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There were extra credit points to be awarded to JM students who came dressed for the feast. Here, teacher-turned-"Pilgrim" Fran Strykowski is surrounded by a group of young "Native Americans" — from left: Camie Home, Taylor Cardenas, Strykowski, Ava Tajbaksh, Ivey Merrill; front: Gabby Thompson

Photo Andy Schreck

215 Reasons to be Thankful

By Cathy Dausman

Over 200 Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School eighth grade students enjoyed an outdoor Thanksgiving meal last Thursday as the culmination to their history lesson about the very first Thanks-

giving. Foods teacher Jill McTaggart popped four cleaned and brined birds into school ovens early that morning while students and parent volunteers assisted later with

decorating, set up and serving. "They're just so anxious [to eat]," said parent Sue Tenerowicz, serving the meal for her second Joaquin Moraga child. "Look at their big eyes," said another. ... continued on page A12

Quote of the Week:

"Institutions are built to succeed or fail, but people are built to remember."

Read Letters to the Editor, page A8

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Supervisor Gayle Uilkema Announces Retirement

By Cathy Tyson



Gayle Uilkema at the annual Board Reorganization Lunch at the Lafayette Veterans' Memorial Building
 Photo Carol Yates

After serving as a Lafayette City Council Member from 1978 to 1997, with four years as Mayor, Gayle Uilkema, currently in her fourth term as a Contra Costa County Supervisor and Chair of the Board, recently announced her retirement. She'll continue to represent District 2 which encompasses Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda along with Danville, Alamo, San Ramon and the western portion of Walnut Creek until the end of her term in January 2013.

Having been in public office for over 33 years, she's ready for a change. "It's time," said the Supervisor, who wanted to decide on her own terms when it was time to retire. "There's an old saying - if you enjoy what you do...you'll never work another day in your life. I value public service so much...it's something I've always been drawn to."

"I chose this time of Thanksgiving to announce my retirement because I'm so grateful and want to give thanks for the opportunity to hold the public trust all these years." She added, "I've had a career full of wonderful experiences." After her

term ends, she's not exactly sure what the future holds, and plans to use the next fourteen months to figure it out.

Prior to her years of public service, Uilkema was an Adjunct Professor in the field of Public Administration and has taught graduate school at Cal State East Bay, JFK University and UC Berkeley.

The biggest change she's seen in public life aside from what she calls "the current financial distress" is regional emergency preparedness. She recalls that after September 11 everyone recognized the real need for a regional system to meet the needs of the public in an emergency. "I remember years ago when I was a teacher - emergency planning was the first thing to go," said Uilkema. Primarily funded with federal grants, Uilkema serves on the Board of Directors of the Bay Area Regional Interoperable Communication System (EBRCSA). Their mission is to own and operate and maintain a state-of-the-art communications system for public agencies in Contra Costa County and Alameda County.

... continued on page A12

Life in Lamorinda B1-B12

Preserving the Stories of Tibetan Elders



By Lou Fancher
 The Dalai Lama looks on as Marcella Adamski settles into an office chair to talk about her life and the Tibetan Oral History Project that has taken over an entire room in her Moraga home. ...read on page B2

Sports C1-C3

Miramonte Boys Reclaim NCS Water Polo Title



By Marissa Harnett
 The high school water polo season came to a close in a dramatic North Coast Section tournament. The NCS tournament began on November 2 and concluded on Nov. 12,read on page C1

Our Homes D1-D8

All in the Family: Second Generation Homeowners



By Cathy Dausman
 Local realtors tout quality of life in Lamorinda, and residents tend to stay put. Some have even moved into the house they are proud originally owned. They are proud Secondread on page D1



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Lafayette Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, November 28, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Planning Commission

Wed., November 30, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Design Review

Monday, November 28, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center
in the Arts & Science Discovery
Center at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District

Wednesday, December 7, 7:30 pm
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, December 7, 7:00 pm
LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

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Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org



Police Report

Making light of things, 11/06/11
Upon a Sunday morn, three juvies sprayed some lights.

Their deeds were caught on video tape, making such a sight.

Detective work would prove, just who those bad boys were

The parents and the business place decided to confer.

(refrain)

They caught the guys, no surprise, to either you or me
The matter settled out of court, and settled civilly!

(Seriously now: Three young men entered the juvenile diversion program and will be doing community service to atone for vandalizing school property.)

Fight club, 11/04/11

Two employees of a Mt. Diablo Blvd. business distracted each other from work when, instead of punching the time clock, one punched the other—not once, but several times. Again, thanks to on-site video surveillance, it was pretty clear who hit whom. Although advised to seek medical help, the victim declined and later refused to cooperate with police.

Digging for clues, 11/11/2011

Tools were stolen from a locked landscape shop near downtown Lafayette. Police raked the crime scene for clues, and dug out several fingerprints on the damaged door frame. Although it is nearly Christmas, there was no hoe-hoe-hoe involved, and just like Frosty the Snowman, any leads and suspects simply melted away...

Planning Commission Bumps Back Downtown Plan Schedule

By Cathy Tyson

The Downtown Specific Plan is once again going to take a bit longer than anticipated. At a recent meeting – the Planning Commission approved a revised schedule for the home stretch of the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The Planning Commission will continue to review the DSP and EIR concurrently through January 30; on February 6 the Planning Commission will adopt recommendations to give to the City Council. Forget the chocolates and a romantic dinner, residents will surely want to enjoy the evening of February 14 - Valentine's Day - when the Planning Commission recommendations will be presented to the City Council. The City Council will use that information to start considering the DSP and the EIR for adoption in March, 2012.

It seems like only yesterday the *Lamorinda Weekly* reported that Planning Commission recommendations to the City Council were slated for late January; this new revised schedule pushes everything back by a few weeks. Responding to a question,

Planning Commissioner Will Lovitt said, "No one is more tired of this than I am." The rest of the Commissioners agreed there is no rush, and they would like to take the time to fully complete the process.

A letter was presented by the Lafayette Homeowners Council at the meeting that disagreed with the logistics of reviewing the Downtown Plan and the Environmental report concurrently, "We urge the City Council in the strongest possible terms to complete the final Environmental Impact Report before deciding on the merits of the DSP Project." The Planning Commission saw it differently, and will review both the EIR and the DSP at the same time, consistent with State guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act review.

Marie Blitz, President of the Lafayette Homeowners Council, stated she was "nervous and concerned" because the current EIR is based on the 2009 staff version of DSP. "It's still an incredibly optimistic schedule," she said. George Burt also disagreed with the Commission, noting he has "significant

objections," and in his view, not certifying the EIR first was putting the "cart before the horse."

Planning Commissioner Chair Patricia Curtin-Tinley explained that

certifying the EIR, "really just means it's done correctly and in accordance with the law." She argued that, "certification alone is meaningless... unless it refers to a plan."

Date	Who	What
November 7	Planning Commission	Discuss process and schedule for the DSP, EIR and GP amendment.
November 14	City Council	Receive report and update on the Planning Commission's 11/7 discussion
November 16	Staff	Release EIR Memorandum, General Plan amendment, and staff reports for DSP, EIR and GP amendment
November 30	Planning Commission	Present and begin initial discussions on DSP, EIR and GP amendment
December 12	City Council	Receive report and update on the Planning Commission's 11/30 meeting (if necessary)
January 17	Planning Commission	Begin review of DSP chapters and GP amendment
January 30	Planning Commission	Review EIR with focus on mitigation measures
February 6	Planning Commission	Adopt recommendations to the City Council on the DSP, EIR and GP amendment
February 14	City Council & Planning Commission	Present Planning Commission recommendations to the City Council
March	City Council	Begin consideration of DSP, EIR and GP amendment

Thanksgiving Breakfast



From left: John Sherry and Ann Grodin at the breakfast buffet

Photo Andy Scheck

The 32nd Annual Community Thanksgiving Breakfast once again was a time for local business people and Chamber of Commerce members to break bread and give

thanks. Always scheduled for the Friday before Thanksgiving, it's a celebration of family of a different sort, sponsored by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. The delicious breakfast, provided by SpringLoaf Catering, went according to plan and the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church had a lovely set up, but there was an "upgrade" of the scheduled speaker.

Congressman George Miller was slated to address the gathering, but unfortunately he was stuck in Washington D.C. for an important vote. Anne Grodin, Field Representative of Assembly Member Nancy Skinner and member of the Board of Directors of the Lafayette Community Foundation, graciously stepped in, reflecting on the incredible volunteerism in Lafayette that supports an amazing array of philanthropic organizations that are headquartered here. Father John Kasper of St. Perpetua Catholic Church wrapped up the event with a short story of thanks and concluded, "Gratitude is at the heart of humanity." C. Tyson

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Pathway Project Dead on Arrival at Council Meeting

By Cathy Tyson

No go at this time for the proposed Class 1 bicycle and pedestrian path along the EBMUD right of way property that meanders through downtown Lafayette. On November 14, the City Council considered the final feasibility study from a consultant team headed by Ian Moore of Alta Planning and Design. A CalTrans grant paid to examine the feasibility of a one and a half mile bike and pedestrian pathway just north of Mt. Diablo Boulevard from Risa Road to Brown Avenue that would connect with the BART station. Turns out that it is possible to build a path, but due to elevation

changes, tricky intersections and retaining walls – it’s surprisingly expensive.

It took more than a year to analyze technical, planning, logistical and regulatory issues that would impact the path, if built. A number of residents attended two workshops, offering comments and suggestions. Participants from EBMUD to Caltrans to the East Bay Regional Park District and BART gave input on engineering challenges and constraints regarding the pathway on the right of way over large buried water pipes in the heart of the city.

...continued on pageA10

BART Ramp Access Partially Remedied



Photo Cathy Tyson

The handicapped ramp issue reported on in the October 12 issue, *Handicapped Ramp Inaccessible to Disabled BART Patrons*, is now partially remedied. The south side of the BART station had a \$2 million ramp completed in April, but until relatively recently there were no curb cuts or handicapped parking spots for folks with mobility issues to get to the fancy new switchback ramp leading to the station. Now there is a curb cut,

with adjacent ‘no parking’ space outlined in red, but there are still no handicapped parking spots in that lot. On a recent day, the curb cut didn’t look that welcoming with construction cones and yellow tape nearby. BART spokesperson Jim Allison reported that the handicapped parking requirement for the station had already been met with conveniently located spots in the north lot, a short and flat distance from the station. C. Tyson

As Seen in Lafayette:



Who knew the brand new Lafayette Library and Learning Center would be in need of repair work so soon? The outside steps that lead from the front plaza down to the lower patio area and amphitheater failed – lifting up – as of press time the cause was uncertain. Due to safety concerns, access was restricted until repair work is complete. The Building Manager estimates the stairs should be open for business as of publication time. C. Tyson



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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Nov. 23, canceled
Wednesday, November 30, 7:00 pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, December 5, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Design Review

Monday, December 12, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District

Tuesday, December 13, 7:30 pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



Police Report

Backpack burgled, 11/17/11 A car was parked at the rear parking lot of Campolindo High School at 7:00 p.m. When the driver returned around 11:00 p.m. one of the windows was smashed and his black leather backpack was missing. Estimated loss \$250.

Car window smashed at J.M., 11/17/11 A witness and the victim saw and heard a car window being smashed at 7:45 p.m. - same day as the Campo heist. There was a white male adult near the vehicle, who ran to his car and drove out of the parking lot upon being spotted. Estimated value of the smashed window was \$300.

Barking dog, 11/16/11 Moraga Country Club Security called the cops after responding to a barking dog complaint on St. Andrews Drive. Turns out, the home was unlocked and the rear sliding door was ajar. The owners of the home and the dog arrived, and it was determined there was no burglary.

Branch Dispute, 11/13/11 Hopefully police were wearing bullet proof vests when they responded to a disgruntled Kimberly Court neighbor who reported that her next door neighbor had been trimming tree branches and willfully trespassed to retrieve the cut branches that had fallen onto her property. The trimmer neighbor acknowledged that he willfully retrieved the branches but disputes that he threw them over the property line. Unhappy female neighbor requested documentation of the incident.

Attempted burglary, 11/12/11 Golfers heard a house alarm sounding and observed an adult male in the bushes of an Augusta Drive home, then called police. One screen door was found off the track and another had evidence of tampering. Cops later contacted an adult male for questioning - but he was wearing different clothes than the ensemble reported by golfers. Was it the same guy? Fingerprints were not available and no pry tools were found. One the other hand, nothing was taken.

Driving bike without light, 11/08/11 An officer was parked in the usual spot on St. Mary's Road and observed a bike travelling on the wrong side of the road without a light on at 9:00 p.m. The 19-year-old cyclist pulled out an expired California Driver's License that belonged to his over 21-year-old brother. The cyclist back-pedaled and explained that he had attempted to buy alcohol in the past, but that he keeps the expired license next to the real ID and simply pulled out the wrong one. Major puffed. The expired brother's ID was confiscated and the kid was cited.

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Howard Harpham's Vote Needed

By Sophie Braccini

The Town Council is in agreement that Moraga will adopt a Climate Action Plan. Such a Plan will define objectives and a road map to reduce the Town's greenhouse gas emission. But a point of disagreement arose during the Council's November 9 meeting: how the volunteers who will design this plan should be selected.

What looks, on the surface, like a minor procedural point reveals a divide in the way the council members perceive the role and functionality of government. Two members wanted to have the volunteers handpicked by a subset of the Council, while two others thought the selection should be made by staff. Since Council Member Howard Harpham, the fifth vote, was out of town, the issue was continued to a later meeting.

The need for a Climate Action Plan Task Force was not in dispute. As Town Manager Jill Keimach explained it, the State will require all

new developments to be evaluated for their potential to increase air pollution, greenhouse gases, odors, and hazardous materials unless they comply with the Climate Action Plan of the jurisdiction in which they operate. To simplify permitting procedures, municipalities are designing their own Climate Action Plans that aspire to be both business- and climate-friendly. "It's about compliance and the welfare of the Town," said Vice Mayor Mike Metcalf, "we have no choice."

Plans that other municipalities have already approved vary widely, from those that design a road map to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by the year 2020 (Union City), to an 80 percent reduction by 2050 (Albuquerque).

When the final makeup of the Task Force could heavily influence what a Moraga Climate Action Plan might look like, it may not be surprising if the decision of who gets to pick its members takes on an ideological

bent.

Moraga has used different methods to choose its volunteers. For many committees and commissions, the Town sends out a call for volunteers, and interested residents come forward. They are interviewed and appointed by the Council. For temporary committees, two other methods have been used in the recent past: selection by a few members of the Council, as was the case with the Revenue Enhancement Committee RECOM (then-mayor Dave Trotter and Council Member Mike Metcalf wrote the Charter and selected the volunteers); or appointment by staff according to a set of criteria approved by the Council, such as to the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC).

"It is important to take the politics out of the selection of this group," said Council Member Ken Chew, "Staff will be able to create a balanced committee, and then we can add

Council Members to it." Mayor Karen Mendonca supported that position, "We want staff to choose members who represent a broad cross-section of the community, and it is important to have consistency in the way committees are selected," she said, in reference to the formation of the EDAC.

"Appropriateness is more important to me than consistency," answered Metcalf. "There were differences between EDAC and RECOM and the recruitment was done differently and appropriately."

"We will need to have developers, property owners and environmentalists on that committee," added Trotter, "It is not realistic to have such a plan divorced from politics."

The full Council is expected to convene on November 30 and make its decision. Whatever method is used to appoint the Task Force, it's likely to take about 18 months to develop a Climate Action Plan.

Beyond the State of the Town Address

By Sophie Braccini



Mayor Karen Mendonca and Brother Ronald Gallagher, President of Saint Mary's College. Photo Sophie Braccini

This year's State of the Town address featured the traditional updates on the budget and potholes, but the most memorable moment for the hundred or so people who attended the annual event

may be when Mayor Karen Mendonca asked those who volunteered for the town, its schools or its service clubs to rise - not surprisingly, everyone in the audience stood up; and found themselves cheering in

support of each other. The message the outgoing mayor conveyed to all of the volunteers was, "Thank you for making Moraga a special place to live, work and play."

"Marty McInturf (the Town

Clerk) suggested that we include a volunteer recognition in our State of the Town event and I thought it was a great idea," said Mendonca. Appetizers and wines were offered at Saint Mary's College Soda Center the night of November 16th, and the first 45 minutes of visiting and mingling were particularly cheerful.

In her address, Mendonca talked about the definite strides made toward the 18 goals that were defined a year ago, in spite of the difficult economic climate.

The mayor outlined the outreach campaign that has begun to inform the community about the state of the roads, and pointed out the new businesses that are repopulating the Rheem Center, noting that the planning efforts for that area are continuing. Mendonca reminded the audience that the Town continues to be frugal and to present a balanced operating budget.

... continued on page A10

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Miss Moraga Valley takes on the Universe

By Sophie Braccini



Mary Beth Ward on the Saint Mary's campus Photo Sophie Braccini

A cute, slender blond with baby blue eyes and a lot of self-confidence, Mary Beth Ward, a Moraga-raised Saint Mary's College (SMC) student, decided she wants to represent Moraga in the Miss Universe beauty pageant, a joint venture of Donald J. Trump and NBC Universal. She says her motivation is helping younger girls discover their inner beauty.

"I was watching e-news on Channel 24 and saw an ad for Miss Universe," recalls the SMC freshman, "they said that anyone could apply. I had never been in a pageant, but found the idea interesting. I looked it up and liked the emphasis on community service: they wanted young women who give back and they claim they are evaluating the girls on their achievements. So I decided to apply."

Ward had to pick a name for herself to enter the first stage, which is the Miss California competition. She asked her childhood neighbor, Moraga Mayor Karen Mendonca, what she thought about using the name Miss Moraga Valley. "The young women can enter this contest with any name they want," said Mendonca, "Mary Beth wanted a name that would represent where she comes from, but not compromise any town or jurisdiction because we never had a contest. 'Miss Moraga Valley' is a good idea."

The first title to win on the way to Miss Universe is Miss California. 150 young women, who were selected by the Miss Universe organization from among those who applied, will compete for that title on January 8th. Ward said that she went through a series of phone and personal interviews to be selected. She believes that her volunteerism in Moraga, as a Girl Scout, a member of the Moraga Youth Involvement

Committee, and in her church, played a key role.

"I want to take this opportunity to make a difference in my community," says Ward. "When I was in fourth grade I was chubby and too tall, other kids would tease me. Girls between 4th and 7th grade have body image issues and try to fit it. It's a very hard time, with a lot of clique-ish behaviors and pressures." Her objective is to create or support events and workshops that will empower young women.

The New Rheem Theatre will provide her with her first chance. "We are planning a movie day/workshop combination," she says, "we'll have a movie at 11:00 a.m. on a Saturday, such as *Miss Congeniality*, followed by a discussion with a motivational speaker and activities for the girls." Ward herself gets trained by the Miss Universe organization, with podcasts and videos on female empowerment, fitness, and motivation.

At the end of November, Ward will go to Florida for an orientation session. Then she will have to get ready for the California competition in Palm Springs. "I know that some of the girls have pageant coaches, but I do not," says Ward, "the girls in my Hall are prepping me, and they interview me or make me walk in heels—it's like getting ready for Senior Ball!" Ward thinks that she has a good chance to win. "I am really hopeful," she says.

Ward has a Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mary-Beth-Ward-for-Miss-California-USA/273561789351501>, where interested Moraga residents can 'like' her project. "Whatever happens, I will continue the community service for girls," she concludes.

Moraga Art Gallery Finds a New Home

By Sophie Braccini

Wenda Pyman could add the title Fearless Negotiator to her business card, alongside Landscape, Scenic and Travel Photography Artist and President of the Moraga Art Gallery (MAG). The Moraga photographer has arranged a good, although temporary, solution for the artists' collective, MAG, that was recently told it needed to find a new home.

Readers may remember that MAG lost the free use of some space leased by Comcast in the Rheem Center, where it has been displaying the work of local artists for 10 years. (See www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0512/Moraga-Art-Gallery-Loses-its-Space.html).

MAG artists looked everywhere for solutions compatible with their limited resources. Pyman decided to contact the headquarters of the property owner, Kimco Realty. "I had been in touch with New York executives when we started displaying members' artwork in empty store fronts in 2009," says Pyman, "so I thought I should call them again and see what they could do for us this time."

The solution is a new space, at 518 Center Street next to T.J. Maxx, for a moderate rent, but with a caveat. "We signed a 12-month conditional lease," explains Pyman, "and if this space gets a permanent lessee, we will be asked to vacate immediately." So Pyman and her fellow artists are still looking for a permanent solution.

At this time and until the end of the year, MAG is still in the Comcast space at 570 Center Street, showing *Masks and Meditations: Art Quilts* by Susan Helle, as well as holiday work by all of its members. The Gallery will close after Christmas and will reopen in the new space after the few weeks that will be necessary to ready the location.

Seen See's?

Also in the Rheem Center, November 18 until December 24, the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley will again sell See's Candies during the holiday season. The temporary store was very successful last year. Proceeds from this fundraising activity go to the Club's community service projects.




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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Special Meeting
Tuesday, November 29, 7:00 pm
Regular Meeting:
Tuesday, December 6, 7:00 pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, December 13, at 7:00 pm
Regular Meeting Library Auditorium
Tuesday, December 13, at 6:00 pm
Workshop Garden Room, Library,
26 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District
Monday, December 12, 6:00 pm
OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Police Report

What's the Dope on These Two? 11/14/11

Guys, listen up: ya gotta drive *carefully* if you're doing something illegal, 'cause the cops will find out when they pull you over. A perfect example: two male suspects stopped for driving with expired plates were found to be in the company of methadone smoking devises, scales, meth and 100 small baggies of marijuana. They were transported to Martinez Detention Facility, where they were booked on a variety of charges.

Good Intentions, Bad Idea, 11/14/11

A brown Jeep parked off Camino Pablo was found with its engine running and lights on. The driver, a 52-year old male, was found asleep at the wheel. Apparently, he was trying to sleep one off after admittedly "having a beer...earlier this morning." The problem was that this man was already on probation. Even though he only blew .047, he was arrested for violating parole and taken to Martinez Detention Facility.

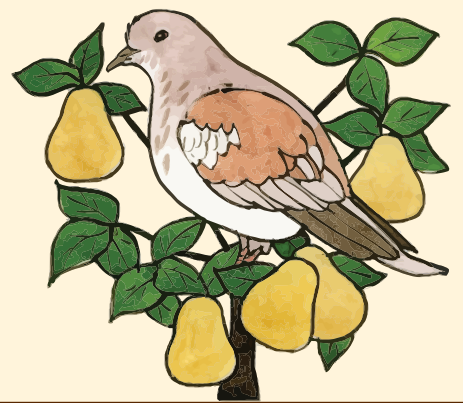


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City Council May Re-Poll Residents Regarding Roads

Special Meeting scheduled for November 29, 2011

By Laurie Snyder

Orinda City Council, as a follow-up to its October 18th Roads Workshop and Roads Subcommittee meetings, will gather together in a special session November 29th to continue the conversation regarding Orinda's roads and drainage systems. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the Orinda Library.

As part of their discussions,

Council members will consider giving staff the go ahead to identify and contract with an independent public opinion polling company to gauge the mood of Orinda residents as they did prior to previous, unsuccessful road improvement-related ballot initiatives.

The Council commissioned a poll in 2009, when FM3 (Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates) was paid \$16,220 to prepare the poll,

conduct the field work, and prepare final reports for the City Council. The culminating report, which was delivered to the City in February 2010, is available on the City of Lafayette's web site: <http://lafayette.waterware.com/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-3832/Orinda%202010%20Survey.pdf>.

According to the agenda for the November 29th meeting, if the Council authorizes a new poll, its Roads

Subcommittee members will then work with City staff and the polling firm to draft wording for the questions to be asked of Orindans. That wording would include questions regarding the Council's proposed funding strategies for repairing and maintaining Orinda's roads and drainage systems moving forward, as well as an assessment of residents' opinions of the general level of service provided by the City.

City Council to Consider Extending Eden Housing Agreement

By Laurie Snyder

Eden Housing, Inc., the non-profit organization selected by the Orinda City Council to create an affordable senior housing development on the site of Orinda's old library, returns to the Council's agenda on November 29. Council members will vote on approving Eden's request for a one-year extension of its Exclusive Right to Negotiate (ERN) Agreement with the City.

The original agreement, approved on a 4-1 vote a year ago (with Steve Glazer opposing), is set to expire on December 14, 2011. Council members and Orinda residents learned at the November 1st Council meeting that Eden Housing is unable to complete the Disposition, Development, and Loan Agreement (DDLA) associated with the project because it is currently working to secure additional financing.

Upon the Council's approval of the one-year ERN extension, Eden would receive a guarantee from the City that it will not discuss or negotiate development of the old library site with anyone other than Eden during that time. The City would receive a commitment from Eden to diligently

pursue the project.

City staff anticipates that there will be no fiscal impact to the City with the granting of the ERN Agreement extension.

In preparation for the Council's consideration of the issue the Council's Senior Housing Subcommittee, composed of Mayor Victoria Smith and Council Member Amy Worth, met with City staff and Eden representatives last week to discuss the proposed extension. Woody Karp, Senior Project Developer, and Joyce Glass, Karp's counsel on the project, represented Eden Housing, Inc.

Participants at the Subcommittee meeting also discussed the City's plan to contact an appraiser to determine if the former library property at 2 Irwin Way, which is slated to be used as the senior housing site, needs to be reappraised. Concerns have been raised by Orinda residents that the property's value may have changed with recent real estate market fluctuations and have asked for a review. Staff members concurred with Subcommittee members Smith and Worth that a reappraisal would be prudent.

Karp agreed and advised the group

that, in order for Eden to continue to meet the target dates associated with the applications he will be making for funding and tax credits, any updated appraisal would need to be completed prior to the Christmas holidays.

Karp also briefed Council members and staff on the latest difficulties being faced by Eden and other senior housing developers in light of the federal government's recent 39 percent and 12 percent cuts to its HOME Investments Partnerships Program (HOME) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) initiatives, respectively. Karp will be requesting a combined \$2.5 million from both of these funding sources in support of the Orinda senior housing project, and said that he has been working hard to build a strong case with the Affordable Housing Program Manager in the County's Department of Conservation and Development, who helps to develop recommendations for the Board of Supervisors concerning the allocation of CDBG and HOME funds.

Because Contra Costa County has only been awarded an allocation of \$4 million in affordable housing development funds by the federal

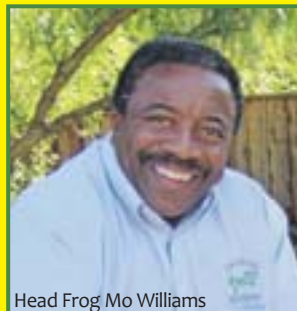
government on average each year, the County's allocation review process has traditionally been a competitive one. It has become even more challenging with the struggling economy, making Eden's planning with the County more complex and contributing to its need to adjust its timelines for the Exclusive Right to Negotiate (ERN) Agreement and the DDLA.

In closing, Smith and Worth reflected on the project's history and observed that, with the myriad details over the years regarding design and funding, it is important for all concerned to remember the true focus of the project – the seniors who will ultimately benefit from having affordable senior housing that offers services which enable them to continue to live full lives.

All in attendance agreed, as Karp stated, "Our goal is that the people in place age gracefully."

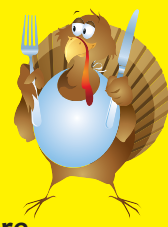
Orinda residents wanting to view the Exclusive Right to Negotiate (ERN) Agreement will find a copy attached to Item G-8 of the materials which will be reviewed by the City Council during its November 29th meeting on the City's web site: www.ci.orinda.ca.us.

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Orinda Police Department Nabs Potentially Masked Men

By Laurie Snyder



Officer Danny Vargas, the Orinda Police Department's 2010 Officer of the Year, nipped in the bud the careers of two more aspiring criminals last week. Photo from the City of Orinda website

tempted to case the CVS store in the heart of Orinda last Tuesday evening as prelude to their potential commission of a robbery.

Thanks to alert actions by a CVS staffer and Orinda's finest, the guys with the misguided mission are now both in jail.

The suspects, who ducked out after being spotted by the clerk, drove off in a car missing its front license plate and tried to elude the Orinda Police Department, but were caught at the eastbound freeway ramp by Officer Danny Vargas, the Orinda Police Department's 2010 Officer of the Year. Officer Vargas, most often seen around Orinda with his K-9 partner, Chef, bird-dogged the suspects with help from a fellow officer and kept the suspects from getting away.

As Vargas was interviewing the pair, he caught the distinctive whiff of weed, searched the car, and uncovered, in addition to marijuana, a loaded handgun, starter's pistol, a stash of ecstasy, and Halloween masks – a most interesting find in

light of the recent series of armed robberies that have rattled East Bay residents in Concord, Pleasant Hill, and Walnut Creek.

In one of those armed adventures, three subjects wearing dark colored clothes, surgical gloves, and Halloween masks attempted to rob a 7-Eleven in Pleasant Hill during the wee hours of September 27th. One was reported as carrying a semiautomatic handgun. On the 28th, again in the early morning, armed and masked individuals successfully walked off with cash and other items from a Walnut Creek Valero station. This time, a customer pumping gas was shot at but not injured.

Since then, according to Corporal Jason Kleven, the Watch Commander of the Pleasant Hill Police Department, similar armed robberies have been reported at a Verizon store and another 7-Eleven in that community. Police are looking at whether or not there is a definite connection between any of the robberies as part of their investigation into the individual cases.

Two young men got more than the great bargain they were looking for when they allegedly at-

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Share your thoughts with our community!

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only).

Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis.

email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com;

Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

As a father, it has always been a mission of mine to teach my sons some of life's lessons as seen through the eyes of sport. Whether it was coaching a soccer team, talking with them after karate practice, or sitting on the couch watching the 49ers, I tried to share with them how the dynamics of sports transcends what it takes to succeed in life. Work hard. Be disciplined. Master the fundamentals. Be a team player. Don't be afraid to fail. And never, ever give up. And while it may be exciting to watch Barry Bonds hit a home run, or to see Jerry Rice catch a touchdown pass, always remember that the real heroes in life are those that run into burning buildings, care for the sick, or fight for our freedom.

Which brings me to my next lesson from the world of sport, though this has nothing to do with athleticism: Penn State.

For years they heard me reminisce about my trips to Penn State. How State College, PA was the perfect college town and Joe Paterno was the perfect college coach. Nothing bad ever seemed to happen there, and the legendary Joe Pa could do no wrong. But as you can tell from the nonstop coverage on TV and the Internet, that isn't the case anymore.

Joe Paterno dedicated his life to Penn State. He built a successful football program, which lifted the prestige of the school and brought prosperity to an out of the way community. He gave back millions of dollars in salary to help Penn State fund scholarships, faculty chairs, and a library that bears his name. In forty-six season as head coach, Paterno graduated 97% of his players, and he was never accused by the NCAA of breaking any of its rules. On the scale of good and evil, Joe Paterno is clearly one of the good guys.

But he made an egregious mistake, and he exercised a huge, unconscionable, and unforgivable lack of judgment. Joe Paterno was more than just the head football coach. He was more than the face of an educational education. He was also an adult, and while he legally did things right, he lacked the courage to morally do the right thing. For that, he deserved to be fired.

I've told my sons that there are two important life lessons here. One, though you may spend years building a personal reputation based on hard work, integrity, trust and mutual respect, it can all be lost in an instant. Keep that in mind when you are faced with a situation that can be perceived as right or wrong. And two, always remember to use your moral compass to help you decide what is in the best interest of people, not institutions. Institutions are built to succeed or fail, but people are built to remember.

Lee Geiger
Moraga

Editor:

I attended the last of the Planning Dept meeting, held at Glorietta School. One man made a speech opposing the "Downtown Plan". After that, Emanuel Ursu, who was conducting the meeting did not allow any further speeches by citizens. He posed a series of questions. Citizens who held up their hands were allowed to respond; to those questions only. The questions were about various aspects of the "Village" and "Crossroads". The questions clearly assumed that the City must have a "Plan" for future development. It is clear to me the City is planning major restrictions on businesses renovating their buildings; to conform to whatever "Plan" is decided on.

I do not believe the City of Orinda should attempt to exercise this power. We will all be better off if the individual owners of the land in the Crossroads and Village have the maximum freedom in how they develop their own property. Individuals almost always make better decisions about this than government.

This whole business comes from two groups who want more money. 1. The Developer, who is looking to building this "Plan" 2. The City Government, which is looking to remove existing businesses from their Prop. 13 advantages as well taxing the new high density residents. In short, a larger tax base.

We, who live here, do not need this, or want it. In my opinion, this will drive business from Orinda and destroy the character of downtown Orinda.

Henry R. Pinney
Orinda

Join our Public Forum

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda, or one of its communities, that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum. We will not accept Public Forum submissions regarding a current ballot measure or candidate for public office. Opinions expressed in Public Forum are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

Q&A With MOFD Fire Chief Randy Bradley

By Lucy Amaral



In part two of an interview with Moraga Orinda Fire District's (MOFD) Fire Chief Randy Bradley, he addresses concerns that have been brought by District residents, notes some accomplishments and discusses goals for the next year.

Q. Some District residents have the opinion that Orinda is paying more for service than Moraga. Can you address this?

A. We are one Fire District and we operate as one District. When the District consolidated, the goal was to gain local control over tax dollars and to improve service levels, equipment and facilities in Orinda and Moraga. We continue to accomplish those goals. Prior to the consolidation, southern Orinda was within the Moraga Fire District due to the proximity of the homes to the Moraga Fire Stations. When the tax revenues from the homes in southern Orinda are apportioned to Moraga the perceived inequity no longer has merit.

Orinda also required extensive fire station and equipment upgrades after the consolidation and the District has spent approximately \$9 million (including fire station 43 replacement) in Orinda compared to \$3 million in Moraga. It should also be noted that the assessed property val-

ues in Moraga have trended up and the assessed property values in Orinda have actually trended down in the last two years.

Q. MOFD District residents have a concern about low water pressure. How has MOFD addressed this?

A. The bigger concern is actually the size of pipes and gallons per minute the pipes supply. The problem with the water pipes is similar to the problem with the roads. The system was designed as a rural system to provide domestic water services to homes. When I arrived I was impressed that an older community with very low housing densities would have a municipal water system with an abundance of fire hydrants. East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) owns the water system and the Fire District has no authority to modify the system. However, the District utilizes compensatory measures to ensure we have the needed water supply at fires within the District. We send a fire engine with a 2,500-gallon tank to fires in areas that do not have adequate water supply and we also respond additional fire engines when required.

Q. Now that the option of purchasing a building to house the administrative staff has been taken off the table, how will MOFD proceed?

A. We will continue to evaluate our options. One option the Board is considering is to lease space until we address our cash flow issue and have a better understanding of how we will address our unfunded liabilities. We continue to negotiate with the City of Orinda and there is additional space in Moraga that just became available for lease. There is also an investor who has offered to purchase 1150 Moraga Way (the building the District was considering buying) and lease the building back to the District. Cur-

rently, I believe that City Hall is our best option but we need to agree on a lease rate that will be acceptable to both agencies.

Q. What are some achievements you feel you have accomplished during your time with MOFD?

A. One of the most positive aspects of being the Fire Chief for MOFD are the firefighters in the fire stations, management staff and the administrative staff. They are committed to providing superior customer service on a continuing basis. Our firefighters and are the best trained, professional and community-oriented firefighters that I have ever been associated with.

The District also has two ongoing initiatives, funded through grants, that I believe have made a positive impact: our "Firewise" and "CPR Anytime" programs. With Firewise, we have trained citizens and fire personnel how to complete home assessments that identify simple measures to improve the survivability of homes during wildfire. I strongly believe this program will improve the overall safety of our communities.

Our "CPR Anytime" program uses a simple kit, mannequin and DVD to train individuals in basic CPR. By training people, the chances of someone witnessing a sudden cardiac arrest and immediately beginning CPR will increase dramatically. Witness CPR with a fast paramedic firefighter response will improve the survivability of patients.

We have also worked hard to improve the District's relationship with the public. I have made presentations at service clubs and organizations to explain who we are, what we do, why we do it and how we do it. The presentations have been well received and I believe the communities have a better understanding of the Fire District.

We continue to support a robust school educational program. Each

year every elementary school class is presented with information by firefighters concerning fire safety. The program builds on the information from the previous year at each grade level.

Q. What do you hope to accomplish in the next year?

A. To complete our Strategic Business Plan and begin to address our unfunded liabilities, add three more neighborhoods to our Firewise Program, train a minimum of 1,000 people in "Anytime CPR," and continue with the processes already in place and development progression for the replacement of Fire Station 43 in Orinda.



Moraga Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors Meetings

Meetings of the MOFD Board of Directors are open to the public and take place on the third Wednesday of each month in the Board Room, Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.

Next meeting:

Next regular MOFD Board meeting is December 21, 7:00pm, Station 41 (1280 Moraga Way, Moraga), (go to www.mofd.org as the meeting date approaches for more information)

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.
Send a letter to the editor:
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Civic News Lafayette, Moraga

Measure G Falls – Now What?

By Cathy Tyson



Despite a valiant effort by proponents, only 3,683 Lafayette residents voted "Yes on G," not enough to pass the \$89 parcel tax. Photo C. Tyson

On November 8, Lafayette voters decided the fate of Measure G, the \$89 parcel tax for a maximum of ten years that would have funded road and storm drain repairs. Proponents were hopeful that it would pass due to an extensive outreach campaign and because there was little organized opposition.

Although the measure received a majority of votes, 57% in favor, it needed 66% + 1 to pass. This is the third strike for road repairs; voters also missed the two-thirds threshold

in 2004 and 2007. Measure G Co-Chair Guy Atwood considered the options, "There are alternatives, but none of them are particularly viable. One thing the City needs to consider is whether to let the good roads go and put all their available funds into fixing the failed roads. People living on failed roads have had to endure their roads not being fixed for many years, and they should not have to do so forever. I am not recommending this approach, as it has a greater long term financial cost to the community, but it needs to be thoroughly considered. Other options could include cutting City services."

At a recent City Council Meeting Mayor Carl Anduri discussed next steps. As part of the proposed tax, the City Council agreed to contribute \$3 million from General Reserve Funds to help address the asphalt infrastructure problem, but the funds were contingent on the measure passing. Although nothing was decided, the Council agreed it needs to look at the issue broadly. As reported in the June 8, 2011

issue of the *Lamorinda Weekly*, the city has a whopping \$9.8 million in the General Reserve account, the equivalent to 86% of General Fund expenditures, substantially over the City Council's target of 50%. Whether they choose to spend it on roads is unknown at this time.

The Mayor asked City Engineer Tony Coe to give a quick snapshot of where the city stands today on the road repair problem. "For 2012, \$2.95 million has already been approved for road repair," said Coe. He explained that Lafayette received more gas tax than originally anticipated, but despite the additional funds it will still have 81 failed roads remaining at the end of 2012.

Looking forward to the five year Capital Improvement Plan – he estimates known road funding to be \$9 million, that's enough to fix 18 roads and take on 15 more with stop gap measures – a less expensive rubberized seal to be used exclusively on the end of cul de sacs. That would still leave scores of residents living on failed roads. "It's just not fair," said Anduri.



Pathway Project Dead on Arrival at Council Meeting

... continued from page A3

Consultants from Alta Planning segmented the proposed project into three phases to be completed over time and suggested most of the total \$6 million construction cost could be paid by grants. However, because grants generally do not pay for on-going maintenance, the City of Lafayette would have to find a way to come up with approximately \$1 million per year for upkeep. Potential options for funding maintenance of the path were outlined, but the City Council felt none were viable.

Discussion about the feasibility study was short and to the point. "It's a lot of money to get something that's not going to get a lot of

benefit," said Council Member Mike Anderson, who also was concerned that the east-west trail wouldn't serve many Lafayette residents who are usually heading north and south from the BART station.

Council Member Brandt Anderson noted how valuable it is to have the study complete, "but it still comes down to cost/benefit analysis." To get an ADA accessible pathway, Council Member Don Tatzin pointed out, you only have to go a block down from the proposed path to the lovely wide, relatively flat sidewalks along Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

Beyond the State of the Town Address

... continued from page A4

The Town's new web site was one of the highlights of Mendonca's comments regarding improved communication between the Town and its residents, along with the successful 'Ask the Mayor and Town Manager' monthly open meetings that she initiated last May.

Finally, the venue itself, at Saint Mary's College, illustrated Mendonca's goal of enhancing partnerships.

The mayor also rejoiced that Council meetings had, by and large, remained civil even when animated.

Mendonca added an image-filled list of the events that bring residents together, and showed a short movie by Grant Stubble-

field, of Neighborhood Computers, which he entered in the Chamber of Commerce's video contest – Why I Love my Town. His message was simple, "Why we love Moraga? It's the people!"

The movie served as a natural transition to the volunteer recognition ceremony. "The last time this was done was in March of 2009 during a separate event," said McInturf, "so it was time we recognize the past service of our volunteers." Council members took turns calling up the volunteers who served on the Town's committees, commissions, task forces, and teams. Each of them received a certificate provided by the office of Supervisor Gayle Uilkema.

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Red Carpet Event in Orinda



Photo Ohlen Alexander

The November 18 world premiere of Hercules Saves Christmas at the Orinda Theatre was a star-studded affair; Hercules himself walked the red carpet with his human, Shorty Rossi.



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What's Wrong with the "Best Fit" College?

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

About a year and a half ago my youngest daughter, Angela, announced in a distraught voice, "It didn't happen, Mom. I didn't feel any of the colleges we visited was 'the right fit.' What am I going to do now?" She had been offered admission to a few fine US colleges and universities and was uncertain where she wanted to attend. Well-intentioned others assured her that she need not fret...just go and visit the colleges that accepted her, and she would 'just know'—in fact, in all likelihood she would 'know' the minute she set foot on campus. We had just completed visits to these colleges and Angela was disappointed that the magic had not happened. She was terribly discouraged, and nearly convinced that there was something wrong with her for not recognizing her 'best fit' school.

That's when I started to rethink the whole notion of 'college fit.' Clearly, colleges have latched on to the concept of 'the right fit' like no other and drench our high school students with glossy guidebooks filled with colorful photos of attractive students holding test tubes in labs or studying under large oak trees on manicured lawns; other photos depict students engaged in sports in gleaming athletic facilities complete with climbing walls, or lounging in new and spacious dorms. Many colleges will assure students that their campus is not too big and not too small; that it is, in fact, "just right"—as was Goldilocks's porridge in the famous children's tale.

As a college advisor, I am trained to guide students toward discovering colleges that are the best match for them. Yet I find the statement 'finding the right fit' to be overused—sort

of a mantra that we repeat to families as well as to other college counselors to avoid conversations that are more difficult. The mantra stifles opportunities for productive discussions about how to actively help our students move past the obvious factors like national ranking, campus size and region of the country and focus instead on those features of college life that will contribute to student success. And that process involves guiding students toward greater self-awareness.

As I gave this more thought, I also came to grips with the fact that we counselors work with 17-year-olds who are largely unshaped, although certainly full of possibilities and potential. Fixation on fit has been so distorted by the media that it distances our youth from self-awareness. It plays to normal teen feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt by masking them with grandiose visions of college life. All young people want to succeed and find some happiness in their college experience. In order for that to happen a good dose of self-knowledge about what type of college environment best suits them would help.

If the idea of 'the perfect fit' preys on teen inexperience and naiveté and encourages unrealistic expectations, what can teachers, counselors and parents do to support young people? We can start by pointing out that real college life will be filled with good and not so good teachers, exciting relationships and dramatic breakups, cramped freshmen quarters and more spacious sophomore suites where you may make friendships that last a lifetime. We can help by reinforcing that real university life turns out to be just life, not some romanticized version of it.

But before we throw 'fit' out the proverbial window, there are some concrete ways to evaluate a student's college readiness and success. For example, a few nonacademic factors that have been demonstrated to affect a student's success in college include personality and temperament, which are often tied to study habits. A more introverted student who prefers to work alone and demonstrates a high level of achievement may not have the need or desire for much teamwork; such a student may be utterly isolated at a college where collective knowledge borne of student collaboration predicts greater success. Other qualities students should consider are their experience and success with long-term goal setting, decision-making, self-control, time management and organizational skills.

Changing the language from find-

ing 'the best fit' to finding 'a better fit' is important. Then we must act accordingly by encouraging students to better understand themselves by asking the right questions when they start to research colleges. Questions about how a student studies and learns, how he prefers to socialize and recreate, if she enjoys mostly leading or following should help students and their families to seek out the truly important aspects of college life to consider. These kinds of explorations lead to greater self-discovery and hopefully better, albeit not perfect, college choices.

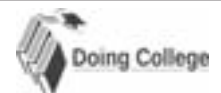
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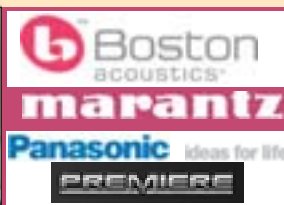
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215 Reasons to be Thankful

... continued from page A1

The boys were focused on the obvious: "free food" for their stomachs. A table of girls admitted they enjoyed this Thanksgiving celebration as much as the legal holiday because "this one is with friends."

The meal tradition was established 15 years ago by teachers Carol Robak and Fran Strykowski. Each year while the students gobbled up turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberries and pumpkin or pecan pie the weather remained dry—something to be thankful for this late in November.

Strykowski stresses that the Thanksgiving menu of today is a far cry from the real, first Thanksgiving. There were no cows (hence no milk products), no cranberries and no turkey, and the bread was a fried, corn-based affair. There was plenty of seafood, including lobster and clams, and perhaps wild fowl. The early settlers had in fact nearly starved their first winter in New England, and 18 months later were only eating what they grew, shot or caught. The celebration lasted several days, but only once did they celebrate with their Native American counterparts.

Relations between the two groups were a bit strained to say the least. Yet Strykowski and fellow teachers Paul Schindler and Kerry Warmboe see their school event as a memory these students will carry into high school; and that is something they are all surely grateful for.

Are You Smarter Than a JM 8th Grader?

By Cathy Dausman

Joaquin Moraga eighth grade students are stuffed with historical information about the colony's first Thanksgiving celebration, including these tidbits from Fran Strykowski's vast collection:

- The first Thanksgiving menu included eel pie (whipped cream? No thanks!)
- Before it carried Pilgrims, the Mayflower transported wine.
- Although there were acres of cranberries nearby, none were served at the first Thanksgiving.
- The first Thanksgiving took place in mid-October; Abraham Lincoln established the official holiday as the fourth Thursday in November.

Test your knowledge:

1. What year did the Pilgrims have their first Thanksgiving feast?
2. Which of these items did the Pilgrims eat: lobster, pumpkin pie, corn, cheese
3. Name the Governor of Massachusetts during the first Thanksgiving
4. Americans didn't care about Thanksgiving during George Washington's presidency. Why not?
5. Who led the crusade to establish Thanksgiving Day?
6. Which president moved the date of Thanksgiving not once, but twice?
7. What percentage of Americans eat turkey on Thanksgiving Day?
8. Name the first state to celebrate the "official" Thanksgiving
9. Which country actually consumes more turkey than the U.S. annually?
10. How much does a day old turkey weigh?
11. True or false: wild turkeys cannot fly.
12. How far away can you hear a turkey gobbling?

Answers at the bottom of this page in blue box

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Mural to Honor Moraga School District Teacher Carol Robak

George Washington ...In High Tops?

Submitted by Hillary Hoppock, JM History Teacher



Teachers and staff at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School invite the community to contribute their artistic talents and support for a mural memorializing Carol Robak, who taught in the Moraga School District for thirty-four years. The theme for the mural will incorporate two of the subjects Carol enjoyed teaching – History and Sports. In honor of Carol's passion for teaching and her spirit of fun, the mural will feature well-known historical figures engaged in sports activities. Historical figures need to be recognizable and not necessarily commonly asso-

ciated with the sports features. Donations for the "Robak Mural Fund" may be made to the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Office or directly to the Robak Mural Fund account at Wells Fargo Bank in Moraga. Community members interested in the contest need to submit original drawings in black and white (10"x5.5" or 20"x11") to the JMIS Office (labeled Robak Mural Contest) by December 16, 2011. Contact JM teachers Hillary Hoppock or Fran Strykowski with any questions (377-7206).

Supervisor Gayle Uilkema Announces Retirement

... continued from page A1

"It takes a tremendous amount of effort and cooperation to get off the ground – we're working on infrastructure and maintenance right now," said Uilkema.

Although retirement is still more than a year away, Uilkema plans to see more of her two grown daughters, one is a Deputy District Attorney and the other is a family practice physician in southern California, and of course, the grandchildren. Beyond that, "It's really premature at this point, still to be determined - but I don't have a huge bucket list," she said.

Answers:

1. 1621
2. Lobster and corn
3. William Bradford
4. They were preoccupied with the country's move toward independence
5. Sarah Josepha Hale
6. Franklin D. Roosevelt
7. 93%
8. New York
9. Israel (26 pounds/capita); the U.S. rate is 17 pounds/capita
10. 2 ounces
11. False: Lamorindans know they can fly; They can also run 20 mph.
12. One mile. That means in Lamorinda you can hear them everywhere!

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The three Youth Committees met at the Hacienda de las Flores in Moraga

Photo Sophie Braccini

Tri-City Youths Bubble Up With Safe, Fun Ideas

By Sophie Braccini

Once a month the three Lamorinda Youth Involvement Committees, appointed by their respective City/Town Councils, meet to plan tri-city activities and service projects. On November 17, it was Moraga's turn to host the meeting. Accompanied by their own staff liaisons, the teens led a very efficient meeting. Following the Brown Act to the letter, they tackled a long agenda in an hour, made decisions and even had time for a group picture.

"We started to meet together last year," said Linda Dezzani, Orinda Recreation Manager and staff liaison for the Youth Committee in Orinda, "it is a great opportunity for the teens to interact. We couldn't do the teen dance last year, but the overall experience was tremendous. It provides opportunities for more teen activities and they learn to better support each other." Each jurisdiction appoints a group of teen volunteers that plans activities and participates in service endeavors, either supporting existing town functions or designing their own service projects.

Since it was Moraga's turn to hold the meeting, it was led by Moraga Youth Involvement Committee Chair Steven Wetterholm. The first task was to decide what name the grouping of the three committees should have. After a short deliberation they unanimously voted for Lamorinda Teens Association, LTA. They also agreed to create a pool of volunteers among themselves to support individual projects when needed.

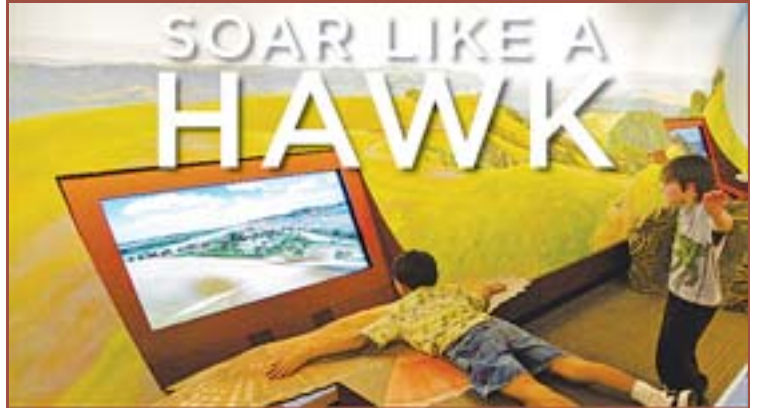
The most ebullient and pro-

ductive part of the evening was when the teens started brainstorming ideas for future common recreation opportunities. It opened with previously debated ideas such as a battle of the bands, a teen dance or movie night; but then all sorts of creative suggestions began to come from all sides of the room. The proposal of a petting zoo morphed into an animal extravaganza with an adoption component, donations for ARF and the participation of the Lindsay Wildlife Museum. The battle of the band scheme was enriched by the addition of a visual and performing art component, a showcase for all the creative students of the three high schools.

Lafayette members proposed to expand across Lamorinda the café and art auction they organize, while Orinda suggested to open up the taste of Orinda that brings restaurants and businesses together. Ideas for younger Lamorinda kids, such as a Teddy Bear tea and a mother-son dance/dinner, were explored as well. They agreed that February would be a good month for their next big joint event. They also voted to appoint two or three members from each town's Committee to be LTA coordinators and follow up on the projects.

The teens then discussed tri-city community service projects, as a way to strengthen their bond. "Getting you together outside of the formalities of these meetings would be good," commented Kimberley Nelson, Recreation and Facilities Coordinator in Moraga. The next planning steps will be taken in December.

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MOVIE REVIEW

Beau/Derek on Happy Feet 2

By Beau Behan

“Happy Feet 2” opens with a colony of Emperor penguins dancing to a hip-hop tune. The film’s landscape of animation is visually stunning, and Director George Miller provides an array of dazzling and endearing musical numbers to our delight.

Mumbles (Elijah Wood) is now all grown-up and has a family. His son, Erik (voice of Elizabeth Daily), does not have the penchant for dancing, and becomes a social pariah in the colony. He, now, tries to shun it all by running away. His father sets his feet to another beat, and this time, it is geared towards finding Erik. This sets the tone for the story line.

Happy Feet 2 is a concoction of sweet and sour candies. It is a mixed bag. From a child’s vantage point, the film is very entertaining, especially with the Emperor penguins’ love of dance. It is philosophical in some aspects, with a message that

you can find happiness by believing in yourself, with great candor and honesty.

On the other hand, from an adult’s perspective, the film could just be a lengthy ordeal of sitting through a series of songs and dances. The film’s attempt to be existential and philosophical is lost in the multitude of musical interludes.

Overall, it is a film for children’s entertainment that seeks out a chorus of “Wows” that will continue to reverberate across schoolyards and playgrounds.

Derek shares my predilection, and we both give the movie 2 ½ stars. It is a good family movie so come to Lamorinda Theatres and experience it!

(Derek Zemrak is a filmmaker and the president of the California Independent Film Festival Association (CAIFFA); Beau Behan is a member of the CAIFFA Board and director of the Lamorinda Theatres.)

Preserving the Stories of Tibetan Elders

Moraga’s Marcella Adamski and the Tibet Oral History Project

By Lou Fancher



The Dalai Lama is never far from the thoughts of Marcella Adamski, Ph.D., shown here at her desk in the Tibet Oral History Project’s office in Moraga. Photo provided by the Tibet Oral History Project

The Dalai Lama looks on as Marcella Adamski settles into an office chair to talk about her life and the Tibet Oral History Project that has taken over an entire room in her Moraga home. Beaming from photographs sprinkled amid books, artwork and iconic sculptures, images of the holy leader serve as a reminder of the vital work she performs.

In 1999, Adamski, a clinical psychologist, was working with the Tibet Justice Center, an organization helping Tibetans to establish a government in exile after fleeing their country following the 1959 Chinese invasion. After interviewing 64 children, she asked the Dalai Lama what more could be done.

“He said, ‘Make sure the people of China know about Tibetans because they do not have access to accurate information,’” she recalls. “It seemed so overwhelming and fearful. It was not my field and it was bigger than anything I had ever done.”

Charged by the Dalai Lama with rescuing Tibet’s rich cultural and historical heritage, Adamski relied on a lifetime of experience to create, fund and organize the Tibet Oral History Project (TOHP).

“I grew up handling my younger brother, who had suffered brain damage at birth,” she says. “It enabled me to be with people who were compromised in various ways.”

Blessed with stamina and an uncommon degree of equilibrium in challenging environments, Adamski’s work followed what looks, in retrospect, like an in-

evitable path. Arriving from the East coast in 1973, she was hired by the Berkeley and Oakland libraries to create and implement a project aimed at an underserved population of her choice. “I selected the elders with restricted mobility, who could not have access to library services. I was given this huge, 26 foot-long Chevy step van, \$100,000 dollars, and one year to spend it,” she says, her voice still tinged with amazement.

Shopping sprees filled the van with books and videos, using up most of the budget. The remainder, a small \$300 fee she managed to negotiate with a designer from Walter Landor & Associates, was used to place a logo on the van.

“Unfortunately, the van looked like an euthanasia pick-up [vehicle], so I had to do something! I was driving up to nursing and rest homes, after all,” she laughs. The outreach project meant she often fell into conversations with elderly people who had suffered the trauma of relocation, if only from their homes to an assisted living facility. She became fascinated with similar populations around the world.

And it was at this time that the disparate strands of her life wove themselves into the fabric of Tibet. She designed an interview process to capture the disappearing stories of Tibetan elders.

Gaining permission to enter the refugee camps in India was complicated. Locating the 70 and 80-year-olds who had lived in the

country prior to the invasion, especially amid the 25,000 people living in the camp, was nearly impossible. And requesting permission to talk about injustices suffered at the hands of the Chinese was a delicate operation.

“I would sit down with the camera going and a translator there. I’d say, ‘Tell me about life when you were a child: What do you miss about Tibet? What exciting things happened to you?’” Adamski remembers.

The first stories would be about riding horseback, fresh cream from yaks, and dressing up for religious festivals. These were followed by confusing tales of Chinese soldiers claiming to help and offering to “liberate” their communities. And then the accounts would move from mysterious to horrifying: entire villages slaughtered and piles of bodies burned beyond recognition.

The resulting 120 videos are now compiled into a collection. The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, University of California at Berkeley, Stanford University and soon, the U.S. Library of Congress, hold the entire set of transcripts and DVDs.

Two publishers have expressed interest in publishing a book on the project.

Most significantly, Adamski has heard from young Tibetans responding to blog postings and the project’s website. They express gratitude for TOHP’s preserving the language, culture and customs of their homeland’s common people: the farmers, yak herders, artisans, salt traders and monks who are often overshadowed by more illustrious figures.

Adamski is currently working to raise \$30,000 needed to return to India.

“The window is closing. We have maybe five years to be able to talk to people who can say, ‘With my own eyes, I saw this,’” she says.

If she is successful, the Tibetan people will recover their past; filled with love of family, spiritual values and a strong commitment not to harm living beings. And Adamski, immersed in the project and toiling under the smiling face of the Dalai Lama, will return his gaze, happy to have completed her mission.

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Mystery in a Trunk

By Sophie Braccini



Carole Sinclair and the steamer trunk that held a mystery.

Photos Sophie Braccini

A love letter sent before World War II, hidden in a steamer trunk. A mystery, but this one's not found in a movie or romantic novel.

Farmyard Darlings co-owner Carole Sinclair had never seen anything so touching among the collectibles she and partner Kim Berry purchase for their shop. Behind a compartment in an old trunk were wedged a spectacle case and a letter. A pair of spectacles still lies in the case; one of the lenses is loose. The letter is written on frighteningly thin, yellow paper, and when Sinclair opens it up it looks like it could turn to dust.

The letter is addressed to "Jane." The main text is typed, with the slightly awkward looking block capitals that typewriters imprinted.

Handwritten lines have been added at the bottom, as if someone was keeping notes on his or her own life. "I started to obsess with this letter," recounts Sinclair, "the letter talks about love and trust, and was dated 1937. One of the handwritten notes reads, 'I became engaged to you and I hope and pray that we will be very happy' - it was dated April 17, 1938. I had to find out what happened to these people."

With a few clicks and phones calls, it only took Sinclair about three weeks to identify the writer, his family and his wife. But the veil has not been completely lifted - the writer's wife was not named Jane; the enigmatic fiancée has not been found.

The letter was written by Herman Casper Halbach Jr. When Sinclair

entered the name in Ancestry.com she immediately got a trail. "I started with our Facebook page where some of our fans tried to help. Many recommended Ancestry.com so I became a member," explains Sinclair, "I posted my request for information on this family and within 24 hours I had responses, within 48 hours I was talking with people on the phone and tracing back Herman Halbach."

Sinclair first talked to a cousin living in Germany. She corresponded with a grand-nephew and a grand-niece who lives in Tracy and was born in Hayward. They all knew about Halbach and were very interested in the discovery. It turned out that Halbach was originally from Oakland. He was in WWII, survived, and was stationed in Germany for a few years; one of his granddaughters lives there.

Halbach died in 2009. His wife, Loraine, lives in Yuba City.

"Since the letter is not addressed to Loraine, I decided not to try to reach her," says Sinclair, "but his daughter, who lives locally, is coming and we will give everything to her."

Sinclair hopes to find out more about the mysterious Jane to whom the letter was addressed. For now, the steamer trunk is still in Sinclair and Berry's store, in the back of Mt. Diablo Nursery & Garden in Lafayette.



Scouts Take History Walk

Submitted by Kana Ryan



Photo provided

The Wolf Scouts of Pack 505 recently went on a Moraga History Walk. The Scouts started at Willow Springs Church, the site of the 2nd school house in Moraga. They then walked by the site of the old railroad tracks, on to the Moraga

Barn, and finally to the Ranch House Café where the boys tasted local produce including walnuts, pears and apples. Throughout the walk the Scouts learned about Moraga history and life in the olden days.

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Home Expo

LamorindaWeb calls to construction/design business to participate in their first Home Expo. Home Expo '12 will be held on Saturday, January 28, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Building in Lafayette. The event is free to the public. The organizers want to limit the exhibitors to 40 businesses. "The goal of the Expo is to showcase local, Lamorinda businesses. Exhibitors will range from painters and contractors to interior decorators and landscape artists as well as home organizers," says Stephanie Kusinski, Director of Marketing for LamorindaWeb, "The Expo will also have workshops for residents as well as kids activities so parents may enjoy the Expo. Home Expo will also be supporting both Foster-a-Dream and Huckleberry Café at the event." The cost to businesses headquartered inside Lamorinda is \$150 (\$125 for members of one of the three Lamorinda Chambers of Commerce). For more information, go to LamorindaWeb.com/HomeExpo."

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Time to Party with your Chamber of Commerce!

Lafayette

Wednesday, December 14, Holiday Mixer at Bank of the West, 3583 Mt. Diablo Blvd., 5:30-7pm. \$10 for members, \$20 for non-members.

Moraga

Tuesday, December 6, Holiday Party at Moraga Royale, 1600 Canyon Road, 7-9pm. "Festival of Trees" is back this year, hosted by Moraga Royale. Cocktails and hors-d'oeuvres, music and entertainment, silent auction benefiting the Rescue One Foundation. Please RSVP to kathenelson@gmail.com by November 29th. Free - for members only.

Orinda

Thursday, December 8th, Chamber Holiday Mixer at Mechanics Bank, 77 Moraga Way, 5:30- 7pm. Free for members and their guests.

Lamorinda Weekly

is an independent publication, produced by and for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, CA

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Publishers/Owners: Andy and Wendy Scheck;
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Circulation: 26,200 printed copies; delivered to
homes & businesses in Lamorinda.

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Lamorinda Weekly,

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Getting Rid of Allergies for Good

New Allergy Breakthrough Center in Lafayette claims success

By Sophie Braccini



Christine Garvey in her Lafayette office Photo Sophie Braccini

Since she was two years old, Dr. Christine Garvey has suffered from eczema. In high school, she developed irritable bowel syndrome. At one point, the young woman weighed only 90 pounds; she searched for a way to curtail the allergies that were poisoning her life. She says she found that miracle cure three years ago in the Pleasanton office of Dr. James Stalker, who practiced Advanced Allergy Therapeutics (AAT). Garvey was so impressed with the results that she decided to add this specialty to her chiropractic practice. The Orinda resident moved her office from San Francisco to Lafayette a few weeks ago and now operates out of Heritage Square.

The method is completely non-invasive, somewhat repetitive when a lot of components have to be tested, but it claims to cure allergies very quickly and for life. Sherri Glazer had episodes of eczema before, but nothing like the major allergic reaction she experienced which manifested in an itchy red rash on her back that spread

to her whole body. "For a month or two, I tried everything," she said, "24 hours after Christine treated me, the irritation was gone and the rash cleared completely within three weeks."

The principal under which AAT operates is that most environmental allergies are due to the brain having associated one element of a harmless substance with a negative effect, and every time it encounters that element, it sends chemical signals to organs that overreact in an effort to get rid of it. The cure consists of retraining the brain to have a positive association with the substance: while the unique binary code of the substance is sent through a chip fastened to the wrist, stimulation of the nervous system along the spine is applied sending the brain a positive signal.

The first part of AAT treatment is diagnostic. "When someone is allergic to dust, we first need to find out what component of dust is involved, then we can go down to the molecular level and treat appropriately." According to Garvey, sometimes people's own elements can trigger an allergic symptom.

Sheeba Love did not think she had any allergies, but she is a friend of Garvey and she decided to be tested, just in case. "I had been diagnosed with low thyroid and was taking the artificial hormone at a high dose," remembers Love, "when Christine tested me, she found that I was allergic to T4 (one of the hormones produced by the thyroid gland). After she treated me, my doctor reduced my artificial hormone dosage by half and I lost 30 pounds in 3 months!"

Demitrios Sotiropoulos saw Dr. Garvey in 2009 in San Francisco for a dog allergy. "I would break out in hives where my dog had touched me

when we played," he said, "and one time after a bath I almost had an asthmatic attack." Sotiropoulos testifies that after Garvey treated him the reaction disappeared and never came back. Sotiropoulos' improvement was almost immediate; for others it can take up to eight weeks for complete remission, according to Garvey.

"One of my favorite memories is of a one and a half year old baby who came here with severe eczema on his legs," recalls Garvey, "I tested him and all that came out was coffee. I was really puzzled, this must have been a mistake; he was not breastfed and obviously not ingesting coffee." When she started testing for the different elements of coffee, what came out as a trigger for this child was the aroma of coffee, "he was around when his parents were brewing their coffee," she said. The child was successfully treated.

AAT claims a success rate of 89%. The cost of the treatment is not negligible and is not supported by insurance companies. Some negative comments about the method along with many positive ones came be found on the internet. On its web site, AAT warns potential patients: "AAT does not cure allergies. AAT is a highly effective treatment that provides long-term relief from symptoms associated with allergies or sensitivities. AAT does not treat cases of anaphylaxis or life threatening symptoms. Strict avoidance is always advised in such cases."

Allergy Breakthrough Center, 936 Dewing Ave., Suite B, Lafayette, (925) 314-5959. www.allergybreakthroughcenter.com/allergybreakthroughcenter/Lafayette_AAT.html.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

Senior Center Without Walls Reaches Out to Our Community

By Sophie Braccini



Rosalee Biasatti Photo Stephen Biasatti

Rosalee Biasatti moved to Orinda to be close to her son when her mobility became compromised. Being in a wheelchair she has difficulty going out, so to keep busy and intellectually active the former English and Drama teacher, now in her seventies, joined Senior Center

Without Walls, a free non-denominational service that connects elders over the phone through all kinds of activities and classes.

"I very much enjoy the connection that we have with other people our age and with similar interest," says Biasatti. "I couldn't do without it now, I would be lonely." The free service organizes group discussions and classes that are held in the form of conference calls where people interact. "I belong to groups where stories are read aloud and we can discuss them at the end," explains Biasatti, "we've been as many as 18 people on the conference call, this is very popular." She also belongs to the play-reading class. "At the moment we are working on Eugene Ionesco's play Rhinoceros, which I had not read since college, it is wild and fun," says Biasatti, who adds that she is making friendships with some of the members and that the people

managing the service are very nice and professional.

"The holiday season is an especially challenging time for many older adults. With the current decrease in availability of Adult Day Centers and other senior programs, it is vital that other options be available to help reduce the isolation of elders who have difficulty leaving their homes," says Terry Englehart, Director of the Senior Center Without Walls. "Senior Center Without Walls is an option for those seniors in California who are unable to go to a community senior center. Participants call in from their homes to join others in activities, friendly conversation, and an assortment of classes and support groups." The service is a non-denominational community outreach program of the Episcopal Senior Communities. For more information call (877) 797-7299 or go to www.SeniorCenterWithout-Walls.org.

www.Lamorindaweekly.com

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- When Buying Your Office Space Makes Sense
- Vets Building Re-Branding Itself as Events Center
- TassaTags Reclaim Children's Lives While Claiming Your Luggage
- SMC Men's Basketball Wants to Change the Face of Men's Health
- Cougars Cheer Achievements
- Dons Freshman Take First
- Orinda Aquatics Swimmers Excel in the Classroom and in the Pool
- Grand Plans for Orinda's Mini Park
- Hercules Saves Christmas in Orinda
- Lamorinda Prep Basketball Will Fight for DFAL Title

If you wish to view any of the stories above go to www.lamorindaweekly.com and click the link below the story.

Hitting the Holidays Head On In Style

By Moya Stone



White+Warren

Go pink in python for the holidays in this cozy sweater from Specialtees.

The holidays are here and with this special season come parties, family get-togethers, work luncheons and many other opportunities to dress up. Or at least pep-up our style a bit. Lafayette boutiques say sparkle, faux fur, and color are the signature looks of the season.

Erica Perez, owner of Duchess Boutique, has filled her store with the big story for the holidays – sequins. But we’re not talking multiple colored big sequins of the costume variety. Modern sequins are smaller and sewn tightly together for a quiet effect. The colors come in muted gold, silver, and a pale pink as well as black. “We’re doing sequin shorts, sequins integrated into sweatshirt material, and sequin dresses,” says Perez, who also notes that dresses in general are very popular. She has stocked plenty of Little Black Dresses, some one shoulder silhouettes and some with sleeves. “Sleeves are back in, which is nice because it gets really cold here,” says Perez.

Speaking of cold, Jamie Finegold from the Lafayette women’s boutique Tart, said in the fall that faux fur was going to be big, and it remains so for winter. “Faux fur is the hottest outerwear piece for the holidays,” says Finegold. The key word is *faux*. With modern technology in fabrics, faux feels

like the real thing and offers high quality at reasonable prices. Tart has a variety of jackets in faux fur and coats with faux fur collars. Finegold says the holiday season is when local women like to step out with their style. What better way to add a little glam than with a touch of faux chinchilla, fox, or mink.

Even women entertaining at home or attending a local house party want to add little pizzazz to their holiday style. For those who prefer to go more casual Perez suggests pairing the new trend of faux leather jeans with a sequin or chiffon blouse. Fine cords are also a new look and a dressier pant option. Cords worn with a sequin embellished sweater and a simple pump shoe make for a warm, comfortable, and festive outfit.

Ann Rubin, owner of the successful shop Specialtees, an Erin Paige Boutique, says Lafayette women are sophisticated and informed when it comes to fashion. “They like old world mixed with new trends,” says Rubin. For a chic holiday look Rubin suggests a cashmere sweater. “Women want things that feel good on them.” What feels better than cashmere, and the trend in sweaters is the comfy, oversized grandfather cardigan. A cashmere cardigan in a bold color such as red worn over a pair of colored jeans, leggings, or cord pants offers effortless elegance perfect for the busy Lamorinda woman. Add a dressy high heel boot and top with a sparkly brooch and you’ve got fashion with a twist, which Rubin says is always a must-have.

Any choice from a Little Black dress to a sweater can only be enhanced with a touch of bling. Souvenir is the local favorite place to shop for costume jewelry. According to store manager Meddy Bartoletti, the holiday look in jewelry is sparkly and chunky. Leather mixed with pearls and long strands of beads and pendants hitting the bellybutton are the latest trends. A single skeleton key is a popular motif as are charms and locket. Big crystal bracelets add drama to a simple dress and brooches are showy additions to a coat, jacket, or even a hat.

Holiday merchandise will be arriving in local boutiques all during the month of November. Go forth in holiday style.

Lamorinda resident Moya Stone is a freelance journalist specializing in fashion. Read her blog at <http://overdressedforlife.com/>.



Sparkle in this sequin LBD from Tart.



White+Warren

Animal print grandfather cardigan over leggings from Specialtees.



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Cardigan sweater paired with camisole and slim skirt from Specialtees.

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Local Artist at Santa's Bag Boutique

By Cathy Tyson

Once shoppers have nibbled their way through the vast array of samples in the food room of the extensive Santa's Bag Boutique; it's time to move over to an even bigger room at the Lafayette Community Center full of unique holiday and gift items. Keep an eye out for lifelong Lamorinda resident Kristin Gregersen who has been working diligently on hundreds of gorgeous hand painted note cards and plaques along with very special hand painted goose eggs ornaments.



It's not unusual for her to work until the wee hours of the morning. "I'm a night owl," says Gregersen, who works eight to ten hours per day, with her legs up and pillows behind her back to prop her up. "I just love it. It's very relaxing for me."

It's a labor of love for Gregersen, after preparing scores of cards - that can take anywhere from a half hour to an hour to paint, she will be selling them at the Boutique. She used to paint on duck eggs, but enjoys the larger shell "canvas" of goose eggs. The eggs are sent from a farm in North Dakota, all carefully packaged, clean and ready to be transformed into a work of art.

she has an assortment of designs: Santas, reindeer, snowmen, along with teddy bears, roosters, lady bugs, cats and beyond.

"People like my simple designs and bright colors," said cat lover Gregersen, who attended Miramonte High School back in the day. She used to paint on duck eggs, but enjoys the larger shell "canvas" of goose eggs. The eggs are sent from a farm in North Dakota, all carefully packaged, clean and ready to be transformed into a work of art.

Timeless Scrooge! Comes Back To Lafayette

By Sophie Braccini

The holiday season just wouldn't be the same without Scrooge, without the live performance of the story that makes us cry, and makes us laugh. The musical retelling of *A Christmas Carol* is the kind of family favorite that has the lovely smell of good times, like the Thanksgiving Turkey or the Christmas Pudding. At Town Hall Theatre in Lafayette, the job of keeping it fresh this time around fell into the capable hands of Jessica Richards, Associate Artistic Director at the California Shakespeare Festival. "Seeing the community come together each year to celebrate the holidays with friends and family is what Town Hall Theatre is all about," comments Artistic Director Clive Worsley. And this year in particular, he and Richards believe the classic story is more relevant than ever.

"We have several new staff members who are reenergizing the whole team, keeping it fresh," says the returning Richards, "and the new choreography by Emily Morrison keeps everyone on their toes." Richards says that each year she comes back to the play a different person and sees different things as being important. "This year, with everything that is happening around the world, it struck me how different Scrooge is from everyone else around him," she says.

Worsley, who also returns as an actor in the play, experienced a similar shift in awareness. "A lot of our fellow Americans and people around the world are suffering," he said, "Scrooge's story is important for all of us, as we have a duty to care for those less fortunate than ourselves. The idea that someone who feeds on other's suffering could be transformed, makes me confident in the future. We need to remain forward-looking

and hopeful, and it is a great time for doing this."

Again this year, the musical will feature memorable songs such as "Thank You Very Much," "I Hate People," and "Christmas Children." "Whether you grew up with the movie like I did, or this is your first experience with this heart-warming and fun show, you are absolutely going to have a blast," says Worsley. Scrooge is played by John Blytt, Clive Worsley is Bob Cratchit, Randy Anger is the Ghost of Christmas Present and young Joel Braunstein is Tiny Tim.

Scrooge! runs December 3-18th, with previews on December 1 and 2. It is rated PG (due to spooky ghosts) and is about two hours long. For tickets, contact Town Hall Theatre at 283-1557, or purchase online at www.TownHallTheatre.com.



John Blytt (Scrooge) and Joel Braunstein (Tiny Tim)
Photo Stu Selland

'Tis the Season for Festivities!

Lamorinda's Holiday Events

Lafayette

Wednesday, November 23, 7:30pm. Community-Wide Interfaith Thanksgiving Service in the Temple Isaiah Sanctuary 3800 Mount Diablo Boulevard, entrance off of Risa Road. The entire community is welcome at Temple Isaiah for this annual event. Bring your friends and neighbors for an evening of interfaith prayer and inspiring music from a collection of adult and children's choirs. Refreshments will follow the service.

Sunday, November 27, 11:45am-2pm. Advent Festival: games, crafts, food and fun for all ages at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Have questions? Call (925) 283-3722.

Friday, December 2 through Sunday, December 4 Santa's Bag Boutique at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette. Lots of delicious handmade treats, jewelry, ornaments and holiday sparkle will be on sale to benefit the Lafayette Community Center Foundation. Don't miss out on quite possibly the best toffee you have ever had. A wide variety of gift baskets from area merchants will be available at the silent auction, hint: think coffee, books, wine and more. Admission is free. 12-2, 11am-7pm; 12/3 and 12/4, 9am-5pm. For more information, call Judy Gregersen at 510-918-2280 or email santasbag@comcast.net.

Saturday, Dec. 3, 1-2pm. Nutcracker Storytime with Diabolo Ballet. Enjoy a sweet holiday treat with this special retelling of the classic fairytale featuring dancers from the Diabolo Ballet. Don't forget to wear your favorite dancing finery! Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. (925) 385-2280.

Sunday, December 4, 5:30pm, Tree of Lights
Hospice of the East Bay invites the public to participate in its 25th annual Lafayette Tree of Lights ceremony at the corner of Mt. Diablo & Lafayette Circle East, near the Round Up. Each light on the tree is symbolic of a life and will shine in honor or memory of a beloved friend or family member.

Sunday, December 4, 7pm. Master Chorale at Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian church, the area's longest performing Korean Choir group. The evening will feature both Korean and English language holiday pieces. Tickets are \$20 a piece, available at the door, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette.

Friday, December 9, 1:30-3pm: Annual Holiday Concert and Fundraiser - Performance by Rossmoor and Moraga Community Chorus at the Live Oak Room of the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road. Get in the holiday spirit with a festive afternoon of music, caroling, light refreshments, and a chance to win wonderful raffle prizes. Funds raised will go to support the Lamorinda Spirit Van paratransit program. Call 284-5050 to reserve a spot. \$3 for member and \$5 for non-members.

Moraga

Saturday, December 3, 6:30pm, Tree Lighting at the Moraga Commons Park (tree lighting at 7pm) Don't miss the cookies, cocoa, music and Santa.

Saturday, December 3, 5:30-8pm, Live Nativity - See the Christmas story come to life as the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church courtyard is transformed into a Bethlehem manger.

Tuesday, December 6, 8pm, and Wed., Dec. 7, 1pm, the Saint Mary's College choirs return from the Interkultur American International Festival with a Gold Rating to sing a program of sacred music and holiday favorites. Concerts in the Chapel. Free admission.

December 8 from 11am-2pm Saint Mary's Guild is hosting a Merry Christmas Luncheon at Saint Mary's College Soda Center as a fundraiser for student scholarships. The Saint Mary's College Chamber Singers will sing a wide variety of selections; including classical, traditional, jazz, and Broadway songs. Enjoy champagne cocktails and a Christmas raffle. The price of the luncheon is \$45. For more information call Jeffry-Lynn Dunne (925) 284-7750.

Orinda

Friday, December 2, Noon-8pm, Saturday and Sunday, December 3 and 4: 11am-6pm, 10th Annual Orinda Overhill Holiday Boutique. Now in its new location: 1 Tarabrook Drive, Orinda (one block from the old location - look for the signs). One-of-a-kind handmade gifts & food from over 30 local artisans. All items handmade. Lots of parking. Great Prices! A percentage of the sales of many of the artists goes to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Friday, December 2 at 7:30pm. A community sing of Handel's Messiah will be held at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St Stephens Drive, Orinda, on The Messiah Sing will be directed by Minister of Music Robert Train Adams, with Festival Choir, professional soloists and chamber orchestra with harpsichord and organ. This event is an annual fundraiser for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties. Childcare is available by reservation. A free-will offering will be taken. For more information contact Brenda Free, office@ststephensorinda.org or (925) 254-3770 x10.

Saturday, December 3, 4:30-6pm, Tree of Lights, Orinda Village Square, Orinda Way. Hospice of the East Bay invites the public to participate in its 25th annual Tree of Lights ceremony. Each light is symbolic of a life and will shine in honor or memory of a beloved friend or family member. Please join the commemorative ceremony to enjoy music, poetry, remembrances by family members and friends of Hospice, and the special moment

Saturday, December 10, 4pm and Sunday, December 11, 4pm, "This Shining Night" featuring the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church Festival Choir, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. This is great way to listen to some of your friends and neighbors raise their sixty plus voices - number of participants, not actual ages - performing traditional choral-orchestral music for the holiday. Tickets are free, but organizers ask that you reserve seats via their website at lope.org or for more information contact Sharon Francis at (925) 283-8722 x 264.

Saturday, December 10, 10am. Beginning students from the Lafayette campus of The Contra Costa Children's Chorus will perform "Winter Awakenings" at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 1601 Mary Drive in Pleasant Hill. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children 14 and under. Please email: programs@childrenschorus.org to reserve tickets and pay at the Will Call table on the day of the event.

Sunday, December 11, 4pm, Christmas with a Flourish at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette, featuring The OSLC Choirs with an ensemble of professional instrumentalists. A festive mix of jubilant, contemplative and just-for-fun holiday music from our singing and ringing choirs. This concert features the choral music of Texas composer Randol Alan Bass, opening with his haunting arrangement of the ancient chant/carol, Personent Hodie, and ending with his dazzling carol medley, Christmas Flourish. Add our tradition of a glittering reception in the Fellowship Hall, and you have a delightful holiday experience that will leave no Christmastone unturned! For questions call: (925) 283-3722.

Monday, December 12, 7:30-9pm. "Winterfest," Maestro Duane Carroll will lead the 45-member Contra Costa Wind Symphony as they perform seasonal favorites with special guests - members of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, in the LOPC chapel, 49 Knox Drive Lafayette. Although they usually perform at the Lesher Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek, the exceptional musicians of the Wind Symphony with singing special guests will rock the house with a variety of familiar seasonal selections including "Silver Bells," "Rhapsody for Hanukkah" and "Sleigh Ride." The concert will include an audience sing-along. Admission and parking are free.

Holiday Fun at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center: Holiday Cards Craft on **Thursday, Dec. 8, 3:30-4:30pm** In the Children's Room. Toddler Holiday Dance Party, Monday, Dec. 19, 10:15-11:00am In the Homework Center. Wear your party clothes and celebrate the holidays with music, dancing, and fun! This is a special event just for little ones ages 2-5. LLC is located at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette; (925) 385-2280.

Friday, December 23, 8:00pm, Temple Isaiah - Join us for a Shabbat service with a special Chanukah celebration. We'll have a Chanukah sing-along and treats after the service. Don't forget to bring you menorah to light. Questions? Call (925) 283-8575.

Friday, December 9, 7pm w/Concerto; Saturday, Dec 10th, 2 pm; Sat., Dec 10th 7pm w/ Concerto; and Sun, Dec 11 2pm: CAPA Nutcracker Ballet: Campolindo Performing Arts Center in Moraga. Tickets available online at www.ShowFix4u.com (click on California then CAPA Nutcracker). CAPA is donating proceeds from 2011 weekday student performances to fight child hunger in Contra Costa. Please bring a jar of peanut butter to any show-Donation barrels & envelopes available at all shows.)

Saturday, Dec 10, 11am-2 pm, take a Photo with Santa at the Rheem Valley Shopping Center. Bring your own camera. Holiday clowns & balloon art. You will need your Rheem Valley Shopping Center receipts totaling \$25.00 or more to participate.

Saturday and Sunday, December 10 & 11, 7pm, Concert: Christmas on the Hill. Experience a heart-warming evening of new and traditional Christmas music. At Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church.

December 13, 14 and 15. Winter Concerts by Campolindo High School Choir. Some concerts at the high school, others are at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church. For more information, go to www.campochoir.com.

when the tree lights up. The event will feature an Orinda school chorus performance and Santa's arrival on an Orinda Fire Department fire truck. Bring your kids and your cameras - it's an annual event not to be missed.

Sunday, December 4, 4-7pm, Get In The Christmas Spirit! Annual Advent Celebration at Orinda Community Church, Fellowship Hall, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda 94563 A time for great Christmas crafts, cuisine and candlelight caroling! All are welcome!

December Canned Film Festival. Orinda Theatre is offering special free screenings of holiday classics when you bring a canned food item to these special Saturday morning shows: **December 3rd 11:30am- Home Alone; December 10th 11:30am - Elf; December 17th 11:30am - Polar Express**

Tuesday, December 6 at 6:30pm, The Twelfth Night Singers: A Concert of Carols at the Orinda Library. Dressed in 19th Century costume, the quintet will perform old and new carols which scan Christmas music from medieval time to the present. Along with the music, they will offer comments on the origins of the songs we all know so well. This program will take place next to the fireplace inside the Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way. It is free to all. For more information, please visit the library website at ccclib.org or telephone (925) 254-2184.

Need Stocking Stuffers?

Who doesn't love a good book? All three Lamorinda libraries have Friends of the Library groups, and the Friends have book shops that benefit the libraries.

Lafayette: At the Library and Learning Center, corner of First St. and Golden Gate Way. Choose from over 25,000 titles, most under \$5. Hours: Mon/Tues/Thurs: 10am-6pm, Wednesday: 10am-8pm, Friday: 10am- 5pm, Saturday: 9am- 5pm (closed Sunday).

Moraga: The Friends Book Shop in the library is open and staffed by volunteers on Tuesday and Thursday from 1-7pm, and Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 1-4pm.

Orinda: The Book Shop is located on the library level and open Monday - Wednesday, 1 - 4pm; Thursday, 1 - 6pm; Friday & Saturday, 1 - 4pm.

Friends of the Orinda Library will offer two book sales in December: Thurs. Dec. 1 - 10am- 1pm and Sat. Dec 17 - 10am-1pm. Both will be in the Book Shop and Sorting Room. The monthly sales offer quality books for all interests and ages. These December sales will offer many books ideal for holiday giving. Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. (925) 254-1358.

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www.futures-explored.org

Holiday Gem Jewelry & Gift Show
December 9-11, 2011 (Fri-Sun)
Alameda County Fairgrounds -Building P- 4501 Pleasanton Ave. Pleasanton, CA 94566

FREE ADMISSION CASH & CARRY

EGI Gem & Jewelry Show
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Show Hours:
Fri-Sat 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Sun 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

- Bring this ad and receive a gift while it last
- Daily gift certificate drawing for the first 100 attendees (Gift certificate only applied towards the purchase during the show)
- Wholesale open to public

◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

ART

The Saint Mary's College William Keith (1838 -1911) Collection will welcome visitors into the expanded galleries of the new Museum of Art thru December 18. Among never before seen recent acquisitions and newly restored paintings are magnificent early views of the Columbia River Valley, Pacific Northwest, Mt. Tamalpais and Russian River. The Hearst Art Gallery is open from Wednesdays through Sundays, 11am-4:30pm. Admission is \$4 for adults; free for groups, K-12th graders. For more information, please call (925) 631-4379.

On Friday, December 2, 6:30-8:30pm the Lafayette Gallery will be hosting a free reception, with hors d'oeuvres and beverages, to

celebrate the holiday season, and the new Gallery exhibit, "Peace on Earth." The gallery is located at 50 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette (across from Chow); www.lafayette-gallery.net, (925) 284-2788.

Moraga Art Gallery will feature the work of guest artist Susan Heller thru Dec. 24. Heller's work falls outside the traditional function of quilts as each piece is intended to hang as a work of art. She enjoys using appliqué for its added dimension and embellishes with hand-embroidery, beading or both. Moraga Art Gallery is open Tues.-Sun from noon-5pm. MAG is tucked in a corner north of CVS in the Rheem Center in Moraga (until the end of this show).

MUSIC

Voices of Musica Sacra sings "Carols Old and New", featuring traditional carols from France and Spain, works by Jacobus Gallus (Handl) from Germany, 15th and 16th century carols from England, recent pieces by Gustav Holst and John Rutter, and American carols ranging from shape-note singing to Charles Ives and Alfred Burt, and even one from Canada. The program concludes with a carol sing-along. John Kendall Bailey, music director. www.vmschorus.org Tickets: \$20 adults, \$15 seniors/students. Saturday, December 3, 2pm, St. Francis of Assisi Church, 860 Oak Grove Rd., Concord. Sunday, December 4, 2pm, St. Stephen Catholic Church, 1101 Keaveny Ct., Walnut Creek.

San Francisco Chamber Orchestra presents Family Concert: Holiday Show! on Saturday, Dec 3, from 2 to 3pm, at Lakeside Theatre, 300 Lakeside Dr., Oakland. Juggling, acrobatics, and feats of derring-do are woven into an entertaining program that will feature a discussion on creating musical moods! Cost: \$0 (Admission is free, but tickets are required for non-members.). For more info see <http://www.sfchamberorchestra.org/events/family/> or call 415-692-3367 or email info@sfchamberorchestra.org.

The Campolindo Jazz Program presents "ALL THAT JAZZ" Featuring guest artist and Campo Alumnus, Geoffrey Countryman with the Campolindo Jazz Ensembles. Jazz combo will be playing from the entire spectrum of jazz styles plus original compositions by Geoffrey Countryman. Where: Camplindo Performing Arts Center. Admission Free. Date: Thursday, December 8, Time: 7:30pm.

THEATER

On December 1, 2, and 3, the Saint Mary's College Dance Company presents its fall concert, Origins of Self. The show performs at 8pm Thursday, Friday, and Saturday in the Lefevre Theatre at Saint Mary's College of California in Moraga and admission in FREE. For more information and directions, visit the college website, www.stmarys-ca.edu/performing-arts. Expect a wide variety of entertainment, from solos to group numbers in the styles of modern and tap dance. You will laugh and cry as the choreographers explore their life origins.

LECTURE & LITERATURE

Commonwealth Club: Tuesday, Nov 29, Governor Jennifer Granholm and Dan Mulhern, her husband and co-author of their book "A Governor's Story: The Fight for Jobs and America's Economic Future" will discuss Michigan's unique struggles during the recent economic crisis, how the state weathered the storm, and what advice they can offer other policy makers and citizens. Location: Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Time: 5:45 p.m. check-in, 6:30 p.m. program Cost: \$22 standard, \$12 members, \$7 students (with valid ID).

Budd MacKenzie, the founder of the Lafayette-based grassroots nonprofit organization, Trust In Education (TIE) and two Afghan-Americans, Nabi Tawakali, long time committed volunteer for TIE, and Zohra Azis, who is coordinating the construction of a girls's school in Afghanistan funded by TIE will share some of their experiences on November 30, 7:30pm, Acalanes High School Performing Arts Center, 1200 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette.. Hope for Afghanistan comes in small steps, but Budd, Nabi and Zohra have seen the difference that Americans can make. Their portrayal of Afghanistan is unlike any you have read, heard or seen.

OTHER

Toe-tapping music, twirling dancers, and the friendly buzz of conversation keep the atmosphere lively at the weekly Dance Social Wednesdays 12:30-2:50pm at Lafayette Community Center. The longtime event is held in the big, bright Live Oak Room. There's plenty of space for a sizable group to swirl, twirl, and socialize. The Dance Social specializes in ballroom, but any style of dance adds to the fun. Professional dance lessons the first Wednesday of the month. The Lafayette Community Center is at 500 St. Mary's Road. A map & additional details are posted at: sites.google.com/site/lafayette-teteadance. The event is \$2 for members of Lafayette Senior Center, and \$4 for non-members. It's \$10 yearly to join the Center, and enjoy the complete range of activities.

Moraga Women's Society is sponsoring a fundraiser for the Moraga schools on Wednesday, November 30. Treat yourself to a fun-filled day before the holiday rush. Join us for "Brunch, Bridge and Bunko" at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street in Moraga, at 10:30am. Tickets are \$25. Please call Jean @376-7961 for ticket information.

5th Annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner, December 1 at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building. The event is sponsored by local veterans groups and the Navy League and the public is cordially invited to participate. Rear Admiral Christopher C. Colvin, USCG, Deputy Commander of the Coast Guard's Pacific Area, will be the guest speaker. Cost: \$30 per person, including wine. Social hour will be at 6pm with dinner at 7pm. Reservations may be made by check (CCC NLU) to Steve Cruikshank, 165 Random Way, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. Deadline for RSVP November 23. For information, please call Jim Harbuck, President, (925) 376-8574.

Acalanes Fellowship Masonic Lodge in Lafayette will have an open installation of Lodge Officers on Saturday, December 3, at 4pm. The Lodge is located at the corner of Brook Street and Moraga Road in Lafayette. For Further information go to <http://www.acalanes.org> or contact Don Hoskins, Secretary by phone at 800-419-0819 (Option 4), or by email at donhosk@aol.com.

Northern California Camellia Society meeting: Monday, December 5th, 7:30pm, First Baptist Church of Walnut Creek, 2336 Buena Vista Dr., Walnut Creek. We are hosting an evening with Tom Nuccio from Nuccio's Nursery in Altadena. Tom a well-known speaker and hybridizer, will have a discussion on unique camellias and azaleas. He will bring special plants for the silent auction and raffle. Admission is free, please come and bring a friend. For seating reservations, please contact Bob Ehrhart at 925 937-0188.

The Orinda Historical Society Holiday Party will be held on Wednesday, December 7, 6-9pm. The theme of the evening will be "Celebrating the 70th Birthday of the Orinda Theater" with guest speakers Colette Kersten, Malia Martin, and Dina Fiatarone, who were all former ushers at the theater. \$40 per person: 6pm Social- 7pm Dinner and Program. Orinda Community Church, Fellowship Hall - RSVP to 254-1353 or send check to PO Box 82, Orinda.

The World Wide Web: Practical Knowledge for Today and Is It All Still Good? Presented by Edward Zeidan, Nerd4Rent. Surfing the web carries with it inherent risks. Learn valuable tips on how to protect yourself online: backing up your data, choosing a strong password,

protecting your identity and wireless network, and much more. To Sign Up, Call (925)284-5050. \$1 members/\$3 non-members. Tuesday, December 13, 10:30-Noon, Elderberry Room, Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Rd., Lafayette.

Lafayette Gallery Trunk Show, December 10 & 11, unique gifts hand crafted by local artisans. The Gallery is located at 50 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette (across from Chow). Free event. www.lafayette-gallery.net. (925) 284-2788.

Electronic E-waste Collection/ Fundraiser for Loaves and Fishes of CCC. When: Saturday Dec. 10, 9am-4pm. Where: Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church @ 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Free to recycle televisions, monitors, laptops, cell phones, flat-screens and wires. \$5.00 per item fee to recycle: stereos, telephones, CPU's, printers, DVD players, radios, fax machines, small appliances etc. Secured Document Destruction (shredding) also provided at \$7.00 per Banker Box. Contact: (925)-890-1324.

PJ Library, Jewish Community Center of the East Bay, Jewish Gateways, and Building Jewish Bridges present Hanukah Festival of Light and Isaac Zones Family Concert on Sunday, Dec 11, 10am-2pm, at Jewish Community Center of the East Bay, 1414 Walnut Street, Berkeley. Fun day of Hanukah activities for the whole family -- storytelling, family concert, latkes, dreidel games, arts & crafts, more! All are welcome! Cost: Suggested donation \$5/person + canned food donations. For more info see <http://www.jewishgateways.org/events/2011/dec/11/hanukah-festival-light-and-isaac-zones-family-concert> or call (510) 410-0622 or email rabbibridget@jewishgateways.org.

16th Annual Teddy Bear Tea will be held at The Gardens at Heather Farm on December 3rd and 4th with seating available at 11:30am or 2pm each day. Your ticket includes an elegant holiday setting, a wide variety of tea-time treats, story time, and photos and favors to take home. We will also have a gift boutique open for children and adults for holiday shopping. Tickets are \$15 children/\$25 adults. For reservations call: (925) 947-1678 or www.gardensh.org.

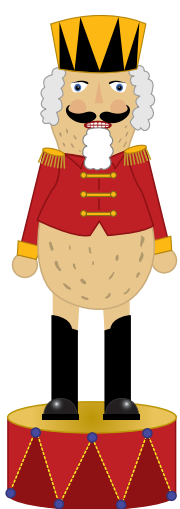
Lindsay Wildlife Museum will hold its annual holiday sale on Saturday, November 19 and Sunday, November 20, 10am-5pm; browse the store's selection of nature and wildlife-inspired toys, clothing, jewelry, books and more. The general public will receive a 10% discount on all merchandise during the weekend sale, and museum members will receive a 20% discount on all store purchases. In addition, family and grandparent memberships, normally \$65 per year, may be purchased during the months of November and December for \$55, a \$10 savings.

POLITICAL GATHERINGS

Town Hall Meeting: Education Finance Challenges in California; December 6, 6:30pm, Stanley Middle School MP Room, Lafayette. This is an opportunity to ask questions, share ideas, and get involved! For more information and a list of the speakers visit <http://lafayetteforeducation.weebly.com/index.html>.

Please submit:
calendar@lamorinda-weekly.com

NUTCRACKER CARES!



CAPA is donating proceeds from 2011 weekday student performances to fight child hunger in Contra Costa. Additional donations gratefully accepted: capa@capadance.net (Please bring a jar of peanut butter to any show. Donation barrels & envelopes available at all shows)

Fri Dec 9th 7pm w/Concerto
Sat Dec 10th 2pm
Sat Dec 10th 7pm w/ Concerto
Sun Dec 11 2pm

Tickets available online at www.ShowTix4u.com

(click on California then CAPA Nutcracker)

Campolindo Performing Arts Center

Call for Artists!

Moraga Art Gallery is now accepting applications from local artists that have a unique vision & quality work.

We will be moving to a new location:
522 Center St, next to TJ Maxx

If interested, please send a query to:
moragaartgallery@gmail.com.

Located @570 Center St, Rheem Valley Shopping Center
Open Tuesday thru Sunday, 12-5p
925.376.5407

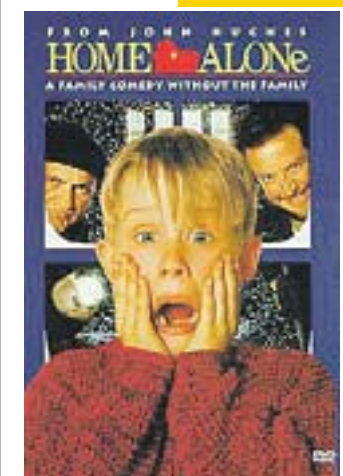
Upcoming Special Events at:



Orinda Theatre

"FREE" holiday movies at the Orinda Theatre with a canned food item for the Contra Costa Food Bank

Home Alone Dec. 3rd, 11:30 AM



Elf Dec. 10th, 11:30 AM

Polar Express Dec. 17th, 11:30 AM

Rheem Theatre

CAIFF Members **Dec. 12th, 7 PM**
2012 Film Festival Preview Night
Come see a sneak preview of the great films that will be screening at the 14th Annual California Independent Film Festival February 10th - 16th
CAIFF Members, please bring a guest and show them the great benefits of being a CAIFF member!

Friday Night of **Dec. 16th, 10 PM**
Fright

Rocky Horror Picture Show hosted by the Queen of Scream Vanessa. Live Stage show from the cast of Barely Legal. Please bring a canned food item for the Contra Costa Food Bank

CAIFF Classic **Dec. 17th, 7 PM**
Film Series

Christmas in Connecticut
Hosted by Pete Crooks, Diablo Magazine. Free to CAIFF Members.

Moraga Movers & apos; Classic Film Series **Dec. 21st, 4 PM**

The Canterville Ghost

Coming **January 21st, 2012**
Bunjo Comedy Club at the Rheem!

14th Annual California Independent Film Festival, Feb 10th - Feb 16th, 2012

Become a member of CAIFF to receive free & discount movie tickets at Lamorinda Theatres! www.caiff.org

Check www.lamorindatheatres.com for all movie listings

Olive Friends

By Susie Iventosch



EJ Keller at the Olive Festival Photo provided

Last month, the Friends of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area (FWRNA) hosted the second annual Olive Festival, complete with local olive oil-tasting from the McCauley olive orchards, olive branch crown-making and even an Olive Expo, which displayed an olive oil lamp and an olive oil collector fashioned after those invented by the Greeks two thousand years ago.

And no true competitor was left idle with an olive pit spitting contest, in addition to games of "stuff the olive", "olive pizza party" and "olive regatta."

Besides the contests and tastings, EJ Keller, owner of Orinda's Carotte et Caviar, and I conducted cooking demonstrations for the guests. EJ made a wonderful fig-olive tapenade, while I made Greek olive-feta scones.

The event, which attracted more than 100 contributors and hundreds of attendees, raised a total of \$7,000 from the event.

"Every dollar [raised] supports the Wagner Ranch Nature Area programs such as: Thanksgiving, Pioneer Days, and regular educational activities, for Orinda students in grades 3 through 5," said board member Shirley Heichel.

According to Heichel, the board responded proactively to this statement from the School District: "In 2009, the school district was forced to eliminate the nature area naturalist position as a result of continuing cuts in state funding."

The FWRNA, a nonprofit dedicated to environmental education and social studies for Orinda youth since 1970, stepped in to provide funding for nature aides and other

costs of running the program. The historical Wagner Ranch site boasts an olive orchard, planted by the original Wagner family, with many olive trees that are 130 years old.

Many local volunteer groups and individuals came together to make this event a huge success. There were master gardeners, recycling organizations, native bird experts, Boy Scouts, and the Orinda Historical Society, just to name a few.

Shirley Heichel reminded me of a famous Shakespearean quote, "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

And, the truth in that statement is evident when it comes to community members pulling together for an event like the Olive Festival. The Republic of Cake was very generous in allowing us to use their kitchen to prepare food for the event. Thank you!

EJ Keller's Olive and Fig Tapenade

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup pitted Kalamata olives
- 1 peeled clove of garlic
- ¼ cup walnuts
- 4 ripe figs
- 6-8 springs of fresh mint
- ½ cup cream cheese, softened
- 2 heads of Belgian endive, leaves separated and washed, or slices of cucumber
- 1-2 tablespoons Balsamic vinegar

DIRECTIONS

In a food processor, puree ½ cup pitted Kalamata olives with a peeled clove of garlic. Add ¼ cup of walnuts and pulse a few times, leaving the walnuts in small pieces. Transfer to a mixing bowl. Chop 4 ripe figs and add to the olive mix. Finely chop the leaves from 6 or 8 sprigs of mint and add to the mix. Stir in ½ cup of cream cheese and mix all the ingredients together. Serve on top of endive leaves or slices of cucumber and drizzle with a few drops of balsamic vinegar. Enjoy!

Olive-Feta Scones with Parmesan

Created by Susie for the Wagner Ranch Nature Center Olive Festival fundraiser (Makes about 2 dozen)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup self-rising flour (can substitute with 1 cup regular flour plus ½ teaspoons baking powder and ¼ teaspoon salt)
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon dried mustard
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter (1/2 stick), cut into small pieces
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped Kalamata olives
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped Greek green olives
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan (plus ¼ cup grated Parmesan for topping)
- 1/3 cup crumbled Feta cheese
- 1 egg
- 1/3-1/2 cup half & half

DIRECTIONS

In a large mixing bowl place flour, salt, cayenne pepper, dried mustard and thyme. Mix well with a wire whisk. With pastry cutter or fingertips, cut in butter until well-integrated. Stir in Parmesan, feta and olives. In a small bowl, mix egg with half and half and stir well. Pour into dries and mix well. Turn onto floured board and roll out to a thickness of about ¾ inch. (If too moist, simply knead a little more flour into dough.) Cut into small rounds using a 1½ inch diameter biscuit cutter. Place on baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Brush tops lightly with olive oil, and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake at 400° for approximately 10-12 minutes, or until golden brown.



Scones-Olive Feta Parmesan Photo Susie Iventosch

About Chef EJ Keller

Originally from San Francisco, Edward (EJ) Keller travelled to France in 1995 with his French wife. He was immediately won over by the French attitude toward cooking and eating, and quickly decided to make a professional career of cooking. Over the course of ten years, he worked inside the French kitchen scene and in a short time, worked his way up through several historical and prestigious Parisian restaurants, including: Le Grand Véfour, L'Escargot Montorgueil, Jacques Cagna, and Cabaret. In search of increased client contact and greater menu creativity, he left the restaurant kitchens behind and now works directly with individuals in their homes (both in Paris and in California), to create meals and culinary events based on the values of fine dining with good friends. Carotte et Caviar is a personal chef service designed for food lovers, that offers a "chef in your home" for parties and gatherings, market tours, meals in advance and cooking workshops. Carotte et Caviar in California
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Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. **These recipe is available on our web site** 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.



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Community Service

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

Lafayette Connection at CF Climb for Life

(Prepared from information submitted by Jim Gallagher)



Lafayette's Claire Gallagher (center) with members of the Cal Rugby Team—back row, from left: Josh Tucker, Tyler Fach, Kenny Bruzzone, Nicklas Boyer; bottom row: academic advisor Nick McNeill, Spencer Morris, Brad Harrington. Photo courtesy Cal Athletics

The Northern California Cystic Fibrosis (CF) Foundation held its annual Stair Climb event, called the CF Climb for Life, on Saturday, November 5. The climb is a fundraiser for the CF Foundation – participating teams climb to the top of the skyscraper at One Sansome Street in downtown San Francisco. That's 41 floors – or 800-900 steps. When the climb teams reach the top, they have a party to celebrate their success. This year a Lafayette connection was made, high in the sky across the bay.

The Gallagher family of

Lafayette participated in the event; dad Jim Gallagher is a Foundation board member. The family includes a first grader at Burton Valley and 6th grader at Stanley Middle School. The UC Berkeley Rugby Team also has a tradition of joining the stair climb; in fact it's often a Cal player that wins the fastest time to the top. In true blue and gold fashion, that distinction went this year to freshman Spencer Morris. Gallagher recalls, "At the party on the top floor of the building my 11-year-old daughter posed for a picture with the Cal Rugby Team. She

was wearing her Stanley tee-shirt—two of the players high-fived her and said, "I went to Stanley, too!" Looks like Lafayette students turned Cal Rugby players Kenny Bruzzone and Tyler Fach are keeping the connection to home. The funds raised by the Climb for Life will go toward vital research and therapies for those affected by CF, an inherited chronic disease that affects the lungs and digestive system of about 30,000 children and adults in the United States (70,000 worldwide). For more information, visit <http://www.cff.org/Chapters/nca/>.

Cadette Scouts Help Out at Special Olympics

Submitted by Kim Jinnett



From left, front row: Kendall, Kenna, Jessie; back row: Maria, Juliet, Keira, Genevieve, Clare; helpers not pictured: Josie and Emilie. Photo provided

Ten of the girls in Cadette Girl Scout Troop 30072 from Moraga had the privilege of helping at a Special Olympics Bowling tournament on Saturday, November 12, 2011 at Diablo Lanes in Concord. Jenny Choo, Vice Pres-

ident of Regional Sports for Special Olympics Northern California said, "The Girl Scout group did a fantastic job volunteering at the Special Olympics Northern California East Bay Regional Bowling Tournament. They were great with

the athletes and were an integral part of the success of the event by assisting as Lane Monitors, Awards Distributors and also helping out with lunch. We appreciated their enthusiasm and initiative."

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Community Service

Orinda Couple Wins Rotary Raffle Canoe

Submitted by Thomas Black



From left: John Fazal, Janet and Norm Pease

Photo Thomas Black

The winners of a custom-made, hand-crafted wood canoe raffled by Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club are Norm and Janet Pease, longtime residents of Orinda. Their winning ticket was drawn after the recent Lafayette Reservoir Run, in which Norm was an entrant, by Jay Lifson, Executive Director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, which sponsors the Run.

Gross revenue from the raffle -- \$20 per ticket, six for \$100 -- totaled \$17,310. The winner had the choice of accepting the canoe or \$2,000 cash. The Peases opted for the canoe, the commercial value of which is estimated at between \$8,000 and \$10,000. Proceeds will be used by the club to fund a variety of community-service projects, including partial underwriting of the new outdoor concert stage under construction at Lafayette Reservoir.

Tippy, as dubbed by the club, will make the trek next spring to the Peases' summer

home at Elk Lake, near Bend, Oregon. Meantime, it will "hibernate" in a hangar at Buchanan Field in Concord, where a private airplane owned and flown by Pease is stored.

The canoe was built from scratch by a dozen worker-bee Rotarians in the private woodshop of Gary Fulcher, a club member and resident of Orinda. In addition to acting as official project supervisor, Fulcher put in untold hands-on hours himself. It is estimated that some 1,500 man-hours were invested over a period of eight labor-intensive months, beginning last January.

The 15-foot canoe—literally one of a kind—was hand-built stem to stern, including the two caned seats. The outer top and bottom are "woven" from hundreds of lengths of African rosewood veneer. Other materials comprising the laminate hull are Kevlar, fiberglass and resins. The topmost layer is a professionally-applied thick clearcoat of high-gloss varnish.

Moraga Rotary Donates Dictionaries to Third Graders

Submitted by Gary Irwin



Moraga Rotarians, from left: John Erickson, Dictionary Project chairman Dick Vance, Al Simonsen, Frank May, Barbara Bruner, Tony Schoemehl, and President Nora Avelar.

Rotary Club of Moraga recently donated and delivered a total of 270 dictionaries to third graders at Camino Pablo, Rheem, Los Perales, Canyon, and Saklan schools, and to an elementary school in Oakland. These dictionaries are now owned by the students. Moraga Rotarians delivered the dictionaries to their classrooms, and gave the children some introductory instruction in using them. Many teachers assign the chil-

dren to pick a favorite word, look it up in the dictionary, and tell of their experience in a letter of thanks to Rotary. Delivering these dictionaries has been a Moraga Rotary project for more than 15 years.

Moraga Rotary is a local service club within Rotary International that meets most Tuesdays at noon at St. Mary's College. For information, please call Gary Irwin at (925) 376-7688.



Giving Opportunities this Holiday Season

Cycle Recycle, 'til the end of November. Every year, Bobbie and Tom Preston collect repairable bikes for refurbishing by Trips for Kids, the Bicycle Hut, and by the inmates at Marsh Canyon Detention Facility. The repaired bikes are given at Christmas to under-privileged children. Most needed are tricycles and junior bikes; please no skateboards. The Prestons have been doing the Cycle Recycle for 14 years, and over 1500 bikes have been gifted to kids. New and/or used, repairable bikes may be delivered to the side driveway of the Preston's home, only through the month of November, at 1307 Larch Avenue, Moraga.

The Moraga Police Officers Association along with S.A.F.E. (Stuffed Animals For Emergencies) is collecting new or gently used stuffed animals to help children through traumatic experiences. The stuffed animals are given to local police and fire departments, which distribute them to children they encounter who have been affected by traumatic events. S.A.F.E also facilitates the distribution of donated stuffed animals for a variety of charitable purposes to help children. This year's annual holiday collection drive begins on 11/23 and ends on 12/27. New or gently used stuffed animals can be dropped off in the collection area located in the lobby of the Moraga Police Department, 329 Rheem Blvd. Thank you for your support!

The wonderful people of Handlebar Toys of Lafayette have kindly offered to host Lamorinda Girl Scout Troop #31983's "2nd annual Toy Drive Event" again this year, from November 25th until December 20th! There are several thousand homeless and needy children that will be served by the Mission this holiday. When purchasing a special gift for a child in your life, please consider choosing something to put a smile on another less fortunate child's face. Thank you so much from Troop #31983! Make a difference in the lives of women, families, and teens by making a tax-deductible donation to Be the Star You Are!® charity in Moraga. New books are being shipped to groups and families across the US who have suffered in recent natural disasters. Checks of any amount may be sent to Be the Star You Are!® 501c3, PO Box 376, Moraga, Ca. 94556. Or make donations online via PAYPAL at <http://www.bethestaryouare.org/donate.htm>. \$25 provides 5 books, \$50 provides 12 books, and \$100 provides 28 books. Thanks for caring. Everyone counts!

Please support the new Lafayette Community Stage at the Reservoir. The new permanent stage, initiated by the Lafayette Rotary, will be used for community events like the annual "Concert at the Res," which help fund music programs at our local schools and many other outdoor performing events. Send your check to Lafayette Community Foundation, "Rotary Stage", PO Box 221, Lafayette, CA 94549-0221.

Tree of Lights ceremonies are meant to comfort members of the community who have lost a loved one and to raise funds to support Hospice of the East Bay services. By purchasing a light for \$25, you can honor someone you love while supporting patient care. To sponsor a tree or to make a suggested donation of \$25 per light visit www.hospiceeastbay.org or send a tax-deductible check to Hospice of the East Bay, at 3470 Buskirk Avenue, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. For further information, call (925) 887-5678.

The Town of Moraga reminds residents that they can help light the Town tree at the Moraga Commons Park by donating to the Buy-a-Bulb Fundraiser - send checks payable to the Town of Moraga to: Town of Moraga, Attn: Buy-a-Bulb, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, CA 94556.

Safeway: Help Us End Hunger Holiday Food Drive from November 16 - December 24. Purchase a \$10 prepacked bag of groceries which will be donated to the Food Bank. In store barrels will be available to drop off the donation, it's quick and easy.

Whole Foods: From Now until December 31, donate non-perishable items while shopping at the Lafayette Whole Foods store to support the Food Bank, or make a cash donation at the register while checking out. Look for pallets of healthy items on display. You can't miss the bins to collect donated non-perishable items.

"Beadforlife" Workshop And Bead Sale, November 27 after worship at 11:15 at Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda 94563. The Women Helping Women Group of Orinda Community Church will sponsor another handmade beaded jewelry sale to help Ugandan women to leave poverty. The event will also feature a Workshop on Empowerment of Girls through Education. All net profits from BeadforLife sales are invested in projects that fight extreme poverty, primarily in three key areas: health, affordable housing, and vocational training for impoverished youth, and entrepreneurial development through micro credit for small businesses.

Company C Contemporary Ballet is partnering with the non-profit Educational Foundation of Orinda to offer tickets to select performances of the 10th Anniversary Season Winter Program that benefit EFO and the Orinda schools. For every full priced benefit ticket sold to an EFO supporter, the Company will donate \$10 of the ticket price to EFO. Benefit tickets are priced \$45 orchestra seating, available for the following Winter Program performances: Leshner Center for the Arts, January 20-21 and the Novellus Theater at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, February 17 and 19. For the matinee performance at the Leshner Center for the Arts at 3 p.m. on January 21, children 12 and under come for free with purchase of one full priced benefit ticket. Maximum of 4 children per ticket sold. Most appropriate for children 7 and older. Benefit ticket buyers must use the code "ENRICH" when ordering tickets to ensure their discount and support for every full priced benefit ticket sold. Details of programs, dates and venues may be found at www.companycballet.org.

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Cougars Open NCS Playoffs with a Strong Statement

By Alex Crook



Photo Andy Scheck

The Campolindo Cougars were picked to finish last in the DFAL this year but have proven early predictions wrong. They finished the regular season a perfect 10-0 to claim the league title.

Campolindo has made it a habit this year of putting a lot of points on the board, averaging 39 points per game in the regular season. Their first playoff game certainly was not unlike that.

On November 18, third seeded Campo started its postseason run with an emphatic 58-14 win against the #14 Hercules Titans.

Campolindo scored early and often, starting with a 13-yard pass from junior quarterback Brett Stephens to senior wide receiver Karl Thornton. The explosive senior receiver caught four passes for 63 yards on the night.

Just four minutes later, the Cougars found the end zone again, courtesy of a 9-yard scamper by senior running back Connor Rosenbaum. Rosenbaum finished the night with 19 carries for 114 yards.

Campolindo took a commanding 38-0 lead into the half.

The Cougars opened the third quarter with another quick touchdown. The visiting Titans suddenly found their rhythm in the third and rattled off 21 unanswered points.

The Cougars were not intimidated and finished the job, scoring two more times before the game's end. Campo went on to win it 58-21.

Over the off-season, Campolindo acquired a new assistant coach, Angelo Garza. Garza played for Campolindo coach Kevin Macy at Oakland Tech, and is proud of this team. "The Reno camp was my first

chance to be on the field with the guys. I'm really impressed with the team," he said.

He also noted that their success has come from teamwork. "Even though we have a couple of guys that are superstars, the team really plays like a genuine team. There's not one guy that thinks that he's better than any other guy on the team. Everybody plays like equals and everybody plays a part. It's the epitome of what a team means."

With the win, Campolindo now moves on to the second round, where they will meet HAAL champion and sixth seeded Bishop O' Dowd. Bishop O' Dowd is fresh off a first round 41-0 thumping of Del Norte.

The Bishop O' Dowd game is Saturday, November 26 at Campolindo, with a 7:00 p.m. kickoff.

Matadors Cruise into Second Round

By Alex Crook



Photo Jordan Fong

Senior Quarterback Ross Anderson (9) runs for one of his two touchdowns.

On a rainy Saturday night in Orinda, Miramonte football (9-1) began their run through the playoffs. The fifth-seeded Mats hosted twelfth-seeded Tennyson High School and proved they were ready for round two in a dramatic 42-7 victory.

Miramonte started their playoff opener strong, scoring on their first possession of the game just three and a half minutes in. Senior running back Luke Carrillo took the pitch from senior quarterback Ross Anderson 14 yards for the score.

Anderson went 11-17 for 219 yards on the night.

Late in the first quarter, Mats senior receiver Miles Honens caught a critical 26 yard reception to give Miramonte a 14-0 lead.

On the ensuing kickoff, Tennyson fumbled and Miramonte junior running back Matt Solit recovered the ball. The Matadors quickly punched it in again with a 28-yard touchdown by senior running back Kevin Booze.

In the second and third quarters, the Mats did not let up. Anderson scrambled for a 21-yard touchdown run, giving Miramonte a 28-0 lead. The Mats took an impressive 35-0 lead at halftime.

Another touchdown in the third put the Mats up 42-0.

Tennyson did not give up, rallying late in the fourth to score a touchdown. After converting on fourth down just outside the red zone, Tennyson scored on a 17-yard pass to put them on the board. The score was now 42-7, but it was too late.

"I felt that we played very well. We put in work all week, and it showed in the game. Our season has been great so far, and we will continue to play hard and show that Mira football won't be an easy opponent," said Booze.

With the 42-7 win Miramonte moves on to face fourth-seeded Encinal in the second round.

Encinal is no stranger to Miramonte. Two years ago, the twelfth seeded Mats had their season ended in the NCS playoffs by the top seeded Encinal Jets. That year the Mats were 6-6. Now with a better record, Miramonte is hoping to avenge that loss.

The Matadors' game with Encinal will be this Friday, November 27 at 7:00 p.m. at Encinal High School.

Sherman Divers have Fall Fun

Submitted by Steve Sherman

The Sherman Divers held their Fall Fun Meet on Saturday, November 5 at Sherman Swim School in Lafayette. Ten teams from across Northern California came to participate in the event.

Local Top Finishers:

- FC 3 Girls—Second, Katrina Drake
- FC 4 Girls—Third, Addison Naton
- FC 4 Boys—First, Harrison Fischer
- 13&U Girls—Third, Brenna Cetrone
- 16-18 Boys—Third, Asher Lichtig
- 14/15 Girls—First, Morgan Matranga and third, Miranda Gold
- 40-49 Women—First, Marie Estorge
- 60-69 Men—First, Mike McGowan and second, Andy Stortren
- 80-89 Men—First, Bob Sherman

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- Please see our flyer on the Moraga School District website at <http://www.moraga.k12.ca.us>. Click on the Community tab and then the Local Student Activities tab.
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SPORTS LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS

Miramonte Boys Reclaim NCS Water Polo Title in Sudden Death Overtime

By Marissa Harnett



Photo Doug Kohen

The high school water polo season came to a close in a dramatic North Coast Section tournament. The NCS tournament began on November 2 and concluded on November 12, to name the Miramonte boys' team the champions. Acalanes reached the semi-finals before falling to Miramonte. Campolindo lost in the quarterfinals to Acalanes.

The Miramonte boys' team has dominated high school water polo in the NCS for the last sixteen years; their streak was only interrupted by De La Salle for four of those years in the early 2000s. Last year, Miramonte lost their championship title of five consecutive years to local Lamorinda rival, Acalanes.

In the quarterfinal round #3

Acalanes defeated #6 Campolindo, 20-10 behind seven goals from senior Tanner Cullen, the game's high scorer. Campo was led by senior Tor Jensen with four goals.

Second-ranked Miramonte solidly defeated #7 Washington High School (Fremont), 15-5, to secure their spot in the semi-finals against Acalanes.

Miramonte and Acalanes faced off again in a much anticipated rematch, in the semi-finals of this season on November 10.

Acalanes head coach Clarke Tamriki said before the game against Miramonte that Acalanes was ready to take on their rivals. "We like to compete against this team, so both teams always play hard. We like to think that every year is an NCS op-

portunity. Our team needs to stay as a unit on defense, and execute on when given the chance. We like our chances."

Miramonte coach James Lathrop, said it was a good test. "It has been a goal of the Miramonte team since the start of the season to play for the NCS title and having to play Acalanes in the semi-final. Acalanes knows our team better than anyone else and always challenges us to play our best."

Because of their knowledge of each others' game, neither team could gain a large lead. Miramonte won in a tight, back and forth game, 6-5. Miramonte juniors Charlie Wisner and Jack Fellner split the Mats' six goals, scoring three each. Acalanes junior Connor Reid also

Girls Water Polo NCS Results



Photo Doug Kohen

The Lamorinda girls also fared well. All the teams were ranked in the top four: #2 Campolindo, #3 Acalanes, and #4 Miramonte. Miramonte lost to #1 Las Lomas, 13-6 in the semi-finals and Acalanes fell to Campolindo, 10-9. Campolindo continued to the finals to face Las Lomas. Campo, the defending NCS champions, ultimately lost to the Lady Knights, 10-5.

logged three goals.

With that win, the Mats moved forward to face the #1 San Ramon Valley in the finals at Acalanes High School. San Ramon recorded just one loss in the season and won the East Bay Athletic League title.

Miramonte was not intimidated by San Ramon Valley's record. "Despite that we had six losses, compared to SRV's one, we knew that those losses were against some of the top teams in the state and those games had helped the players to prepare for the championship."

The Saturday final match was an intense fight to the end. It took three overtimes for Miramonte to eek out the 8-7 win.

After falling behind in the first quarter, 4-1, the Mats dug deep and

pulled themselves back into the game with good defense. The teams battled before Wisner scored to tie the game at 7-7, forcing overtime. After two 3-minute overtimes and no decision, the teams played a sudden death overtime. The Mats won the sprint to gain ball possession and implemented a textbook play to set up Wisner to score the winning goal. Goalie Drew Holland made key saves in the second half and overtime to help secure the Mats' win.

Lathrop said his team was prepared for the game. "I was very proud of the determination the players showed and the effort that they put into the season, which culminated in a North Coast Section championship. The team was very confident going into the game."

Girls' Basketball will be Tough in DFAL

By Conrad Bassett



Kiara Harewood Photo Doug Kohen



Janine Loutzenhiser Photo Jordon Fong



Annelise Ito Photo Doug Kohen

A year ago Diablo Foothill Athletic League girls' basketball had the reputation as one of the toughest in California, five of the seven teams qualified for the Northern California Championships, including all three Lamorinda teams. The league looks to be just as tough this year.

Dougherty Valley, 54-7 over the last two seasons, will be very good and Dublin, 15-13, is returning several key players. Alhambra, behind former Dons coach Mike Wilson, looks to improve.

"In most leagues teams that usually make the NCS can plan on five or six league wins against teams that aren't as strong. That is definitely not the case in the DFAL," said Acalanes head coach Chris Russell.

Russell comes to Acalanes with plenty of experience building a boys' program at John Swett (Crockett) to be competitive and last year he led Contra Costa Christian to an NCS berth.

The Lady Dons qualified for the Northern California tournament and recorded 19 wins last year behind since-graduated second team all-DFAL players, seniors Kiara Harewood and Emani Harrison. Harewood is starting at UC Riverside as a true freshman.

However, they do welcome back three seniors—Sophie Taylor,

Meredith Collett, and Olivia Murphy. Taylor, DFAL honorable mention, is the only returning starter and she intends to play at Loyola Marymount next year.

Russell is pleased so far with his senior leadership. "Sophie, Meredith and Olivia are setting the tone in practice every day and are working hard and the rest of the team is following the example."

Other key returners include juniors Jamie Jacobs, Molly Martin, Sam Anderson, and Marie Paladino. The Dons also have a freshman—Taylor Odom. Coach Russell believes she has a "tremendous upside."

The team will stay local for all of their tournaments—traveling to one at Northgate in mid-December, Alhambra, and the West Coast Classic at the end of December.

Lamorinda rivals Miramonte welcome back Kelly Sopak for his third year after he led the Mats into the second round of the state tournament for the second straight year. The Matadors finished 23-7 (8-4 DFAL) last season.

Although Alyssa Johanson graduated and now plays at Washington University in St. Louis, the Mats return a strong nucleus from last year's team.

Senior Janine Loutzenhiser, named second team All-DFAL and

sophomores Megan Reid and Breanna Alford, DFAL honorable mentions, are returning.

Sopak will also be counting on contributions from seniors Devon McDonald and Taylor Kizzie, and junior point guard Carly Gill.

The Mats will be road warriors, playing their first five games on the road—including a visit to defending state champion St. Mary's (Stockton) and to a tournament in Willits.

They then will come home to host their own tournament—The Mats Tip-Off Classic December 9-10. They will also be a host site for the West Coast Jamboree.

Sopak is very enthused about what he has seen in practice so far. "At Miramonte we are going to play one way and that is fast. We are three years into my system and we are further along right now than we have ever been the previous two seasons," he said.

Campolindo finished 25-7 (8-4 DFAL) a year ago and went to the Nor-Cal semi-final game before losing a close game to Sacramento High.

The Cougars also experienced some personnel changes. Former head coach Clay Kallam moved over to Bentley in Lafayette and the new coach is Elgin Leslie.

Leslie is coming from Carondelet High School and will be challenging his squad early and often—they will be playing in the West Coast Jamboree and will take on Piedmont, TerraNova and Salesian in non-league games.

The Cougars lost first team selections Amanda Forshay and Annie Ward to graduation last year and junior honorable mention Annelise Ito to a knee injury. Ito is expected to miss the season.

The Cougars will return junior Laura Hickey along with sophomore Ashley Ewing and senior Malory Brown. Elgin expects contributions from junior Courtney Seyranian and sophomore Kelsey Wixsom.

Leslie noted that there are opportunities as well as challenges in taking over a successful program. "The biggest challenge is the adjustment and finding a comfort level with each other," said Leslie. "Clay is a very good coach, and the girls were used to his system and expectations."

The girls are adjusting to a new coaching style. "Learning a new system and getting used to my expectations will be something that will take us a while. On my side, getting to know the girls and how to put them in the best position to be successful on the court will be something that takes time," Leslie said.

Upcoming games:

Miramonte at St. Mary's (Stockton) at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 23
Acalanes hosts Skyline at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, November 25
Campolindo at Piedmont, time TBA, on Saturday, November 26

Joaquin Moraga Volleyball Takes Second

By Debbie Standing



The Joaquin Moraga 7A girls' volleyball team finished in second place in the annual Foothill Invitational Tournament at the end of October. The Foothill Tournament is double elimination and included schools from Albany, Lamorinda, Walnut Creek, Concord, Martinez, and Benicia.

Back row, from left: Coach Standing, Frannie Lee, Carly Crumbaugh, Kiera O'Brien, Elle D'lorio, Claire Matranga, Assistant Coach Michael Standing; middle row: Mia Lineweaver, Caroline King, Kelsey Budde, Alyssa Roth, Janelle Gong; front row: Sarah Ryles and Emily VanKoll. Not pictured: Sabrina Smith. Photo Sharon Lee

SMC Soccer Heads to Sweet Sixteen

By Caitlin Graveson



Riley Hanley
 Saint Mary's men's soccer team defeated #7 UC Irvine to advance to the NCAA Tournament Sweet Sixteen. In the late Sunday game, sophomore forward Justin Howard headed in the winning goal

back to tie the game in the 84th minute.

Neither team scored in the first overtime, but Howard finally found the net and the win in the second overtime, to take the game 2-1.

Senior goalie Doug Herrick made five saves and allowed one goal.

On Friday, November 17 Saint Mary's defeated #25 CSU Bakersfield 1-0 to reach the second round against UCI. It was the first NCAA Tournament win for the Gaels and only their second appearance, the first coming in 2009. It was also the Gaels 11th shutout of the season.

The Gaels will take on Brown in the Sweet Sixteen on November 27; at press time, details have yet to be announced. This is Brown's second consecutive NCAA Sweet Sixteen appearance. They defeated defending national champion #9 St. John's to reach the match.

The program has been recognized for their success by the WCC. Head coach Adam Cooper was named the WCC Coach of the Year. Agustin Cazarez was named to the All-WCC First Team. Second Team honors went to Malcolm Alugas, Jose Cabeza, Julian Godinez and Herrick. Justin Grider and Trevor Newquist were named WCC Honorable Mentions. Hanley was named to the All-Freshman team.

Photo Tod Fierner

in 103rd minute, in double overtime, to give the Gaels a 2-1 win.

Saint Mary's got on the board first as freshman midfielder Riley Hanley scored in the 58th minute. With under 10 minutes to play, UCI answered

Orinda Aquatics Coach Travels to Swaziland

Submitted by Julie Carlson



Photo provided

Don Heidary, co-head coach of Orinda Aquatics, recently returned from a trip to Swaziland where he presented a coaching clinic to local swim coaches and parents in conjunction with the American Swimming Coaches Association. Over 25

coaches and parents attended the clinic.

During his visit, he was able to attend a swim meet.

"The meet was one of the most endearing and precious experiences I have enjoyed as a coach. It was an early season relay meet and included the elementary schools. The meet had no timers, no officials, no "stars," only a few streamlines, but more spirit than I have seen in my thirty-five year career," Heidary said, "It was powerful and refreshing and a stark reminder of the pure joy that can and should exist in sports - at all levels."

Acalanes Sophomore is Golf MVP

Submitted by Valeska Schultz



Photo provided

Acalanes Sophomore Elizabeth Schultz won the 2011 DFAL Golf Championship and was named the DFAL's Most Valuable Player. On October 17, Schultz shot a 75, eight strokes ahead of the second place finisher. Schultz shot a 74 to place second in the North Coast Sectional Qualifier on Monday, October 25 at Franklin Canyon Golf Course in Hercules.

Campolindo Volleyball Falls in NCS Semifinals

By Alex Kozela



Annie Shurtz (14) led the Cougars in kills this season Photo Doug Kohen

A year after winning the state title, Campolindo's girls' volleyball team has been ousted from the NCS Division III playoffs. The Cougars lost to Albany 3-1 last Wednesday, November 16 in the semifinals.

The Cougars (20-11) started out strong, winning an energetic first set 25-21, but Albany (32-6) slowly but steadily gained control of the match. Albany took the next three sets in a row, 25-14, 25-19, and 25-17, to seal a berth in the final against Drake.

"I just think we didn't find the consistency we needed for this match," Campolindo head coach Scott Bishop said after the game. "The girls really worked hard and put a lot of effort into training for this part of the season, and, hey, any given night anybody can win

and you've got to bring your best game."

Bishop was quick to point out the strengths of Albany's team, led by Kariana Castanon-Hill (13 kills, six block assists) and McKenzie Giblin (31 assists).

"They are a really athletic team, they did a great job blocking tonight, and they have enough ball control to use their middles and their outsides, so they did a great job tonight," Bishop said.

Despite the loss, Bishop was proud of how far the team progressed. The state champion team had seven players who were seniors.

"I don't think anyone was expecting much at all of us this year, so this has been a really good season. As a whole, I really loved the way our team improved over the

course of the season, and as far as performance and expectations we are way ahead of where I thought we were going to be," said Bishop.

Cougars' junior outside hitter Annie Shurtz, who led the team in kills this season, echoed her coach's sentiments.

"We accomplished so much [this season]," she said. "I remember at the beginning of the season, people were saying this was our rebuilding year, but we stepped it up and showed them that we were a good team and we went far, so much farther than I expected."

The Cougars defeated Petaluma, 3-0, in the first round of the playoffs to advance to the semifinals. Local rivals Miramonte also had a spot in the playoffs but fell in the first round, losing 3-1 to Sonoma Valley.

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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 05 Issue 19 Wednesday, November 23, 2011



Home Sales and Foreclosures

...read on page D2

All in the Family: Second Generation Homeowners

By Cathy Dausman



The Jacobsen family in their living room

Photo provided

Local realtors tout quality of life in Lamorinda, and residents tend to stay put. Some have even moved into the house

their parents originally owned. They are proud Second Generation Homeowners.

Bill Leone is one example. His

parents bought a single story rancher in Lafayette in 1965. Leone marveled at the home's "high" price (\$46,000) because it had a pool. After 20 years

in a two-story Walnut Creek home, Leone and his wife were ready to downsize. "I started thinking about stairs," he says. His family had rented out the Lafayette home after his father's death, but it suffered water damage and needed remodeling. "Let's not rent," said Leone to his wife, "let's remodel and move in." Their children supported them, and Leone was ready to take on a project (he's doing some of the work himself). Renovations include a new master bedroom wing, new bathrooms and a new kitchen. He wants to make the house "as green as possible," and make it his own. There are even future plans for a wood shop. Leone admits it was "weird, at first, to move into my mom's house." But he loves the fact that it is single story, and close to schools and the Lafayette-Moraga bike trail. He brags playfully that he can even have an extra beer when dining out because he can walk home. The couple expects to move in by Christmas.

As Miramonte classmates, Susan and Keith Jacobsen are longtime Orinda residents. Keith's grandfather built his home even before Susan's parents built their home in 1948. Susan's mother, Anne, grew up on Oahu and designed the living room bay windows "to bring the outside in."

... continued on page D3

Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	10	\$459,000	\$1,485,000
MORAGA	7	\$130,000	\$2,650,000
ORINDA	7	\$557,000	\$3,450,000

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

- 437 Donegal Way, \$470,000, 3 Bdrms, 1836 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 10-26-11;
Previous Sale: \$530,000, 09-11-09
- 3103 Gloria Terrace, \$690,000, 4 Bdrms, 3164 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 10-20-11;
Previous Sale: \$810,000, 05-27-03
- 3208 Lucas Circle, \$619,500, 3 Bdrms, 1612 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-20-11;
Previous Sale: \$52,500, 01-09-78
- 3445 Moraga Boulevard, \$459,000, 2 Bdrms, 768 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-21-11;
Previous Sale: \$218,500, 12-05-90
- 3224 Palomares Avenue, \$620,000, 3 Bdrms, 1109 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 10-14-11;
Previous Sale: \$525,000, 10-10-02
- 50 Ridgecrest Court, \$1,485,000, 4 Bdrms, 4455 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 10-26-11;
Previous Sale: \$1,270,000, 02-05-01
- 41 Shadow Hill Road, \$675,000, 3 Bdrms, 2065 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 10-25-11
- 3357 South Lucille Lane, \$690,000, 3 Bdrms, 1671 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 10-21-11
- 3479 Stage Coach Drive, \$1,080,000, 4 Bdrms, 2949 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 10-14-11;
Previous Sale: \$670,000, 05-28-93
- 1116 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$1,040,000, 4 Bdrms, 2091 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 10-18-11;
Previous Sale: \$699,000, 07-28-00

MORAGA

- 203 Alderbrook Place, \$800,000, 4 Bdrms, 2478 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 10-14-11;
Previous Sale: \$1,171,500, 10-10-07
- 1971 Ascot Drive #C, \$180,000, 2 Bdrms, 938 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 10-21-11;
Previous Sale: \$390,000, 05-10-05
- 1434 Camino Peral, \$335,000, 3 Bdrms, 1348 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 10-19-11;
Previous Sale: \$555,000, 10-31-07
- 2133 Donald Drive #18, \$130,000, 1 Bdrms, 560 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-26-11;
Previous Sale: \$265,000, 08-25-04
- 80 Lynwood Place, \$2,650,000, 5 Bdrms, 5293 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 10-21-11;
Previous Sale: \$3,000,000, 09-01-06
- 158 Selborne Way, \$1,075,000, 5 Bdrms, 2433 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-26-11;
Previous Sale: \$1,299,000, 03-28-06
- 272 Tharp Drive, \$687,500, 3 Bdrms, 1580 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-14-11;
Previous Sale: \$687,500, 10-14-11

ORINDA

- 52 Camino Encinas, \$590,000, 5 Bdrms, 2116 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 10-20-11;
Previous Sale: \$616,000, 03-04-03
- 175 Canon Drive, \$945,000, 3 Bdrms, 2257 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-20-11;
Previous Sale: \$1,200,000, 08-22-06
- 5 Canyon View Drive, \$3,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 4672 SqFt, 2003 YrBlt, 10-21-11
- 139 Fiesta Circle, \$557,000, 4 Bdrms, 1369 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 10-25-11
- 70 Monte Vista Road, \$1,260,000, 1 Bdrms, 2057 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 10-21-11
- 170 Ravenhill Road, \$801,000, 3 Bdrms, 2245 SqFt, 1981 YrBlt, 10-20-11
- Skyline Boulevard, \$1,176,500, 10-14-11

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

LAFAYETTE

- Jennie Court, 94549, Wells Fargo Bank, 10-13-11, \$662,818, 2392 sf, 5 bd
- Sunset Loop, 94549, Sami Trust, 10-21-11, \$479,250, 1023 sf, 3 bd



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All in the Family: Second Generation Homeowners

... continued from page D1

The sweeping, west-facing view was bare hillside when the family moved there. Now mature redwoods and vegetation envelop the hills. Susan's mother died suddenly in 1971 and "Dad was by himself [in the house]." Two years later he married a neighbor who lived down the block and moved into her house.

At the time, the Jacobsens lived in Montclair. "I really would like you to live in the [family] house," Susan's father told her. A year later, they decided. "We're going!" she said. And they've been there ever since. Jacobsen's thought process was similar to Leone's: "this was my *mother's* house," she said. In time, though, she says you make it your own: "We redid things." Jacobsen's brother, who lives in Oregon with his family, has been supportive of the move. Even after leaving the house her father reminded Jacobsen to water "their" rhododendrons. He died in 1995; her step-mother lives nearby.

Cathie and Doug Barrows and their daughters live in the house Doug's father built in 1947. They moved in after Doug's mother died in 1995. The current Barrows are also Miramonte classmates. They say there are definitely challenges associated with living in an older home: "We have had to remodel a corner of the house to address foundation problems due to Orinda's famously sliding soil," Cathie says. "We've been continually updating over the years we've been here and have more yet to do. Our kitchen is still basically 1947." Overall, though, the Barrows' are "glad to be living in a house that has so much family history, and especially appreciate the mature redwoods, cedars and oaks that Doug's mom planted and nurtured decades ago."

Dana Farkas' family moved to Lafayette from the Oakland area in 1967 for the good schools and the "country feel" of the town. They bought a large home with a pool built in the early 1950's on land that was once walnut and pear orchards. When Farkas' father died 11 years ago, her mother converted part of the house to an apartment and found a renter. The renter left on good terms, but Farkas' life was changing directions.

Farkas, a professional chef and "lifelong renter" had tired of apartment noise in Los Angeles, New Jersey and the San Francisco Peninsula, and wanted to return to her beloved East Bay. She sold her business, went to work for a former client and asked her Mom if she would consider renting the apartment to her. Farkas' grandmother had lived with the family before her death, so both understood multiple generations living under one roof. As Farkas explains, the arrangement works because she and her mother live independently, but enjoy each other's company. They dine together weekly, and help each other out with house and yard work, an important component in caring for their aging home. Farkas says although the house has "issues," (their private road was built atop a creek) living there has allowed her to "get her feet wet in home ownership."

Living in a parents' home is not for everyone, as aging homes may require substantial maintenance, but it does have advantages. For the residents, there is continuity and a sense of history, and, as another homeowner happily volunteered, "Prop 13 is awesome!"



Susan Jacobsen in front of living room bay windows her mother designed

Photo Cathy Dausman

From Parent to Child: A Gift of Love and Lower Taxes

Moving into a parent's home can be a gift that keeps on giving; at least as far as tax assessments are concerned. Normally a change in property ownership triggers a tax reassessment at market rate. However, when one family member gives or sells his or her home to another family member, the parties can file for a parent/child exclusion (Proposition 58) or grandparent/grandchild exclusion (Proposition 193). Then even if the family to family sale price is at full market value, the tax rate may be discounted.

Donna Murdock, Associate Appraiser for Contra Costa County, gives an example: a home owned for 30 years and originally assessed at \$50,000.00 might be assessed at about \$85,000.00 today under its Prop 13 cap (2% per year rate increase, compounded annually). Comparable homes in that same neighborhood not eligible for such an exclusion might be assessed at \$200,000.00 or more and taxed accordingly.

The assessor's office deals purely with home **assessments**. The tax collector and auditor's offices then use the assessed home value to compute the taxes. Actual taxes on homes of similar value can vary based on the home location and voter initiative bond measures (which combined comprise the Part 1 tax rate) and set parcel tax amounts such as East Bay Trails (Part 2). Propositions 13, 58 and 193 details are available online at <http://www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/faqs/propositions58.htm>, and <http://boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/faqs/caproptaxprop.htm#2>. Murdock suggests calling the Assessor's Office (925-313-7400) with questions. "We are here to help guide you through the process," she says.

C.Dausman

Protecting Home and Hearth

Orinda Police Chief Talks Home and Holiday Safety

By Laurie Snyder



Jeffrey Jennings, Orinda's Police Chief, wants everyone to have a safe and happy holiday season. Photo courtesy City of Orinda

“Safety is knowing your neighbors,” says Jeffrey Jennings, Orinda's Chief of Police. “You are your own best defense.”

That concept is never more uppermost in the minds of Jennings and his officers than during the holidays when many area residents leave home for treasured times with loved ones.

It's important, says Jennings, to give neighbors a heads' up when you are leaving town. There are far more residents than there are police, and neighbors are capable of noticing suspicious behavior much more quickly because they are the ones most familiar with their area's daily routine – who currently has a housekeeper coming in and on what days, who has contractors performing work or regular pool service, or who or will be expecting UPS or FedEx deliveries.

One great way to get to know neighbors, says Jennings, is to form a Neighborhood Watch, but even if you don't have the time or are not a “joiner,” you can still help keep your community safe.

When you know your neighbors, you're in a great position to spot something out of the ordinary for the time and day in your area – a car that has always parked at one house on a Tuesday is now suddenly parking there on a Saturday while the homeowner is away, a worker arriving with someone you've never seen before, an odd experience happens with a delivery or utility visit.

“We're looking for behavior that doesn't fit the norm,” Jennings says.

And call the police dispatch number right away if you see something, urges Jeannette Irving, the Chief's assistant. All too often, she says, residents will phone a day or two after witnessing something, delaying out of fear that they will appear “silly” or “nosey.” By then, it's usually too late for the police to take action.

If residents do see something odd, Jennings suggests that they try to get license plate numbers when cars are involved – but only if they can do so safely. “Use your cell phone camera and photograph the plate or the person.”

Chief Jennings also strongly suggests that Orinda residents make use of two home security programs that are offered free of charge by the Orinda Police Department.

The first – a vacation check program – enables residents to have police drive by and check on their homes while they're away. Just swing by the department's office at the City Hall and fill out a small green index card, and you'll be able to leave the worrying to the police. (Moraga Police also offer a Vacation House Watch program; go to <http://police.moraga.ca.us/links.php>).

Home Security Audits

Orinda, says Jennings with pride, is known as one of the safest cities per capita in the nation. The burglaries committed in the community have, to date, been unarmed and non-confrontational.

But those who have experienced break-ins have still reported a sense of violation – an experience sometimes so traumatic that homeowners have felt compelled to sell their previously peaceful sanctuaries.

“The same reasons why you bought your home are the reasons burglars find it attractive,” explains Jennings. Recessed driveways and landscaping that affords privacy makes life easier for those looking to commit crimes of opportunity.

So, the Chief is also encouraging Orindans to participate in the City's free home security audit program. The audits are conducted by an actual Orinda Police Department officer, and take approximately 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the number of questions the resident has and issues that may be uncovered during the review.

For many residents who have already gone through the process, the audits have affirmed that they are already employing sound self defense strategies. Others have received advice on ways to upgrade their security procedures.

The changes recommended are usually simple: ensuring that window locks are in working order and used when residents are out of the home, home address numbers are

made clearly visible from the street, shrubbery is cleared away from windows and doors, and making sure valuables or tools are not left out for burglars to steal or use when committing their crimes. Additionally, the installation of solid wood doors to withstand door kicks, an alarm system, and enhanced lighting around doorways and in the backyard will also make homes safer.

Residents may also do their own security checks informally, using the handy checklist that is available on the City's web site: <http://www.ci.orinda.ca.us/>.

“Your home should be a sanctuary where you feel safe,” says the Chief.

To make sure your ducks are in a row before heading out of town for the holidays, call the Orinda Police Department to arrange for a security audit: (925) 254-6820. Appointments are scheduled Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to noon and from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Before You Go:

1. Swing by the Orinda Police Department to arrange for vacation checks. Let trusted neighbors know your schedule, and ask them to keep a look out. Also make sure they have your emergency contact information.

2. Arrange for a neighbor, friend, or house sitter to pick up your mail, UPS/Fed Ex deliveries, and newspapers on a daily basis, or ask the Post Office and delivery companies to hold onto your materials until you return.

If you'll be gone for more than a week, ask the same person to make sure that your trash and recycling bins are taken to the curb and returned to the house.

3. Make sure that everyone with access to your home knows how to properly operate the alarm system so that no false alarms are triggered.

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

by Andi Peterson Brown

It's beginning to look a lot like the most wonderful time of the year. And if your home is still on the market, you might be contemplating pulling it for the winter. But you might want to hold that thought. Even though real estate activity tends to decline during November and December, the season can in fact be a great opportunity to showcase your home in its holiday best.

Buyers who are out looking during the holidays are usually more serious about their search. To capture their hearts and secure a sale, here are some quick and easy tips for holiday staging.

Tip #1: Keep it natural, keep it simple. While it might be tempting to display your cardboard cut-out Buddy The Elf or put your Clark Griswold skills to the test, it's best to keep things simple and natural at your front door. Beautiful wreaths, poinsettias, and tasteful, classic twinkle lights will put buyers in the spirit and make a lasting first impression.

Tip #2: Keep it natural, keep it neutral. It's important for buyers to see themselves living in your home, and universals such as winter greenery, decorative candles, pine cones, and glass jars of candy canes and marshmallows all invoke the warmth of the holidays and spread good cheer to the widest pool of buyers.

These tips, coupled with the fact that Lamorinda currently has a very low housing supply, might just make the difference for that one buyer. And remember: it only takes one.



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675 Carroll Drive
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41 Greenfield Drive
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945 Mountain View Drive
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3376 Ridge Road
Affordable 4bd detached home in the popular Trail neighborhood surrounded by heritage oaks - truly a beautiful, natural setting. Tons of recent improvements made to this charming home. Walk to town/trail/schools. **Offered at \$649,000**



3363 St. Mary's Road
Quiet location set back from road. Classic 4bd/2.5ba rancher on nice lot. Near trail, Stanley Middle School and town. Private pool setting. **Offered at \$749,000**



3286 Sweet Drive
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1730 Toyon Road
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