

The end of an era

By Sharon K. Sobotta

Laura Kirleis sat on a lawn chair in front of the tiny square Perks/Caffino where she's spent a quarter-century of her life - serving coffee, smoothies, hot breakfast sandwiches, snacks, warm greetings, smiles, and well wishes. "I'm sad," Kirleis said while smiling through tears "I'm going to miss it. The people we see everyday mean a lot. There's a lot of interaction. It's a very special place."

Kirleis's journey to Caffino-turned Perks began when she was caring for young children and her grandmother, who had been diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease. At the time, her husband came home from his job at (another) Caffino and told Kirleis that they should buy a franchise. This surprised Kirleis as a non-coffee drinker.

"He told me that after my grandmother passes, (the drive through coffee shop) would save me. He said I'd need the camaraderie of people around me...and he was right. It has saved me," Kirleis said. "I love the people here. People are busy, but this has been a place they could go while on the run. I can't tell you how many times someone at one window knew the person at the other one."

As Kirleis chats in front of Perks, former customer Keenan Parmelee stops by. "I've been coming here everyday since my son was very young and now he's a teenager. This place (and the staff) have been a part of our lives and my kids' lives. It was the one place I could come to during the pandemic," Parmelee said. "It's been an important part of our

community. I guess now I'm going to have to make my own coffee."

Kirleis had been led to believe (by her landlord) that she was vacating for the sake of a forthcoming construction so the city could build offices and a teen center, which she deemed a worthy cause.

"I don't think we would've survived the construction of this lot with me in it," Kirleis said. "Maybe I (might've proposed) that we stay until the plans are developed or the construction begins."

It turns out, however, that although the city has been interested in acquiring the Boswell's property, which city manager Niroop Srivastva said is ideally situated between the police station and the library, the city has not purchased the prop-

erty. Srivastva said the city appraised the property in 2019 and the owners declined. In late 2023, when the Lafayette city council was approached by the property owner about a potential sale, the council declined the offer.

"The City supports and values local businesses," Srivastva said. "We also have a strong partnership with the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and support the local small business community through Shop Local promotions such as the new ExperienceLafayette.org business directory website and the eCard Program (a localized gift card that works at participating local stores)."

For now though, the lot, which once bustled with people driving through or walking up to get coffee or snacks, sits



Laura Kirleis

Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

still in front of what has been a cornerstone of community and connec-

tion to Lamorindins-marking the end of an era.

Orinda/Moraga Girl Scout International Fair

Submitted by Karleen Stern



Photo provided

On Sunday, Feb. 25, over 450 Girl Scouts from the Orinda-Moraga Service Unit of the Northern California Girl Scouts Coun-

cil gathered at Joaquin Moraga Middle School participate in the annual Girl Scout International Fair. Each year, in honor

of World Thinking Day, the Orinda-Moraga Service Unit of NoCal Girl Scouts hosts an International Fair. World Think-

ing Day, first celebrated in 1926, is a day of international friendship, providing an opportunity to speak out on issues that impact young girls and women around the world. World Thinking Day is celebrated by Girl Scouts and Girl Guides in over 153 countries.

This year, 29 troops within the Orinda-Moraga Service Unit hosted country booths, including Argentina, Greece, India, Israel, Philippines, Thailand, and Ukraine among others. The troops spent the weeks before the Inter-

national Fair learning about their chosen country, its language, history, customs, and culture. Troops then decorate their booths and plan activities like crafts, games, or food tasting - for other Girl Scouts to participate in to learn more about the country.

At the International Fair, Scouts spent the afternoon traveling from country booth to country booth, learning about each country's unique customs, sampling cuisine from the country, playing traditional games, learning a few

new words in that country's language, or participating in a craft. Once they've visited the country, they get a stamp in their passport.

The event brings together Girl Scouts of all ages, from Daisies (Kindergarten and First Grade) to Cadettes and Senior Scouts in high school.

It's fun to learn about different countries and try new foods, said one Del Rey fourth grade scout and now there are even more counties I hope to visit one day!

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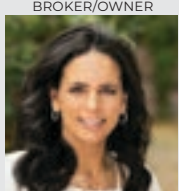
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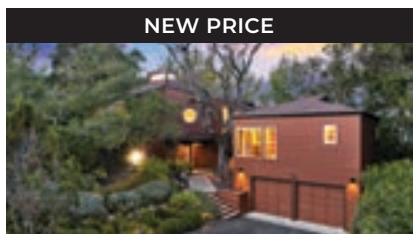
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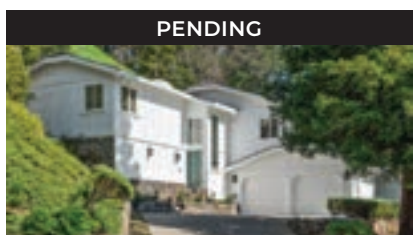
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MATT MCLEOD | 925.465.6500



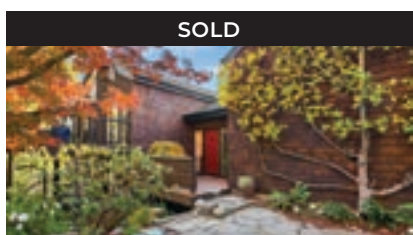
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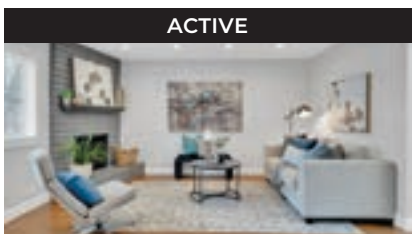
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601 WATCHWOOD ROAD, ORINDA
SOLD FOR \$2,175,000
CAROLYN WAY | 925.890.4115



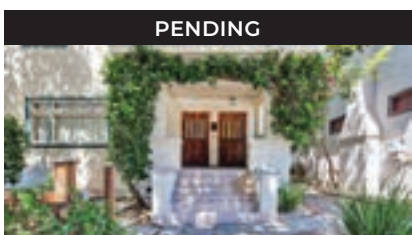
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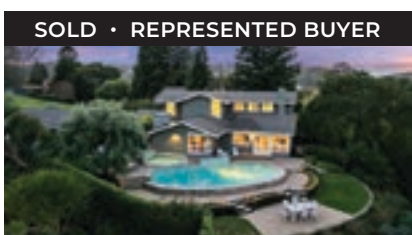
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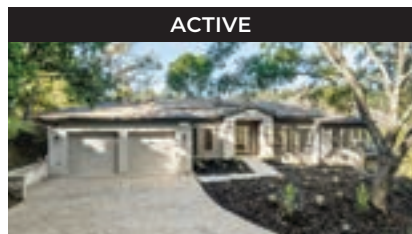
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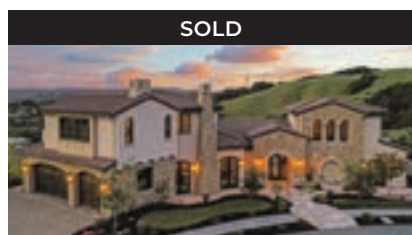
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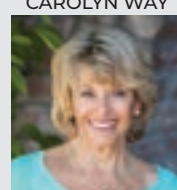
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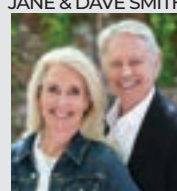
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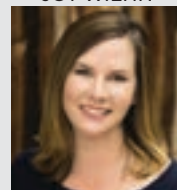
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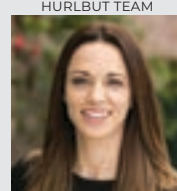
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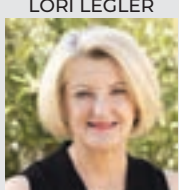
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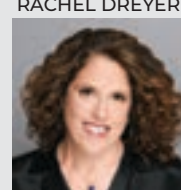
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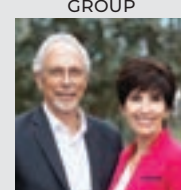
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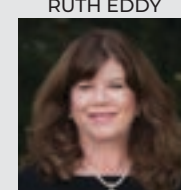
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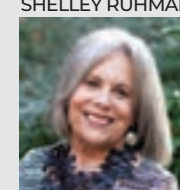
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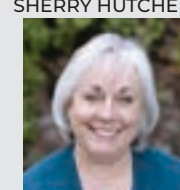
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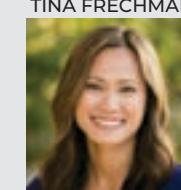
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