in Orinda, Miller attended Miramonte High School and felt a debt of gratitude to her native city. She is very proud of the work done to adopt the downtown Orinda plan, which she hopes will reverse the decline of the downtown and what she views as "tremendous retail leakage."

Her worst experience in office was the AirBnB shooting that occurred when she was serving as mayor in 2019. "Anytime there is a

loss of life," Miller said, "it is devastating." She was glad that something good came from the incident, insofar as laws were changed locally and beyond after the shooting to prevent future occurrences.

Her belief that no one should die is also key to her absolute dedication to Orinda's evacuation planning. "Preparation is everything," she believes. While she is happy that Sleepy Hollow Elementary School has been prepared as a "place of last resort," she firmly believes that in most circumstances there will be sufficient warning to evacuate students from the schools. She noted that since the destructive wildfires in Australia, they have mandated places of last resort, or neighborhood safe places.

Miller had words of praise for many of Orinda's former mayors, whose ranks she will soon join. Miller recalled the many volunteer activities they have undertaken since leaving the council, adding that Orinda is a place where

there is a huge willingness to volunteer.

The outgoing city council member, who will serve until the end of the year, had many good things to say about the candidity of Hoxie, whom she is endorsing. As a lawyer, like Miller, with eight years of experience serving on the school board and dealing with the passage of a school bond, Hoxie understands infrastructure and contracts, Miller said. She has been a host family for a student from the Czech Republic and has visited the Tabor Meetings with the Orinda Tabor Sister City Foundation. She has also been involved in building bridges between the school district and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, Miller added.

The other council member whose term expires at the end of the year is current Mayor Darlene Gee. Gee was appointed to fill the vacancy left when council member Steve Glazer was elected to the California Senate in 2015, and won election to the council in 2016 and 2020.

Correction: The Chinese New Year's Lion Dance and a martial arts demonstration on Feb. 10 in Orinda was performed by Tomizaki's Champions Kung Fu school and its students. Concord Kung Fu, a different school, was erroneously named in the article in the Feb. 14 issue of The Lamorinda Weekly. The names of Dr. Weylin Eng and Dick Heggie were misspelled in the same story. We apologize for these errors.

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Local expert addresses hot topic of home insurance availability

By Sora O'Doherty

The Via Farallon La Cuesta Firewise group hosted a Zoom meeting, open to the public, on Feb. 22, so that local residents could hear from a local insurance expert about the problem of home insurance nonrenewals.

Joel Laucher, a Moraga resident who worked for the California Department of Insurance before retiring, now works for the non-profit agency United Policyholders and addressed over 80 people who attended the Zoom meeting. He explained how United Policyholders came into being after the devastating Oakland fire 30 years ago, to try to help consumers understand and contend with the realities of premium increases and nonrenewals.

Laucher also addressed some problems of people who still have insurance, but are underinsured (30 to 40% of people are underinsured and would not be able to rebuild if they lost their home in a fire, he ex-

plained). The current cost to rebuild is now a minimum of \$450 per square foot.

If your insurance company is not going to renew your home insurance policy, they must by law give you 75 days notice. This is intended to either allow you to correct deficiencies that might have led to the nonrenewal, or to shop for another insurance provider. Laucher explained that often a policy nonrenewal may have nothing to do with your particular property, but the insurer might be trying to reduce their risk in a certain area.

The California Department of Insurance provides tips on how to obtain home insurance, including the 800 telephone numbers of every insurer who writes policies in California.

Laucher advised calling every one and asking if they can either give you a direct quote for a new policy or direct you to an agent who handles policies for their company.

Although California established its "FAIR plan" to provide basic fire insurance to those who live in a high-fire area and cannot obtain insurance, Laucher advised strongly to keep this as the option of last resort. FAIR plan policies are fire insurance only,

and Laucher said homeowners would require "Difference in Conditions" policies to protect them from everything else, from liability to water damage. Although water damage claims are rare, he noted, claims for water damage tend to be very significant.

Laucher offered these tips to homeowners. Seek out proactive insurance agents or brokers. Do as much mitigation as you can, including clearing all vegetation and debris from under decks and clearing all combustible material for 5 feet from your

home, with six inches of noncombustible vertical clearance at the bottom of all exterior surfaces of your home. Ask your agent about all available discounts. Raise your deductible to reduce your premium.

... continued on Page 8

Art Gallery at Wilder reopens to public

By Sora O'Doherty



Knitting Love by Shiva Jafarzadeh, 2022

The Lamorinda Arts Council will be hosting a Grand Reopening of the Art Gallery at Wilder on Sunday, March 3. There will be a reception with light refreshments from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Orinda Vice Mayor Latika Malkani will be present to officially reopen the gallery, which will remain open for public viewing each weekday from 3 to 5 p.m.

Curator Bill Carmel will introduce featured artist Shiva Jafarzadeh and her themed artwork, "Paintings and Drawings of Romance, Womanhood, Motherhood & Feminine Poems."

More information is available at <https://lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits-wilder/> or by email to info@LamorindaArts.org or by telephone at (925) 359-9940.



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Moraga resident's mission: Keep Moraga clean and beautiful

By Diane Claytor



Photos provided

Just some of the trash Scott Parker found when cleaning up the creekbed at Moraga's new West Commons Park

Scott Parker is nothing if not persistent; passionate and stubborn may also be words used to describe the Moraga resident. What began more than three years ago as a way to kill a few hours while his son practiced soccer has grown into a lofty mission: keep Moraga clean.

Parker has been heading out by himself every weekend - mostly during the winter months when the weather is cooler and there is less chance of confronting poison oak - and cleaning up years and years worth of trash throughout Moraga. He estimates that he has removed in excess of 30,000 pounds of litter from the town's open space, watersheds, and creeks. This includes more than 10,000 bottles and cans, 1,000 paint cans, dozens of car tires, TVs, trash compactors, HVAC units, shopping carts, and even toilets. He believes some of this debris has been lying

around for decades. In fact, while cleaning up Mulholland Ridge recently, Parker proclaims, "I found Burgermeister beer cans — Burgermeister stopped producing beer in 1971!"

It was never Parker's intention to clean up the town, he says. But everywhere he looked, he saw litter. "The more I see it, the more I have to do something about it," he states. "I can't just leave it." But now, after hundreds of hours of sometimes back-breaking work, hundreds of dollars spent on supplies, gas, and dumping fees - not to mention a few broken toes, occasional dehydration, and a head-first tumble into a creek, Parker is ready to stop. "My body is starting to feel it, going up and down steep slopes, dragging full, heavy bags of trash, not to mention big, bulky items," he explains.

"For me," Parker advises, "it's all about

long term solutions, not endless cleanup." He believes he has hit all the local creeks and open space, cleaning up each one. "But now, we have to figure out why people are using these spaces for dumping and come up with solutions," he notes.

"I've done, and will continue to do, my part," Parker says. But now it's time for the town, private property owners and residents to do their part to either stop litter altogether or at least stop it from accumulating. It's time to get the community engaged and involved."

Parker has many solutions for keeping our community clean, all of which involve taking responsibility, being accountable, and reporting issues quickly to the town. He believes that Moraga is now the cleanest it has been in decades so we can start fresh to keep it this way.

The easiest way to do this, Parker emphasizes, is by going to the town's website (<https://www.moraga.ca.us/>). On the front page, there is a "Report an Issue" button. It's easy to use and, Parker notes, "is a great way for residents to get involved without getting their hands dirty; the town is generally very responsive. It's the old 'see something say something' adage," he says.

"We have the ability to keep our town clean and be proud of where we live," Parker declares.

Applications for Grand Jury service sought

The Contra Costa County Superior Court is accepting applications for Civil Grand Jury service for fiscal year 2024-2025 term. The Civil Grand Jury is made up of 19 members who serve for one year, July through June, to monitor, review, and report on city and county governments, special districts, and school districts.

Every effort is made to ensure that the Grand Jury reflects the makeup of the residents of the county. Approximately 75 applicants will be selected to be interviewed by Grand Jury Selection Committee, which is composed of Superior Court Judges. After interviews, the judges will nominate approximately 30 applicants to constitute a grand jury pool from which the final panel of 19 will be selected by random drawing. The drawing is scheduled to be held on Friday, June 14.

Individuals selected for service will be expected to be available from June 17 to June 21 and June 24 to June 27, to attend an orientation where they will meet with department heads, become familiar with their colleagues, learn about juror responsibilities and procedures, and select committees on which they will serve.

Grand jurors must be a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older, who have been a resident of Contra Costa County for at least one year prior to selection. They cannot currently hold any elected position within the county. Applicants should have reliable transportation to Martinez, and must be prepared to devote at least 30 hours per week to Civil Grand Jury service. Applicants should have access to a computer, be familiar with Microsoft Word, and be able to send and receive email. Citizens who work should apply only if they can be released from their jobs to perform the jury duties. Applicants selected as one of the 30 nominees will be fingerprinted before the drawing.

Jurors receive a stipend for attending full jury and committee meetings and reimbursed 62.5 cents per mile for allowable jury travel.

Persons interested in applying may contact the Office of the Civil Grand Jury at (925) 608-2621, or visit the website at www.cc-courts.org/grandjury to receive additional information regarding service on the Civil Grand Jury and to obtain an application.

Application deadline is Friday, March 22.

Moraga's teachers rally

... continued from Page 1

The District's last salary proposal was a 4% increase in salary for the current school year and ongoing, plus an additional 3% bonus in one-time money." A confidential mediation was held on Feb. 16 that was described as "productive," and a second session is on track for March.

"The state has provided an 8.22% COLA (Cost-of-Living Adjustment) this year for every district," stated California Teachers Association

and East Bay Coalition for Student Success labor representative Gray Harris. "That's what we are asking be passed along to the employees so that we can retain and attract the best educators for our students."

Harris also added, "The Moraga and Orinda teachers are a few months from being legal to go on strike, but the Dublin and Pleasanton teachers (also coalition partners) are only a few days and weeks from a potential strike."

"The Moraga School District values our quali-

fied and dedicated teachers," wrote Parks, in a Feb. 21 email response to this reporter's request for comments. "The District is committed to continuing to work with the Moraga Teachers Association through the negotiations process to reach an agreement that ensures a continuation of excellent educational programming for our students while maintaining competitive salary and benefits and highly desirable working conditions for our employees."

Home insurance information

... continued from Page 7

One big issue that insurers are focusing on is wooden gates connecting fences to homes. Best practices would be to have metal gates five feet wide. Other things that can be done include installing fire resistant vents and multipane windows, although Laucher did say that

most Lamorinda homes already have multipane windows. A Class A roof is also recommended, as are enclosed eaves.

Laucher added that anything you do adds to "herd immunity," that is, the more homes that have done mitigation of fire hazards, the safer the whole neighborhood will be. He took some questions from the

group; several homeowners reported that their insurance company had not renewed their policies. Laucher noted that you cannot go without fire insurance if you have a mortgage on your home. While the search for a policy may be time consuming and difficult, Laucher said it was the best way forward.

Links: Get risk reduction in your area www.uphelp.org/WRAP Get ready, get your disaster ready guide www.listocalifornia.org/resources

Source of Litter	Citizen Solutions
Commercial Dumping Contractors, Landscapers, Haulers etc.	1 Check to ensure proper disposal by requiring contractor's dump receipt before full job 2 Report dumping as soon as you see it 3 Encourage authorities to add dumping signage, highlight positives & expand enforcement
Individual Littering	1 Personal & community accountability 2 Encourage authorities to expand garbage receptacles in high litter/traffic areas 3 Report chronic littering spots
Poor Property Maintenance	1 Report an Issue for littered commercial properties, particularly properties with storm drains and/or direct creek access where their litter gets spread to the waterways
Backyard Unintentional Litter	1 Those living next to creeks be aware of kids/dogs toys & balls going over fences and clean up before rainy season (there is a surprising amount of this in creeks)
Garbage Truck Litter	1 Citizens pick up during walks 2 Report instances of garbage truck littering 3 Encourage municipalities to hold garbage companies accountable
Roadside/Storm Drain Litter	1 Citizens pick up during walks 2 Report as issue to Intrans/Intrans/Caltrans 3 Encourage municipalities to utilize storm drain garbage capture devices

After cleaning up Moraga, Scott Parker had created a brochure, including his ideas of how to keep the town clean.

Lamorinda CERT Monthly Meeting
March 11, 2024 7:00 pm

Rechargeable Batteries and Electrified Vehicles

Electric Vehicles (EVs), e-bikes, hoverboards, e-scooters, rechargeable flashlights, and all other battery powered equipment present challenges for firefighters, consumers, and law enforcement. We will discuss some of the battery technologies and the risks associated with charging, storing, using, and disposing of batteries.

Your child wants an e-scooter. Where can it be ridden? How can you safely charge it? What are the laws related to electric conveyances in our community? *Thinking about getting a new electric vehicle?* What are the fire risks? *Your camera has a rechargeable strobe.* Can you leave it on a charger overnight?

Lamorinda CERT Monthly Meetings are open to all. To get a Zoom link, register at:
<https://lamorindacert.org/monthly-meetings>

Public Safety	Moraga Police Department Incident Summary	Orinda Police Department Incident Report
Emergency response: 24 Hours 911 Police Dispatch: 24 Hours 925-284-5010 Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or www.nixle.com Lafayette Police Department: 3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd. 925-283-3680 Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt 925-299-3221 Police Department Tip Line 94549Tip@gmail.com Police Department Traffic Issues 94549Traffic@gmail.com Moraga Police Department: 329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055 Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049 Orinda Police Department: 22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820 Chief of Police, Ryan Sullivan 925-254-6820 Orindatip@cityoforinda.org	Tc - Property Damage 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd. Happy Valley Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd. 10 Block Wellesley Dr. Vehicle Theft 3500 Block Brook St. Other criminal activity Fraud Credit Card 800 Block Santa Maria Way Fraud False Pretenses 3500 Block S Silver Springs Rd. (2) 800 Block Santa Maria Way 1000 Block Oak Hill Rd. (2) Grand Theft 3900 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Grand Theft Veh Parts 400 Block Florence Dr. 3300 Block N Lucille Ln. Identity Theft 1100 Block Monticello Rd. Police Department (2) 3900 Block Rancho Rd. 3300 Block Woodview Dr. Petty Theft 3600 Block Sundale Rd. Happy Valley Rd./Deer Hill Rd. 1100 Block Sierra Vista Way 3100 Block Rohrer Dr. Residential Burglary 1000 Block Windsor Dr. 10 Block Moss Ln. Robbery - Armed 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Robbery Strongarm Mt. Diablo Blvd./1st St. Shoplift 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2) 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Nuisance to the Community Disturbance-domestic 800 Block Mountain View Dr. Disturbing The Peace 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Loud Music 20 Block Toledo Ct. Loud Noise 10 Block Camellia Ln. 900 Block Moraga Rd. Vehicle violations 3800 Block Happy Valley Rd. Broadmoor Ct./St Marys Rd. Public Nuisance Oak Hill Rd./Wb Sr 24 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2) Vandalism Police Department Other Drunk In Public 500 Block Merriewood Panhandling 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2) Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd. Stray-traf Haz Deer Hill Rd./Brown Av Terrorist Threats 3400 Block School St. Trespass 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	Trespass W/ Vehicle Upper Happy Valley Rd. /Happy Valley Rd. Unwanted Guest 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Violation Custody Order 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Violation Restraining Ord 900 Block Moraga Rd.
	Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Jan. 23 - Feb. 5 Alarms 8 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 6 Traffic 35 Suspicious Circumstances 4 Suspicious Subject 2 Suspicious Vehicle 0 Service to Citizen 9 Patrol Req./Security Check 10 Public/School Assembly Check 4 Supplemental Report 1 Vacation House Check 0 Welfare Check 2 Ordinance Violation 0 Vehicle violations Excessive Speed Rheem Blvd. Canyon Ifo Via Vista 100 Block Draeger Dr. Moraga Rd./Lucas Dr. Canyon Rd./Moraga Way Fayhill / Fronteras Moraga Way/School St. Country Club Dr./St Andrews Dr. Twenty Four Hour Fitness Moraga Rd./Lucas Dr. Camino Pablo/Rimer Dr. Reckless Driving Moraga Way/Camino Ricardo Tc - Property Damage 1400 Block Camino Peral Other criminal activity Petty Theft Cvs Shoplift Safeway Nuisance to the Community Public Nuisance 100 Block Devin Dr.	<p>Orinda Police Department Incident Report will be back</p>



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Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church

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First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

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This chocolate cake is our favorite for birthdays

By Susie Iventosch



Chocolate cake

Photos Susie Iventosch

This decadent cake has become my “go-to” chocolate cake for almost any occasion! It is super moist, easy to make, calls for no eggs, and can be dressed up or down. Sometimes we add peanut butter chips and Reese’s to the batter, and

peanut butter to the frosting for our favorite peanut butter and chocolate lovers. Other times we add mint chocolate or raspberries, and often we leave it simply and divinely chocolate with either chocolate or vanilla buttercream. You can

make it in 8 or 9-inch cake pans, but it also makes a great batch of two dozen cupcakes. You have so many options with this basic cake recipe.

The reason we love this chocolate and vanilla version is because one of our very favorite cakes comes from Amy’s Bread, a fabulous bakery in New York City. For our daughter’s 30th birthday party several years ago, we ordered four cakes from Amy’s Breads, and while all were fantastic, their Black and White was our absolute favorite. It was a dark chocolate cake with white vanilla buttercream. Sooooo good! Ever since that time, whenever I visited Courtney while she was living in New York, we made it a point to pick up a couple of

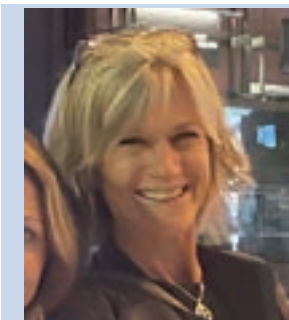
slices of this luscious cake. She no longer lives there, but we still needed our regular fix of this amazing cake, so we started making our own.

To make all the fun swirls of frosting on top of the cake, remove about 1 cup of the vanilla buttercream frosting and add 2-3 tablespoons of cocoa powder to it. Blend well, and add just a dash of milk, if the frosting is too thick. Then, using a pastry bag and a number 824 open star tip with the matching coupler, make the swirls on top of the cake and along the bottom edge. It looks so fancy this way! But, if you are more inclined, you can also just frost the top of the cake and in between the layers, to expose the cake layers. This is easy and makes a



beautiful naked style cake.

Thanks to Sora O’Dougherty, I now use even bake cake strips for placing around the outside edge of the pan to allow the cakes to bake more evenly. If you don’t have these, don’t worry, you can always slice off the rounded part on the top of each layer to make a flatter surface. Also, I have found over the



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

years, that is it so much easier to get the cake layers out of the pans by using parchment paper rounds that fit into the bottom of the pan. They come pre-cut, with tabs which really makes it easy to get the cake out!

Cooking Tools

- 1 large pastry bag
- 1 #824 open star cake decorating tips with matching coupler
- 1 offset spatula
- 2 eight or nine-inch cake pans
- Parchment paper cake rounds with pre-cut pull tabs (you can buy them or make your own)
- 2 even bake cake strips (helps the layers to bake evenly)

INGREDIENTS

- Cake**
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
 - 2 cups granulated sugar
 - 1/2 cup unsweetened Dutch-processed cocoa powder (the better quality, the better the flavor)
 - 2 tsp. baking soda
 - 1 tsp. salt
 - 2 cups cold water (can use 1/4 cup strong coffee and 1 3/4 cup water to boost the chocolate flavor)
 - 1 cup canola oil
 - 2 tsp. vanilla extract
 - 1/2 tsp. cider vinegar
 - 1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips

Frosting

- 2 cubes butter, softened to room temp
- 6-7 cups confectioners (powdered) sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla powder (or vanilla extract)
- 1/4 -1/3 cup milk or cream
- 2 tbsp. cocoa powder (for the chocolate frosting designs)

DIRECTIONS

Spray the bottom and sides of two cake pans and place parchment paper rounds on top of spray. You can make the parchment rounds by tracing the bottom of the pan and leaving two-inch tabs or you can buy them pre-cut. (See image) Soak the cake strips in water and secure them around the edges of each of the cake pans.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place all dries for cake in a large mixing bowl and blend well with a wire whisk. In a large measuring cup, mix oil, water, and vanilla and add to dries, mixing thoroughly with a whisk or wooden spoon.

Divide batter evenly among the two cake pans. Sprinkle chocolate chips evenly over the batter in each pan. Bake for about 30-35 minutes, or until the cake tester comes out clean. Cool completely and remove from the pan. Place one layer on your cake plate and spread vanilla frosting over the top and sides of that layer. Place the second layer on top of the first, and frost top and sides of that layer, smoothing out the frosting on top and around the sides of the cake with an off-set spatula. Using the chocolate part of the frosting, make your decorative swirls on top of the cake and smaller stars all along the bottom edge, using the same tip.

Frosting

Place softened butter in the bowl of your standing mixer. Using the paddle attachment, beat until creamy and very white with an electric beater. Beat in vanilla powder or extract.

Add powdered sugar alternately with milk, beating well after each addition, until you reach the desired spreading consistency. Reserve 1/4 cup powdered sugar for the last addition, in case you’ve added too much milk. Remove about 1 cup of the vanilla frosting and set aside in a separate bowl. Stir cocoa powder into this frosting for the chocolate decorations on the cake.



A cake spinner like this one is not absolutely necessary, but it sure makes cake decorating easier!

Cake Strips: Wilton and King Arthur Baking Co., among others, make these and you can buy them online or at stores like Michaels or Williams Sonoma.
Parchment rounds: The Smart Baker makes these. <https://thesmartbaker.com/>

'Io Capitano' – A hero’s journey

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

What makes a good movie? How about giving the audience a window to a moment of the human experience that will touch them so deeply that they will leave the theater a different person. Such is "Io

Capitano." The movie that will be shown at the Orinda Theatre for at least a week, starting on March 8, comes from Italy and is set almost entirely in Africa. It tells the perilous voyage of two 16-

year-old Senegalese cousins who dream of Europe and cross half of their continent to reach Libya and from there, a boat for Italy. The scenario tells real stories, including that of Mamadou Kouassi, who was a consultant on the movie. After fleeing his country and crossing the Sahara Desert on foot, he was captured and tortured in Libya, sold as a slave laborer, before being able to cross the Mediterranean Sea. When Kouassi and film director Matteo Garrone were interviewed by the Huffington Post last January, they explained that the purpose of the film was to change the way immigrants are perceived around the world.

The linear movie follows Seydou and Moussa, two dreamers who, in spite of warnings from their relatives and friends, want to leave their small Senegalese village and make a better life for themselves and their families. They have no idea of the violence and exploitation they will be confronted with.

Kouassi explains that the film shows only a portion of the violence he encountered. The physical violence is quite difficult to bear at times, but maybe what is worse is how these people are dehumanized by those who exploit them or use them as targets for their sadism. Where no law protects them, the immi-

grants fall prey to trafficking and racketeering.

The movie follows the classical form of the Hero's Journey. Seydou especially has such a good and incredibly brave heart. He overcomes obstacles one after the other and he always gets up again, sometimes on his own, other times supported by his fellow men's solidarity. And this is one of the most optimistic elements of "Io Capitano," showing the support these people who are at their wit's end still give to each other. "Solidarity is a big part of our African culture," commented Kouassi in the Huffington's interview, "something we bring with us wherever we go."

This important movie is overall hopeful and a tribute to the courage of the immigrants, including a touch of fantastic imagery that adds lightness and poetry when reality is too harsh for the protagonists.

"Io Capitano" is a nominee for the 2024 Oscar in the Foreign Films category (just as "The Teacher's Lounge," last month's Orinda programming, is a nominee for Germany). It is a part of the International Film Showcase that brings a remarkable foreign movie to Lamorinda once a month. Details and tickets at www.orindamovies.com/

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Not to be missed

Art

The Lamorinda Arts Council is excited to announce the Art Gallery at Wilder's grand reopening on Sunday, March 3 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. A reception is planned with light refreshments. Orinda Vice Mayor Latika Malki will officially open the Gallery to the public. Hours will be Monday - Friday from 3 to 5 p.m. Curators are readying the gallery to display featured solo artist Shiva Jafarzadeh's artwork. Her theme is "Paintings and Drawings of Romance, Womanhood, Feminine Poems and Motherhood." <https://LamorindaArts.org/galleries-2>, info@LamorindaArts.org, (925) 359-9940.

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library: Students Rock the Art at VAC. The Lamorinda Arts Council's (LAC) High School Visual Arts Competition (VAC) features artwork from students living in or attending school in Orinda, Lafayette, or Moraga, including all schools in the Acalanes Union High School District. In addition to the in-person art exhibit which runs from March 4 to April 7, the contest features cash prizes, merit certifications, and an online public exhibit on the LAC website, www.LamorindaArts.org/online-galleries/. The reception in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda, begins at 7 p.m. on March 14; the juried awards ceremony runs from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Library Auditorium. (925) 359-4490. www.lamorindaarts.org/vac.

Music

Diablo Ballet presents Stars & Stripes Jubilee onn March 22 and 23 at the Leshler Center for the Arts, located at 1601 Civic Drive in Walnut Creek. Performances: Friday, March 22 at 6 p.m. and Saturday, March 23 at 2 p.m. Single tickets are now on sale now (\$26 - \$54) with senior and youth pricing available. For tickets, call (925) 943-SHOW (7469) or visit www.lesherartscenter.org or www.diabloballet.org.

Cantare, an Oakland-based non-profit community choral organization, celebrates the 25th Anniversary of its 120-voice adult Chorale this March with a concert of past favorites by American composers on Saturday, March 16, at 7:30 p.m., Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, 1801 Lacassie Ave, Walnut Creek. Tickets and more information at www.cantareconvivo.org, or (510) 836-0789, or at the door. General admission is \$35; Seniors, \$30; Students, \$10.

Deborah Del Mastro Benefit Concert on March 16 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School Street, Lafayette.

General in advance \$50, General at the door \$60, VIP \$75. www.townhalltheatre.com/benefit-concert

Armando's presents The Sunday Paper at the Town Hall Theatre on Sunday, March 10, from 2 to 6 p.m., at Townhall Theatre, 3535 School Street, Lafayette. The Sunday Paper is known for their crisp, tight sound with former and current members of Tower of Power, Cold Blood, Sly & The Family Stone, Santana. Cost: \$55. For more info see <https://SundayPaper-March10.eventbrite.com>.

The Diablo Symphony Orchestra brings Igor Stravinsky's groundbreaking Rite of Spring to Walnut Creek on March 3 at 2 p.m. at the Leshler Center for the Arts. The program also features a new work, "Many Hues of Green," by local composer Jean Ahn, and Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto in E Minor featuring 16-year-old Starla Breshears, this season's winner of the DSO's Yen Liang Young Artist Competition. www.diablosymphony.org

Flock of Flutes in free concert Saturday March 9 at 3:45 p.m., directed by Monica Williams and Martha Uhey. Come and hear a variety of flutes including contra bass flute, bass flutes, alto flutes, concert c flutes, and piccolo. Free. Don Tatzin Hall at Lafayette Library: 3491 Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

Theatre

Miramonte High School's upcoming spring musical Footloose! Join for a toe-tapping, hip-shaking journey that'll have you dancing in the aisles and cheering for more. With electrifying music, exhilarating choreography, and a 90-member cast and crew that's ready to rock, this year's musical production is sure to make you feel like you've been transported straight to the heart of the '80s. Friday, March 8, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 9, at 7 p.m.; Friday, March 15, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 16, at 4 p.m., Tickets are available here: www.showtix4u.com/event-details/80916

Town Hall Theatre is thrilled to invite the community to celebrate at their Season Announcement Party on March 2, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at their esteemed venue, 3535 School Street, Lafayette. Come celebrate as they unveil their highly anticipated 80th season with a theme that delves into the heart of humanity: "Family: Born into and Chosen." To reserve your place and be part of the excitement, please RSVP at www.townhalltheatre.com/2024-2025-season.

Not to be missed

Other

The Electrified Home Tour is a new program of the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour and Green Home Features Showcase on Sunday, March 10, from 11 a.m. To 3 p.m. at four electrified homes in Alameda and Contra Costa County (Moraga home included). Free. Registration is required at www.bringingbackthenatives.net/electrify-reg

Leta McCollough Seletzky, J.D., Author, Essayist, Memoirist will be speaking at the Lafayette Rotary meeting. In the iconic photo of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination at Memphis's Lorraine Motel, a figure kneels beside him, attempting to stem the bleeding with a borrowed towel. Little known is that this person, a member of the Invaders, a "black power" activist group, was also an undercover Memphis police officer. This mysterious figure is Lita's father. Lita will share the gripping story of her father's undercover career in her book, "THE KNEELING MAN: My Father's Life as a Black Spy Witnessing MLK's Assassination." Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, March 1 at 7 a.m., <https://lamorindasunrise.org/speakers>

Celebration of Norouz, Persian New Year Celebration and Spring Equinox on March 10 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Wilder Art and Garden Center, Orinda. Open to the public, Family Friendly. Persian food & sweets, apparel, jewelry and accessories, pottery, bags, and shoes.

American Assoc. University Women - OML Branch general meeting on Tuesday, March 19 at 9:30 a.m. at the Orinda Community Church. Guests are welcome to join this meeting featuring a panel of 6 women: Pat Rudebusch, Leta McCollough Seletzky, Katharine White, Saira Pasha, Dr. Jacalyn Buettner, Dr. Jamie Textor.

Moraga Historical Society presents resident train expert Sam Sperry. Join us as we go back in time to 1913, when the Oakland, Antioch & Eastern Railway's route between Oakland and Sacramento took commuters to work and pears to market. In 1928, with a merger of railroads, the 185-mile-long Sacramento Northern Railway was formed which included two stops in town: The Moraga Station and St. Mary's Station. Make your reservations now for Sunday, March 3 from 1 to 3 p.m. @ Hacienda de las Flores -- Casita Building, 2100 Donald Dr, Moraga. RSVP to Susan Sperry: ranchusan@aol.com Moraga Historical Society members free, guests \$5. Limited seating.

The Contra Costa Chinese School is holding their annual Open House on Saturdays, March 9 and March 16 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Diablo Valley College, Liberal Arts Building at 321 Golf Club Road in Pleasant Hill. The school offers kindergarten to 10th grade Mandarin instruction during the school year, as well as a summer program for children, ages 5 to 9. For more information, visit www.cococs.org.

Lamorinda Movers, a social organization for adults 55+, invites you to enjoy a fun and informative evening on Monday, March 11 at the Serbian Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga. Cocktails begin at 5 p.m.; a St. Patrick's Day-themed buffet dinner, featuring corned beef and cabbage, will begin at 5:45 p.m. Following dinner, long-time Moraga resident and train expert, Sam Sperry, will provide a fascinating program on the passenger and freight trains that once serviced our town. \$40 for members, \$45 for guests. Reservations required; go to <https://lamorindamovers.org/reservations> to sign up.

Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School Street, Lafayette presents "100 Years From Mississippi" movie screening and talkback on March 8, from 6 to 7 p.m. book signing with Nobuko Miyamoto, screening at 7 p.m. with post show talkback. Adults \$10, Youth \$7, Pay-What-You-Can tickets available at the door www.townhalltheatre.com/100-years

Garden

Moraga Garden Club, March 21 at 9:30 a.m., Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street. "Vegetables Love Flowers" is the topic of their presenter Heather Marano, master gardener and owner of Bush Poppy Farm in Orinda. Community-supported (CSA), Bush Poppy Farm focuses on regenerative farming and offers educational workshops on floral and gardening design. Open to the public and welcome new members. www.moragagardenclub.org

The Lafayette Garden Club monthly meeting begins on March 14 at 9:30 a.m. for social time. At 10:30 a.m., club member Melinda Kell will discuss Soil Preparation for Your Summer Vegetable Garden. At 11 a.m. the guest speaker will be Kim Bancroft, a longtime teacher who became an editor and writer. Kim will present Nature, Landscapes, Farms, and Gardens Through Two 19th Century Bay Area Women's Eyes. Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Free to attend and guests welcome. www.lafayettegardenclub.com

Lamorinda Arts Council welcomes Ali Kozoll as new Executive Director

Ali joins the Lamorinda Arts Council with a professional background in brand development, program management, strategic planning, and building communities around meaningful work. Her leadership aims to elevate the council's initiatives and expand outreach efforts.

Ali's education is rooted in the arts, having earned her Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree from the American Conservatory Theater in San

Francisco, after which she spent her early career as an Equity stage actor throughout California.

"Growing up in Orinda, where the arts were celebrated and encouraged, was vital to the development of my artistic nature and I believe that a vibrant arts community is an essential part of individual and community well-being," says Kozoll. "I look forward to working closely with our talented

team of volunteers, local artists, and friends of the council to amplify the impact of the arts on our community's cultural vitality."

The Lamorinda Arts Council extends its heartfelt gratitude to Aniston-Maylee Breslin, outgoing Executive Director, for her dedication to advancing the council's mission during her tenure. - *Provided by LAC*



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Publishers/Owners: Andy and Wendy Scheck; andy@lamorindaweekly.com, wendy@lamorindaweekly.com
Editor: Jennifer Wake; jennifer@lamorindaweekly.com
Associate Editor: Jaya Griggs; jaya@lamorindaweekly.com
Advertising: 925-377-0977, Wendy Scheck; wendy@lamorindaweekly.com

Staff Writers: Vera Kochan; vera@lamorindaweekly.com, Sora O'Doherty; sora@lamorindaweekly.com, Jon Kingdon; sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com, Digging Deep: Cynthia Brian; Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com Food: Susie Iventosch; suziventosch@gmail.com
Contributing Writers: Conrad Bassett, Sophie Braccini, Diane Claytor, Jenn Freedman, Moya Stone, Alison Burns, Linda Fodrini-Johnson, Elizabeth LaScala, Lou Fancher, Sharon K. Sobotta, Ashley Dong, Jim Hurley, Casey Scheiner, Toris Jaeger; **Photos:** Tod Fierner, Jeff Heyman
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My spouse was diagnosed with MCI – now what?

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson

MCI is the acronym for Mild Cognitive Impairment. It does not mean “Dementia” at this stage. A large percentage of those with this diagnosis never progress further than short-term memory loss. Research has shown with lifestyle changes, improvements in cognition are possible. However, any new diagnoses often come with stress and worry about the future. Many individuals think they have a dementia like Alzheimer’s disease, but that is not the case at this point of the journey. It can progress to a dementia and further testing will determine the type of dementia someone might have.

Worry and stress are negatives for a healthy brain. It is imperative to take this as an opportunity to make some lifestyle changes that could keep the brain healthy and possibly arrest the progression.

This is an important time for couples not to put their “heads in the sand” as the saying goes but to take action and do some practical planning – that will be helpful for whatever the future holds.

1) Share responsibilities of running a

household. Traditionally we all have our roles in our relationships but with this diagnosis it is a time to share how to run the household, which includes, finances, medications, taking care of the garden or pets, even how to cook some simple meals and more.

2) Legal documents. It is always good to update your Trust or Advance Health Directives. It is very important if the person with MCI is the only other decision maker that you add additional decision makers, not only the well spouse, but for the spouse with MCI.

3) Learn as much as you can about the “Healthy Brain” and MCI. If you have dementia in your family, you might want to have genetic testing to see if it is even more important for you to make these changes. Changing lifestyles is not easy but after about six weeks, it will become the new routine.

4) Lifestyle changes:
a) Positive attitudes toward aging have a great impact on the brain. The American Medical Association’s research last year found that even those with a genetic link to dementia and had a

positive outlook toward aging were able to reverse their MCI diagnosis. So, if you think “aging is the pits,” that is not going to help you. A positive outlook on aging includes looking at this stage of life as an opportunity to give back, travel, learn new skills and enjoy each day.

b) Diet – the best diet to follow is the Mediterranean Diet. An important food item for the brain is the healthy fats, such as salmon, olive oil, avocados and walnuts. Avoid processed foods and eat whole foods.

c) Exercise – try for 30 minutes a day. Add some resistance, weight training and balance work to your routine. Join a class and make it fun, walk with a friend or your partner. Look for the “Awe” in every day.

d) Social Engagement. This is not just for your brain health but it adds years to your life. Be a part of a group that meets regularly. Examples; senior centers, libraries, Rotary or other service organizations, the Lamorinda Village www.lamorindavillage.org. Continue to be in touch with family and friends but add more to the calendar. Volunteer-

ing just about anywhere is both good for your health and another way to stay socially engaged.

e) Learning new skills and playing brain games is a boost to brain health.

f) Sleep. Work on getting 7-8 hours of sleep each night without medications. During sleep is when memory processing is working.

g) Mindfulness: Find some time each day to just “be” – quiet the mind. Listen to music, sit in a garden, even coloring with markers or doing another art project can be a way to lose yourself and empty the mind. One can use yoga, prayer, meditation recordings or apps on your phone like Calm.

The above lifestyle

changes are going to benefit both the spouse with MCI and the care partner. Stress is part of life but when you focus on the positives, it becomes manageable and allows for joy.

I taught two sessions for couples this past year and plan on teaching another late this fall at Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church. These sessions are three weeks and are for couples. If you are interested, email me at LindaFJ620@outlook.com.

I will be teaching a free Zoom class, “Dementia: Road Map from Diagnosis to Family Care,” at 11 a.m. March 8. If interested enroll on my website: www.LindaFodriniJohnson.com.



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

Lafayette Housing Element and Res Tower

... continued from Page 2

Srivatsa also provided information about the Lafayette Reservoir Tower Seismic Retrofit project. A proposed design for the required retrofit included a tower shortened by 40 feet and received comments of concern from residents and members of the council. Srivatsa said the reaction indicated high levels of concern to EBMUD’s plan that would reduce the tower, leaving “only a truncated remnant of the iconic structure.”

A committee of

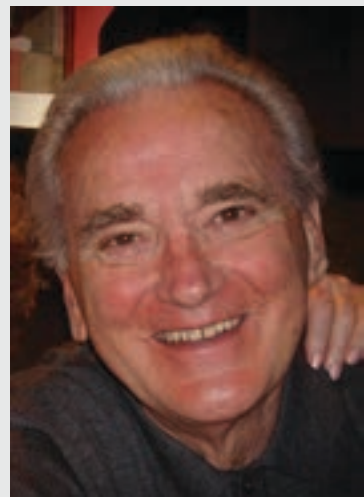
highly qualified residents with expertise in seismic structural retrofit design, structural engineering, architecture, and construction volunteered to review EBMUD’s plans. Over a period of nine months, the committee studied the project’s technical reports, analyses, plans, and references cited by EBMUD’s structural design consultant (AECOM) and the Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) to determine if the existing scale of the tower could be retained while still ensuring safety for Lafayette residents and visitors.

A revised plan which concluded the tower could remain at the same height, requiring only a modest addition of mild steel reinforcement in the upper half of the tower, was submitted to EBMUD. Srivatsa told council she will make sure the committee’s report “finds a home” on the city website where council and members of the public can review the plans and find updates.

Finally, Srivatsa said city staff are meeting with Caltrans the first week in March to discuss the El Curtola Bridge situation.

In Memory

Dick Macy Resident of Moraga



Ernest Richard (Dick) Macy, a remarkable and cherished individual, has left an indelible mark on the lives of those who were fortunate enough to know him. He passed away surrounded by the love of his family on January 30, 2024.

Dick was a devoted husband, celebrating 70 years of marriage with his beloved wife, Jean Macy. Together, they exemplified unwavering commitment and deep affection. As a father, Dick was unparalleled, nurturing and guiding his children with wisdom and love. He leaves behind a legacy of love to his children: Kim Macy Richardson, Eric Macy, and Jennifer Conley. He was not just a father but a pillar of strength and support, instilling in his children values that will endure through generations.

To his grandchildren, Brittany and Amanda Richardson, Eric Jr., Brooke, and Hunter Macy, he was affectionately known as ‘Papa’. His playful spirit and boundless love enriched their lives and created cherished memories that will be forever treasured.

Dick earned his undergraduate degree from UCLA (Kim and Eric followed in his footsteps) and his MBA from USC, all while working to support his young family. The majority of his career was spent at IBM, where he spearheaded major projects and built highly effective teams. Upon taking early retirement, he joined Digital Equipment where he handled major domestic and international accounts.

Dick’s faith was the cornerstone of his life, and he was an active member of Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church for many years. He served in various capacities, from elder to mentor, leaving an indelible mark on the community. His dedication extended to supporting Mount Hermon in Santa Cruz, where his participation was deeply valued.

Beyond his spiritual and familial commitments, Dick was an adventurer at heart. He found joy in sailing, whether on larger boats or navigating the waters on his Hobie Cat catamaran, where he fearlessly rode the waves of both San Francisco Bay and Lake Tahoe. His zest for life extended to other activities, including travel, horseback riding, bike riding, and motorcycle riding. He was also a master of leisure, enjoying games like Monopoly, Gin, and Ping Pong.

However, above all else, Dick cherished moments spent with Jean, his beloved wife and companion for 75 years. Their enduring love story is a testament to the power of love and companionship.

Though Dick has departed from this world, his spirit will forever live on in the hearts of those he touched. His kindness, laughter, and unwavering love will be dearly missed but fondly remembered for years to come. May his legacy of love and joy continue to inspire and guide us all. Please join us in remembering and honoring the extraordinary life of Ernest Richard (Dick) Macy.

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Success for Lamorinda girls soccer led by Miramonte's NCS championship

By Jon Kingdon

It was a classic matchup between the No. 1 seeded **Miramonte** and No. 2 seeded Cardinal Newman high schools at Miramonte in the NCS championship game at Miramonte last Friday.

With the score tied at 2-2 after two 10-minute overtime sessions and in the second round of penalty kicks, Miramonte won on a sudden death kick by Shauna Lindheim after a diving save by Miramonte goalie Talia Karden.

Trailing 1-0 at the end of the first half, Miramonte scored the next two goals by Madyson Yu on an unassisted goal and Sadie Leal Schuman on a penalty kick with 17 minutes left in the game, though Cardinal Newman scored on their next possession.

For Miramonte head coach Taylor Abbott, the difference in the teams came down to one thing: "Heart! This team has been working so hard all year and they didn't want to lose. It took playing the whole 100 minutes which was unbelievable, and it was just a perfect ending."

With Cardinal Newman up 4-3 in the first round of penalty kicks, Kardon made the save and Olivia Penney then converted for Mira-

monte to put the game into sudden death. Another save by Kardon was followed by Lindheim's goal.

Kardon, a freshman who began the season on the JV team, was called up to the varsity due to an injury to the Matador's starting goalie. "Talia put in so much work with an extra goalie coach and on her own and then for her to get to the saves in the penalty kick shootout is just unheard of and I'm really happy for her."

It was as much a mental plan as it was the physical success in Kardon's stopping the final two penalty kicks: "I just kept my mind completely blank because I tend to get in my head a little bit," Kardon said "My plan was always to focus on where the shooters were positioned and where to commit to the dive and it was a matter of not hesitating or overthinking it."

The 17-2-2 Matadors were 3-15-1 just two years ago and Abbott highlighted his senior co-captains Lindheim and Zoe Rossiter because "They are well aware of where the program was and where it's going."

Prior to taking the winning shot, Lindheim was in the moment and after the winning shot



Photo Ann Murphy

took a second to look back. "I felt I got into their goalies' head by staring in the opposite direction and felt she would go that way and that's exactly what happened," Lindheim said. "I've seen this program transform and it's just so exciting to finish out my senior year on such a high level."

Abbott was hard pressed to contain his excitement after the final goal. "I'm getting goosebumps thinking about Shauna getting the penalty kick to seal the victory. It was just poetic. We couldn't have

scripted it any better."

Acalanes

Despite having lost 12 seniors to graduation, Acalanes had a core of 11 juniors to step in this season. "We had a lot of kids stepping up into new roles and taking on important leadership positions as captains, starters and first-time kids getting big minutes," head coach Nick Barbarino said. "They work hard, have a great attitude, and a number of them have learned through the season."

The Dons finished the season with a 11-6-4 record, 7-3-2 in league

and made it to the second round of the NCS playoffs, losing to the No. 1 seed Casa Grande 3-0.

Acalanes had a dominant defense only giving up 18 goals all season. "Junior goalie Melisa Adatepe got her voice this year as a first-time starter and sophomore Sara Tarnai also saw game time as well," Barbarino said. "Tori Hittatt, Edie Berzansky, and Tatum Keely are all sophomores in our backline that start, and freshman Reese Tierney also got big minutes."

The offense was a young group with junior

Nicole Nguyen the only one on the front line with a lot of experience. Junior Livi Foster, on the varsity for the first time, started most of the time. "Our offense has created a lot of opportunities we have just missed a lot of really good chances when usually that's the opposite," Barbarino said. "Megan Yee was a winger who stepped in at right back and has done a phenomenal job, starting every game, and freshman Reese Tierney has basically played every minute this season. In fact, everyone stepped up." ... continued on Page 13

Continued success for Campolindo, and major turnaround for Miramonte boys basketball

By Jon Kingdon

With no returning player that had scored in double figures and the loss of starting point guard Tyler Bergren to a season ending injury, **Campolindo** head coach Steven Dyer was at best cautiously optimistic about the team's prospects allowing that though this team was the "most inexperienced team I've had at Campolindo with a chance to be pretty good," offering the proviso that "we just have to make progress every week."

Dyer would go deep into his roster all season, having 11 players that appeared in at least 20 games and finished the season with a 22-8 record (9-3 in league play) and making it to the second round of the NCS Division I playoffs. Dyer spoke highly about the team's overall performance. "We had a lot of guys that have won at

lower levels, and that translated to the next level," Dyer said. "We didn't necessarily have the players with flashy stats as we've had in the past, but we had a true team with guys buying into their roles. This has been one of my favorite teams to coach because there's been no drama and all the guys have been fun to coach. Guys just came ready to work and it's been really rewarding."

Stepping up on offense were seniors Dylan Mansour (13.9/+6.2) and Tim Smith (+9.8/+9.1) and junior Gavin Rendle (11.1/+9.5), all increasing their scoring averages. Smith also increased his rebounds per game from 0.7 last season to 7.0. "Tim made a ton of progress from last year by working incredibly hard. He would stay after practice and work extra on his game and it

was a day and night difference from last year," Dyer said.

Despite so many new players on the varsity, it was a roster that came up learning the Dyer system on the Campolindo freshmen and JV teams. Once again, the Cougars' signature was the play of its defense, only giving up 47.5 points per game, holding two teams under 22 points. "Our younger players have used the same system we use on varsity, so it was just a matter of learning how to do it at the varsity level playing against better guys, and it just takes a lot of work to be good defensively," Dyer said. "Our freshmen coach Nicky Aikawa and JV coach Spenser McDonald do a great job in preparing these guys to move up to the varsity and it's not as hard for me to demand they play

defense because it's already been demanded at the lower level."

Miramonte

After last season's 5-22 record, Miramonte was ranked 603 out of 605 California schools. Head coach Chris Lavdiotis made it clear what needed to happen this season. "We determined what we need to do to get better and then put it in the rearview mirror."

The Matadors improved their record to 19-12, won their first two NCS playoff games before losing to the No. 1 seeded University High School, jumping up 378 spots, finishing the year ranked 225 in the state. The team scored 15 more points and gave up six fewer points per game than last season.

"This was a great season with a tremendous group of kids that were dedicated and committed to working

together," Lavdiotis said. "The kids earned everything they got. There were a lot of doubters and we proved them wrong. From top to bottom, this was one of the best groups of kids I've coached."

Nine of the players improved their scoring averages this season led by seniors Marcus Robinson (+4.8), Thomas Zwahlen (+3.3), Chris Kaufhold (+2.8) and junior Jack Quinnild (+4.7). The team converted 70% of their foul shots, assisted on 73% of their baskets and improved their assist to turnover ratio.

"It was little things like that," Lavdiotis said. "Our guys made a concerted effort to really play well together, and their attitudes were wonderful and that's why it was so hard to have the season end." Lavdiotis and his

staff also put the effort in off the court. "We watched a lot of videos, and our team was always prepared so that nothing any of our opponents did surprised us," Lavdiotis said. "We did have a bad two minutes in the third quarter against University, where things fell apart and that was the game which was so unfortunate."

Despite losing six of their top eight scorers to graduation, a number of underclassmen got substantial minutes. "We will lose a lot of players but it's how we're developing our next wave of players," Lavdiotis said. "A lot of our underclassmen got a lot of valuable experience, so we'll be good next season."

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Acalanes girls basketball lead Lamorinda teams into the playoffs

By Jon Kingdon



Photos Ann Murphy

Acalanes guard K.K. Lacanlale (33) surrounded by Miramonte players



Miramonte's Karena Eberts being guarded by Acalane's Dulce Vail

With Acalanes heading to the NorCal tournament and Miramonte and Campolindo all winning playoff games, it's clearly been a successful season for the Lamorinda girls basketball teams.

Acalanes

Despite losing two key players to injuries – first team all-league Sophie Chinn (knee) and Lexi Le (shoulder) – Acalanes played in the open division in the NCS tournament as the No. 5 seed, splitting two games and finished with a 26-5 record and automatically qualified for the NorCal tournament.

"After losing someone like Sophie who

played such a big role on our team, everybody's had to do a little bit more," head coach Margaret Gartner said. "Our girls are in great shape, and they dig deep and just keep battling every game and that's all that you can ask."

The strength of the team has been their ability to call upon any number of players to score, led by last year's division co-MVP Karyss (K.K.) Lacanlale, Dulci Vail, Ariana Hallstrom, Natalie Frechman, and Sofia Fernandez.

"Ariana has been very solid and a huge part of our success," Gartner said. "We're happy to have her play-

ing at full strength and we depend on her. Dulci has constantly improved with her skills and confidence. She's a tough matchup because she moves so well so it's hard for a big player to guard her. Sofia transferred in and had to sit out the early part of the season and has ended up being a very solid player for us and has definitely been a part of our success."

A pleasant surprise for the team has been junior forward Addi Ames. "Addi hadn't played since middle school and she has really improved and come along," Gartner said.

This is a team that is all business, and to a point unemotional on the floor. "We talk about just focusing on the next play," Gartner said. "The players know they have to finish what they start and then we can celebrate."

With the sixth seed in the Division III NorCal Tournament, Acalanes planned to host Archbishop Riordan on Tuesday Feb. 26 at 7 p.m.

Miramonte

Miramonte started off the season losing six of their first nine games and then went on to go 17-5 the rest of the season, going 11-1 in league play.

"I would say it was a successful season," head coach Vince Wirthman said. "We intentionally had a tough preseason schedule. We came together later in the season and won a couple games in the NCS tournament with the No. 3 seed in the Division II playoffs so I would say it was a good year all around."

Miramonte suffered a tough loss to Northgate in the third round of the playoffs, with two starters missing the game and shooting 3 for 30 on three's and the game came down to a last second shot to win it by Northgate.

Karena Eberts had an outstanding season averaging 19.0 points/game and also broke Miramonte's career rebounding record and there was a lot of balanced scoring after Eberts.

The leading scorers after Eberts were seniors Willa Mapaye (6.1) and Marianna Lawrence (5.8), juniors Julia Quinn Ferguson (6.0) and Robin Parmelee (5.2), and sophomore Maegan Gloria Eichenberger (5.7). "We're going to miss Karena and Willa and others, but we've got a good nucleus coming back so I think we'll be competitive next year for sure," Wirthman said.

With the fifth seed in the NorCal Tournament, Miramonte

planned to travel 123 miles on Tuesday for a 5 p.m. game against the fourth seeded Colfax High School.

Campolindo

Campolindo, the prior two seasons had a combined record of 15-35 and 2-22 in league play and finished this season with a 15-15 record, 5-7 in league play and a home playoff win 51-37 over Archie Williams.

"I think the season was a resounding success," head coach Doug Cardoni said. "I care more about getting the girls to play the way I wanted them to play, with freedom, but they really cared about our record, and they showed it on the court in how hard and well they competed."

Leading the team this season were the junior captains Ali McCauley and Raegan Shum. "Ali was outstanding this season and I expect her to be even far better next year because we have certain things that we're really going to work on with her," Cardoni said. "Raegan embraced our new philosophy early on and just took off with it. She was a three-point shooter but also became a good driver and was our best defender on and off the ball all year."

The Cougars are looking forward to having 6'2" sophomore Sofia Iakoveleva for the whole season next year after only being eligible to play two games on varsity at the end of this year.

Cardoni will be extending what he has brought to the team next year: "I want the players to look for mismatches whether it's size, speed

or skills and building from the base up by recognizing situations and that's where basketball gets to be a lot more fun from a thinking perspective."

Graduating only

three seniors, Cardoni is brimming with optimism: "Our freshman and sophomore classes were great, and I'm really excited about next season."

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Girls soccer

... continued from Page 12

Campolindo

Campolindo finished with an 11-8 overall record, 8-4 in league play and made it to the second round of the NCS before losing to Petaluma 3-2. "With our players coming from so many different club teams, it took a little bit of time for the team to come together, making plays and winning games," head coach Luis Pinto said.

Pinto came to rely on captains Molly Dougherty, Sara Brockmeier and Indira Naylor. "They showed great leadership, stepped it up on the field and made it fun to watch," Pinto said.

The offense was led by Naylor (17G, 6A), Mylie Jaquet (15G, 16A), Maya Abughosh (9G, 8A) and freshman Zoe Lehrman (7G, 4A) and followed Pinto's direction to be aggressive. "The best defense is a strong offense,

so we didn't sit back and wait," Pinto said.

Senior goalie Maya Schwartz was solid in goal and junior Natalie Hsia was the team's leading defender. "With Maya's communication and leadership, she made it easier for our backline," Pinto said. "Natalie was a complete player who was very strong and fast and was really able to work the ball in the air and on the ground."





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Longtime editor is leaving Lamorinda Weekly

By Diane Claytor



Jennifer Wake

Photo Sora O'Doherty

Almost 17 years ago (March 14, 2007 to be exact), the Lamorinda Weekly published its very first issue. Among the early writers was Jennifer Wake, who wrote stories about Saint Mary's College happenings. With a degree in media communications from Cal State, Sacramento, and work stints in a San Francisco PR firm as well as serving as PR Director at Saint Mary's, this was Wake's first foray into newspaper writing. Apparently she liked it because she's been at the paper ever since.

Wake began writing about SMC before moving into writing more Life section stories. From there she became sections editor, associate ed-

itor and then, in 2014, was promoted to editor. Editors are the backstage workers; they're quietly in the background, doing so much but receiving little credit. This describes how Wake has happily spent the last 10 years at the helm.

Warm and humble, Wake laughs easily and treats everyone with equal respect. She has calmly encouraged and supported the writers to become better at what they do. Vera Kochan, who covers Moraga for the paper, says, "I have no doubt I was able to grow as a writer over the years thanks to Jen."

"The job of editing is so minor compared to what the writers and columnists do," Wake

says. "We have such great writers, it's amazing what people have been able to put together." She also notes how impressed she is with Lamorinda residents. "It's incredible all the things Lamorindans have done and how so many of them give so much of their time to help others without ever expecting anything in return."

As editor, Wake makes many decisions on a regular basis - from what stories to write to which photos to use and what headline is best. She recently made one of the more difficult decisions of her professional life: after all these years, Wake is leaving the paper; this is her final issue. "It blows my mind that I've been here this long," she wrote when announcing her departure.

Married with two adult children, the former Moraga resident has several aging family members and she will now have more time and flexibility to help them. She will, however, also continue writing, most likely as a freelancer. "I don't want to lose that part of myself," she states. "I need that cre-

ative outlet. "I'm definitely going to miss working regularly with all the writers and columnists and being part of this fantastic team," Wake continues. And the writers and columnists are all going to miss working with her. Since her announcement, the accolades have been plentiful.

Longtime garden columnist Cynthia Brian called Wake a "remarkable editor" and "the sweetest woman," noting what a joy she has been to work with; Susie Iventosch, who writes the food column, echoed Brian's comments, noting it has been "a pure pleasure to work with Jen," who is the "most wonderful editor."

Wendy Scheck, associate publisher, who was instrumental in hiring Wake in 2007, comments that "she is the backbone of our editorial team ... she has a talent for managing the mix of articles for every issue and has a keen creative eye for photos. ... She also worked hard to keep, expand and nurture our pool of writers."

Sora O'Doherty, who covers Orinda for the paper said, "In addition to

being a highly competent editor, Jen is a person of great sensitivity and compassion, whose warmth and understanding kept the staff together and happy."

Kochan perhaps said it best: "Jen is like the great and powerful Wizard of Oz behind the curtain; ...she has masterfully orchestrated so much of what our readers have come to enjoy and done it with a gracious guidance. ... I will miss her encouraging words, her sense of humor and her calmness under stress."

As is often the case, when one exits, a new one enters. And in this instance, Jaya Griggs has been selected to replace Wake as the Lamorinda Weekly editor.

Griggs was raised in Moraga and grew up with the newspaper. As the Schecks' daughter, Griggs was there from the very beginning and has had a variety of roles and assignments over the years. She's illustrated stories, edited, proofread, and worked on the paper's layout. She's even written articles occasionally. "The Lamorinda Weekly is a family-owned, family-run, family-oriented pub-

lication," Griggs notes, and she's excited to become more involved in the family business. At 29 years old, with this new expanded assignment, she'll unquestionably bring a young, fresh perspective to the publication.

An avid reader and graphic artist, Griggs graduated from the California College of the Arts. She says there may be some changes in the paper eventually but nothing immediately. "I need to get my feet wet," Griggs states. "Once I'm more comfortable with how it all works, I may suggest some changes." In the meantime, she looks forward to getting to know all the writers and their different styles.

Both Wake and Griggs are wished the very best of luck in their new endeavors.



Photo Susan Loenneker Incoming editor Jaya Griggs

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OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 18 Issue 1 Wednesday, February 28, 2024



Conserving water with drip irrigation ... read on Page OH8

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian Coming Alive!

By Cynthia Brian

Photos Cynthia Brian



A tree is filled with cerise-colored camellias.



Salvia-hot lips sage is stunning.



Blue muscari, also known as grape hyacinth, shines at night.

"I went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown. For going out, I found, was really going in." ~ John Muir

Walking around my property, I am in awe of how quickly my landscape has come to life. Within just a couple of weeks, the garden has awoken from its deep sleep blanketing the hillside with lush green grasses and fantastic flowers. The frogs are croaking, the birds are chirping, and the bees are buzzing. Despite the continuing rain, nature is waking up from its soggy slumber.

My garden is a living laboratory where I design borders to include a diverse mix of plants including bulbs, perennials, annuals, shrubs, trees, and vines. Originally my color palette was strictly pinks, purples, blues, and whites, but over the years I have acknowledged the beauty of all

color combinations. Daring forms and textures are welcome as I attempt to create a naturalistic style. Taking cues from Mother Nature, I encourage self-sowing specimens (thank you calendula and nigella) and I prefer my landscape to be full, a bit crowded, and wild. Rocks, stones, and gravel are incorporated into the scheme while vintage used bricks delineate the paths.

If you'd like to create a garden that respects the natural world, here are a few tips that may help.

1. Don't be afraid to mix and match. Shrubs and trees provide structure. Bulbs pop up as surprises, especially at this time of year. Perennials are the main attraction with annuals affording the colors you desire throughout the year.
2. Always plant in swaths or groups. Repeating the groups coalesces and unifies the look.

3. Invite specimens that you like to self-sow. Allow plants to grow as they would in nature without your assistance. Don't fret when stray flowers appear in an area where you didn't plan to have them grow. Whimsical is fun.

4. When it comes to coordinating colors, be open to the bold and beautiful. I never thought I'd like so much orange and yellow in my landscape, but the combination of daffodils, calendula, and poppies has changed my mind.

5. Strive for balance. A clipped hedge is wonderful surrounding a formal rose garden, or outlining a driveway, yet when a garden is too heavily manicured it appears almost fake. Allow for some spillers, fillers, and thrillers. Add elements of awe.

... continued on Page OH10

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	4	\$1,119,000	\$5,000,000
MORAGA	3	\$669,000	\$2,450,000
ORINDA	2	\$1,075,000	\$1,700,000

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

908 Brown Avenue, \$1,175,000, 2 Bdrms, 1439 SqFt, 2022 YrBlt, 01-19-24

11 Cherry Hills Court, \$1,119,000, 4 Bdrms, 1631 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 01-18-24

3338 Freeman Road, \$5,000,000, 7 Bdrms, 4852 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 01-18-24,

Previous Sale: \$3,188,500, 12-07-18

3268 Park Lane, \$1,160,000, 3 Bdrms, 2097 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 01-24-24

MORAGA

490 Rheem Boulevard, \$669,000, 2 Bdrms, 1126 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 01-17-24,

Previous Sale: \$445,000, 09-25-06

55 Sanders Ranch Road, \$2,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 3054 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt,

01-19-24, Previous Sale: \$1,270,000, 03-05-03

109 Westchester Street, \$1,660,000, 3 Bdrms, 2291 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 01-18-24,

Previous Sale: \$810,000, 03-19-14

ORINDA

35 Marston Road, \$1,700,000, 3 Bdrms, 2578 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 01-23-24

18 Vista Del Orinda, \$1,075,000, 2 Bdrms, 1501 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 01-26-24

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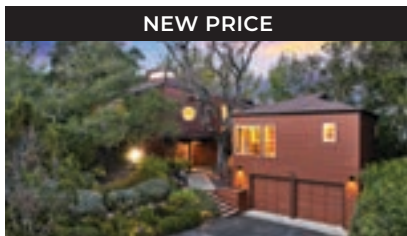


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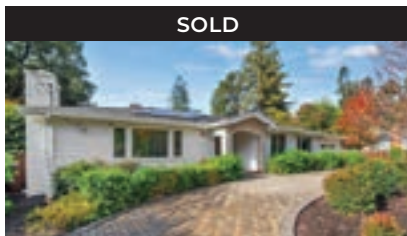
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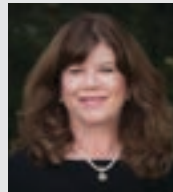
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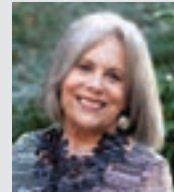
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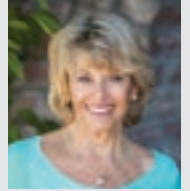
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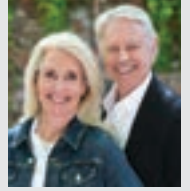
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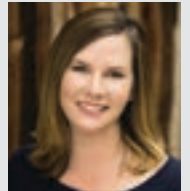
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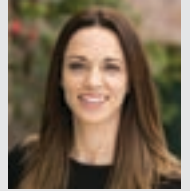
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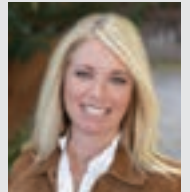
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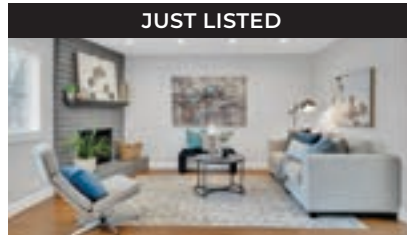


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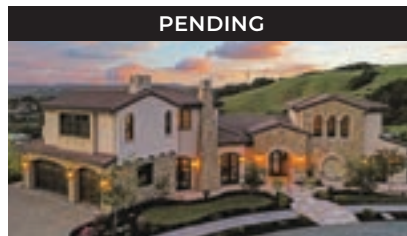


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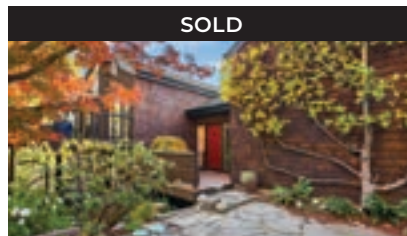
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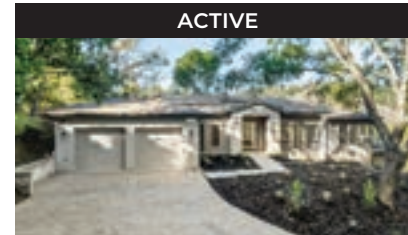
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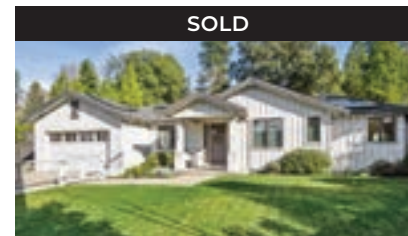
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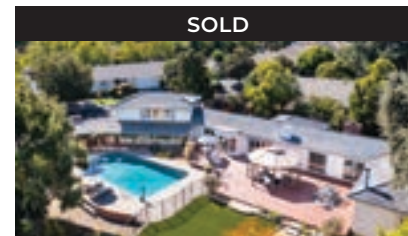
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TO OUR

LAFAYETTE OFFICE



Conserving water with a drip irrigation system

By Jim Hurley



Pressure regulator

Photo Jim Hurley

Who remembers word problems in math class? I was terrible at math but loved word problems like: If Steve has seven apples and Mary has fourteen oranges, how fast was the train from Boston going? (Wait, what train? Was Mary on the train? I'm so confused!) And what does this have to do with conserving water?

Water conservation is a huge issue in our area. Many people choose to conserve water by eliminating lawn areas. That's fine, but not entirely necessary. Grass lawns absorb and utilize all the water you provide. Recent studies have suggested that watering lawn areas benefits nature by replenishing the water table in the summer months. Of course, you want to water responsibly, making sure you are not sending water into the street and are only watering the grass. Modern lawn systems use pop-up spray heads that have directional spray nozzles. The pop-ups are installed to cover the configuration of the lawn using full circle, half circle, and quarter circle spray nozzles. Overhead

sprayer nozzles are rated by Gallons per Minute, or "GPM." The sprayer manufacturer tells us the amount of GPM for each nozzle type. So, let's do some lawn-watering math.

Question #1: How much water does a lawn take?

Let's say a medium-sized front lawn is 45 feet long and 30 feet wide, which is 1,350 square feet. It uses six half circle heads (6-halves times 2 GPM = 12 GPM) and two quarter circle heads (2-quarters times 1 GPM = 2 GPM) for a total of 14 gallons per minute. From late spring through the summer, the system may run for 15 minutes using 210 gallons per day (14 Gal. times 15 Minutes).

Old-fashioned garden shrub areas before the 1990s typically used spray nozzles that are measured in gallons per minute and are attached to risers (tall pipes) or extra tall (12-inch) pop-up heads. In contrast to lawns which absorb and utilize the water sprayed from above, planting areas lose water to evaporation when it is sprayed over open areas of ground. Modern drip systems target water just where the plant needs it, allowing us to have beautiful landscapes AND conserve water. Explaining drip systems also requires some irrigation math; get ready for another word problem.

Question #2: How little water can I use and still have an attractive landscape?

Drip Irrigation emitters are rated by Gallons per Hour, "GPH." A rose bed which has six rose bushes with one two-GPH emitter at each bush uses 12 gallons per hour, (6 emitters times 2 GPH = 12 GPH). If that system runs for only 30 minutes (0.5 hours) per day, it uses six gallons (12 GPH times 0.5 hours = 6 gallons) of water to keep the roses beautiful. A bonus feature of using drip emitters to target water at the base of each plant is that the weeds are discouraged from growing in the dry areas in between the plants.

Replacing old-style shrub sprinklers will require some setup. The first, and most crucial, step is to install a combination filter/pressure regulator in the line just after the irrigation valve. The pressure regulator reduces the house water pressure to 30 pounds per square inch (30 PSI) to prevent blasting the lines loose from the connectors.

The filter keeps minuscule bits of sediment from clogging your emitters; make sure you have one before installing your drip lines. You may not need to run your irrigation system every day. Discuss your clock settings -- watering days, times, and duration with your gardener. Drip systems do require some maintenance, as at times the tubing connections come undone. They may get pulled loose by someone raking the yard or accidentally cut by someone digging. Don't worry, as they are easily reconnected. The soft, flexible drip lines are pushed over hard, barbed connectors. If the tubing has pulled off the connector, just snip a bit (1/2-inch) off the tip of the tube and stick it securely back on the connector. Hardware stores and nurseries sell couplers that will reconnect the tubing.

Another method of maintenance is to listen to your irrigation valves when they are running. If it sounds like a lot of water is flowing, you might have a disconnect somewhere in the line. Leave the valve on and walk around the yard looking and listening for spraying water. A wet spot on the fence or in the gutter is a dead giveaway that you have a gusher nearby. Find the problem and fix it or put a marker next to it and mention it to your landscape maintenance team the next time they visit.

Do the math! Sensible watering of your lawn, upgrading your garden sprinklers to drip irrigation, and periodically monitoring the lines as they run will conserve water and save you big bucks in the long run.

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

Coming Alive!

... continued from Page OH1

6. Use containers for a variety of plants, including small trees. I have an Italian white peach growing in a container that boasts beautiful bright pink blossoms with fluorescent yellow oxalis underplanted. It is quite the unexpected showstopper. As a bonus, when the peaches are ripe, they are easy to harvest.

7. Orchestrate seasonal displays with plenty of colorful and textural annuals, perennials, grasses, and bulbs. Natives and carefully chosen non-natives will thrive happily together. With a plentiful variety of plants, pollinators will call your garden home and become your trusted helpers.

What's Blooming Now?

*Bradford pear, plum, and peach trees	*Cyclamen	*Oxalis
*Azaleas and camellias	*Salvia Hot Lips	*Freesia
*Daffodils	*Muscari	*Viburnum
*Tulips	*Iris	*Hellebore
*Calla lilies	*Primrose	*Jade
*Bergenia	*Lilies of the Valley	*Potato Vine
*Calendula	*Christmas cactus	*Chinese Fringe
	*Periwinkle	*Mustard

Numerous other plants are budding and will be gracing our gardens soon. Stay tuned!.



Cerise blossoms of a peach tree grow in a container.

The Goddess Gardener's March Garden Guide

- **DEFINE** property boundaries and create curb appeal with flowering shrubs. Numerous new varieties of hydrangea are a good choice.

- **SPRAY** roses, crepe myrtles, pittosporum, iris, boxwood, rhododendron, laurel, fruit, and citrus trees with organic dormant oil and copper fungicide. This treatment will help to protect the trees and shrubs from overwintering insects and fungal diseases. Wash the citrus before consumption.

- **POUR** chamomile tea around the base of newly planted seedlings to eliminate fungus growth.

- **DISPLAY** fallen camellias on a hedge, ledge, or pathway for outside interest that are not pretty enough to float in a vase, but not rotten enough to toss in the compost bin. As the camellias wilt, dispose of them.

- **FERTILIZE** hungry lawns anytime in March to strengthen roots, and resist cold, heat, and high traffic when the weather is wet.

- **PRUNE** fig trees and grapevines. Dry the branches and cuttings to use in your smoker or barbecue this summer to add interesting flavors to your grilled specialties.

- **WATER** houseplants while you are on vacation by filling a plastic bottle with water, piercing the neck of the bottle with an ice pick, and burying the bottle with the neck down. Your plant will slowly drink as needed.

- **PATIENCE:** St. Patrick's Day is around the corner. Spring is only a few weeks away.

Hang in there for the rest of winter and watch for the reawakening.

Go out for a walk and stay until sundown! Going out is going in!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



The hillside is colorful with sunny daffodils and calendula.



A structural planting boasts a textured natural look.



Purple plum blossoms after the rain.



**Viburnum
in bloom
behind
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 <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com>



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Custom home by Dan Bartlett of DB Design Build features, soaring ceilings, wall of multi-sliders & scenic views!



8 Hidden Lane, Orinda

5 Bd | 3 Ba | 4495 Sqft | \$2,250,000

Beautiful 5bd/3ba, 4495 sqft home w/ wrap-around Sleepy Hollow views and is move-in ready!

New Listing!



5 Los Dedos Road, Orinda

3 Bd | 2.5 Ba | 2322 Sqft | \$1,900,000

Classic home nestled in the Orinda hills features private, half acre lot w/ expansive backyard, pool & panoramic views!



23 Kellie Ann Court, Orinda

4 Bd | 2.5 Ba | 2236 Sqft | \$1,895,000

This 4bd/2.5ba home features a bright living & dining room w/ views, hardwood floors & flat backyard areas!



17 Fallen Leaf Court, Lafayette

5 Bd + Study | 5.5 Ba | 4789 Sqft | \$4,495,000

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1411 Stonehedge Drive, Pleasant Hill

3 Bd | 3 Ba | 2304 Sqft | \$1,675,000

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