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Photos courtesy Historical Society Lafayette and Jennifer Wake

What Park Theater renovation means for downtown Lafayette

By Lou Fancher

When asked about the Park Theater's preservation and significance, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson says, "The Park has been iconic to what downtown Lafayette had been since the 1940s. Like many other small cities, (the presence of) a closed down movie house represents a (visible) scar, a left-over from what once was. Reimagining a new Park Theater represents what a changing Lafayette can be. Even a single two-screen theater is significant as an al-

ternative to multi-screen theaters that are nearby but will not offer the variety of experience that we envision with the planned format and redesign of the Park Theater."

After an arduous three-and-a-half year process, The Park Theater Trust (TPTT) on Dec. 16 announced it has successfully closed escrow and now owns the city's iconic, historic downtown theater. The all-volunteer nonprofit's rigorous exploration of 25 Bay Area for-profit theater operators included research, site visits to theaters, input from trade groups, as well as community town halls and forums held to gather feedback.

After extensive interviews and detailed analysis of the financials, management practices and RFPs (Response For Proposals) from four top candidates, the TPTT board selected CinemaSF as the theater operator.

CinemaSF is widely recognized in the Bay Area for its well-managed, small, independent cinemas such as the Balboa and Vogue in San Francisco. TPTT board member Jana Corey says their organization was looking for a theater operator with a strong financial track record, an experienced and deep management team, and a clear commitment to the community.

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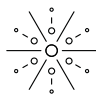


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Moraga's monarch habitat boasts two decoratively-themed sculptures to help boost its butterfly appeal



By Vera Kochan

The Moraga Garden Club's efforts to help encourage the repopulation of the endangered monarch butterfly has been met with success. Following along the theme of "If you built it, they will come," the habitat, located in Rancho Laguna Park, has had monarch sightings as hopeful as those throughout California.

After an all-time state low of 1,914 last year, the Xerces Society (<https://xerces.org>), a science-based nonprofit environmental organization, was thrilled to report that in October 2021, "over 1,300 monarchs were counted at the Pacific Grove overwintering site; this site did not have a single monarch butterfly during last year's count." The Pismo State Beach Monarch Butterfly Grove and an adjacent site accounted for approximately 8,000 monarchs as opposed to 300 from the prior year. Even more inspiring, observations and reports from volunteers and the public throughout the Bay Area, Santa Cruz, Monterey, Big Sur, Ventura and Los Angeles have made Xerces expand the estimates to over 10,000 monarchs easily accounted for.

The nearly 99.9% decline from the overwintering monarchs of the 1980s in California is largely attributed to encroachment by humans into their habitat

and to pesticides. "Populations of monarch butterflies, like other insects, can fluctuate from year to year, in response to the temperature, rainfall, the availability of food, and other factors," according to the website. "Though we are likely to see increases in the size of the western monarch population this year, it is likely to still be dangerously close to extinction, and there remains an urgent need to address the threats that this butterfly faces."

Adding to the appeal of the habitat itself are two new sculptures meant to be interactive with the public. "Wings," created by artist Patrick E. (the E stands for entomology) is over 5-feet tall and made of metal. The other sculpture is titled "Katy Pillar" by artist Mary Gilles. Made of glass mosaic, the caterpillar-like piece is found within the habitat hidden amongst the vegetation. Both sculptures are securely bolted to underground slabs of cement.

"Wings" creator, Patrick Condon (www.patrick-e.com), has been making original sculptures out of metal and glass since 1995, using metalworking and mosaicing techniques. Most of his art includes giant insects with a ladybug being his first foray into public art. The monarch piece was commissioned by the MGC and funded by a private donor.

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Amy Stagg interacts with "Wings." Photo Julie Stagg

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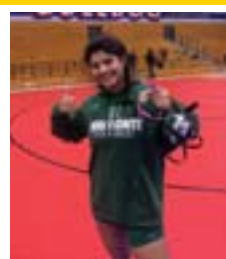
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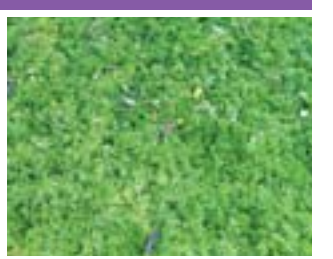
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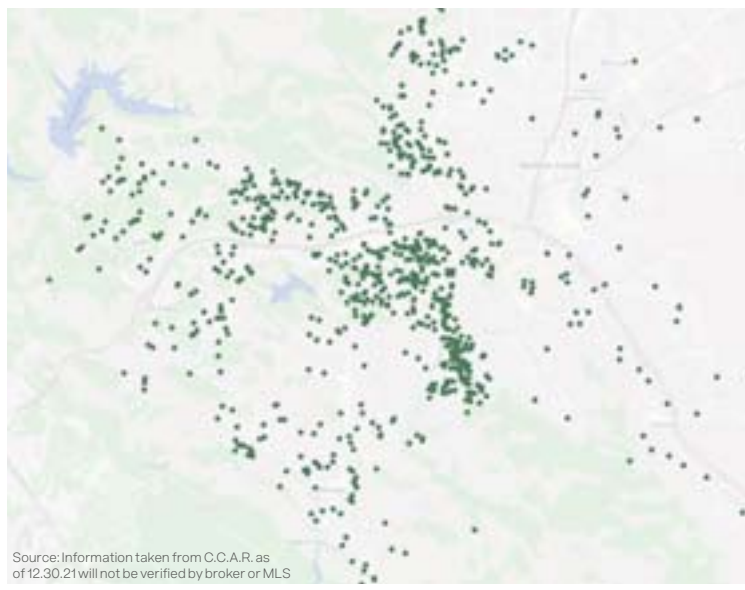
Set your sights on a green themed new year - Page D1





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Gerringer gears up to take new position as Lafayette mayor



Photo provided

New Lafayette Mayor Teresa Gerringer

By Lou Fancher

In the weeks prior to commencing her term in 2022 as the city's new mayor, Teresa Gerringer could be resting up. But that is hardly what this longtime community leader and Lafayette City Council member since 2018 ever seems to do.

Gerringer has served on the Lafayette Community Foundation Board, including a term as president; was a Charter member of the Lafayette Library & Learning Center Foundation Board; and has represented the council on regional boards including the Contra Costa Transportation Authority; California Cities East Bay Division Executive Board; CalCities Communica-

tions, Transportation and Public Works Policy Committee; and the Contra Costa County Solid Waste Authority/Recycle SMART, among others. Her volunteer and professional education advocacy and policy work includes local, regional and state leadership roles. Gerringer currently serves as Communications Director, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, District 3, having previously served as District Director, California State Senate Seventh District. Gerringer and her husband and their two daughters have lived in Lafayette since 1995.

Gerringer says she has been a public servant for most of her adult life and her over 18 years serving on the Lafayette School District governing board – four times as board president – guides her processes. “Listening to and working with others to identify and solve problems is the common thread in my professional and volunteer service.” She has served with the community to raise capital campaign funds to build the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, advocated for increased funding for education at the state and federal level while helping to pass local revenue measures to fund improvements to school facilities and bridge gaps in program funding, and coordinated collaborative partnering with Contra Costa Transit Authority and local schools to bring the Street Smarts traffic safety program to Lafayette.

Gerringer says foundational to all

city council efforts will be “strong collaboration, coalition building and partnerships; and identification and use of available resources that include but are not limited to funding, city staffing, and community volunteers.” Of utmost importance, she says achieving the council’s stated goals and priorities (available for all to view on the city’s website) will require “continued robust, authentic community engagement.”

Lamorinda Weekly asked Gerringer to speak specifically to five areas of interest: transportation safety, implementing the Vision Zero policy, enhancing wildfire and emergency preparedness, the ongoing response to Covid-19, and updating elements of the General Plan.

Gerringer noted that the council and residents have made transportation safety a priority over the last several years, and it will continue to be a top priority in the 2022. “Thanks to the Lafayette Transportation and Circulation Commission, school leaders and parents, city staff and consultants, site visits at our schools and review of previous plans and studies is underway to identify near-term and long-term solutions to improve safety for all modes of transportation around our schools,” Gerringer said. “Some improvements have already begun to be implemented, with more to come in early 2022.”

She noted that at its November meeting, the council adopted a Vision Zero policy affirming the commitment

to make safety a priority throughout Lafayette. “Staff is in the process of putting out a Request for Proposals for a consultant to work with a Vision Zero Task Force made up of committed stakeholders including residents, staff, public agency partners, law enforcement, experts, and others to develop a Vision Zero Plan,” Gerringer said. “Vision Zero emphasizes making systemic change based on data to create an environment where human mistakes on our roads do not cause death or severe injury and works to protect our most vulnerable road users. We will use the city’s many communications channels to ensure that the community has every opportunity to learn more about Vision Zero and to be part of the implementation process.”

As for emergency preparedness, Gerringer said, “Working with our partners and our residents, we made great progress around our goal to enhance wildfire and emergency preparedness and fuel mitigation. I want to thank all residents for taking personal responsibility for vegetation cleanup and creating defensible spaces around their properties, and to forming Firewise neighborhoods. I look forward to us taking a proactive approach to review our tree protection ordinances to ensure that we are not creating barriers to enhanced fuel mitigation measures.”

... continued on Page A9

New LPIE executive director named



Elizabeth Horpedahl

Photo provided

The Lafayette Partners in Education Executive Director Search Committee announced Dec. 20 that Elizabeth Horpedahl is LPIE’s new executive director. Horpedahl will step into “a healthy, thriving organization where the stage is set to take us to the next level of strategic growth and impact,” according to 2021-22 LPIE President Danielle Gallagher.

With over a decade of experience in philanthropy, Horpedahl is passionate about con-

necting donors with opportunities to enhance education and student success, Gallagher said. “Elizabeth has led development programs at education organizations throughout California, from large public institutions such as UC Berkeley, to community nonprofits based in San Diego and Oakland schools. Elizabeth has deep experience partnering with community members to improve educational systems and student outcomes. She has built development depart-

ments from the ground up, significantly diversifying support and increasing long-term funding. Her mission-driven approach is based on listening deeply and building community.”

Horpedahl received a bachelor’s degree in politics from UC Santa Cruz, and holds a Certificate in Fundraising Management from Indiana University’s Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and an Excellence in Fundraising Certificate from UC Berkeley.

She lives in Oakland with her husband, two kids (ages 14 and 11), three cats, a dog, and four chickens.

“After a rigorous search, our committee is confident about Elizabeth stepping into this role and we could not be more thrilled to welcome her to the LPIE team when she starts on Jan. 10,” Gallagher said. “Please make sure to stop by the LPIE office at 3450-A Golden Gate Way and introduce yourself, or email Elizabeth at elizabeth@lpie.org.”

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Small things add up: Project Earth recognized for environmental contributions



Photo provided

David Siu, Lauren Brekke and Raini Chugh present their vision and findings from Project Earth. The trio, who are now sixth-graders at Stanley Middle School, launched their campaign to reduce idling cars during school pickups and drop-offs when they were students at Burton Valley Elementary School, and have continued their efforts to tackle climate change at the local level.

By Sharon K. Sobotta

When many of us were stuck inside due to the poor air quality from the fires in 2018, Raini Chugh, Lauren Brekke and David Siu took note of something else that was impacting the environment right in front of their school everyday: idling cars.

That's what inspired the trio of friends who are now sixth-graders at Stanley Middle School to launch Project Earth and paved the way for them to earn one of the two environmental excellence awards for 2021.

Chugh recalls people paying more attention to the air quality and the monitors at school. "We realized it wasn't just the air quality from the fires. It was also from the cars dropping off (or picking up) their kids at school," Chugh says. "A lot of cars were idling and it was completely unnecessary so we decided to take action."

While at Burton Valley, Chugh, Brekke and Siu began their efforts to curb idling with a poster contest—inviting their peers and schoolmates to creatively contribute to the campaign to teach parents to turn off their engines. Siu says he's seen evidence that their efforts have been making a difference.

"We saw a 10% decrease in the number of idling cars," says Siu, who originally became concerned when he noticed a high number of cars with their engines running as he took the bus to school. He's pleased to see some people

changing their habits.

Although the three students have moved on from Burton Valley Elementary School and now attend Stanley, their work is not done. In addition to continuing to push parents toward turning off their cars while waiting outside of schools in Lafayette, they are involved in the efforts to create safe bike lanes in Burton Valley, they're helping spread awareness about the option of having solar and wind powered homes and they've got plans for the next Earth Day.

"We want to have an arbor day celebration around Earth Day and have people plant trees, which will also help with clean air," says Brekke, who believes that spreading the word is a form of taking action and she hopes everyone realizes that they can make a difference.

"Just taking a long shower or idling your car might not seem like a big deal but so many people do (those things that) it results in a big problem," Brekke says.

If you're skeptical about whether or not your particular idling car matters, Chugh says it does.

"If everyone idles their car, it's all going to add up and make a difference that we don't want, so we're trying to pick projects that everyone does (and can change)," Chugh says. "I think the most important thing I've learned is that we have to keep going even when we face obstacles."

... continued on Page A9



Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Monday, Jan. 10, 7 p.m.
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's You Tube Channel:
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Planning Commission Meeting

TBA
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
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Design Review

Wednesday, Jan. 12, 7 p.m. Zoom
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
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 www.moragachamber.org
Moraga Citizens' Network:
 www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

Town Council:

Wednesday, Jan. 12, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission:

Tuesday, Jan. 4, 7 p.m.,

Park and Recreation Commission:

Monday, Jan. 17, 7 p.m.,

Moraga School District Board Meetings:

Tuesday, Jan. 11, 6 p.m.

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Moraga participates in opioid settlement agreement



By Vera Kochan

Moraga Police Chief Jon King and Assistant Town Attorney

Denise Bazzano informed the town council in a staff report during its Dec. 8 meeting about a multi-jurisdictional, national lawsuit begun in 2017, directed against opioid distributors such as AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson along with manufacturers Johnson & Johnson, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and Janssen Pharmaceutica, Inc. (collectively "Janssen").

Opioid abuse, addiction, overdose and death in the United States has become an increasing crisis in recent years. According to the www.drugabuse.gov website: "Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, morphine, and many others."

The website explains, "All opioids are chemically related and interact with opioid receptors on nerve cells in the body and brain. Opioid pain relievers are generally safe when taken for a short time as prescribed by a doctor, but because they produce euphoria in addition to pain relief, they can be misused (taken in a different

way or in a larger quantity than prescribed, or taken without a doctor's prescription). Regular use – even as prescribed by a doctor – can lead to dependence and, when misused, opioid pain relievers can lead to addiction, overdose incidents, and deaths."

In July 2021, the National Prescription Opiate Litigation (U.S.D.C. Case No.1:17-CV-2804) nationwide settlement, brought on by various states and subdivisions, came to an agreement requiring the distributors to pay nearly \$21 billion and the manufacturers to pay approximately \$5 billion. About \$2.4 billion of the settlements will be directed to California and its subdivisions.

If Moraga decides to opt in to the Settlement Agreements, it could receive between \$59,668 to \$72,800 which will be paid out over 18 years beginning as early as April 2022.

The staff report states, "Under the Settlement Agreements, all of the proceeds received by non-litigating entities, such as Moraga, must be spent on activities to abate the impacts of the opioid crisis such as: providing matching funds for operating costs for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) facilities; creating new or expanded SUD treatment infrastructure; addressing the needs of vulnerable populations that are disproportionately impacted by SUD; preventing addiction in vulnerable youth; and preventing overdose deaths and other harms through increased availability and distribution of naloxone and other drugs that treat overdoses."

"Naloxone is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose," explains the Drug

Abuse website. "It is an opioid antagonist. This means that it attaches to opioid receptors and reverses and blocks the effects of other opioids. Naloxone can quickly restore normal breathing to a person if their breathing has slowed or stopped because of an opioid overdose. Naloxone can be given as a nasal spray or it can be injected into the muscle, under the skin, or into the veins."

If the town opts into the Settlements prior to Jan. 2, it must notify the fund administrator whether it requests a direct payment or whether the payments are to be allocated to the county at least 60 days prior to the payment date in the agreement. Direct receipt of the funds will require the town to account for its usage with annual written reports.

One area where the funds could be put to good use would be to educate students about the dangers of opioid addiction. Another would be to continue with officer training in the use of naloxone in the emergency response of an opioid overdose. "Our officers already carry naloxone," stated King. "We reached an agreement with the county health department a couple of years ago, and while we have not had to, thank goodness, use it, every officer carries it. I carry it when I'm on patrol, and there have been times in the past where it would have been very useful."

Seeing a clear benefit to participate in the Settlement Agreement, the council unanimously voted in favor of receiving the payment over an 18-year period with the option to redirect the funds to the county for use in their programs.

Town accepts \$470K California Department of Justice Tobacco Grant

By Vera Kochan

In order to help law enforcement agencies combat tobacco-related crimes involving juveniles, the California Department of Justice Tobacco Grant program was established in 2017. Over \$124 million in grants have been awarded to police departments with the purpose of providing tobacco-related education and outreach to under-aged youths.

According to a staff report presented to the town council on Dec. 8, Moraga Police Chief Jon King and Lt. Brian South shared some findings from the 2019-20 California Healthy Kids Survey. "Campolindo High School students self-reported that 36% of 11th-graders had used a vape (electronic cigarette) product and 8% had smoked an entire cigarette. Additionally, only 37% of ninth-grade students believed that occasional cigarette smoking was harmful and only 34% thought occasional vaping was harmful."

The staff report also mentioned that "the October 2019 Merrill Fire was started by a discarded vaping device and teens or young adults were observed in the area just prior to the start of the fire."

During the grant application process, MPD declared a proposal to hire a Juvenile Officer to the force whose assign-

ment would involve the coordination of tobacco-related education, outreach and enforcement within the town. Said officer would provide tobacco-related training to the other officers within the department and retain contact with schools in order to conduct educational presentations on campuses.

At this point, there are nine establishments in Moraga engaged in the sale of tobacco involved products. MPD intends to work with those retailers to ensure their compliance with the town's statutes and ordinances.

In November, MPD was notified of the \$470,736 grant award (the full amount that was requested), which covers a 36-month period. The town council voted unanimously to accept the grant.

"The kudos go to Lt. South," declared King. "He actually did a lot of the research and found this grant. We've been talking about it and single-handedly, with only a minor amount of editing from yours truly, got this taken care of; got the grant written; followed up with the Department of Justice and hounded them a little bit; and literally brought home the bacon."

"Credit where credit's due on this one, Brian," added King. "He knows I think the world of him anyway. He did an incredible job on this and great work for us."

Cliff Dochterman Celebration of Life postponed

The Celebration of Life planned on Jan. 14 at 2 p.m. at the Holy Trinity Serbian Church in Moraga for Cliff Dochterman, who recently passed away following a brief illness, has been postponed due to COVID concerns.

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A new mayor and vice mayor for Moraga in 2022



Moraga Mayor Renata Sos



Vice Mayor Sona Makker

Photos provided

ful manner.”

Three top priorities during Sos’ 2020 campaign included exercising fiscal discipline; the preservation of Moraga’s open spaces; and an investment in public safety, infrastructure and community service. She points out that last year’s council collectively did much to focus on those priorities, “and made decisions in a deliberative and transparent way. I am confident that this approach will carry forward through 2022.”

Sos has volunteered her time in various other ways to the town, either through coaching various youth sports over the years or serving on the board of the Moraga Community Foundation. “My family has shared with me that they are proud of my decades of service to this community and proud that I continue to be willing to give of myself to the residents of our town.”

Looking ahead to the coming year, Sos said, “My hope for 2022 is that our residents will continue the tradition of public service, civic engagement, and respectful discourse about the substantive matters that come before the town council.” Sos added,

By Vera Kochan

Every new year in Moraga brings a reorganization to the town council. This year is no exception. At the helm of the town council is new mayor Renata Sos, with the vice mayoral duties belonging to Sona Makker.

Sos first began her work on the council in 2018, when she was appointed to replace a resigning Jeanette Fritzky. When her term was up, Sos ran for office and was elected to a four-year term in 2020. Prior service to the town was a 2005-07 tenure with the Planning Commission.

A graduate of Princeton University with a degree in mechanical/aerospace engi-

neering, Sos went on to obtain her Juris Doctor degree from the University of Chicago Law School, after which she spent 12 years in private practice as a litigator of complex commercial cases.

When asked how the various council member differences can be set aside in order to have productive and constructive council meetings, Sos replied that the new year “will bring both challenges and opportunities to the town council. We have been elected by the voters to set aside our differences and make decisions that are in the best interests of the town as a whole. I believe that we are up to the task, and that we will address the issues before us in a collegial and respect-

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“In addition, I’d love to find ways to reach a broader cross-section of our community, particularly parents of young children, and help them get connected with the council.”

Makker had very recently endured a torturous appointment process in October in order to fill the seat vacated by resigning council member David Stromberg. In the space of a month, she finds herself as Moraga’s new vice mayor.

“When I was nominated, I emphasized that I would be ready to roll up my sleeves and take on the role,” she stated. “I continue to stand by that and feel really energized about volunteering my time on the council.”

Born and raised in Tracy, California, Makker served in local government as Chair of the Youth Advisory Commission and later in her hometown’s Parks and Recreation Department. Earning a BA in sociology from the University of California at Berkeley, Makker went on to receive her Juris Doctorate from

Santa Clara University School of Law. “My family is proud to see me get involved and put my training in public policy into practice. My husband and I love soaking in everything this town has to offer, and we are committed to giving back however we can.”

Makker is looking forward to whatever 2022 goals the council sets. “I am also looking forward to continuing to build bridges and ties in the community, especially amongst individuals and groups of diverse backgrounds that the council has not always heard from.”

Reflecting on the challenges the world currently faces, Makker said, “Life and work are changing and evolving as we live in these unprecedented times. Engagement with residents, retail business owners, and volunteers is even more crucial right now to understand and have a firm grasp on the pulse of the community. This is all of our jobs as council members.”

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Orinda Public Meetings
City Council
Regular Meeting:
 Tuesday, Jan. 11, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only
Planning Commission
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Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
 Wednesday, Jan. 12, 6:30 p.m.
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New Mayor Dennis Fay wants to improve plight of private roads residents



Mayor Dennis Fay Lamo archive

By Sora O'Doherty

As he enters the last year of his term on the Orinda City Council as mayor, Dennis Fay would like to do something to help residents of private streets not in homeowners associations. He would like to get a pilot program started this year to work with residents to bring their streets up to standard and then have those streets accepted by the city of Orinda. However, he is only talking about a specific segment of Orinda's approximately 20% of streets that are private. In fact, he is looking at helping residents on perhaps 25% of those streets, or about 5% of Orinda's streets in total.

The residents whom Fay is seeking to aid live on streets that were offered by their developers to the government - most likely the

county government before Orinda incorporated in 1985, which are also not included in HOAs. According to Fay, HOAs have budgets for street maintenance and insurance for major incidents, such as sink holes. But residents on streets without HOAs must agree to work together to maintain their streets, which can be a challenge.

During his term as vice mayor, Fay is happiest about implementing Measure R, the one-cent sales tax voters approved in 2020, as it relates to wildfires. "We need to be working on all the things that would help reduce our wildfire risk," Fay says, "including fuels mitigation and home hardening, as well as anything new SSTOC (Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission), a commission set up to oversee the use of the Measure R funds over the 20-year life of the tax, might come up with." Fay expressed his appreciation to Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Dave Winnacker for providing a lot of guidance on what to work on. Fay said high on the list of things to be done is getting the word out that fire safety is an issue. "Surprisingly," he said, "some citizens are still unaware of fire danger and what they can do about it." He added that the city's work to promote fire safety has to be followed up by site visits by MOFD, which has the power to enforce the fire code.

Fay's next priority is finishing up Orinda's downtown plan, which he views as a catalyst to revitalize the downtown. Nobody can guarantee it though, he pointed out. "What gets built will be built by the private sector. The city won't be actually building in downtown, but the planning is intended to incentivize developers." Demographics are changing, Fay observed. Younger people with children have a changed perception. Fay says that when he was campaigning for his seat on the city council, he frequently heard that people wanted a more vibrant downtown. "The real question," he says, "is how do you get there."

Speaking about the effects of the pandemic on the city, Fay noted that "we've lost at least two restaurants during the pandemic, Taverna Pellegrini and Brothers Public Kitchen. There are a lot of empty spaces in Theatre Square.

"Orinda Village is kind of sad," Fay remarked, "there is almost nothing going on on Sundays. The Bank of America has closed permanently. It feels like slow decay. If we don't do something to provide opportunities and incentives, 20 years from now it will look even worse." Although he recognizes that there are some who like the current architecture, like parking right in front of stores, he wonders how good that will

be in the long run.

On the infrastructure side, Fay believes that Orinda's roads are in pretty good shape. The 2021 roads project was delayed by contract difficulties, but will start in the spring, with 2022 coming right up behind it. There will be a fair amount of road repaving activity in 2022.

Storm drains are the next priority for expenditure of Measure R funds. Fay notes that Orinda cannot afford to have large storm drains fail, because they go under the collectors and arterials. He doesn't want another Miner Road sinkhole type incident. With limited resources, the city will focus on the big drains.

Fay is in the last year of his term, having been elected in 2018. He would be up for reelection in November if he decides to run. However, he might decide that he needs more family time. His son, currently living in New York, will be moving back to the Bay Area, and his daughter lives in Huddersfield, England with her husband and child. "We haven't been able to see them during the pandemic." Fay's grandson is now 9.

In addition, Fay and his wife might be house hunting, for a place with fewer stairs. His wife recently broke her ankle, making them realize that their current home is not ideal for physical challenges.

Administrative Services Director Paul Rankin retires

By Sora O'Doherty

After a career in government that spanned 42 years, Paul Rankin, Orinda's administrative services director, is retiring. Rankin was hired by Orinda as finance director in August 2017, and became the city's administrative services director about a year and a half ago. The change acknowledged the role Rankin was playing in other areas of the city, including such diverse ar-

reas as IT, risk management, and human resources.

City manager David Biggs reported to the city council on Dec. 14 that Rankin's last day would be Dec. 20. Biggs praised Rankin as a "true professional," who plays a much broader role than just finance director. Rankin had announced his retirement earlier, but agreed to stay on longer than he had originally intended to allow the city to hire a new finance director. The city has hired Doug Alessio, formerly from the city of Livermore. (See article on Page A7.)

Rankin is a native Californian who grew up in Pico Rivera in the San Gabriel Valley. He attended Claremont Men's College (now Claremont McKenna College) before taking an MA in public administration at Cal State Long Beach.

Looking back over his 42-year career in local government, Rankin noted, "That's a lot of meetings!" He has actually enjoyed the switch to



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Retiring Administrative Services Director Paul Rankin

also enjoyed. He speaks with affection of the agency as having a "portfolio of little gems," unique to the Bay Area.

In Orinda, Rankin says, he truly enjoyed the city council, finding them really focused on being there to serve and to make things better, willing to spend their attention on what matters. In preparing for city council meetings, Rankin presents information like an onion, so folks can see the overview on the outside, but can dig as deep as they like.

Rankin found his education at Claremont really helped him with communications. "Sometimes you are stuck with the required way," he observed, "but you can always tell the story differently."

Rankin lives in Dublin with his wife, who is also retiring from her job as secretary to a school principal. Their three children are grown and out of the house, but are all employed and live in the Bay Area. He looks forward to having time to pursue travel when the world opens up again, and his hobbies, including photography which he hasn't touched in a while.

Rankin noted that in 42 years of public service, he'd made a lot of sacrifices - all the late evening meetings, for example. Now he definitely wants to spend more time with family. "We're excited," he concluded, "definitely excited."

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New Administrative Services Director in Orinda knows he's got a hard act to follow



Douglas Alessio

Photo Sora O'Doherty

By Sora O'Doherty

New Administrative Services Director Douglas Alessio knows that he has a challenge to face, stepping into the shoes vacated by outgoing Director Paul Rankin, whom Alessio recognizes as having been well liked and well respected. But the veteran government employee enjoys a challenge, and is excited about his new job in Orinda.

Alessio most recently was assistant city manager in Livermore, a city of some 91,000 residents. Unlike Orinda, which contracts for police services and is part of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, Livermore is a full-service city handling the full complement of services, including water distribution, wastewater collection, police and fire services. Alessio was with Livermore for 12

years, starting as finance manager and serving as administrative services director before being promoted to assistant city manager. He dealt with issues similar to those Orinda faces, from storm drains to using goats for fire safety.

Born in New York, Alessio's family moved to Walnut Creek when he was 4 years old. He attended college at Cal State Hayward (as it was then). After graduating during a recession, he took a job with the Franchise Tax Board auditing people's tax returns. It didn't take him long to realize that this wasn't his ideal job.

After a year, he saw an ad in a newspaper for a job with a firm in Walnut Creek, where he grew up. He stopped by, intending to just submit his resume, but was immediately brought in and interviewed for three hours. The firm told him

that their clientele was mostly local governments. "I warned them that I had had only one lecture in school about local government," Alessio said, but they told him they would teach him. "I fell in love with the field. There is so much going on in local government about which the average person has no idea," Alessio noted, adding that he fell into this career and finds it to be the most interesting career someone can choose. He particularly likes local government because he finds it to be closer to the people and therefore more accountable about how it uses its resources.

Looking at Orinda, Alessio is impressed with the willingness of Orinda's residents to tax themselves for services that they want. "In Livermore," according to Alessio, residents refused to pay for services and amenities. But he thinks it is super cool that Orinda's residents are willing, and he believes that when residents are paying for services from the government it makes them more interested in government finances. "I love that," he said, "I think that is a healthy relationship when the residents want to make sure that the resources they are providing are being used as intended."

In Livermore Alessio was concerned that emergency preparedness and operations were not where they should be. "Four years ago, we brought in an emergency manager, who focused on training staff and developing a public safety

plan." Alessio observed that the city got to see the immediate benefits, as right after developing its safety plan the city had a cyber attack, PSPSs, a wildfire that almost made it into Livermore, and then COVID.

Alessio is excited that one of the things he is being tasked with in Orinda is the development of an IT master plan. "Any time you can leverage IT," he says, "you are leveraging your human resources to keep up with increasing service demands." He says that his passion is to help improve systems so that an organization can function efficiently.

Alessio knew Rankin, and knew that Orinda is a pretty

well put together organization. He views his new job as an opportunity to do something different, to help out a community with slightly less resources than in his previous job.

Another similarity that Alessio sees between Orinda and Livermore is the high level of education among residents. While Orinda is near UC Berkeley and has a lot of tech executives, Livermore has Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. The joke in Livermore local government, Alessio says, is "you don't have to be a rocket scientist to get on the city council, unless of course it's Livermore."

Orinda Theatre hosts a celebration for those who contributed



Photo provided

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda Theatre celebrated its 80th birthday on Dec. 27, with a free screening of the film, "Cinema Paradiso" for all who contributed to the theatre's GoFundMe effort to keep it in business during the pandemic. During the last two days of 2021, a generous donor matched all donations made to the theatre's fundraising effort.

Theatre owner Derek Zemrak extended an enthusiastic thank you to all who came to the 80th birthday celebration. Zemrak said it was a perfect film to celebrate the theatre's history and that it looked amazing on the theatre's new, state-of-the-art screen, recently installed in the theatre's historic 750-seat auditorium.

Zemrak thanked Greg King for restoring the mar-

quee and tower's neon lights to their glory days. Other upcoming improvements include a new screen and curtains in both the 174-seat auditorium and the 47-seat screening room. The new screen in the 174-seat theater will be larger than the current screen, which was installed in 1989. The 174-seat auditorium now has a larger stage to improve Live at Orinda Cabaret concerts. The floor in the 174-seat auditorium was recently painted and looks amazing, Zemrak said, and he is currently working with the premiere sound company in the world on getting a new sound system in the main theatre.

Upcoming live concerts include two-time Tony nominee Christine Andreas on Jan. 30, jazz & pop star Freda Payne on Feb. 20, 5-time Golden Globe nominee Marilu Henner on March 6, 12-

time MAC award winning cabaret star Natalie Douglas on April 3 and Tony Award winner Debbie Gravitte on May 1. The Orinda Theatre is observing all pandemic protocols, including checking vaccination cards and IDs for entrance.

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Week of Jan 10-14	Customers in Lafayette, Orinda, and Moraga (including unincorporated areas).
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- Don't:**

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Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Dec. 12 - Dec. 18

Alarms 31
 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 17

Traffic 16
 Suspicious Circumstances 5
 Suspicious Subject 9
 Suspicious Vehicle 10
 Service to Citizen 20
 Patrol Req./Security Check 32
 Public/School Assembly Check 9
 Supplemental Report 10
 Vacation House Check 2
 Welfare Check 8
 Ordinance Violation 0
Vehicle violations
 Auto Burglary
 3300 Block Victoria Ave.
 1100 Block Hillcrest Dr.
 1200 Block Woodborough Rd.
 1200 Block Vacation Dr.
 Dui Misd
 3500 Block Terrace Way
 Stolen Vehicle Recovery
 800 Block Las Trampas Rd.
 Tc - Property Damage
 Mt. Diablo Blvd./Moraga Rd.
 Vehicle Theft
 3600 Block Chestnut St.
Other criminal activity
 Computer Fraud
 Police Department
 Fraud Credit Card
 3200 Block Gold Ct.
 1100 Block Nogales St.
 Fraud False Pretenses
 600 Block Doreen Way
 Grand Theft
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.
 Grand Theft Veh Parts
 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Identity Theft

Police Department
 Misc Burglary
 1200 Block Woodborough Rd.
 Petty Theft
 1000 Block Stuart St.
 600 Block Glenside Dr.
 3800 Block Happy Valley Rd.
 1000 Block Orchard Rd.
 3100 Block Cordova Way
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 900 Block Dewing Ave.
 Police Department
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Petty Theft Veh Parts
 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Nuisance to the Community
 Disturbance-domestic
 3200 Block Mt. Diablo Ct.
 800 Block Rosedale Ave.
 Disturbing The Peace
 Pleasant Hill Rd./Wb Sr 24
 Loud Party
 3300 Block S Lucille Ln.
 Public Nuisance
 Glorietta Blvd./Acalanes Rd.
 Vandalism
 10 Block Roxanne Ln.
 800 Block Las Trampas Rd.
Other
 Fire/Ems Response Info
 3200 Block La Canada Rd.
 3600 Block Mosswood Dr.
 Fireworks
 3300 Block Las Huertas Rd.
 Harassment
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Threats
 900 Block Dewing Ave.

Violation Restraining Ord
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Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report



Dec. 14 - Dec. 27
 Alarms 22
 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 8
 Traffic 30
 Suspicious Circumstances 4
 Suspicious Subject 3
 Suspicious Vehicle 4
 Service to Citizen 42
 Patrol Req./Security Check 13
 Supplemental Report 9
 Vacation House Check 0
 Welfare Check 12
 Public/School Assembly Check 0
 Ordinance Violation 0
Vehicle violations
 Accident Property
 Ivy Dr./Arroyo Dr., Ori
 Acalanes Ave./Pleasant Hill Rd.
 Safeway
 Rheem Blvd./St Marys Rd.
 Auto Burglary
 Not Available
 Excessive Speed
 Rheem Blvd./Chalda Way
 Reckless Driving
 St Marys Rd./Rheem Blvd.
 900 Block Country Club Dr.
 Vehicle Theft

Moraga Way/Camino Encinas, Ori
 Moraga Rd./St Marys Rd.

Other criminal activity
 Grand Theft
 1400 Block Moraga Rd.
 Not Available
 Rape
 St Marys College
 Shoplift
 Safeway
Nuisance to the Community
 Drunk In Public
 Taco Bell
 Loud Noise
 Alta Mesa Dr./Via Joaquin (2)
 Vandalism
 500 Block Moraga Rd.
 St Marys College
Other
 Fireworks
 700 Block Crossbrook Dr.
 Moraga Rd./Woodford Dr.
 Harassment
 200 Block Donald Dr.
 Mentally Ill Commit
 40 Block Carr Dr.



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report will be back soon

Letters to the editor

Orinda's future

My wife and I feel very fortunate to have lived in Orinda for nearly 30 years now. I used to feel Orinda needed to transform itself into something closer to Lafayette or Walnut Creek, but I've come to agree with the sentiments expressed by Mr. Porges and Mr. Waranoff in their recent letters to the editor. While it would be nice to have a bigger, more commercial tax base to increase revenue, I'm very content to see Orinda make much more incremental improvements and remain a primarily residential community. I also strongly feel that state mandated housing should be multi-family and confined to the downtown area and not scattered throughout outlying neighborhoods in the form of ADUs in backyards as has happened in my own neighborhood much to its detriment.

Gary Johnson
Orinda

Monarch Garden at Rancho Laguna Park

It is cause for huge celebration

that the gorgeous 6+ foot metal monarch butterfly and the charming mosaic caterpillar have been installed at the Monarch Habitat and Demonstration Garden at Rancho Laguna Park at 2101 Camino Pablo, Moraga (see story on page A1). What a way to cap off 2021!! This year-long project of the Moraga Garden Club has been a true community effort, with the Town of Moraga, the Moraga Park Foundation, the Moraga Rotary and Kiwanis and Lions, the Lafayette Garden Club, Orinda Garden Club, Montelindo Garden Club, Orinda Junior Garden Club, Boy and Girl Scouts, Campolindo Leos, Andy Boggeri and AB Construction, Diamond K, Moraga Garden Center, Orchard Nursery, Orchard Supply Hardware, Mc-Donnell Nursery, Scott Carr and a host of private individuals assisting the Moraga Garden Club in bringing this project to the finish line. A few final tasks remain, including installing 5 more benches surrounding the garden and a bit more decomposed granite and flagstone surrounding the spectacular WINGS sculpture. This gift of a generous local donor is already

being used as intended...children interacting with it, learning about monarchs, and having their picture taken with the beautiful butterfly. Special thanks go to the patient and always helpful Town Park and Recreation Department: Breyana Brandt, Director Park and Recreation, Kyle Salvin, Public Works/Parks Maintenance Manager, Public Works Staff: Ruben Ochoa, Jose Limon, Raul Serano; they have been there for the project from the very start and without them we could not have finished the project. We had many butterfly, bird and bee visitors in 2021, including a few monarchs. Soon the early spring flowering plants will be blooming and hopefully even more monarchs will find this slice of heaven. Come enjoy the art, the bubbling fountain and the hardy winter pollinators. If you would like to help with the on-going maintenance of the garden, want to arrange a group docent tour, or want more information: MoragaGardenClub.com/moraga-for-monarchs
Bobbie Preston, Chair Moraga Garden Club Moraga for Monarchs Project
Moraga

Correction: *In the Dec. 22 issue of Lamorinda Weekly, the final portion of the Letter to the Editor that was submitted in the text of an email by former Moraga mayor Mike McCluer was hidden in the body of the text and so was inadvertently cut off in the published version; we apologize for this error.*

The missing text is as follows: "Renata was President of the Moraga Community Foundation while the Fritzky embezzlement was occurring with poor oversight.

I voted for Steve based on his 20 years of experience on the Planning Commission, Design Review Board, Hacienda Foundation Board. A Kiwanis leader and Past President, three years of excellent Town Council service. Steve routinely reaches out to Moraga residents and is a champion for them getting results.

2022 is the last year of Steve's current term. Is this some type of personal, vin-

dictive agenda to deny Steve the Mayorship which he has earned? I certainly hope not.

It's ironic that after taking this action Sos insisted all "take the high road". How completely hypocritical to say that after blindsiding Steve and defying tradition.

This action by Sos and Onoda creates and increases the distrust, divisiveness and dysfunctionality in our Town Government.

200+ negative reactions by residents speaks volumes.

No leader should ever put their individual interests above the residents.

I am calling for Renata Sos to do the right thing and step down as Mayor."

While it is never our intent to leave off portions of submitted material, we must reiterate our standing that Letters to the Editor must not include personal attacks or implied claims of impropriety without documentation to support such claims.

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence - we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters must be factually accurate and be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

What Park Theater renovation means for downtown Lafayette

... continued from Page A1

"CinemaSF demonstrated strengths in each of these areas and the Board found them to be responsive and keen to work in collaboration with the board to establish our vision for the Park Theater."

Board member Tracey Farrell suggests CinemaSF, in addition to having a solid reputation for establishing and managing viable and sustainable practices to run financially successful independent theaters, is "well-aligned" with the Lafayette community's values. "Not only are their films fun, they know that first-run films are a necessity, that 40% of a theater's intake comes from concessions, not ticket sales, and they were completely in tune with the community's best interests in that regard."

She sites, among other programming priorities, films for families with young children, movies with appeal to the senior community, provocative films that deal with diversity and equity or economic and social injustice or the natural environment and will be tied to community conversations, and special programs geared for audiences with particular needs such as people in the autism spectrum or those people who have Alzheimer's for whom movies provide unique, appreciable, science-backed benefits.

Lifson says CinemaSF was well suited to operate the Park Theater and rose to the top during the interviews because they were the most transparent in sharing their financials, had a proven record of working with the communities in which they currently have theaters and "even though their theaters are all in SF, they understand the vast difference in demographics and really focus the movie selections for each location."

Included in the Park's redesign is a commercial kitchen, which Farrell says is a vital feature the Park Theater will offer to nonprofits renting the facility for galas and other fundraising purposes. "An important part of what we wanted was to align with people, not compete with them. For example, Dennis Markam, the artistic director at Town Hall Theatre has been a part of TPTT from the beginning. We want to fit in with other businesses, which means we'll do great books stuff with Lamorinda bookstores and libraries that can be presented also at Town Hall. Local schools offer another direction: The Park used to show films in sync with students' studies during California History week. With diversity issues and other things today, films are a great way to open up and offer content that leads to discussions."

The Park Theater needs extensive renovations - \$5 million

in repairs and upgrades to meet current building codes and offer the aesthetics to make it commercially viable. "You look at the building and it looks pretty dilapidated," says Farrell. "This is community funded, so we have to be realistic. The best news is that we found in a structural assessment we obtained that it's structurally sound. It's built of solid redwood; built like a tank."

Farrell says TPTT's crown achievement was the enormous community partnership with the city, which shared all prior surveys and studies and the history of preceding groups who had attempted to preserve the theater. "We also had hard work and perseverance from the task force and a community who were extremely supportive and volunteered where they were able. We needed to establish a drum beat so developers knew if they were coming to the city hoping to get the property, they had to look at us."

Parking emerged in surveys and direct feedback as residents' primary concern. Fortunately, that had been anticipated by the board. "I've been on other boards and professional organizations and from the first meetings we were staying online with the community's best interest," says Farrell.

Lifson says, "When the theater was opened 80 years ago there was no parking ordinance. When it closed 16 years

ago it could have reopened within 120 days and it would have been grandfathered in to be used as a theater without increasing the number of parking spaces. That ship left long ago. Then the city initiated a historic overlay district that planned to change the current parking for each of the properties on Plaza Way. This included having each property pay into a fund along with the city to increase the parking allowing all the businesses to share parking. With the purchase of the theater property, which includes a four-plex housing building, they can get closer to achieving that goal."

On the TPTT website under FAQs, the most current information reads: "The City has recently developed a new surface parking lot with 23 spaces within a 5-minute walk of the Park Theater. In addition, TPTT has reached an agreement with the City to re-develop the rear of the property to create additional parking of (approximately) 33 spaces. There are also about 500 spaces - we counted! - within (a quarter)

mile of the Park, which does not include possible street parking, private lot opportunities, nor the LLLC garage. The Park Theater will, of course, continue to be highly accessible by foot traffic, ride share, BART, and County Connection bus service as in the past."

CinemaSF's Adam Bergeron anticipates when the remodeled theater opens in 2023, programs "will start with the most classic/popular movies in each specialty category, then move on to 'deeper cuts' as we see that there is interest."

Having seen with his own eyes during time spent in Lafayette that the city is "tight-knit and welcoming," Bergeron expects to hire completely from within Lafayette and the surrounding areas. "We hope to be a hub of discourse and debate as well as entertainment. We look forward to engaging with the community on a variety of levels."

To learn more about how to donate, visit www.parktheatertrust.org. For information about CinemaSF, visit <https://www.cinemasf.com/>

Lafayette mayor

... continued from Page A2

The council will continue to work with the Chamber, Lafayette businesses, schools, nonprofits and faith communities to address ongoing concerns related to COVID. "The distribution of ARPA funds is on track thanks to our subcommittee and staff," Gerringer explained. "We will continue to look for other grant opportunities with the help of Townsend Associates. When it's safe to gather, I look forward to working with the Chamber and the Lafayette Community Foundation to introduce a Lafayette Together Community Volunteer Day

that brings us all together to connect while doing good in the community." More details including the date will follow.

Gerringer also commented on the General Plan Advisory Council (GPAC), which is made up of volunteers from throughout the community who have committed to updating the Lafayette General Plan over a 5-year period. "They are one year in and have begun to update the Housing Element, reviewed and drafted an updated mission and vision statement, and worked on the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) requirements." The GPAC will present

an update on the Housing Element timeline and the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) law at a joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission at 6 p.m. Jan. 10, Gerringer said.

In summarizing her particular focus, Gerringer says, "My legislative priorities will be to work with my colleagues on the council and across the state to advocate to increase the supply and funding for affordable housing, and to strengthen city-school partnerships. Ongoing efforts include safety around our schools, and matters relating to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging."

Project Earth recognized

... continued from Page A3

Chugh says the group has aspirations of pushing beyond no idling practices at schools and toward the passage of a no idling ordinance in the city of Lafayette. "Before this I had never done public speaking. I had no idea about the city council or how any of that works," Chugh says confidently while describing how much she's learned.

Sejal Choksi-Chugh is Raini's mom and serves as

Project Earth's advisor and as the liaison to Sustainable Lafayette. Choksi-Chugh says she's really proud of the kids not only for earning the recognition of an environmental excellence award, which was awarded at the Dec. 13 Lafayette City Council meeting, but for their tenacity, persistence and dedication.

"Climate change is such a huge problem and yet these kids feel enthusiastic and inspired and they want to tackle the problem at a local level,"

Choksi-Chugh says. "It's exciting to work with this group of kids. They're taking their ideas and learning life skills while they work on the problem of climate change. They've learned how to run meetings, make presentations, plan projects and make goals achievable. I think they'll be able to take this experience with them into any future career that they want to have. For their voices to be heard and recognized by the city council has been really rewarding."

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Moraga's monarch habitat boasts two decoratively-themed sculptures to help boost its butterfly appeal



Photo Julie Stagg

Commission, accepted the sculpture for the park. What makes "Wings" so special as an interactive sculpture is, if anyone stands in front of it, there is the illusion that the individual has the wings of a monarch butterfly.

"Katy Pillar" creator, Mary Gilles, (email: mo-saicorinda@gmail.com), has done fused glass work for about 15 years. A former research scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Gilles wanted to spread her wings (so to speak) in community art. While working on a monarch butterfly mosaic in her studio at Oakland's The Crucible, the Orinda resident found out about the habitat and contacted the MGC. The garden club wanted a caterpillar sculpture, so Gilles set about creating the yellow, black and clean white piece beginning with high density polystyrene in an almost paper mache process. The final stage came in the form of hand-cut glass pieces small enough to be applied in a circle around the body and smooth enough so as not to cut anyone's fingers when touched. The time-consuming process to create "Katy Pillar" became a labor of love which Gilles generously donated.

"Katy Pillar" makes her presence known in the monarch habitat garden.

... continued from Page A1

by the Art in Public Spaces Committee and approved by the Parks and Recreation

The town, as recommended

For anyone wanting to help maintain the garden, email moragaformonarchs@gmail.com. For general information, visit www.moragagardenclub.com/moraga-for-monarchs.

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community. Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorindaweekly.com

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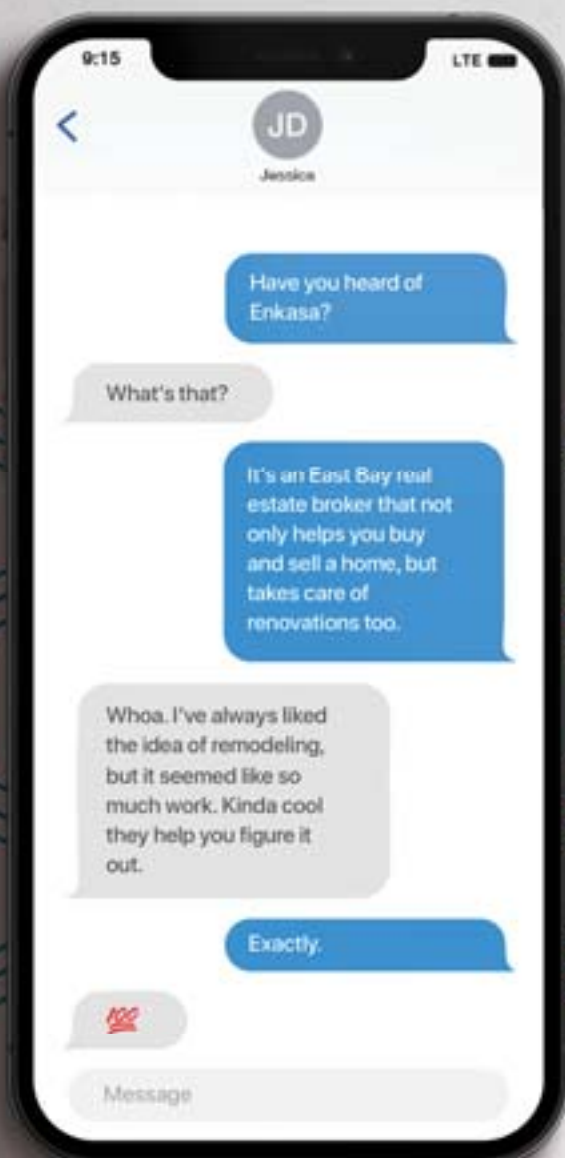
Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary

Every Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.
Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building
OR Zoom Link at <https://lamorindasunrise.org/speakers>

January 2022 Weekly Speakers

7: Marc Myers, WSJ In-Depth Music Man
14: Clara Sousa-Silva, NOVA Exoplanet Series Astrophysicist
21: The Power of Rotary Partnerships in East Africa
28: Invention Time: The Multi-Patient Ventilator by Prana

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One local man's mission: Clean up the town of Moraga



Debris collected during Bollinger Canyon cleanup.

Photos provided

By Diane Claytor

Scott Parker is a man on a mission and he's hoping many of us will do what we can to help accomplish the ultimate goal: ridding Moraga of litter and making sure it stays that way.

For the past four months, the Moraga resident has single-handedly cleaned up many of the town's public spaces, including watersheds, creeks, empty lots and roadsides. He has spent hours filling hundreds of garbage bags with tons of trash. "I'm guessing I've picked up about 5,000-6,000 pounds of garbage, probably 30 years worth of litter," Parker proclaims. He's found thousands of bottles and cans, painting supplies, dumped garbage, furniture, discarded barrels, motorbikes, shopping carts, TV's and even

a rusted-out old car he estimates is from the '50s. And while he's done the work on his own, he has received considerable help from the town's staff in hauling much of the garbage away.

A lover of nature and the outdoors, Parker has always hated seeing litter, whether along the side of a road or on a beach. Whenever he'd go hiking or take his dogs for a walk, he'd pick up trash. He'd be at the park or a soccer field and pick up trash. "We should all be doing this," he insists. "If we all made this small effort, garbage wouldn't be such a huge issue."

Parker, a finance strategist, found himself between jobs and with time on his hands. After dropping his son off for soccer practice at the Lafayette Community Center one day, Parker looked around and noticed how much trash



Debris found at Painted Rock

there was, especially in the areas that were more difficult to access. So he picked it up. He began carrying trash bags in the car and every time he dropped one of his boys off for practice, he'd take an hour or so to drive somewhere, park, walk around and take in the landscape. There was no dearth of trash. Parker reports

that he collected about 16 bags of garbage over approximately five hours just on St. Mary's Road.

He stopped at the Bollinger Canyon pullout and was shocked at the amount of trash all the way down to the creek. He found an old HVAC unit, started rocking it back and forth to break it apart. It took him an hour and that's when he made a decision. "OK, it's on," he remembers thinking. "I'm going to get everything I can out of this watershed. I don't care how heavy it is, I'm going to get it out and then I'm going to figure out where the problems are and go to the town, describing all I'm seeing." Parker says he spent more than 20 hours, pulling out at least 3,000 pounds of dumped items and trash from this one area.

"I was on a mission," he declares. Parker hit the vacant lot next to the Rheem Theatre where he spent hours cleaning up trash. He picked up nine bags of garbage at the hill by the storage facility, more bags at the empty lot by 7-11 and hundreds of bottles and cans in the creek by the Commons. He climbed up to Painted Rock where he cleaned up hundreds of paint cans and painting paraphernalia. He picked up two carloads of trash on Canyon driving out to Pinehurst.

All the while, Parker recalls, he's thinking about what can be done to stop all this dumping. "I'm mentally strategizing," he says, "thinking about going to the town and telling them this is what I'm seeing, this is what I'm

doing and asking them what can all of us do to prevent garbage from accumulating?" He has some ideas: more garbage cans, fencing around some pullouts, annual inspections of empty lots, creeks and watershed areas. "Maybe even some 'Keep Moraga Beautiful' signs," he suggests.

Parker believes the next steps are strategies and organization. "Let's prevent this from happening again," he states. "We all say we care about the environment. Let's prove it. This is our backyard. It doesn't take much.

"All we need is to be vigilant and curious," Parker continues. "Pull off to the side of the road. Look around. Pick up trash that you see. That's all I did."

The town of Moraga has a page on their website where residents can report issues of concern (<https://webrai.mycivapps.com/moragaca>). Parker strongly urges residents to use this resource. "The Town needs to be aware of the problems. When you go for a walk, if you see something, say something," he says. "Advise town officials about concerns through their website. They've been pretty responsive."

Parker is no longer searching for garbage. But when he's out and about, he's still looking around, picking up litter. "It makes us feel better to live in a clean house, wear clean clothes. It's the same with the environment," he states. "A clean environment makes us feel better about ourselves, our neighbors and our community."



Photo Diane Claytor

Santa once again brightens holidays in Moraga neighborhood

Following what was, no doubt, a very busy night, Santa returned to Moraga on Christmas morning and fortunately, he didn't forget his umbrella. Just like last year, Santa Ryan Aull and his trusty elf, Jeff Stone, rode through the streets of Rheem Valley Manor, loudly honking the horn on their sleigh (actually a bright yellow 1932 Ford

truck), bringing delighted residents of all ages out in the rain to happily greet the popular duo. Santa waving and

shouting "Merry Christmas" and "Ho, ho, ho" made Christmas morning just a little more magical. - Diane Claytor

AAUW OML to award Community Service scholarships to Lamorinda high schools and Saint Mary's College



Photo provided

Cayo Marchner, Linda Bochte, Pat Rudebusch (owner of Orinds Books), and Bonnie Fend

Submitted by Cayo Marschner

The Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW OML) of the national organization American Association of University Women, recognizing the importance and value of community involvement by volunteer students, will award three Community Service scholarships each to graduating women from Campolindo, Miramonte and Acalanes high schools. Three similar scholarships will also be awarded

to the High Potential Program (HPP) participants in Saint Mary's College. HPP participants are all first generation college students.

Students are encouraged to apply for these scholarships by the deadline of Feb. 15. Application information may be obtained at the branch website: oml-ca.aauw.net or the school counseling office. Each candidate will be personally interviewed by a two-member team from the AAUW OML branch. Awards will be announced at a celebratory

event in April.

Fundraising for these scholarships began earlier this year. During February, Pat Rudebusch, Orinda Books owner, again generously offered to host a Book Fair by featuring a special AAUW table to "Treat Your Shelf" with a variety of books recommended by AAUW members. The books will represent different genres and many will be newly released. For a detailed book list with brief synopsis, check the list online at oml-ca.aauw.net

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Crispy, fluffy air-fried falafel perfect for New Year's resolutions



Air Fryer Falafel

Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

We love falafel, but since most falafel is fried in oil, we have rarely eaten it ... until now! That's where the magic of the air fryer comes in. It's a game changer in my opinion, because it doesn't need all of that extra oil to make the falafel crispy. We are so happy, because the garbanzo beans, fresh herbs, garlic, shallots, cumin and all of those great flavors are so hard to resist and they are healthy, too. While you can certainly bake falafel in the oven, the air fryer produces a crispier outside and a soft and fluffy inside to the falafel. Now we eat it way more often. Plus all of the great breads and sauces to eat

with falafel are amazing, like naan or pita, whipped feta, tzatziki, Greek olives ... I could go on. Those Mediterranean flavors pretty much make my taste buds flutter!

This recipe calls for a lot of fresh parsley and cilantro, which gives it a super fresh taste and a beautiful green tint on the inside, and seltzer water added to the mixture provides an extra bit of crispiness on the edges. Where most recipes call for using soaked and ground raw garbanzo beans (chick-peas), this recipe uses canned beans, but we roast them to dry them out a bit before processing them with the rest of the ingredients. This speeds up the process and tastes really deli-

cious. And, finally, we add just a bit of baking powder to the mixture, which also helps to keep the inside light and fluffy.

If you would like to make whipped feta to go with your falafel, simply beat 1 cup of crumbled feta and 1-2 table-

spoons extra-virgin olive oil together until the cheese is mostly creamy. Then whip in about a half cup of plain nonfat yogurt and one tablespoon fresh lemon juice until fluffy. That's it. So simple and sooooo good!

Air Fryer Falafel

(Makes 10 2-inch falafel balls)

INGREDIENTS

2 16-ounce cans garbanzo beans, rinsed, drained, and roasted
1/2 cup (packed) fresh parsley leaves
1/2 cup (packed) fresh cilantro leaves
2 small shallots, coarsely chopped (or 1 large shallot)
2 large cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons cumin
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon flour (can use regular all-purpose or any gluten-free flour)
2 +/- tablespoons seltzer water

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray.

Drain garbanzo beans and rinse them in cold water. Drain water off and spread them out on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for about 10-15 minutes or just until dried and starting to brown. Remove from oven and cool.

Place garbanzo beans, parsley, cilantro, shallots, garlic, lemon juice, cumin, salt, pepper and baking powder into the bowl of your food processor. Pulse until evenly mixed and small, fine pieces of garbanzo remain and mixture sticks together when you press it together. You don't want it too finely puréed, but just enough to hold together.

Turn the mixture out into a bowl and mix in flour and seltzer water. Now, the mixture should be able to hold its shape when formed into balls. Add more seltzer if needed for it to be able to form balls. Divide batter into 10 balls, approximately 2-inches in diameter.

At this point, you can freeze the falafel in an airtight container, or refrigerate for several hours until you're ready to bake them in the air fryer.

To cook, preheat the air fryer on the "air fry" mode to 350 F. When it says to add food, place the falafel balls on the tray and air fry for about 12 minutes or until the edges are crispy and the centers are hot.

Serve hot with pita or naan, whipped feta, hummus, tzatziki or even on a Greek salad.



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

Family Focus

Frustrations and guilt with extended family relationships, Part One

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

"Family is supposed to be our safe haven. Very often, it's the place where we find the deepest heartache." ~ Iyanla Vanzant

Happy New Year! I wish you all good health, happiness, and a dearth of difficult relatives.

Both in my therapy practice and in my friendships, I see many people struggling in their relationships with difficult family members. On the one hand, we receive messages such as "Family is everything" and "Blood is thicker than water." On the other hand, since we don't pick our family members, how is it always possible to be close or even to get along?

Because we're instructed at an early age to love and respect family, those who view a family member differently can feel bad or wrong. They often suffer from guilt, sadness, and lowered self-esteem for being unable to match the expectations of family and society.

When we have feelings of guilt, we need to examine whether or not there is a basis for this. Did we do or say anything wrong or hurtful? Are we responsible for a ruptured relationship? All too often, the other party is the responsible one and doesn't feel guilty at all. If we have made good efforts and asked for what we would like from the other person, clearly and positively, but have not received cooperation, it is time for us to purge feelings of guilt. There may be sadness of course, because we all wish for healthy

family relationships. But it is unfair to blame or criticize yourself if you have actually done what you can.

One client, Kara, is an example of someone who took on guilt unnecessarily. Growing up, Kara had two younger sisters and got along well with them. Kara worked hard in school and has had a highly successful career. She is happily married with a young son. Her younger sister, Paige, followed a different path. Although single, Paige chose not to work full-time, saying she preferred having more time and a good quality of life. All well and good, except that she became jealous of Kara's affluence and family status.

Starting in their 30s, Paige began making snide comments about Kara to other family members. Eventually, Kara heard about this and asked Paige to tell her directly what was wrong instead of gossiping about her. Paige denied anything was wrong but continued to badmouth Kara to others. After this, Kara didn't trust Paige and wanted to have nothing to do with her, but she didn't want to cause drama and upset their parents and other family members. She felt guilty about disliking her own sister since she was raised to value family.

In our work together we looked at ways that Kara could take care of herself while not disrupting the rest of her family. If she had free choice Kara would have cut off contact with her sister. She realized she wouldn't miss a person who would willingly stab her in the

back. Kara understood that her guilt about not liking Paige was an inappropriate feeling. After all, she wouldn't continue to like a friend or neighbor who treated her this way either.

For the sake of family harmony, Kara decided she would participate as usual in family gatherings and avoid being alone with Paige. She would enjoy everyone else and not let her sister have the power to alter her behavior with other people she loved and trusted. Once Kara decided on her course of action, she felt much more in control – and less susceptible to Paige's dysfunctional behavior. Her guilt subsided as she found a way to accommodate her family despite her antipathy towards her sister.

The onset of COVID has impacted many family relationships due to differences of opinion on vaccinations, mask-wearing, and general precautions. Combined with those who had difficulties pre-COVID, it's almost becoming an exception where all members of one's extended family are loving and harmonious.

Pre-COVID, Marianne, a mother of two children ages 12 and 15, made the decision to end contact with her husband's father, Frank. Frank had a problem with alcohol and became mean and belligerent when he drank too much, which unfortunately was a frequent occurrence. He refused to admit to or address the problem in any way, and Marianne didn't want to continue exposing her children to him.

Marianne's husband, Rob, didn't agree with her, and they came in for therapy to try to preserve their relationship in the face of this divisive issue. The two families used to spend many holidays and occasional weekends together. Rob's parents were divorced, and his father lived with his second wife, Rob's stepmother.

Rob tried for years to deal with this problem. Since his father refused to drink less or get evaluated medically, Rob decided his family could visit him less and for shorter amounts of time. But he wanted his children to be able to know their grandfather and vice-versa, and he thought they were old enough to be able to understand that their grandfather was an alcoholic. Rob was hoping his kids could realize that alcoholism was a disease and forgive their grandfather. He said he also thought it might serve as a deterrent for them to ever drink heavily when they saw how damaging it could be.

We worked on reaching a compromise. COVID entered the picture, and whether or not to stay with Rob's father was no longer an issue. Rob could visit his father alone and outside during this time. When vaccinations became available and the kids were more protected, Rob could take them occasionally to meet his father for a meal during the day and outside. The hope was that Rob's father would not be as inebriated earlier in the day (and not driving if he was), and therefore would be less belligerent and

better company. Marianne could choose whether or not to accompany her family.

Marianne and Rob had done all the right things. They spoke up for what they wanted from his father and why. Then, when his father refused to cooperate, they implemented consequences. This situation is another instance where we can't control others' behavior but we can control our own. We need to keep searching for solutions for dealing with the difficult family members in our lives. And once we have decided on an approach, it is important to keep reminding ourselves that we have not been the driving force. We are only making necessary adaptations to others' dysfunctional behavior.

In the next column we will examine why some people remain stuck and continue to tolerate inconsiderate and disrespectful behavior from a family member.



Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a local marriage and family therapist. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com. Her new book, "Family Focus: A Therapist's Tips for Happier Families," is available from Orinda Books and Amazon.com.

Holiday treat delivered to seniors



Photos provided

LCVI Client, Ernie (left) and LCVI volunteer Dianne Submitted by Richard Grange

Volunteers from the Lions Center for the Visually Impaired (LCVI) brightened

the lives of 80 blind and visually impaired seniors, including two from Lafayette and Orinda, on Dec. 7 by hand delivering to them a freshly cooked, holiday meal with roast turkey and ham and a bag full of hand-crafted goodies. The seniors, who are blind and visually impaired clients of LCVI and many of whom spend a lot of their time at home, appreciated the special holiday gift. The project was organized by LCVI board of directors (president Charles "Duke" Dunham), to provide a "special, warm holiday meal delivered with joyful kindness."

As they dished out plates for the clients, Bill Ridle, LCVI board member and his wife Darlene, head chefs for the event, commented, "It's great to be able to help our clients with this holiday meal. We enjoyed cooking the food and were able to prepare special dishes for those with dietary needs."

Organized as a way to bring smiles during the ongoing pandemic, this project was led by the LCVI board and volunteers, who expanded the program from 29 meals in 2020 to 84 meals in



Volunteers prepare gift items for the blind and visually impaired senior clients of the Lions Center for the Visually Impaired.

2021. After assembling the gift bags and labeling for delivery, a crew of about 20 volunteers hand delivered the meals to the homes of the clients across the county, providing a welcome treat.

LCVI client Ernie of Concord expressed his gratitude, "Thank you to the volunteers, for their time and special effort to make and deliver the meal and gifts. It was very gratifying to me." Fel-

low LCVI client Sam of Clayton added, "It was pretty good! They delivered right to my house. I especially enjoyed the au gratin potatoes, so creamy and cheesy."

For more information about the free services for blind and visually impaired seniors, call the Lions Center for the Visually Impaired/LCVI at 925-432-3013 or visit www.LCVI.org.

In Memory

Stephen Thomas Herrin

April 13, 1946 – Dec. 25, 2021



Born April 13, 1946 in Fort Bragg, N.C. and passed away on Dec. 25, 2021 with family by his side in Corte Madera, Calif. Stephen Thomas Herrin, an Orinda resident for 41 years, was a loving and caring man who always put his family first. He loved running and ran over 50 marathons and competed in the Western States 100 miler. Next month was always going to be "health month" so he could justify his love for bread, cookies, and ice cream.

He enjoyed coaching kids sports and being a Cubmaster. Forever a handyman whether he was building his man cave in the attic with a motorized staircase, a doll house with electricity or fixing an endless amount of toys.

He spent his childhood in Kansas and Hawaii in a military family. He graduated from Cal State Northridge and completed his master's in business from USC. He married Jackie Jean after a short courtship. Both my parents were proud to say they met in September, were engaged in November and married in March! A hard-working man, he worked for The Phone Company for 30 years. After he retired, he worked for an Internet startup company in Los Angeles for a couple of years – a fun adventure but he was happy to retire for good in 2003. In 2003 he was diagnosed with lymphoma and endured a successful bone marrow transplant, which gave his family 18 more years with him.

Surviving lymphoma gave him and all of his family a healthy perspective of how lucky we all were to have so many more birthdays, events, and ultimately three grandchildren. He loved his grandchildren and spent recent years driving from Orinda to Corte Madera just to take them to gymnastics and swimming. When not with family he could be found "garaging, reading WW2 history books, helping out the neighbors and walking his beloved golden retrievers up the street."

Survived by his wife Jackie of 49 years, his sister Janet Herrin, his children Stephanie (Eric) and Michael, and his grandchildren Brady (Mom Jill), Molly and Katie.

In Memory

Lawrence (Larry) Randall Park

Dec. 11, 1962 – Nov. 24, 2021



Lawrence Randall Park ("Larry Park") passed suddenly Nov. 24, 2021 at the age of 58 in San Rafael, California, preceded in 2020 by father Brian Lee Park, survived by mother Lesley Sue Park, brother Robert Alexander Park, and niece Katharina Park. Lawrence was born Dec. 11, 1962 at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley and his first home as a baby was 19 Cambridge Way, Piedmont. Lawrence was often called "Larry" by family and friends. Lawrence was a graduate of Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School in Orinda. He then went to work for the San Francisco Chronicle newspaper company. Traveling and meeting new people was part of his job at the Chronicle and he liked that his job took him all over northern California. All through his life Lawrence was close with his brother Robert, riding bicycles

together as kids. An example of a big adventure as a kid was Lawrence and Robert bicycling from Orinda to the Lafayette Reservoir, around the Reservoir, and then back home to Orinda, a bicycle trip of about 15 miles. The bigger adventures that Lawrence undertook with his brother as adults included trips to Alaska, Mexico, and New York.

Lawrence lived in Marin County for 35 years and had a special love for the place, not wanting to live anywhere else. He loved his niece, Katharina, and enjoyed visiting her at UC Santa Cruz. He was very proud of her. One of Katharina's favorite memories was giving Lawrence a campus tour of UC Santa Cruz last year. Lawrence always displayed great enthusiasm when his niece shared her school achievements with him. Lawrence enjoyed when Katharina, her mother Esther Park, and Robert all spent time with him in Marin County.

Lawrence loved classic cars and classic car shows, owned a couple himself, and was an avid film buff. He and his brother went to many classic car shows over the years. He would see a new film at the movie theatre almost every month with his brother. Since they were kids, he and his brother always went to the theatre to watch the latest James Bond or Star Wars movie. Larry was known for his love of humor and loved to laugh and enjoyed a good comedy. He also loved music and never passed on a good concert. He enjoyed learning classic rock power chords on his electric guitar. When he saw comedy and classic rock combined in the musical, "Rock of Ages," he thought it was one the funniest things he had ever seen. He also enjoyed a good Sharks ice hockey game.

Lawrence was known for his easy-going, friendly demeanor. He loved pets, especially a golden retriever named Rocky, and a Samoyed named Babsi, and both had visited him in Marin County. Lawrence would sit still for an extended period when a cat named Oranges sat on him because the cat's contentment was a top priority. The pets, and his family and friends, all loved his warm hugs. Lawrence was a brother, a best friend, a brother-in-law, an uncle, and a son and will be greatly missed. Lawrence was one of a kind when it came to his personality and humor and treated all living things with kindness and respect. We will forever miss his laugh and smile.

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

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Not to be missed

ART

Lamorinda Arts Alliance announces a new exhibit at Bank of America, Lafayette, on Mt. Diablo Boulevard across from Safeway. The exhibit will be open through January 2022, during banking hours, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Featured artists are Adrienne Rogers (watercolors), Ellen Reintjes (acrylic paintings) and Carolyn WarmSun (acrylic paintings). <http://LAA4Art.org>

Start the New Year by viewing the Lamorinda Arts Alliance exhibit, "New Beginnings" at the aRt Cottage in Concord, open Jan. 5 - Feb. 25. Please come meet the artists at the reception on Saturday, Jan. 8 from 2-4 p.m. The gallery, located at 2238 Mt. Diablo Street, Concord, is open, Tuesday-Friday 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday 1 a.m.-5 p.m. <https://laa4art.org>.

Art show at Orinda Books. January features the paintings of Lisa Gunn. Lisa has a long artistic presence in Orinda. Her style is a

"California Impressionism" involving plein air, landscapes, and abstracts. She notes, "I am hoping that people will connect with my painting and find some attachment that speaks to them whether it be through color, composition or some thread of energy transmitting from one human to another." Visit the Artist of the Month at www.orindabooks.com. Orinda Books is located at 276 Village Square, Orinda, 925-254-7606.

Noted local artist Geoffrey Meredith will be featured as the guest artist at the Moraga Art Gallery for December and January, with 11 paintings in various sizes on display. The Gallery is normally open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. From Dec. 1 to 24 the gallery is open daily, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free, open to the public, no reservations needed. 432 Center St. Moraga moragaartgallery.com; (925) 376-5407.

MUSIC

Want to have some fun? Come sing with the Diablo

Women's Chorale! The spring season starts on Jan. 17, and auditions will be held by appointment that evening between 6 and 9 p.m. Auditions are open to all female voice parts by appointment only. For information on membership and auditions, contact Nancy Hickman, Membership Chair, at 925-899-5050 or hickmandg@gmail.com. www.DiabloWomensChorale.org/join-us. Saint Matthew Lutheran Church, 399 Wiget Lane, Walnut Creek. Audition is free and open to female voices in the general public.

St. Paul's Concert Series is excited to present Harpsichordist Arthur Omura in a solo performance live from St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 29. This live performance will be broadcast online or in-person as permitted at the time of the performance. To register for tickets and receive the live link, and to check on in-person attendance status, visit www.stpaulswc.org/concert-series. 1924 Trinity Avenue, Walnut Creek. Optional Donation upon

ticketing/registration: average \$20, Students \$10 (all are welcome regardless of donation).

Berkeley Symphony presents Berkeley Symphony Chamber II Concert on Sunday, Jan. 16, from 4 to 6 p.m., at Piedmont Center for the Arts, 801 Magnolia Ave, Piedmont. Features works by J.S. Bach, Caroline Shaw, Brian Nabors (New Music USA Amplifying Voices Composer in Residence), and Maurice Ravel. Cost: \$35. For more info see www.berkeleysymphony.org or call 510-841-2800 or email tickets@berkeleysymphony.org.

THEATER

Shotgun Players presents "Babes in Ho-Lland" on Jan. 20-23 and 27-30, Feb. 3-6 and 9-12; Thur. 7p.m.; Fri. & Sat. 8 p.m.; Sun. 5 p.m.; Live streaming Jan. 27 and Feb. 3; Video on demand Feb. 9-20, at Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave, Berkeley. While attending a predominantly white college, two Black students create their own bubble of self discovery, music and sanctuary in their dorm

room. Cost: \$22 - \$25. For more info see <https://shotgunplayers.org/online/article/babes> or call 510-841-6500 x303 or email boxoffice@shotgunplayers.org.

GARDEN

The Walnut Creek Garden Club welcomes the vaccinated public to visit their next meeting held Jan. 10, and to become a part of the Walnut Creek Garden Club. Shawna Anderson from Orchard Nursery shares her pruning tips for all types of roses. She will demonstrate techniques and the best tools for the job. Shawna is a garden consultant and designer and shares her passion for gardening through her business: Thrillers, Fillers and Spillers. If interested in joining the Club or for more information, please visit www.walnutcreekgardenclub.org. Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 9:30 a.m., September through June at The Gardens at Heather Farm.

Submit stories and story ideas to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com


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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Lamorinda Wrestling back on the mats



Hannah Ripper, Miramonte

Photo provided

By Jon Kingdon

There has been a fair amount of shuffling and turnover among the Lamorinda wrestling coaches. Greg Weitzman, the Acalanes head coach is in his first full season following the abbreviated coronavirus year. Louis Suba moved from the co-head coach position at Campolindo to Miramonte and Phil Freeman, a Lafayette native, is now the head coach at Campolindo coming over from Liberty High School. The coronavirus is never far from the coaches' and wrestler's mind as they are a "no mask" sport, requiring testing every week.

Campolindo

Ironically, it's Freeman and Campolindo that has the largest turnout of wrestlers in the area. "It's been great so far coaching at Cam-

polindo," Freeman said. "It's a great area with great kids. I have about 30 wrestlers on the team, split evenly among the boys and girls and we have a lot of kids new to wrestling."

After an extended hiring process, Freeman and the Cougars had to hit the ground running. "They've all worked hard, and I've made sure to give everybody attention," Freeman said. "We've scrimmaged and have gone to a few tournaments and I'm still looking for a heavy weight."

Leading the way has been senior Ohia Paris, wrestling at 106 pounds. Paris went 4-2 and 3-2 in earlier tournaments and recently won the Bill Martell Invitational. "Ohia can be a top wrestler that just needs a little attention, cleaning some things up," Freeman said. "He does the general stuff

well but just has to address the small things."

Junior Chase Young (145) and senior Walker Johnson (170) have also shown good potential. "Chase is coming along, and Walker should continue to develop and do something."

The girls are led by Isabelle Lurie (111) who works out with Paris and had three wins and three pins in an earlier tournament. "I've been impressed with all of the girls, even the beginners in that they are all listening and trying hard," Freeman said. "We're going to have a pretty strong girls' program. In fact, the attitude of all the wrestlers has been great in giving their best effort."

The captains on the team are seniors Sam Gruen for the boys and Madison Lee for the girls. "They have both been a big help to me, encouraging the players," Freeman said. "Madison, along with her mother (the team mom) has been very good at organizing things and have both been very helpful to me."

The backing that Freeman has received from the school and the parents is something that he is most appreciative of: "I'm happy about the support that I have received from the administration. We were able to hold the novice tournament (for first year wrestlers) at Campolindo that went well and was a good fundraiser for us. The parents have been good with communicating, carpools and bringing snacks and water. It's been very impressive how organized and cohesive everyone has been. It's a credit to the parents for stepping up."

Acalanes

For Weitzman, with so many of the protocols no longer necessary, it's a whole new environment. "I'm definitely enjoying it so far," Weitzman said. "It's great to have a normal season unlike last year. I'm having fun getting out there and seeing the kids wrestle in a real season."

This is an inexperienced team with more than half of the 21 wrestlers being freshmen, sophomores and first-time wrestlers and four of them being girls. "We're a young squad but they work hard and are enjoying it which should mean better numbers next year as they get their friends to come out as well," Weitzman said. "We had a good offseason and our kids have been spreading the word. We participated in the athletics day at school and there's been a lot of word of mouth."

Freshmen Sam Whipple (220) and Luke Ross (138) have been the leading wrestlers for the Dons. "Sam

has done a fantastic job and I'm really excited about his wrestling," Weitzman said. "He won three matches at the Bay Area 58 tournament and it's great to watch him pick up the sport. Luke, who missed last year due to an injury is wrestling top opponents and it's exciting to watch him grow during the season. Zach Robb is a first-year heavyweight wrestler who came over from the football team and I'm excited to see how he will do at that level."

Senior captains Lucas Haase (138 or 145) and Cooper Womack (132) have led both on and off the mat, Weitzman said: "Both are doing well, and I really appreciate how they are keeping the team together and how well they are doing in practice and in matches."

Joy Baker, Dakota Goyert, Anya Haas Hollenbeck, Olivia Banks, and Dakota Goyert (whose brother Hunter is also on the team) are all new wrestlers. "All four are newer wrestlers," Weitzman said. "They went to the DAL Novice tournament, and I was blown away at how well they all did. They are enjoying a combination of the camaraderie and have learned that wrestling is like a kinetic chess match - trying to set up your moves as you wrestle your match the way you want to and not being reactive. It's really hard work, but they seem to enjoy it. As they come off the mat, they say how much they enjoyed it and ask me when their next match is."

The tournaments have returned with a greater sense of normalcy. "They've done a great job of insuring that anyone who is inside is wearing a mask," Weitzman said. "The energy from having a real season has increased the number of schools participating in the tournaments. With the new technology, the tournaments are running more smoothly. There's a lot more awareness of the sport and familiarity with how it functions, so the wrestlers are showing up with more energy and positive attitudes from all the teams that are just glad to be back."

Miramonte

Without an offseason program, there are only 11 wrestlers (3 girls) on the roster. "Because I was new to the program and did not have the opportunity to put in an offseason program, our numbers are limited," Suba said. "COVID had a lot to do with my small numbers this year as some wrestlers opted out" due to concerns over the virus. This is a young team, with a number of the wrestlers in the 152 to 160

weight class and the lightest wrestler at 120, and more than a few in their first year of wrestling. Junior Jack Hughes (160) has a background in jujitsu, and two years of wrestling experience has shown well so far, finishing first in the Bay Area Invitational, second in the Cougar Kickoff tournament and third at the Christmas Classic Tournament

"Our most promising young wrestler is a freshman, William Gilmore (120)," Suba said. "He is strong, fast and scrappy, wrestling in the 126-weight class, and is showing a lot of promise." Gilmore finished first in the Cougar Kickoff Tournament, third in the Christmas Classic, was 3-0 in the DAL and Berkeley Kickoff tournaments, and finished first in the Tri-City Tournament and now has a 13-2 overall record.

There is a solid core of sophomore first-year wrestlers in Jack Riley, Carter Camp and Beckett Randolph (a two-sport athlete) who are all showing great potential. Riley was 3-0 at the DAL and Berkeley Kickoff tournaments. Camp was 3-0 at the Cougar Kickoff Tournament and Randolph was 2-1 at the DAL Tournament. Ben Chinn (150), a senior who did not wrestle last year came over from the football team and has shown the skills to be a good wrestler. "Ben is strong, fast and scrappy," Suba said. "He just needs mat time and experience." Zack Fineman also finished second in the Bay Area Invitational and the Cougar Kickoff Tournament.

Leading the girls is junior Hannah Ripper, at 145, who can wrestle at either 137 or 150. "I was able to coach her last year when we joined the Miramonte and Campolindo team as one," said Suba. "She is just so aware of what is happening on the mat. With her 10 years of jujitsu experience, she knows how to use her body to control her opponent. She is very fast, being able to move on bottom and she is already one step ahead of the competition."

Ripper placed first in the Bay Area Invitational, second in the Castro Valley Girls Invitational and Roger Briones Invitational, third in the Folsom Girls Invitational, first in the Tri-Valley Tournament and won the Outstanding Wrestler Trophy. Alice Cropsy finished second in the Roger Briones Invitational and Gianna George finished in fourth at the Castro Valley Girls Tournament.

"I believe we've got things turned in the right direction both on and off the mat with not only our practices but with mandatory study halls twice a week," Suba said.



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Lamorinda basketball teams spend winter break in tournament play

By Jon Kingdon

For the local girls basketball teams, winter break means tournament time. For the girls, it's the West Coast Jamboree, which entails 120 different schools from all over the state and some out-of-state schools as well. In the past 22 years, there have been over 25,000 players and around 2,500 different teams that have played in the Jamboree. From the proceeds of the tournament, three scholar-athletes will each be awarded \$2,500 scholarships based on their GPA and written essay.

Former Miramonte head coach and current Carondelet head coach Kelly Sopak, in his eighth year as co-director, was excited at the return of the tournament after last year's hiatus. "It's really special to be back and it feels great," Sopak said. "It's been an all-year project to get it done from registering the teams to bracketing and the on-sight management of each of the divisions."

After arranging the teams into 14 brackets (each named after gems and minerals),

changes due to the virus and weather issues forced the tournament heads to make some adjustments. "Originally, we were at 120 schools, but we had some cancellations due to COVID and only one of the Nevada teams was able to make it over the hill due to the weather," Sopak said. "Still, we were able to replace teams and move teams around the brackets."

The tournament was scheduled to utilize 10 area high schools for each bracket, but Northridge High School had an electrical explosion which forced the tournament to shift and double up on some of the schools.

Campolindo (Amber Bracket) assistant coach Mark Ayers, filling in for head coach Bill Flitter in his first Jamboree, acknowledge the effort needed to put on such a large affair. "The girls and I appreciate the work and effort that went into it, setting up the divisions so they're competitive for everybody."

Highlighting the play for Campolindo has been two freshmen starters, Ali McCauley and Reagan Schum. "It's unexpected to have two

freshmen starters," Ayers said. "Reagan has done very well, and Ali has been composed, strong and a great ball handler."

Campolindo defeated Sheldon 43-37, Liberty Ranch 47-44 and fell to McFarland in the championship game 57-51.

Miramonte (Jade Bracket) coach Vince Wirthman, coaching his first Jamboree, was glad to be back playing over the break. "All tournaments are fun, and you get to see teams you wouldn't normally play," Wirthman said. "If we were in one of the more elite brackets, it might mean a little more to the girls, but they are still very glad to be in the tournament."

After a slow start (1-6), the Lady Matadors have won their last six games.

The frontcourt players, Karena Eberts and Chloe Breznikar, have led the team. "They are the heart of the team," Wirthman said. "We're getting better for sure. We just need to get our guards going more consistently and hitting the open shots. Once we figure that out, we're going to be pretty good."

Miramonte defeated Irv-

ington 51-38, Marin Academy 59-28 and defeated Encinal in the championship game 72-58.

Acalanes (Ivory Bracket) head coach Margaret Gartner has coached in almost all the prior Jamborees before coming to Acalanes and acknowledged how much work is put in to bring in so many teams from such varied distances.

The Lady Dons, with no seniors and seven freshmen and sophomores that all play, has a record (10-2) that belies their youth. "There is just too much for them to slow down and think about, so they don't realize how big this tournament is," Gartner said. "My team is special, and they have bought into and believe in our system, even when things are not going right. We're a very unselfish team that believes in each other."

Acalanes defeated Terre Linda 78-37, Eureka 51-37, and defeated Carlsbad in the championship game 69-46.

The boys teams' tournaments were more spread out with Campolindo playing in San Diego, Miramonte in Marin and Acalanes hosting the Chris Huber Memorial Tournament.

Campolindo's winning streak ended at 25 losing to Oak Cliff Faith Family Academy, ranked 12th in the state of Texas, 69-64. Coming into the game, Campolindo had played six games and Oak Cliff had played 18 games.

Shaking off the loss, Campolindo went on to defeat San Ysidro (San Diego) 70-58, Mira Costa (Manhattan Beach) 71-49 and St. Mary's (Phoenix) 54-49.

Miramonte entered tournament play with a 6-1 record. They proceeded to defeat San Martin (Novato) 79-37, Serra (San Mateo) 50-48, Folsom 61-48 and defeated King (Riverside) 72-64 in the championship game

Acalanes had a limited number of games early in the season due to COVID considerations. After the slow start, the Dons are still coming together. Acalanes defeated El Cerrito 74-59 before coming up short against Branson (Ross) 45-29 and Redwood 51-48.

League play begins this week.

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Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 15 Issue 23 Wednesday, January 5, 2022



Lamorinda Home Sales

... read on Page D2

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

A green-themed New Year!



Roses continue to bloom through the winter. Photos Cynthia Brian
By Cynthia Brian

“In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.”
– William Blake

The rainy days and nights have been a welcome respite to our dry, drought-driven California. What a delight to witness hills of green and listen to the rushing waters in our creeks. In the past few weeks, seeds and weeds have germinated providing a lush look to every landscape. Green is the color of life, renewal, and most of all, nature. How fortunate we are to behold green spaces and places as the new year kicks off.

After the recent atmospheric river, I went to check on the Brussels sprouts and sugar snap peas previously planted. To my surprise and delight, the gravel path was covered with sprouted arugula and nasturtium, a most delicious unplanned encounter. The seeds must have

blown in from the vegetable garden bestowing a ready-made salad corridor. In another area, chamomile has covered the ground like a lavish lime carpet. Weeds, appearing as ground covers have made their appearance as well. The common cutleaf geranium, a wild weed also known as cut-leaved cranesbill, blankets my hillside. It is beautiful at this stage of its prostrate growth; however, it will prevent other plants from developing. By spring, it will sport tiny pink florets. The recommendation is to control its spread early as each plant will produce 150 seeds or more that will remain viable for five to 10 years! I have work to do.

In winter, wisteria is a tangle of bare branches. My purple wisteria has twined its way into my flowering pear which makes for an artistic tableau with the pear blossoms peeking out from the brambles. Fresh leaves have emerged on the loquat tree and the magnolia leaves are a shining brilliant green. Society garlic, bergenia, narcissus, and roses offer additional color to the emerald landscape. Naked lady bulbs have sprouted their gorgeous green leaves which are commonly mistaken for agapanthus fronds. I write about Naked ladies often as they are a foundation of my late summer garden with their long naked necks and pretty, pink faces. This week I've been shooting photos of their green leaves which enhance the beauty of barren earth.

My garden has entered the new year in decent enough shape that I will be able to enjoy the winter. If you haven't gardened before, 2022 will be the time to personalize and customize your outdoor experience to reduce stress, smell the roses, and eat what you grow.

... continued on
Page D9



Shiny emerging leaves of the magnolia tree, a pollinator magnet.

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	16	\$900,000	\$4,795,000
MORAGA	10	\$620,000	\$2,550,000
ORINDA	14	\$488,000	\$4,400,000

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

- 1132 Bacon Way, \$1,225,000, 3 Bdrms, 1366 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 11-15-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,215,000, 07-14-21
- 3490 Black Hawk Road, \$2,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 2284 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 11-19-21
- 663 Byrdee Way, \$1,150,000, 3 Bdrms, 2122 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 11-15-21
- 901 Carol Lane, \$2,700,000, 5 Bdrms, 3085 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 11-19-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,005,000, 06-13-00
- 4107 Coralee Lane, \$1,460,000, 4 Bdrms, 2900 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 11-19-21
- 1099 Country Club Drive, \$900,000, 4 Bdrms, 1555 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 11-22-21
- 1656 Foothill Park Circle, \$1,425,000, 4 Bdrms, 2704 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 11-23-21
- 3238 Gloria Terrace, \$4,060,000, 4 Bdrms, 4612 SqFt, 2019 YrBlt, 11-23-21,
Previous Sale: \$650,000, 02-14-18
- 4125 Los Arabis Drive, \$4,795,000, 4 Bdrms, 3934 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 11-19-21,
Previous Sale: \$4,200,000, 01-25-18
- 3279 Mt Diablo Court #12, \$1,137,500, 3 Bdrms, 2420 SqFt,
1987 YrBlt, 11-15-21, Previous Sale: \$710,000, 05-08-07
- 1008 Regio Court, \$1,585,000, 2 Bdrms, 2010 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 11-18-21,
Previous Sale: \$255,000, 06-01-87
- 19 Springhill Lane, \$2,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 2797 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 11-24-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,325,000, 07-06-10
- 3385 St Marys Road, \$2,107,000, 3 Bdrms, 2258 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 11-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,152,500, 12-20-13
- 3660 West Road, \$1,650,000, 3 Bdrms, 1225 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 11-19-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,350,000, 08-04-20
- 22 White Oak Drive, \$2,271,000, 6 Bdrms, 2572 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 11-15-21
- 1000 Willow Drive, \$2,730,000, 4 Bdrms, 2731 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 11-19-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,377,500, 07-16-15

MORAGA

- 1984 Ascot Drive #B, \$620,000, 2 Bdrms, 1233 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 11-22-21,
Previous Sale: \$420,500, 03-21-14
- 827 Augusta Drive, \$1,025,000, 3 Bdrms, 1749 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 11-23-21,
Previous Sale: \$100,000, 02-01-89
- 1844 Camino Pablo, \$1,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 2180 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 11-19-21,
Previous Sale: \$825,000, 05-14-12
- 89 Greenfield Drive, \$1,258,000, 5 Bdrms, 2598 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 11-24-21
- 101 Hazelwood Place, \$1,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 1782 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 11-22-21
- 6 Merrill Drive, \$2,550,000, 4 Bdrms, 3056 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 11-15-21,
Previous Sale: \$499,000, 11-01-87

... continued on Page D6

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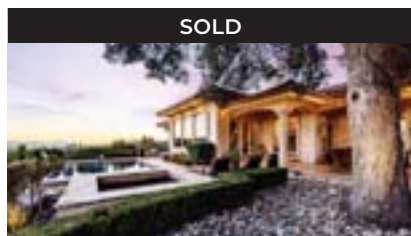


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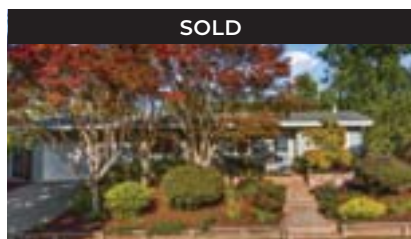
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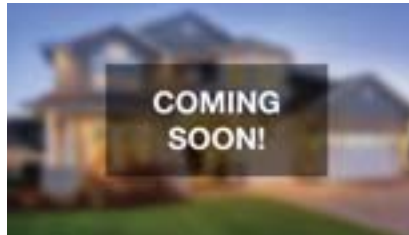
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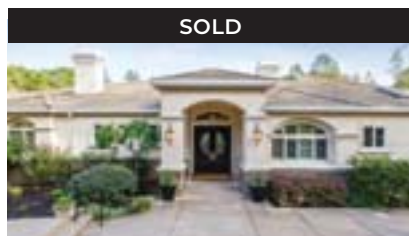
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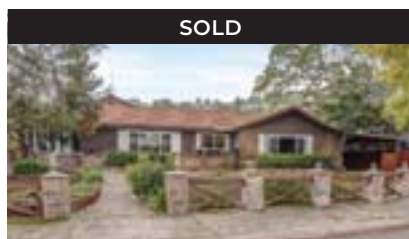
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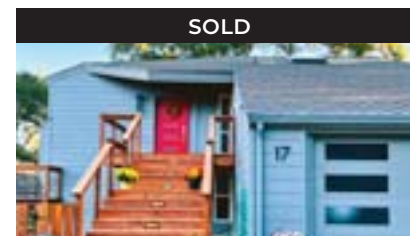
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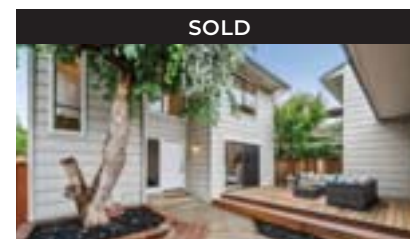
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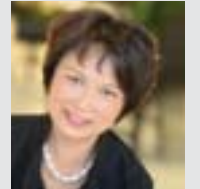
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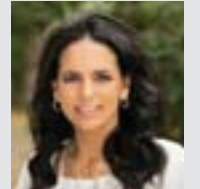
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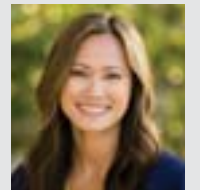
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The best New Year's resolution ever



Photo Shutterstock

Lasting change comes from making slow and steady changes in your daily habits.

By Jennifer Raftis

I have found the secret to making the best New Year's resolution ever. Here it is: Do not ever make another New Year's resolution!

Why, you ask? Because lasting change rarely happens overnight – despite our dramatic proclamations (New Year's resolutions) that we are going to change right now. Rather than New Year's resolutions, I suggest New Year's reflections. Start by giving some thought to your core values and beliefs. Are you living a life that you are proud of? Each and every one of us only gets this one life. Is the way you are living it aligned with who you are and where you want to go? They say that hindsight is 20/20 and I find that to be true. As I look to the new year, I find it important to reflect on the previous year – what

worked and what didn't, did my actions align with my values, what could I have done better?

What would you like to change in the new year?

As a professional organizer, I follow the rules of Project Management theory and the last rule is to write down lessons learned after completing a job. Even if the job appears to be perfect, there is always something that could be learned from the experience. You can apply this rule to the end of a year, too.

Look back and reflect on 2021. What did you learn? Think about how you can improve on your actions, so they match your values and what you would like to change in the new year. Use this insight to create your goals for 2022. When you set goals for yourself, it helps to break them down into smaller

steps. I suggest to my clients that they create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based) goals. By setting objectives and designing a clear roadmap for how you will reach your target, you can determine the time and energy it will take to make progress. Remember the story of the tortoise and the hare? Lasting change comes from making slow and steady changes in your daily habits.

Here is a quick overview of how to create a SMART goal: Specific – be clear and specific; Measurable – if it's not measurable, how do you know you have attained it? (Instead of saying, "I want to improve my golf skills" your measurable goal might be, "I want to improve my handicap from 15 to a 12"); Achievable – can your goal be reasonably accomplished within a certain time-frame that will keep you motivated and focused? (Decide how much time and energy it will take to achieve this goal. Do you want to invest a lot or a little?); Relevant – does this goal contribute to your overall core values or needs; and Time-based – the goal should have an end date. When do you realistically want this goal achieved?

Design a roadmap for how you will achieve your goals. An example would be the classic "I want to lose 15 pounds." If I make this a SMART goal it would look like this: You want to lose 15 pounds; you will know when this goal is achieved because you will have lost 15 pounds; this is a goal that you can achieve (if you said you wanted to lose 15 pounds by tomorrow, that wouldn't be attainable); this goal meets with my core values ... taking care of my health; and, finally, you have set the deadline to lose 15 pounds by Aug. 1.

A well thought out and planned goal is achieved over time by changes in your frame of mind and daily habits, not by a declaration made on New Year's Eve.

... continued on Page D8

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

... continued from Page D2

MORAGA ... continued

- 1223 Rimer Drive, \$2,160,000, 4 Bdrms, 2290 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 11-16-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,385,000, 11-16-15
- 34 San Pablo Court, \$2,255,000, 4 Bdrms, 2530 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 11-24-21
- 34 Sanders Ranch Road, \$2,315,000, 4 Bdrms, 2581 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 11-23-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,510,000, 09-01-17
- 17 Waterloo Place, \$1,840,000, 4 Bdrms, 2791 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 11-18-21

ORINDA

- 73 Brookwood Road #43, \$488,000, 1 Bdrms, 673 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 11-18-21
- 22 Camino Sobrante, \$2,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 3351 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 11-22-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,350,000, 04-14-15
- 19 El Pulgar, \$1,425,000, 5 Bdrms, 1978 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 11-15-21
- 15 Gardiner Court, \$4,400,000, 5 Bdrms, 4510 SqFt, 2000 YrBlt, 11-19-21,
Previous Sale: \$2,675,000, 03-06-15
- 130 La Espiral, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2559 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 11-17-21
- 18 La Noria, \$1,500,000, 3 Bdrms, 2338 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 11-16-21
- 29 La Vuelta, \$2,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 3655 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 11-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,425,000, 03-12-14
- 3 Owl Hill Court, \$1,935,000, 3 Bdrms, 1519 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 11-18-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,328,000, 04-24-18
- 9 Patricia Road, \$1,525,000, 3 Bdrms, 1936 SqFt, 1999 YrBlt, 11-23-21,
Previous Sale: \$850,000, 05-20-13
- 21 Scenic Drive, \$1,900,000, 3 Bdrms, 2004 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 11-19-21
- 4 Southwood Court, \$1,394,500, 3 Bdrms, 1573 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 11-16-21,
Previous Sale: \$640,000, 09-01-09
- 9 Stanton Court, \$1,550,000, 3 Bdrms, 1601 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 11-23-21,
Previous Sale: \$916,000, 11-02-04
- 26 Tappan Lane, \$2,900,000, 5 Bdrms, 3693 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 11-18-21,
Previous Sale: \$475,000, 03-01-91
- 9 Valley View Road, \$3,010,000, 4 Bdrms, 4268 SqFt, 2008 YrBlt, 11-23-21,
Previous Sale: \$2,250,000, 10-30-17

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To all the wonderful clients I worked with in 2021:
Wishing you a joyous new year.

In 2021, Ann represented buyers and sellers in more than \$50 million in transactions, surpassing her record sales total for 2020. One of her 2021 transactions, representing the seller of a Happy Valley property in Lafayette, produced the highest price of any Lafayette sale ever reported on the Multiple Listing Service. Ann has become the largest sales producer in the Golden Gate Sotheby's Lafayette Office.

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The best New Year's resolution ever



What would you like to change in the new year?

Photo Shutterstock

... continued from Page D4

I work with many clients on goal setting, and I always have them start with mentally preparing for the change in habits ahead of time. After they define their SMART goal, we begin. For example, I have a client who valued calmness and found that some of the disorganization in her home was frustrating her. We decided to start with her closet. Her SMART goal looked like this: I will only have clothes in my closet that will fit me now; I will know this goal has been achieved when I have discarded/donated items that no longer fit me so I can easily get dressed in the morning with confidence; I will set a time to work on this project for one hour each week; having a clean organized closet will streamline my morning routine (and my mornings will be less chaotic); and I will complete this project by March 30.

Another example would be the classic "I want to park my car in the garage." If I make this a SMART goal it would look like this: I will make room in my garage for my car; you

will know when this goal is achieved because you will be able to park your car in the garage; I estimate this will take 30 hours and I have scheduled 2-hour blocks on 15 Saturday mornings; this goal meets with my core values ... taking care of my car and belongings; and I will have this project completed by June 1.

So, I encourage you to do the following: 1) Look back at 2021 and reflect on what worked and what didn't; 2) Define your core values and write them down; 3) Create SMART goals for 2022; 4) Place your SMART goals and core values where you can see them every day.

I challenge you to make some SMART goals this year and would love to hear your success stories. Please email me your goals to jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com and the first five people will get a prize from me! Remember, live your life as if it's the only one you have ... because it's the only one you have.

Happy New Year and Happy Organizing!!

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



Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

A green themed New Year!



The purple florets of society garlic add purple to the greenscape.



A former gravel path boasts a salad of wild arugula and nasturtium.

Photos Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page D1

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention released a survey that found 42% of Americans experienced anxiety or depression in 2021 compared to just 11% pre-pandemic. Growing, giving, and receiving flowers, herbs, vegetables and fruits trigger the feel-good hormones that heal. Most seeds that are being sold this year will be for edibles as more and more people realize that growing what we want to consume is easy, nutritious, and better for the planet.

The Garden Media Group reported that in 2021, 18.3 million people took up gardening, with interest levels equal between men and women. Eighty percent of the younger generation consider gardening a worthwhile and “cool” endeavor as the concern with climate change, plant and wildlife extinction, and food equity escalates. People with children are especially interested in growing organic and natural foods. Purchasing grow-your-own kits that include the container, seeds, plants, fertilizer, and supports as well as raised beds are expected to be in high de-

mand. Adding native plants to increase biodiversity and forage for the birds and wildlife will also be a critical ingredient. The National Wildlife Federation launched a Guide for Wildlife collection of keystone native plants that will attract insects that will feed 95% of backyard bird species. Getting to know our neighborhood birds has already become a popular pastime.

... continued on Page D10



The weed, common cutleaf wild geranium must be pulled as soon as possible.

... continued from Page D9

Make sure to provide forage for them as you enjoy their symphonic tunes. (See my article, "A Berry, Merry Christmas...Mostly for the Birds" www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1522/Digging-Deep-with-Goddess-Gardener-Cynthia-Brian-A-berry-merry-Christmas-mostly-for-the-birds.html)

You don't need a large landscape to have a garden. You can buy planter boxes or containers that will fit on your porch, balcony, patio, or even a windowsill. Start planning a mixture of flowers, ornamentals, and edibles. Many flowers are both beautiful and edible including violets, nasturtium, pansies, tulip petals, daylilies, bee balm, calendula, roses, hostas, and herb flowers. By making 2022 the year to embrace organic methods, adding more plants to our dining menus, and composting the leftovers, we can each do our part to reduce our carbon footprint.

As you write your goals and resolutions for 2022, I encourage you to keep a green journal and add gardening to the top of your list. You will be rewarded with a more peaceful mind, a soulful spirit, a kinder heart, and a body that is nourished. Cultivate a theme of green and together we will dig deeper to sustain and nurture our environment for ourselves and future generations.

In winter, enjoy!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Green New Year!



Narcissus are blooming with wafting fragrance. Photos Cynthia Brian



Pear blossoms peek through a tangle of barren wisteria branches.



New green growth on the loquat tree.



Cynthia Brian toasts all gardeners in the New Year!

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your winter garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com.

Buy copies of her books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD and special savings.

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total transactions 2021.



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