

White Pony Express launches annual Star Program



Photo provided

Submitted by Steve Spraitzer

White Pony Express (WPE) is launching its third annual Star Program with the help of local businesses. This unique holiday program uplifts lives throughout the county during a season where warmth is meant to be shared. Each star is hand-decorated and lists a specific item needed by an adult or child experiencing challenges. Businesses can display the stars in any creative way they choose, while clients and friends can select a star and purchase the item listed on the star. White Pony Express will schedule a time to pick up the gifts which will be beautifully wrapped and then delivered to neighbors in need. In this way, everyone can make the holiday season sparkle a little brighter.

To request your Star Program Kit, please contact Mandy at - mandy@whiteponyexpress.org or call 925-322-0604 Option 4. Learn more about WPE at <https://www.whiteponyexpress.org>

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

Vanderbilt admissions official to speak in Moraga



Annie Wells Photo provided

Submitted by Gary Irwin

The Rotary Club of Moraga is partnering with the Moraga School District and Acalanes Union High School District to present Annie Wells, the Assistant Director of Admissions at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, who will speak about "The Ins and Outs of the College Admissions Process" at noon on Tuesday, Nov. 1 at the Holy Trinity Serbian

Orthodox Church.

Wells' talk will provide attendees a baseline understanding of the college admissions process along with insights to the financial aid process and what a college admissions officer from a highly selective university looks for in an application. Reservations are required at <https://moragarotaryevents.com>. The \$10 charge is to provide each person with a light lunch of a sandwich, chips, cookie, and bottled water. Rotary Club of Moraga is a service organization, within Rotary International, chartered in 1967.

"Rotary Club of Moraga has always supported the School Districts as evidenced by Club funding for Campolindo scholarships, buying security cameras for MSD schools, and sponsoring a multitude of Moraga Odyssey of the Minds teams over the years," stated Hubert Ma, Moraga Rotarian and event organizer. "Superintendents Nickerson and Parks, along with the Principals and PTAs, have been tremendous partners in this event. It is because of Superintendents Nickerson and Parks leadership that this event is happening."

You are invited to be a guest at a future Rotary noon-time Tuesday meeting; additional details can be found at <https://www.moragarotary.org>.

Not to be missed

Art

Lamorinda Art Alliance presents: Enhance and Abstract the Human Figure in Art with Melinda Cootsona, who will be conducting two instructional Zoom chats with LAA members on the topic of abstracting the human figure. Tuesday, Nov. 15, 3 p.m. will take us into the intriguing world of the cold wax process. <https://www.melindacootsona.com/>

Art Embraces Words – Oct. 29, 2 to 3:30 p.m. – Costume Event. Writers paint images with words. Artists tell stories with color. To-

gether they enrich our community. The Lamorinda Arts Council invites you to show up as your favorite literary or artistic character at its free program in the Lafayette Library. Emerging writers read from their work surrounded by artwork from local artists. In this way art literally "embraces" the spoken word. The final 2022 program will be a Webinar hosted by AEW alumni Denise Nomura and Natalie Samuels Wheeler in November; date TBD. Visit <https://lamorindaarts.org/art-embraces-words/> for more information. This program is made possible by a generous grant

from the Lafayette Community Foundation.

Valley Art Gallery presents "Focal Points" – A New Juried Collection for Fall. Through Nov. 12. Twice a year, the Valley Art Gallery juries works from their 100+ member artists to hang in a new exhibition. 1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 110, Walnut Creek, www.valleyartgallery.org; (925) 935-4311.

The Moraga Art Gallery's lush holiday exhibit, "Variations on the Theme of Beauty," debuts on Nov. 9 with a display of works by more than two dozen area artists:

ceramicists, sculptors, oil painters, etchers, and many more whose talents will be front-and-center until Jan. 15 at 432 Center Street in Moraga's Rheem Shopping Center. Ordinarily open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m., the gallery will be open daily between Dec. 1 and 24. Save the date: Saturday, Nov. 19, 5 to 7 p.m., free holiday reception to view the art, meet the artists and enjoy snacks and live music. www.moragaart-gallery.com, (925) 376-5407.

Art show at the Orinda Library Art Gallery. On display in November is "Looking Out, Looking

In: Paintings by Nicole Reader." View 13 paintings of contemplative people turning their eyes elsewhere. See more at www.nicolereader.com and lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits. Join the artist for drinks and refreshments at a reception on Saturday, Nov. 5, 3-5 p.m.

Fall open studios on Nov. 5, 6, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Nov. 12, 13, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be over 110 artists to visit and view their art at this free event. All artist and event details, including map, may be viewed at: Eastbayopenstudios.com

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In Memory

John Arthur Baitx

Jan. 28, 1947 – Oct. 15, 2022
Resident of Moraga



John Arthur Baitx passed away peacefully in his home surrounded by his loved ones on Oct. 15, 2022. He was the youngest of three children, the son of Josephine and Alfred Baitx. John spent his youth riding through the hills and pear orchards of Moraga. He grew up in a time where you helped your neighbors, volunteered at the fire department and worked cattle with the local ranchers. John graduated from Miramonte High School in 1965. While part of the Moraga Horsemen, John met the woman he would spend his life with, Gail Gregory. The two were married in 1970 and raised four children, Tanya, Greg, Corey and Katy, on the same property where John grew up.

Following in his father's footsteps, John began his career as a firefighter in 1968. He served with the Dublin Fire Department for 31 years, retiring with the SRVFPD. John loved being an engineer, driving the fire engine on all the calls. It was during this time that his "fire family" was born. John often remarked that the bond between firemen was strong and universal. Even after his retirement, he continued to get breakfast with his brothers and reminisce about the years they served.

John greeted everyone with a smile and a joke. He laughed with friends and could talk for hours. Always up for an adventure, John loved to go crabbing in Oregon and fishing in Mexico. He looked forward to the many family vacations to Disneyland and visiting family

in Southern California. John and Gail were fortunate to raise their children in the same town as Gail's sister Dana and her husband Don. Throughout the years the two families did everything together.

John's greatest passion in life was his family. His home was always open to the kids' friends, often becoming the center of all their activities. He enjoyed being part of all sporting and school events. John served for numerous years as a board member of Moraga Ranch Swim Club. Many summer nights were spent playing dominoes, watching the kids swim and creating memories. John volunteered building sets for musicals and grad nights, as well as the floats for homecoming every year. When grandkids came along, John's heart only grew bigger. He headed the Leos Club, a division of the Moraga Lions Club, in order to spend more time with his grandsons. Papa John could always be found in the bleachers or on the sidelines cheering on the grandkids.

John is survived by his wife Gail of 52 years, their children and grandchildren, Tanya, Chris, CJ, Luca and Grayson Rago, Greg, Kris, Gannon and Sean Baitx, Corey, Doug, Macy and Molly Eckley, Katy, Chris and Brann Binnings, Dana and Don Glasgow, and all the nieces and nephews he loved so very much. Papa John will be missed not only as a husband, father and grandfather, but as a treasured son of Moraga.

A Celebration of John's life will be held on Dec. 10 at the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church in Moraga from 1-4 p.m. The Fire Department Last Call Bell Ceremony will take place at 2 pm. We invite all our loved ones to join us in saying goodbye to John. In lieu of flowers, John would love for you to watch an old Western movie and think of him.

In Memory

Deborah Clayton White

June 15, 1948 – Oct. 7, 2022



Moraga's Deborah Clayton White passed away peacefully in her home surrounded by her loving family after a year-long battle with cancer.

Debi, the oldest of three daughters of Frank and Betty Clayton, grew up in Yuma, Arizona, helping her family to run their feedlot business, raising thousands of head of cattle during her youth there. Graduating from the University of Arizona, she swore off the desert and made her way to the Bay Area in the early 1970s, where she met the love of her life, Tom White, and the two were married in 1974. Two sons, Matt and Michael, soon came, and the young family settled in Moraga in 1979.

For over 40 years, Debi was a fixture of the Moraga community. She involved herself with numerous local organizations, including the Moraga Junior Women's Club, Meals on Wheels, the Moraga Baseball Association, and the Moraga Ranch Swim Club, to name a few. Most notably, she worked as a teaching assistant at Camino Pablo Elementary School for 15 years, partnered with the legendary fifth-grade teacher, Glenn Robak, with whom she helped to educate Moraga's youth.

Debi was a devoted mother who loved spending time with her family. She relished in planning gatherings to bring the family together, including organizing Thanksgiving feasts each year for 35, Christmas trips to Paso Robles, where her parents and sisters relocated, and the annual family week at Tahoe Taverns, coordinating accommodations for 20. Her organizational abilities were unmatched.

In her second act, Debi partnered her knack for planning with her passion for travel by becoming a travel consultant in the early 2000s. For the next 20 years she expertly planned countless worldwide trips for customers, family, and friends. With their rotating "Travel Tribe," Debi and Tom traveled the world, experiencing diverse cultures, creating indelible memories, and developing deep personal connections with their companions. Debi's motto was "Life is too short to take a bad trip!"

Debi is survived by her husband of 48 years, her sons, daughters-in-law Jessica and Amanda, her three beloved grandchildren, Harper, Jonah, and Everett, and her two sisters, Suzie Rava and Pam Wilken. Beyond that she leaves behind an extensive network of friends and family that have been so supportive over these past few months. During her final days testimonials poured in from extended family, sorority sisters, book club cohorts, professional group members, travel companions, Moraga Ranch buddies, co-workers, fellow Indian Guides families, and numerous others who were touched by Debi during her lifetime. While ending too soon, Debi lived a full and rich life, leaving no stone unturned. Above all else, she will be remembered for her positivity, her sense of humor, and her head on approach to life.

A celebration of Debi's life will be held in November. In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution in Debi's name to the Helen Diller Cancer Center at UCSF or to Hospice East Bay.

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 story-desk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.