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Photo Jeff Heyman

Community gathers for an early Thanksgiving breakfast in Lafayette

By Jeff Heyman

Filled with soaring seasonal harp music and bedecked in floral displays, Lafayette's Veterans Memorial Center – radiating warmth against the early morning autumn chill outside, was filled on Nov. 7 with Lamorindans eager to begin the holiday season. Some 130 early-risers mingled with their fellow neighbors at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce's 44th Annual Community Thanksgiving Breakfast. Traditionally, the breakfast rings in the holiday season in Lamorinda and this year was no different: a

who's who of locals feasted on a sunrise breakfast, beautifully laid out in the expansive Veterans Memorial building.

City officials, small business owners, educators and, of course, residents got to know each other just a little bit better on what would otherwise have been just another chilly November morning. The breakfast's keynote presentation was devoted to Las Trampas, a local nonprofit organization which since 1958 has provided services to people with developmental

disabilities and their families in our community.

And, as invocations and benedictions were delivered, it was the community that was foremost in people's minds. Best summed up by Lafayette Chamber's Executive Director, Sara Regan, the Thanksgiving breakfast – and the entire Thanksgiving holiday – is about the community coming together and offering thanks for all that we have. She's right, as we look back during this Thanksgiving, we really do have so much to be thankful for right here in Lamorinda.

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IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE IN LAFAYETTE

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, DEC. 3 4:30-6:30 LAFAYETTE PLAZA

PRESENTED BY **LAFAYETTE CHAMBER BRANCH** **Dana Green Team**

TREE LIGHTING ★ VISIT FROM SANTA ★ MUSICAL PERFORMANCES
LafayetteChamber.org/Holiday

Autumn craft-making brings kids to the library

By Vera Kochan



The month of November brings to mind colorful leaves, hot chocolate, and Thanksgiving. On that note, Moraga Librarian Nirit Schnitzer and Librarian Assistant Emily Ferne offered kids the opportunity to attend a free Autumn Crafts event on Nov. 16.

In keeping with the theme of the season, kids could color a white paper acorn and write on it what they were thankful for. The finished product was turned over to library staff to be hung up in the children's area.

Leaf People were made with precut, multi-colored, paper maple leaves for the bodies and pipe cleaners for the arms and legs. Crayons, markers and colored pencils were on hand for any detail-work, such as facial features.

Pre-printed white paper mugs were available for the kids to decorate with stickers and large balls of cotton, which stood in for marshmallows on their hot cocoa "mugs". It was noted, for those tykes who have a vivid imagination, that the "marshmallows" were not edible.

You can't celebrate Thanksgiving without the obligatory turkey. Paper plates served as the bodies while different colored, paper feathers were attached to bring the bird to "life." Googly eyes gave the doomed-for-Thanksgiving-dinner bird that extra frantic appearance.

As is typical with those parents and nannies that brought younger children, the adults wound up partaking of the assembly process and appeared rather pleased with their results. Oh, to be a kid again!

Maya (7) and brother Lucas (3) are proud of their Autumn Craft creations

Photo Vera Kochan

Civic News

Moraga Council approves Phase 2 of Laguna Creek Restoration Project – Page 5

Public Safety

Orinda sees two school lockdowns in one week – Page 8

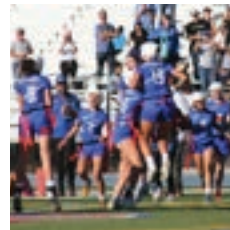
Life in Lamorinda

Festive holiday events planned in Lamorinda through December – Page 13



Sports

Acalanes flag football team finishes second at NCS – Page 10



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Our Homes

The spectacular show of fall colors. Growing with gratitude. – Page OH1

OH1-OH12





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

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Lafayette Plaza at 3530 Plaza Way
LafayetteChamber.org/Holiday

The Dana Green Team has proudly founded and sponsored this loved event since its inception.

Lafayette teachers' contract ratified with unprecedented solidarity

By Sharon K. Sobotta

Lafayette Teachers may not have gotten the full 14% raise they asked for, or additional health care coverage, but they did get 13, which was a percentage of a concession on the district's part and recognition of all of their years of service as educators, which many of them say, will be a game changer. Teachers and allies in other districts are crediting the unprecedented amount of coalition building and organizing with the strides they made.

California Teachers Association Staff Representative Rosemary Louissaint, who represents teachers in Pittsburgh, Antioch, Clayton Valley Charter, Contra Costa County and John Swett United, was among the supporters. "I've seen this kind of solidarity in other districts before but this was the first time I've seen something like this in Lafayette," Louissaint said

during a solidarity action ahead of the contract being reached. "We know that the teacher shortage is real. We need to pay teachers the best we can so we can support our families and stay in the profession. We don't want our classrooms to be revolving doors. We want people to stay committed. And in order for that to happen, we need to prioritize our students, and to do that we need to prioritize our teachers."

In the end, 13 proved to be the lucky number for settling the one-year contract. On Nov. 8 after the Lafayette Education Association members voted, the year-old contract was ratified. And while no party got everything they asked for, there's a sentiment among teachers of being relieved that an agreement has been reached and happy to have been made "whole-ish" for now. The new agreed upon

contract recognizes the teachers' collective years of service in the profession, which impacts the pay raise schedule for many of them. The teachers union conceded on their wish for more inclusive healthcare coverage and the district raised their offer from 12 to 13%.

Kristi Gingrich, a third- and fourth-grade teacher and the president of the Lafayette Teachers Association, believes strongly that the community support and educator solidarity had a direct impact on meeting the ultimate goal of reaching a contract.

When the contract was settled, Gingrich said she and many of her colleagues felt incredibly relieved. "We're excited to put the negotiation process behind us and move forward. We [teachers] conceded on our +1 healthcare ask, the district gave us an additional 1% in salary. We feel

like our hard work hasn't gone unnoticed. We think having the community and fellow teacher support, and coordinated plans of action and being so organized as teachers for the first time in many years really helped us," Gingrich said. "Being united with teachers in other districts and with the community is what helped us move the needle a little bit towards a fair contract. We needed to work together to have a voice and be fair and be strong."

Lafayette School District Superintendent Brent Stephens says the district is just as excited as the teachers to move forward. "The 13% raise reflects the district's strong commitment to our teachers and staff. We value and recognize our outstanding Lafayette educators and the many contributions they make to our students' education," Stephens said. "Throughout

the bargaining process the district has appreciated our ongoing engagement with the Lafayette Education Association, the voices of all our teachers, and the active participation of the Lafayette community in our public schools."

The negotiation process for next year's contract begins in March. Many may be watching to see if the needle towards a fair contract moves even a little further to add in the missing ingredient of more healthcare coverage. Till then, teachers from across the Bay have made their position clear. They are sticking together.

"We all stick together. We're here to help our brothers and sisters," Bob Carson, the president of the Antioch Teachers Association, said while standing in solidarity with Lafayette teachers at a board meeting.

Council recognizes longtime LLLCF Executive Director Needel upon retiring

By Lou Fancher

The city council and members of the Lafayette community at the Oct. 23 council meeting honored Beth Needel, Executive Director of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation, upon her retirement. Mayor Carl Anduri thanked Needel for her contributions over the past 10 years, recalling at the time she was hired a Lafayette Vista headline: "Impossibly, Impressively Qualified." Anduri said because it was in the news publication Vista "it had to be true" and it described the skills she brought to Lafayette. "What you brought was a real spirit to get things done, a real understanding of the community and the desire to serve all ages in the community," Anduri said.

The presentation had begun with Needel introducing a short video created for the foundation over the Labor Day weekend in 2022. On the video, a number of people expressed appreciation for the library, highlighting in their comments that "it is teaming with opportunities and offerings accessible to all people," and suggesting "a thriving library is the key to a healthy community" that "provides a sense of belonging to all" and is "a stress reliever."

Rita Iorfida in public comments made in person at the meeting spoke as a founding board member of the library to Needel's reliability and said, "She's always come through for us."

Iorfida was swiftly sec-

onded by Karen Mulvaney, who said Needel brought "exactly what was needed" to the foundation and was "a tremendous team builder." Needel's relationships within the community, Mulvaney said, were exemplary and had "blossomed" while her focus from day one had remained always about the group, the people who came to the library, more than about Needel herself.

LLLCF president Lisa Speigler first met Needel virtually during the pandemic. "Beth was a person who dug deep to bring us back to what the library really offers: a sense of place, a sense of connection; grounding our community at a time when we needed just that. The programs and events that

Beth and her team spearheaded during the pandemic kept the foundation running and thriving." Speigler specifically mentioned the Virtual Night held at the library that at the time was "groundbreaking, creative, thoughtful, and made people feel like a community." Needel, she suggested, was a visionary who brought programs such as the Swell Center that benefits teens, pre-teens and now, seniors.

Suzu Pak was on the Foundation board's hiring committee 10 years ago when Needel was a candidate for the executive director position. She remembered thinking that while Needel would be coming from a leadership position with Oakland Zoo, the library was a

home for people, not animals. She wondered about possible outcomes, then realized animals and people have in common the same need for care, nurturing, and maximum use of resources. Thanking Needel for her contributions that expanded the vision of what the library could be, she said, "You're a great ambassador of Lafayette."

In a phone interview two weeks later, Needel said her departure from the library is timely. "I've been there 10-and-a-half-years and I think every person has just so much excitement and creativity to put toward any job. I thought fresh leadership would do the organization good.

... continued on Page 5

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Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission provides annual update to city council

By Lou Fancher

A panel of Parks, Trails and Recreation Commissioners brought a department update to the council at the Nov. 13 meeting. Following the introduction of the commissioners by PTR Commission Chair Alison Hill, Parks Subcommittee chair Grace Dixon highlighted the strengths that could be applied to all city committees and subcommittees. “Lafayette is a sought-after city that thrives due to our small and mighty and knowledgeable staff, and its strong partnerships with our dedicated volunteers.”

The PTR department includes the Trail, Park, Community Center, and Hamlin Nature Park subcommittees.

Dixon emphasized that the committee’s partnerships with local organizations are vital and lead to memorable events. Among the partners mentioned were the Youth Commission, Senior Services Commission, Community Foundation of Lafayette, Chamber of Commerce, Lafayette School District, East Bay Regional Park District and the East Bay Municipal Utility District, neighboring cities and others. Green hills, great schools, and good teamwork is the result of the collective energy and contributions, according to Dixon.

Hamlin Nature Park Subcommittee member Justine Parmelee spoke on three initiatives as examples of the work performed by the subcommittee. Lafayette Community Center Playground’s renovation when opened in 2024 will offer a larger footprint, improved accessibility for tiny tots and others. The Leigh Creekside and Gazebo Conceptual Design has moved forward with funding support, and the safety and experience on the area’s recreational trails has been improved with new signage and trail markers enhanced by QR codes.

Key accomplishments fea-

tured in the presentation ranged from the Brook Street Play Area Renovation to the Parkland Acquisition, a Rain Garden Partnership with the Creeks Committee, the Expanded Childcare and School Bus Service, and more.

Challenges facing the committee continue to be funding for land acquisition, repairs or replacement of aging facilities, and the environmental impacts on parks and trails as the Lafayette community continues to grow. Maintaining the current system is requiring all of the resources and the PTR continues to fall short of their goals. One bright light was a report that the recreation program is self-sustaining and this year broke the past records by generating \$2 million in revenue.

Council questions from Mayor Carl Anduri began with what the demands for community playing fields will be as the population grows and where those fields might be located. With limited flat spaces, the shortage is an ongoing challenge the department continues to address. Efforts to expand the hours and bolster the durability of the current fields through measures such as additional lighting, artificial turf and other means have an impact, but it is limited. Ideally, adding more land to the system would result in the largest improvements.

Mayor Anduri commended the department’s efforts during the pandemic to increase the childcare support programs and safe activities for youths. He read a proclamation thanking the many volunteers who keep the trails safe and maintain them year-round, especially the Save Mount Diablo Trail Dogs, whose work has resulted in January 30, 2024, being declared by the city as “Trail Dogs Day.”

Lafayette once again receives excellence in financial reporting certificate



Photo courtesy city of Lafayette

Lafayette’s Assistant Administrative Services Director Jennifer Wakeman shared a plaque with the city council at its Nov. 13 meeting after the Finance and Budget office re-

ceived its eighth consecutive certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting. The awarding organization, the Government Finance Officers Association, represents public finance officials throughout the United States and Canada. To promote excellence in financial reporting the GFOA developed the Excellence in Financial Reporting Program. “The certificate is the highest form of recognition a public agency can receive for their financial reporting,” Wakeman said. “I want to thank the finance staff who works with integrity and diligence every day.” – J. Wake



Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Monday, Nov. 27, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall

Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall

Design Review

Monday, Nov. 27, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Arts & Science Discovery Room

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 MORAGA

Moraga employees win county-wide walking challenge

By Vera Kochan

The Municipal Pooling Authority, which provides workers' compensation insurance and liability coverage to municipal employees, held its first ever Fall Walking Challenge 2023,

which spanned the month of October and was officially over on Oct. 31. Of the 14 Contra Costa teams that participated, 10 employees from the small but mighty town of Moraga came in first place with 322,334 average steps per day. Orinda came in second with 294,958 and Lafayette placed fifth with 246,865.

On an individual basis, Moraga Police Department Support Services Coordinator Cathy Ghiselli came in first place, out of 385 participants, with a month-long total of 913,352 steps (29,463 average steps per day).

According to MPA Administrative Program Coordinator (and point of contact for the Wellness Program) Azalea Wylie, several of their members were interested in participating in some type of walking challenge. With the blessing from MPA Chief Administrative Officer Linda Cox, the event had its first trial run with only Martinez taking part by using the Pacer app. The initial at-

tempt was a success, and any feedback from Martinez proved invaluable to incorporating the Walking Challenge into the Wellness Program.

"The idea behind the Walking Challenge is to encourage healthy movement with your team/co-workers," explained Wylie. "You work with your team to earn the most steps, competing against the other members who are participating. In the end, the goal is to build a new walking habit by way of some friendly competition. Research shows that something as simple as walking more often can help not only your physical well-being but also your mental well-being."

Participants' steps were recorded through the Pacer app and were automatically averaged. Top walker, Ghiselli received a Fitbit, while Team Moraga will receive a yet to be determined mystery prize, and each team member will also receive a certificate and an Iron Flask Sports Water Bottle

of their choosing. The town will receive a plaque, and of course, bragging rights.

Besides Ghiselli, Team Moraga included: Senior Maintenance Worker Jose Limon, Engineer Technician/Inspector Justin Jerome, Part Time Accounting Technician Steven Thomason, MPD Officer Fabiola Hernandez, Public Works Senior Administrative Assistant Jeanet Lara, Town Manager Scott Mitnick, Planning Director Afshan Hamid, Assistant Planner Alistair Fortson, and Senior Accountant Sylvia Wells.

"Cathy, in our Police Department, deserves the most ink and attention," stated Mitnick. "She was the lead 'walker' and organizer for Team Moraga. This may seem like a silly thing that MPA does to promote healthy employees, reduce sick leave usage, and lower operating costs. However, it really does serve to make our employees aware of their lifestyle and personal health. It also helps to promote teamwork and bring our em-



Photo courtesy Municipal Pooling Authority

Certificate awarded to the town for winning Fall Walking Challenge 2023

ployees closer together." Mitnick added, "It should be mentioned that by lowering use of sick leave due to having healthy employees, we are able to provide our taxpayers higher levels of service at a lower cost."

"The Fall Walking Challenge had such a great turnout," said Wylie. "We will be hosting another walking challenge in April 2024."

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Author Dan Hanel discusses local history at MHS event

By Vera Kochan

Award-winning mystery novel author Dan Hanel offered insight into some of the local history of Contra Costa County during his Nov. 5 presentation for the Moraga Historical Soci-

ety's speaker event at the Hacienda de las Flores.

Hanel's historical mystery series, "In the Shadow of Diablo," has earned him accolades as the "2019 Next Generation Indie Book Award Winner for Best Series." The fact that his fictional main character is a science teacher comes as no surprise in that Hanel has personally received the "Eukel Teacher Trust Award for Outstanding Teachers of Contra Costa County," in addition to being named "Distinguished High School Science Teacher for the State of California."

The Brentwood resident's four novels combine fact with fiction while bringing to life heavily researched, historical locations near Mt. Diablo and weaving a past/present storyline. Hanel's first novel, "Mystery of the Great Stone House," is based on Brentwood's John Marsh, who with no actual credentials, became California's first doctor and first American settler in Contra Costa County. After amassing a fortune from crops, ranching, and the fur trade, Marsh built his 7,000 square foot stone mansion. His brutal murder in 1856, prompted his long-lost son, Charles, on a quest spanning a decade to bring the killers to justice.

Marsh's daughter, Alice, by a second marriage, was responsible for the naming of Orinda. While married to Oakland's William Camron, their land purchase was named Orinda Park after Alice's favorite, 17th century, English poet Katherine Fowler Philips, also known as, The Matchless Orinda. Rumors of a fortune in hidden gold help to drive this novel's plotline.

Hanel's second novel, "Death at the Healing Waters," explores the west coast's most famous 1920s resort called Byron Hot Springs. Built on hot springs and salt flats, the hotel was originally constructed to provide people with the oppor-

tunity to "partake of the healing waters", which were advertised as a cure-all for a variety of medical issues. As its popularity grew, the rich and famous of the day came for a relaxing and restorative getaway. The fact that the location was so remote, prohibition never came knocking on its door. When the Great Depression took a toll on everyone's wallet, the resort eventually became the Army's Camp Tracy during WWII and was converted into a secret interrogation center for Japanese and German Naval officers. At the center of this novel's intrigue is a missing, legendary 137 carat diamond.

"Ghosts of Black Diamond," Hanel's third novel, refers to the Black Diamond Coal Mine near Antioch. Thanks to the population boom of the Bay Area in the 1800s, coal was considered a valuable commodity in its day. Founded by Noah Norton, the town of Nortonville sprouted up near the mines in order to house the workers and their families. It was populated by mostly Welsh immigrants, some of which belonged to a secret society based on ancient philosophy and mystic symbolism with ties to medieval legends such as King Arthur. These symbols can be found on many of the headstones in the adjacent Rose Hill Cemetery. Sarah Norton, Noah's wife, was the town's midwife who attended over 600 cases without losing one. She died at the age of 68 in a runaway buggy accident while en route to a birthing. Known as the White Witch, it is said that her spirit haunts Rose Hill Cemetery.

Hanel's latest novel, "Beneath the Tangled Vines," involves Contra Costa County's once burgeoning wine industry. By 1904, there were dozens of vineyards and wineries dotting the land surrounding Mt. Diablo. Martinez, Clayton, and Pleasant Hill, among so many more, added to the wine indus-

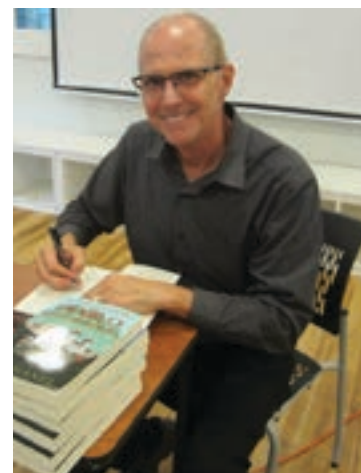


Photo Vera Kochan

Historical mystery author, Dan Hanel, signs his books

try with their plentifully producing vineyards. San Francisco was a mecca of wine warehouses, counting at least 27 until the 1906 Earthquake destroyed all but one with fires that were fueled by the alcohol within. The California Wine Association, which held a virtual monopoly over the industry, decided to consolidate and move to Point Molate in Richmond to build Winehaven -- the largest winery in the world.

Not to be left out of the wine business, Saint Mary's College had moved from San Francisco, to Oakland, and eventually to its present location of Moraga, and under the name Christian Brothers began its altar wine production at a vineyard they named Villa de La Salle in Martinez. It was a small money-making hobby until they realized that the wine was so good they decided to move Christian Brothers to Napa in order to step up production for commercial purposes.

"Beneath the Tangled Vines" contains mysteries that revolve around Chinese immigrants and secret underground tunnels; a cryptic message in a peculiar bone box; and a fortune in missing wine.

For more information about Dan Hanel visit: danhanel.com.

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Town Council authorizes Phase 2 of Laguna Creek Restoration Project

By Vera Kochan



Photo courtesy Moraga Public Works Dept.

Example of periodic Laguna Creek flooding at the Hacienda

The ongoing Laguna Creek Restoration Project, located at the Hacienda de las Flores, is entering Phase 2 which involves removing the existing, undersized culvert near the Pavilion and restoring a natural channel for improved flood protection for the Pavilion and other facilities in the area.

In October 2020, the Town council awarded BKF Engineers a contract to complete the Phase 1 design plans (up to 65%). According to the Nov. 8 staff report by Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp, Senior Civil Engineer Bret Swain, and Associate Civil Engineer Edriane Aguilar, "The 65% Plans display how the proposed design will restore the natural stream channel and expand capacity to accommodate a 100-year flood, including the

30-foot-wide vehicular bridge, decomposed granite trail, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) parking stall relocated to the front of the building."

Additionally, "the 65% plan set includes details for the grading and striping of the relocated ADA parking stall; cross-sections of the proposed new creek channel; structural plans for the proposed bridge; and an erosion control plan."

In August, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had approved a revised Phase 2 federal share of funds of up to nearly \$1,681,995 for the town to proceed with 100% design, bid support, and construction engineering. The total federal share has now increased to \$1,808,810, and the non-federal share for all phases is

\$999,723. The total estimated project cost by FEMA is \$2,808,533.

Phase 2's project scope includes obtaining necessary environmental permits; coordinating with utility agencies for any needed relocation work; completing 100% plans, specifications, and estimates; providing technical support during bidding; and providing technical support during construction.

If this coming winter's El Nino weather predictions are correct, the Hacienda can ill-afford to go through yet another flood damaging episode such as last season. "The drainage culvert interfaces with other assets in the area," according to the staff report. "Failure of the culvert to adequately convey storm runoff waters induces flooding of those other assets, such as the adjacent roadway, trails, hardscapes, and buildings. The flooding can then lead to a cascade of other failures and damage to other assets." As a worst-case scenario, if the Hacienda facilities required shutting down due to flood related damages, the town could risk losing nearly \$25,000 in monthly rental income.

The Town Council voted 4-0, with one recusal (Kerry Hillis), in favor of amending BKF's services agreement to increase their contract by \$60,170 due to their indication that costs have risen due to project delays related to obtaining FEMA Phase 2 approval, in addition to high inflation. The council also authorized Phase 2 (100% design, bid support, and construction engineering support) to proceed.

Kiwanis offers sweet way to support the community

Submitted by Steve Woehleke



Photo provided

Kiwanis Club members celebrated the store opening on Nov. 17 at the Rheem Shopping Center.

The Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley has sold See's candy during the holiday season every year since 2010, and

their fundraiser store opened Nov. 17 in the Rheem Shopping Center near CVS. Kiwanis is all about char-

ities, youth organizations and families in need, and what better way to support the community, give a helping hand to those in need, and spread the cheer of See's candy than by shopping at the Kiwanis store. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Dec. 23.

Thanks to the generous support of the community members, over the past four years the club has donated over \$200,000 to local organizations. Please join the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley once again, to both give back to the community and to share the magic of See's candies during the holidays.

For more information about the See's store and who Kiwanis serves, visit www.moragavalleykiwanis.org.

continued from Lafayette

Council recognizes longtime LLLCF Executive Director Needel upon retiring

... continued from Page 2

I could have done the job forever, but you can get comfortable and stagnant. I just felt it was good for me and good for the organization to bring in someone new."

Although she's at an age when some people retire, Needel is not considering that the primary option ahead. She plans to reacquaint herself with treasured activities – first mentioning walking "Goldie," the beloved rescue dog whose full name is Golda My Dear (a clear riff on the late Golda Meir, who was the fourth prime minister of Israel) and jokes the family pet is her "nonprofit-style gold perk" because she was allowed to bring the dog to work every day. Other hobbies such as reading, playing guitar, puttering around with clay, and traveling are also on the horizon. She's serving on several boards and

a task force and says, "I'm going to take the next six months and see what comes my way. I know that every time I open up to something new, really cool jobs come my way."

Needel is most proud of having established the Swell Center, where she said kids meet kids from outside of their own schools or inner circles and people interact in-person in real time, not on cell phones. With the library foundation conducting a search for a good fit for the "next big thing, whatever that is," Needel said the staff is "strong, with really smart women in the foundation office, so everything is fine."

Asking to offer a few, final comments, Needel expressed gratitude for the community and its spirit. "Lafayette is a small town with great aspirations. Everybody has this can-do attitude, which is infectious. Covid changed everybody, but people in Lafayette still want to gather. I remember that first day, when the library reopened to allow visitors from the public. Those first people who walked through the door, taking that first step back to reality, it was incredibly moving."

Mayor Anduri during the meeting presented Needel with a proclamation and read it into the record.



Town Council Wednesday, Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m.
 Special Town Council Wed., Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m.
 Planning Commission: Tuesday, Dec. 5, 6:30 p.m.
 Park and Recreation Commission: Tuesday, Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m.

Holiday Tree Lighting
Moraga Commons Park
November 30
6:30 – 7:30pm
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- **TIME: 11:30 AM- 1:30 PM**
- **DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023**
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City Council Regular Meeting:
 Tues., Dec. 5, 7 p.m. Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda
Planning Comm.:
 Tues., Nov. 28, 7 p.m. Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda
Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
 Wed. Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way

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A tied City Council keeps Zoom comments alive in Orinda

By Sora O'Doherty

Owing to the excused absence of Council Member Janet Riley, the Orinda City Council split two to two on a vote to prohibit public comments at City Council meetings to be made via the Zoom meeting platform. Because the vote was tied, the measure failed to pass and as a result public comments via Zoom will continue to be allowed during city council meetings.

City staff had asked the council to modify their meeting protocol in order to disallow public comments to be made via Zoom during council meetings in an effort to avoid episodes of "Zoombombing" that have been experienced in other jurisdictions, including some Country Costa cities such as Lafayette. The Zoom platform has permitted individuals, often anonymously, to interject comments of an obscene, hateful or derogatory nature into public meetings.

City Attorney Osa Wolff explained to the council that their meetings are considered under the law to be limited public forums. Wolff said that the council cannot prohibit critical speech, or even obscenity or profanity, unless it reaches certain thresholds. While there are limits to freedom of speech, for example speakers cannot encourage violence or disrupt a meeting, she pointed out that "often very shocking speech is so hateful that it is difficult to make a decision in real time." Mayor Inga Miller agreed that it puts a heavy burden on staff to identify it correctly when it is occurring in real time.

In the long discussion that followed, there was some confusion as to what the council was being asked to vote on. Council members discussed ceasing to use Zoom at all, while staff was only asking that comments during meetings not be allowed to be made on Zoom. Comments would continue to be available in person, in writing, and via email.

The ability to make comments during public meetings via Zoom has led to instances of what has become known as "Zoombombing," in which a speaker, sometimes anonymously, makes remarks of an obscene or defamatory nature, including hate speech, that may not even be related to anything on the meeting agenda. Such speakers may not be local, in fact may not even be residents of the same city, state or country as the meeting venue.

Nevertheless, council members Brandyn Iverson and Latika Malkani felt that they would prefer to honor the principle of freedom of speech over protecting the council and its audience from negative comments. Seven written comments were submitted in response to the proposed ban on Zoom comments. The written comments came from Charles Porges, Joel Libove, Steve Cohn, Leslie Hudak, Charles Brotman, Kathleen Robertson and Kathleen Finch.

All seven comments were against the action. The comments mentioned that Orinda has not yet been subjected to a Zoombombing incident, but

City Manager David Biggs said that staff was trying to be proactive, and that of the jurisdictions that have been Zoombombed, many did introduce a ban thereafter. He noted that other jurisdictions within Contra Costa County have been subjected to hateful comments via Zoom.

In terms of how much a potential ban on Zoom comments would affect the number of comments received by the council, City Clerk Sheri Smith reported that an informal survey she conducted, the city had four Zoom comments over the last five months, or 10 meetings. Miller reported that at the Mayor's conference, about half of Contra Costa jurisdictions reportedly have discontinued or never offered the ability to comment via Zoom.

Vice Mayor Darlene Gee concluded that although the city had given Zoom comments a fair trial after returning to in-person meetings, it was hardly used. Miller said that one of the reasons she was willing to go down this path was because of the support of staff. Adding that she had had a lot of reservations, she could see that comments from outside Orinda, outside the state of California, even from outside the country could be seen as taking time away from the management of the city.

With Council Member Janet Riley not present to vote, the final vote was 2-2. Wolff noted that procedurally, because the vote was tied, the measure failed.

Annual study shows no increase in Sudden Oak Death east of the Berkeley-Oakland hills

By Sora O'Doherty

The results of the 2023 Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Blitzes were released on Nov. 17 by Matteo Garbelotto of the UC Berkeley Forest Pathology and Mycology Laboratory. Each year

citizen scientist volunteers collect symptomatic foliage in their local communities in order to track the rate of SOD. The samples are then tested at University of California, Berkeley. This year there were 28 district locations across central and northern California. Over 10,000 trees were surveyed over 145,000 acres and 1,900 samples were turned in for analysis by the more than 400 volunteers who were trained online and assisted in the blitz.

Owing to last year's wet winter, it was expected that there would be an increase in the SOD pathogen, but, fortunately, infection rates only increased in a few regions, including Sonoma, Carmel/Big Sur and the West Peninsula. Rates in the East Bay and elsewhere were relatively constant.

The areas east of the Berkeley-Oakland hills were mostly devoid of active outbreaks. However, outbreaks in the northern and western parts of the East Bay were numerous and included UC Berkeley property, North

Berkeley and El Cerrito. Plant nurseries, including the UC Berkeley Botanical Garden and Tilden Park were negative.

However, it is possible that SOD will steeply increase in the next year, and UC Berkeley Forest Pathology and Mycology Laboratory recommends that for residents with coast live oaks, Shreve oaks or black oaks on their property, this may be the time to actively protect trees. First and foremost, oak owners are advised to eliminate small and medium sized bay trees up to 20 inches in diameter with canopies within 15 to 30 meters from the trunk of an oak tree. For high value trees, treatments with phosphite in conjunction with gypsum amendments may also be recommended, and pruning of large branches or of stems at the end of November should be avoided.

Further information about the annual survey and results, including videos on how to protect trees, may be found at sodblitz.org

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Orinda recognizes Transgender Day of Remembrance

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo courtesy City of Orinda

As a matter for the good of the city, the Orinda City Council on Nov. 7 issued a proclamation in recognition of Transgender Day of Remembrance. The proclamation was accepted by Hen King of Lamorinda PFLAG. PFLAG is an organization of LGBTQ+ people, parents, families, and allies who work together to create an equitable and inclusive world and was founded in 1973.

Mayor Inga Miller read out the proclamation, which acknowledges that all people deserve respect for their dignity, safety and well-being through the promotion of equal and fair treatment for everyone; and members of the transgender community are valued and productive members of the city of Orinda and contribute to its progress, compassion and prosperity. However, the proclamation goes on to say that transgender people continue to face high levels of discrimination, fear, stigmas and bias that can fuel abuse and violence against people who identify as transgender.

Transgender Day of Remembrance helps bring public awareness to hate crimes against transgender people and honors the memory of those harmed and killed by senseless acts of violence each year and on this day of observation, Orinda commits to moving forward together to promote inclusion, equity and understanding toward transgender people, the proclamation continues. In conclusion, it states that the city of Orinda benefits from the diversity of its population and seeks to promote inclusion of all people as a testament to the shared values of dignity, equity and fair treatment for everyone without regard to gender identity or expression; and through its laws, policies and practices condemns acts of violence.

King spoke of her journey of acceptance as a transgender woman, and her family's understanding. King, a founding member of PFLAG, an organization dedicated to helping LGBTQIA+ people, noted that "You never know whose life you may change or even save just by being kind and respectful." She expressed her sincere gratitude to the city for the proclamation.

King then spoke about Kaylee Scott, a United Airlines flight attendant who passed away in March at the age of 25 by suicide. King quoted Scott's last social media post, which read, "As I take my final breaths and exit this living earth, I would like to apologize to everyone I let down. I am so sorry I could not be better. To those that I love, I am sorry I could not be stronger."

Miller thanked King for sharing the memory. "These incidents of suicide are so devastating to the entire community and have been pervasive in the community, unfortunately," she added. The mayor said that Elsie Mills of the Rainbow Community Center had brought the Transgender Day of Remembrance to the attention of the council and worked with the city on the draft proclamation.

Council Member Latika Malkani also thanked King for coming on short notice and sharing her personal stories and for "reminding us that embracing acceptance and tolerance and kindness is a way to make all of our community members feel safe and included and it is the way that we build our community."

The presentation of the proclamation can be viewed in full on the Orinda City Council's YouTube video of the meeting at www.youtube.com/live/kCTu5dHK21Q?si=4idrBpF54Eu2AGEw

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Decorated and decadent brownies make a festive dessert

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

Brownies with Cranberries, White Chocolate and Pistachios

When the sweet tooth hits, it's hard to go wrong with a good old-fashioned brownie! They check all of the boxes — rich,

sweet, chocolate and decadent. This is a really fun twist on your favorite brownie recipe and it's festive for the

holidays. White chocolate chips, dried cranberries and roasted pistachios add a bit of chewiness and crunchiness. To top off the goodness, I like to add white chocolate icing with more goodies decorating the top for a holiday flair.

This is our favorite brownie recipe, but you can use any brownie recipe you love best, even if that means box mix brownies, and then add the goodies. And, if you are not a huge white chocolate fan, you can substitute dark chocolate chips and frosting.

When it comes to white chocolate, though, be sure to buy real white chocolate, one made with cocoa butter and not just white baking chips. If you cannot find the chips, then find a white chocolate bar and cut it into small chunks, and that will be perfectly satisfying!

INGREDIENTS

Brownies

- 4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chips or chunks
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 cube unsalted butter
- Dash of salt
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup unbleached flour
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped roasted unsalted pistachios
- 1/2 cup white chocolate chips (best if you can find actual white chocolate and not white baking chips)
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries (pour 1 cup boiling water over for 15 minutes to plump up, then squeeze out excess liquid)

Frosting

- 1/2 stick 2 oz. unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 4 oz. white baking chocolate melted and cooled
- 1 cup confectioners powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon milk +/-

Toppings

- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped roasted unsalted pistachios

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease or spray an 8-inch baking pan. Set aside.

Put the dried cranberries for the brownie batter in a bowl and pour 1 cup boiling water over them. Let them sit for about 15 minutes to plump up and then squeeze excess liquid from cranberries. Set aside.

Melt bittersweet chocolate, cocoa powder, and butter in medium-sized pot over low heat on the stovetop and stir until well blended. Remove from heat. Add salt and sugar and stir until both are dissolved into the chocolate-butter mixture. Add two eggs, one at a time, mixing thoroughly after each. Stir in flour and vanilla and mix well. Fold in chopped pistachios, white chocolate chips, and cranberries.

Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake in a 350-degree oven for 18 minutes. (If you use a glass baking pan, reduce heat to 325 and bake slightly longer.) Test with a cake tester and if brownies still seem too wet, bake for one minute longer. If they seem just right, turn off the oven and leave them in the oven for another minute. The brownies should be just slightly wet in the center when they are done baking.

Remove from oven and cool completely on rack. Once completely cooled, spread frosting (recipe below) over the entire pan of brownies. Sprinkle dried cranberries and chopped pistachios evenly over frosting.

Frosting Directions

In a medium-sized bowl, cream together melted, cooled white chocolate and butter until fluffy. Beat in powdered sugar until integrated. It will be a bit lumpy at this point. Add vanilla and milk, and beat well. You may need a little more or less milk, to get to the desired spreading consistency. Spread over cooled brownies.



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>

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Peter Pan Foundation production of 'Beauty and the Beast' opens Dec. 2

By Ashley Dong



Photo Ashley Dong

Singing teapots, nosy townspeople, and dancing silverware will come to life through the performers of the Peter Pan Foundation (PPF) this winter. On Dec. 2, 9, and 10, the Lafayette-based nonprofit will proudly present "Beauty and the Beast."

In this classic Disney movie-turned-musical, an enchantress curses a young, arrogant prince into the body of a hideous Beast. To teach him a lesson, the spell cannot be broken until the Beast learns to love another and earns her love in return, and until then, he is forced to live alone in his castle. Meanwhile, in a nearby village, Belle, a spirited, sharp-witted girl longs for a life beyond what the townspeople have in mind for her. When her father is taken prisoner by the Beast, Belle bravely takes

her papa's place. Together, in the enchanted castle, both Beauty and the Beast finally discover what they are looking for.

"I suggested 'Beauty and the Beast' for our winter show because it has a beautiful message and is such a wonderful, family-oriented, feel-good musical," Rehearsal Manager Kirsten Torkildson said.

This year, there are three casts of performers of all backgrounds and ages – the youngest performer is 5 years old; the oldest is 46 – and the show is directed by PPF's founder, Leslie Noel Hansen. In addition to the three full-length shows, there will be an In-Concert Performance featuring the powerful voices of PPF's adult performers on Dec. 2 at 5 p.m.

"Our talented performers are putting their all into the characters, and I am confident that this performance will be nothing short of beautiful," Production Assistant Larrolyn Patterson Parms-Ford said.

All four performances will take place at the PPF home. Although unaffiliated, PPF shares its rehearsal and performance space with Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Lafayette, in a building not originally designed for theater. However, Leslie uses this unconventional space to her advantage.

"PPF is very fortunate to have Leslie as a director because her vision and the magic she can create in unique spaces is amazing. Our set-up makes the show more special because it pulls the audience right into the story, so they feel like they're a part of the magic," Torkildson said.

With every musical, song, and interaction, the performers of PPF bring a spirit of philanthropy. "The heart of the PPF is about giving back to those in need. We are dedicated to forever finding ways to always be the most loving, inclusive, inspiring safe space we can be," PPF's website states.

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Acalanes Flag Football team finishes 2nd in North Coast Section

By Jon Kingdon



Photo provided

The Acalanes Flag Football team celebrates after defeating College Park to win the DAL and move on to the NCS tournament.

Despite starting from scratch, the high school flag football season turned out to be surprisingly successful for the players, the coaches, and the team's supporters. Many of the teams were richly stocked with players and then there were teams like Acalanes that had a roster of 17 players, yet finished the season with a 13-5 record, winning the Diablo Athletic League championship over College Park 6-0, and finishing second in the North Coast Sectional championship game, losing to Clayton Valley 12-6 in overtime.

Initially it was a battle just to get a head coach for the team. When Victor Silva stepped up, he called a number of people like Mike Ivankovich, Joe Escobar, Steve Seidler, Erin Wong, and Tom Shoehair and asked them to just give him the time that they could, and they all served as assistant coaches. "They all had other team responsibilities and I could not

have done it without them," Silva said. "My goal was to make sure that everyone was happy, and I just had a fantastic time."

The work of the staff was not lost on senior co-captain Jenna Steele. "It was a very extensive coaching staff that all had their own areas of expertise which allowed us to split up and do multiple drills at the same time, working within our individual positions," Steele said. "So, having all of them together really presented us with a wider picture of what we could learn and allowed us to go more in depth at each position."

Ivankovich, a longtime coach and first-time flag football coach spoke glowingly of the character of the girls on the team. "Having only 17 players was not quite enough for practice and games," said Ivankovich. "To make it to the NCS championship game, com-

peting against large Division I schools, was an amazing accomplishment for such a small group of kids who had never been coached in football and were there because they wanted to be, and it was one of the best coaching experiences of my life."

Silva shared that sentiment: "If you would have told me after our first practice that we were going to make it to the NCS championship game, I would still be laughing."

The roster included 11 seniors led by Steele who jumped at the opportunity to join the team. "I was really excited to hear that Acalanes was starting a flag football team," Steele said. "My dad is a really big football fan, so I grew up watching football games. Five of the girls on our team this year were on my powderpuff team last year, but we were all really new to the sport and at that point, I definitely had not

thought that we would have gotten as far in the playoffs as we did because it was a little rough at first."

Despite the lack of experience with football, most of the girls brought were athletes that were able to carry those skills over to the football field. "Our players are exceptional people that are very smart, and they absorbed everything," Ivankovich said. "There was a compounding effect of their acquisition of knowledge and understanding about football because they were able to handle more than one idea at a time, facilitated by their knowledge of defense acquired from playing basketball, lacrosse and soccer. Our girls made up for any lack of experience with just this incredible commitment and dedication to each other and the team and bringing such a high athletic IQ and just their overall intelligence."

Thus, the players were able to pick things up quickly. "We had to learn how to break down and pull flags, how to throw and catch the football and all of the super basic skills," Steele said. "By the end of the season, we're running our routes and making crazy catches. Our defense was very solid, and we learned how to read the quarterback's eyes and make interceptions. We also watched game film which our parents would shoot to see where we made mistakes and that was also very helpful."

As in many sports, the defense was ahead of the offense. "Our defense came together from the very beginning," Ivankovich said. "We had a good plan on defense but in the end, the plan is only as good as the players, and it was there from the very beginning. We

only had three touchdowns scored on us three times all season along with three shutouts."

The defense was led by senior linebackers Steele, Ella Thomson, and Alana Brinkman. "The girls always struck me as so mature, and they were tough as hell in the way that they would play through things," Ivankovich said. "It's impossible for football to not be physical and our girls were physically and mentally tough."

The coaches also went the extra mile: "Mike and Joe watched a ton of film on our opponents so in every game, we knew what the other team was going to do on offense and that is another reason why our defense was so good," Silva said.

It took a while for the offense to catch up to the defense, but it all came together soon enough. "We really pushed hard to improve our offense and installing the option really helped us become more dynamic," Ivankovich said. "We used two quarterbacks, seniors Addie Martin and Zoya Acuna who split time most of the season, but all the girls improved a lot on offense throughout the season. Kelly Todhunter, who played running back, was an explosive athlete who was a catalyst for a lot of things on our offense."

The co-captains of the team were Steele and Addie Martin. "It was basically the entire team, but Jenna was our key spokesperson," Ivankovich said. "She would take over the pregame coin toss, correct the officials and even yell at the man on the sidelines handling the down box if he was doing it wrong."

... continued on Page 12

Campo boys water polo wins D-2 NorCal Championship; Mats suffer close loss in D-1 final

By Jon Kingdon



Campolindo boys team

Photo Shirley DeFrancisci

Though disappointed at just missing playing in the Division I NorCal Tournament, finishing third in the NCS championship, Campolindo did have the satisfaction at being named the No. 1 seed in the Division II tournament. After defeating Rocklin 14-9 and San Luis Obispo 14-4 in their first two games, Campolindo, ranked 40th nationally, came away victorious over the 30th ranked Buchanon (Clovis) High School in the championship game with a 14-12 victory.

The Cougars played a very difficult regular season schedule competing against several teams ranked high nationally. The Cougars took the challenge and ran (or swam) with it. "We really had a trial by fire and the team responded with our development over the course of the year," co-head coach Darren Schroeder said. "The team's character was focused and interested in developing."

Even with an extended losing streak late in the season, the team never lost his composure. "As coaches, we really did not have to do anything there," Schroeder said. "Our players are positive, and our captains, Callen Bronson and Dante Vattuone, are very good leaders and we kept working and soon enough, it was behind us."

Schroeder and Yuri Hanley stressed teamwork over individuality from the beginning and it has worked on offense and defense. "We're very balanced in terms of goal scoring among five players and our defense also has a very team-oriented defensive scheme," Schroeder. "That makes it a little difficult to pick out 'stars' on the team with the way that they have developed and play together."

Stepping in as the team goalie, Joey Cecchin kept up the tradition of strong play in the goal. "Joey was fantastic. You know, every time you graduate a great goalie and Campolindo has a tradition of great goalies, you're really going to miss some, but it helps when you know that there's another talented player right behind them coming out."

Miramonte

After defeating De La Salle 12-10 in the North Coast Section championship, Miramonte entered the Division I NorCal CIF championship as the third seed. The Matadors opened the tournament defeating Saint Francis 17-12 and Bellarmine College Prep 10-9, setting up the championship game against Sacred Heart Prep. Trailing by one after three periods, Miramonte was outscored 4-2 in the fourth

quarter, making the final score 13-10 in favor of Sacred Heart Prep.

Miramonte had a schedule that saw them play 11 teams that were ranked in the top 10 nationally, which was by design, according to co-head coach John Nash: "Every year we set out to play the most difficult schedule we possibly can because if we compete against the best, it'll put us in the best position to be prepared to play the North Coast and CIF playoffs."

It proved to be an effective way to help the team handle the pressure of competition. "We ended up learning what the process of winning is like," co-head coach Lincoln Nash said. "It was going to take four quarters of effort and realize that there are going to be ebbs and flows every game and you have to keep a positive mindset the entire time."

The goal for the coaches was to keep the team balanced. "We talked about staying off the emotional roller coaster," Nash said. "We wanted our players to stay even keeled, not reacting to positive or negative things but to just move on to the next play which has put us in a great position for the post-season."

Cooper Stern who began the season as a field player, became the Matadors' starting goalie in mid-season. "Cooper has done a really nice job for us," Nash said.

Henry Engs, Grant Kurtz, Oliver Sherwood, Tristan Tucker, Griff Tunney, Patrick Stice and Brady Hassett were major players on the team. "They all contributed a bunch as have our substitutes," Nash said. "As a freshman, Hassett did a really nice job progressing through the course of the season, earning more playing minutes. Ben Lucas also became one of our top guys off the bench as a utility player."

Moraga moms place in local Triathlon

Submitted by Brad Beal



Emily Karlberg and Erin Beal Photo provided

Moraga moms Emily Karlberg (Lieberman) and Erin Beal both made the podium at the 2023 Alpha Win Napa Valley Fall Triathlon held at the end of October in Napa.

This was Emily's first triathlon (sprint distance)

and she came in 3rd place in her age category (35-39 years old) with a time of 1:33:23. Erin Beal participated in her third triathlon (sprint distance), and she came in 2nd place in her age category (45-49) with a time of 1:35:12.

Emily and Erin were joined by friends and fellow triathletes from Moraga and San Francisco, and all finished the race and had a great time. They are excited to prepare for their next triathlon in 2024!

First place for Miramonte Water Polo JV team

Submitted by Lena Ayoub Van Leeuwen



Miramonte boys JV Water Polo team

Photo Ann Murphy

The JV water polo season for the Lamorinda teams concluded at the Diablo Athletic League JV Tournament on Oct. 28 at College Park High School. Miramonte High School Boys'

Water Polo JV team, coached by Joey Estrada and Sam Parfitt, took first place in the tournament, winning 12-4 over Campolindo High School in the DAL Championship game.

Miramonte wins NCS championship with victories over Acalanes and Campolindo

By Jon Kingdon



Miramonte girls victory celebration

Photo Jane Bordalo

This may have been as dominant a season as the Lamorinda girls water polo teams have had in their history. Miramonte, Campolindo, and Acalanes had a combined won-lost record of 65-16 but when the games between each other are removed, their combined record is 54-3 for a 95% winning record against non-Lamorinda teams.

The rivalry is a huge part of the area's success, according to Acalanes head coach Misha Buchel: "That's a huge part of it. The community and culture from the rec teams all the way up and it provides that great base of which to build and the desire to beat your neighbor is

really powerful."

Miramonte

Following two undefeated seasons and championships, Miramonte entered the CIF tournament as the No. 1 seed having won the DAL and NCS tournament with a composite record of 25-2. After defeating Acalanes 11-8 in the semifinals, Miramonte faced Campolindo for the seventh time this year and came away with the championship by a score of 10-5 for a combined record of 83-2 these past three years.

"I'm pretty surprised because I thought this year was going to be pretty challenging," said head coach John Roemer,

who graduated nine seniors from last year's team. "We've been up and down so it's been hard to figure out who's going to show up at some games. In a way, it's been a lot more fun because it's wasn't automatic."

Leading the team have been seniors Tali Stryker and Rosalie Hassett. "We wouldn't be where we were now without Rosalie and Tali," Roemer said. "Their leadership is amazing. They've stepped up not only in the pool but in leadership roles in getting the girls focused and having them understand what it takes to win a championship. It's more than just playing well - it's a mindset and the other girls are beginning to understand that."

Junior goalie Eliana Botene really played well as a first-time starter and was the MVP in the Rio Grande Tournament. Other new starters this year were Audrina Kang, Alden Coate, Roxy Tarantino, and Mira Haldar all contributed a lot along with the starters.

Campolindo

With a roster of only three seniors, co-captains Ana Pieper, London Menard and Grace Gafni, and a solid core of underclassmen, Campolindo finished the regular season with a 19-7 record and only one loss to a non-Lamorindan team and entered the CIF tournament as the No. 2 seed.

"Their leadership has been

outstanding, and the girls really loved them and a lot of it has nothing to do with water polo," head coach Kim Everist said.

Campolindo would defeat Arroyo Grande 12-9 and Sacred Heart Prep 10-9, avenging an earlier season defeat to make it to the CIF championship game but once again, came up short to Miramonte 10-5.

Still, Pieper and Menard's performance in the pool can't be overlooked. "Ana's a killer on the outside and despite every team trying to stop her, she still finds a way to score," Everist said. "London's is a tremendous center that you have to run a zone against and is effective passing or scoring inside."

Juniors Nikki and Sammy Frazier and freshman Lily Holloway have also been forces on offense and Holloway and Ainsley Hogan have also been strong on defense with a number of steals.

Sydney Kring's play in the net has been outstanding but with 35 steals is a stat not to be overlooked. "Sydney is very active and mobile in front of the cage," Everist said. "She's always thinking one step ahead and that one of the things that makes her a tremendous goalkeeper and it says a lot about why we're in the position we're in."

Acalanes

Coming into the CIF tour-

namment as the five seed with a 19-7 record, Acalanes was coming off a five-overtime win over Carondelet and defeated Soquel 9-7 after trailing 7-5 entering the fourth period along with a number of close wins all season. "It's a trademark of us in general, but this group, in particular, accepts that there's no gifts," Buchel said. "We've had solid and consistent efforts throughout the season."

The Dons then lost in the CIF semifinals to Miramonte 11-8, knowing at least that they were the only team to beat Miramonte this season, having done so twice.

The team has been led by a solid core of seniors, Wendy Heffelfinger, Brooklyn Plomp, Sophie Hendrickson, and Liv Hoppe.

Not to be overlooked is sophomore Ella Del Rosario's season of scoring dominance with 96 goals along with the play of freshmen goalie Adelyn Horciza and field player Finley Graff. "Our freshmen have been huge," Buchel said. "Adelyn has been as good in the goal as anybody in the area. Finley has grown up on the fly coming out of 14 and under water polo. She's thrived and been great offensively and was also willing when called upon to be one of our primary matchups against our opponents' interior players."

Exemplary day for Lamorinda cross country teams

By Jon Kingdon



Acalanes team and coaches

Photos Jon Kingdon



Miramonte boys cross country

On a dreary rainy day, running on a slippery, muddy course at Hayward High School, with the runners finishing the race covered in mud, the Lamorinda boys and girls cross country teams had a stellar day with the Acalanes girls and Campolindo girls and the Miramonte boys and the Campolindo boys all qualifying to run in the California State Meet next Saturday in Clovis, California.

Campolindo Boys and Girls

The Campolindo boys finished in second place and it was freshman Clark Gregory, finishing third overall, who was the first Cougar to cross the finish line. "Clark's been running really well for us so for him to finish in third was not a surprise," coach Andy Lindquist said. "He's been training and racing so well we figured that if he just put himself out there, he would have a great performance and he did."



Campolindo's Shea Volkmer crosses the finish line

The conditions today were tough with the runners slipping and sliding all over the place but they definitely hung in there and did what we had to do to advance. We'll just regroup now and hopefully we can put it together a little bit more next week."

The top five finishers for Campolindo boys were Clark Gregory (3), Alex Thomasson (12), Cale Anderson (16), Paulo Trento (17) and Drew Shogan (27).

The leaders for the Campolindo girls were Shea Volkmer, Kate Kabenina and Daisy Penney. "We had a huge step up this year from them as our veteran leaders and today it was a total effort," Lindquist said.

"It was super slippery the whole time," Volkmer said. "I'm really proud of all the girls and I love how we became so bonded this year."

The top five finishers for the Campolindo girls were Volkmer (2), Kabenina (5), Penney (7), Sloan Pullen (9) and Anya Houston (21)

Miramonte Boys

It's been a magical season for the Miramonte Boys, having broken Campolindo's win streak at the DAL tournament and winning the NCS meet and Asher Patel who finished in second looked back to see how far this team had come. "Two years ago, we finished in eighth place and my personal best was less than our number six runner this year," Patel said. "We had an amazing group of runners that did not run cross country last year and this is their first season on the team. I knew we had a good team with Logan Letulle and James Jenkins but I had no idea it was all going to come together so well with our first years and freshmen doing cross country. Everything came together this year and I'm so thankful for the leadership from our head coach Andrew Lewis, Julia Hall, and Cassie Haskell."

The top five finishers for Miramonte were Patel (2), Letulle (6), Jenkins (8), Brenden

Collins (11) and Breydon Collins (23).

Acalanes Girls

With the victory, it was more than just the talent of the Acalanes girls team that was responsible for their success. "This was a really special bunch of girls this year," coach Jeff Hutson said. "They're supportive, collaborative, competitive and passionate with each other."

For Olivia Williams who finished in first as she did two years ago on this course, it was particularly satisfying. "It was so nice to be with the team after cheering for them on the sidelines last year. They're all my best friends and we're all so close and it was great to race with them."

The top five finishers for Acalanes were Williams (1), Nevis Murphy (8), Anju Sekhon (18), Cathryn McCormick (23) and Cameron Powell (26).

Big Game Lunch celebrates 51 years

Submitted by John (Jack) Flanagan



Orinda resident, Jerry Wendt (center) sports his Cal Cheerleader Sweater in front of the Cal Band.

Jerry Wendt, one of the first original male Cal cheerleaders, graduated from Cal in 1956 and then started a 50-plus year tradition for an annual Big Game Lunch the Friday prior to the Cal vs Stanford football game. Last Friday, the 51st lunch took place at Metro in Lafayette. Local Cal and Stanford alumni and families celebrated joyfully together as the band performed their music and their moves.

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Lions Peace Poster contest draws 118 students from Lamorinda

Submitted by Bob Murtagh



Photo provided

OIS Winners, from left: Lion Bob Murtagh, Liam Arndt, Axel Eismann, Sophia Baker, Art Teacher Sean Ferguson.

Every year the Moraga Lions Club participates in an annual Peace Poster Contest alongside other Lions Clubs from over 200 countries. The 2023 theme is "Dare to Dream."

Students, age 10-13 years from Stanley Middle School in Lafayette and Orinda Intermediate School, competed for local prizes, with the

winner from each school advancing to the District level which includes 10- to 13-year-old students from Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The competition continues until one international winner is chosen and that student will be presented a award of \$5,000 at the United Nations, in New York City.



Stanley Middle School, from left: Lion Bob Murtagh, Sophia Moore, Nina Salazar, Ryker Hassan, Principal Brian Mangold

East Bay Warriors team of Lamorinda girls' fundraise for November's Diabetes Awareness Month

Submitted by Nathaniel Welcomer



Photo provided

Five Lamorinda girls between the ages of 8 and 11 who live with Type 1 Diabetes have raised

over \$38,000 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's (JDRF) annual OneWalk to find a

cure for T1D.

Lily Griffin, age 10 (Lafayette), Haddie Kellenberger, age 11 (Orinda), Laila Lam, age 10 (Lafayette), Petra Nadjawi, age 8 (Orinda), and Eva Sway, age 11 (Orinda) formed a team, the East Bay Warriors, to fundraise together for Northern California's annual OneWalk that took place on Nov. 5 at Great America in Santa Clara. They ranked fifth overall in Northern California for the amount they raised, coming behind two colossal companies, Salesforce and

PWC, that also had teams at Norcal's annual OneWalk. Last year, the East Bay Warriors also participated in the OneWalk and ranked first in fundraising. The team included three other girls from Oakland, Palo Alto, and Modesto.

JDRF has funded research that has made huge strides in the management of Type 1 Diabetes. The girls and their families are determined to find a cure, and JDRF's annual OneWalk is a meaningful way to realize their dream.

Saklan students sing to seniors

Submitted by Emily Williamson



Photo provided

The Saklan School's kindergarten through third grade students shared part of their Hal-

loween with the residents of Moraga Royale. Dressed in their Halloween costumes, the

students sang spirited songs they learned in music class, including "Monster Mash" and "The Purple People Eater," to residents, guests, and staff who had gathered in the Moraga Royale dining room. The students had a wonderful time sharing some of their favorite songs with the residents, and loved seeing the smiles on the seniors' faces.

Saklan's third-grade teacher, Lisa Rokas,

shared that she was "very excited to resume this yearly tradition" that hasn't happened since the pandemic. She also mentioned that "singing to the seniors is the perfect activity for the students on such an exciting day, and a great service learning opportunity. Singing to the seniors is a great way to showcase their learning while giving back to the community."

Cub Scout Bobcats Lafayette scouted for food

Submitted by Casey Van Veen

Cub Scout pack 645 with 118 scouts dropped off door tags asking residents to leave out non-perishable food donations for the Contra Costa Food Bank. Over the Memorial Day holiday, the troupe picked up thousands of pounds of vitally needed food for members of the commu-

nity who are in desperate need of nutritious food.

The group met with Lafayette Mayor Carl Anduri to discuss local government and how the rule of law is critical in modern societies. The Bobcats had the opportunity to ask questions and shared valuable ideas with the mayor.



Photo provided

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.

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 200 words) to story-desk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations or Remembrances" in the subject line.

Acalanes Flag Football team finishes 2nd in North Coast Section

... continued from Page 10

She was a brilliant leader and someone who could multitask and be aware of what's going on everywhere on the field."

Steele shared the credit with her teammates: "We had a really good dynamic and we all got really close in such a short amount of time. I knew I was going to have fun because I was doing it with my friends, but I did not realize how much fun I would have just playing the game. Captaining a team of a sport that no one had played before, I had to learn how to involve everyone even though we were at all different stages of learning to play, and we all had very different personalities. I've played other sports that became so competitive that it was no longer fun but in playing flag football, I always genuinely enjoyed myself and I really loved the game."

There were several highlights during the season. "My favorite part of the season had to be our victory over Northgate in the Diablo Athletic League semifinals after having lost to them on our senior night and then defeating College Park in the championship game," Steele said. "It was a really rewarding moment because

we really didn't think we were going to get there."

For Silva, it was how the team came together and making it to the championship game. "The girls all had different personalities but when the games started, we were one," Silva said. "The quality and the character of the girls that was the reason for our success. After the loss to Clayton Valley in overtime, some of the girls were crying but I didn't cry until I got home."

Ivankovich had a wide range of emotions after the final game. "I've never coached a team like this," Ivankovich said. "When people don't hold anything back and they make a total commitment into something with an unknown outcome, the risk is you may not get what you want. We got almost everything that we wanted to get out of it but after making it that far and coming up short, it's painful. I've been coaching for 30 years now so I know that you don't often get to have this kind of opportunity. I've never coached a team like this. The number of things we taught them was unprecedented for us and it's only matched by the heartache of not being able to coach our 11 seniors again. It was a lot to digest and accept."

Peter Pan Foundation production of 'Beauty and the Beast' opens Dec. 2

... continued from Page 9

The organization especially focuses its efforts on the UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital in Oakland. The proceeds of its annual benefit musical, "Wish Upon a Star," are donated to the children's hospital, and over the years, PPF has raised over \$200,000 for its cause. Additionally, throughout the year, PPF organizes visits to the Oakland hospital. Dressed up as beloved Disney characters, performers have the opportunity to interact directly with the patients. Through one of these visits, PPF met one of its own performers.

In 2018, Benny Williams, now 16, was a patient at the Day Hospital at UCSF Benioff. During one of PPF's visits to the hospital, he met Leslie, dressed as Elsa from "Frozen."

"This interaction raised my spirits while I was in the hospital. I later joined PPF because I wanted to help the other kids in the hospital who were in my situation. PPF has given me a safe place to be myself," Williams said. This December, Williams will play Cogsworth in "Beauty and the Beast."

Like Williams, many performers have found a home within the organization. Miramonte senior Janie Hollerbach is now in her 10th year with PPF. "Being a performer in PPF has taught me the importance of valuing the arts and maintaining connections with close friends. I have met so many people through the Peter Pan Foundation, and I love how this organization strongly emphasizes the importance of representation and inclusion," Hollerbach, who is playing Babette in the winter show, said.

The Peter Pan Foundation brings its magical touch to everything it does. "The heart and passion that our performers bring to their performances is really special, and I believe audiences will walk away knowing that they just experienced something incredible," Torkildson said.

The writer of this article is a member of the "Beauty and the Beast" cast. Read more about PPF's story at <https://peterpanfoundation.org>. Buy tickets at www.showtix4u.com/events/18708.

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Don't miss these festive Lamorinda holiday events

By Sora O'Doherty

Lamorinda organizations will once again be hosting a wide variety of festive events and activities during the month of December, starting off at the end of November with an open house at Orinda's History Museum from 5 to 7 p.m. Nov. 30, featuring home-baked cookies, soft drinks, wine and lilting guitar music. Pick up a unique woven throw showing Orinda's old landmarks or a signed copy of Arcadia's "Images of America: Orinda."

The free annual Tree Lighting Ceremony will also be held Nov. 30 at Moraga Commons Park, starting at 6:30 p.m. with cookies, cocoa and carols, followed by the lighting at 7 p.m. and a very

special appearance by Santa.

The Second Annual Orinda Tree Lighting event will begin at 6 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Orinda Community Center, held in conjunction with the annual Gingerbread House Making Contest, sponsored by the Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation, and Winterfest, which will include a performance by the Orinda Intermediate School Choir, led by Choir Director Christina Holling, the Orinda PD "Stuff a Cruiser" Toy Drive, a craft for children led by the Orinda Teen Advisory Council, as well as a seasonal-themed photo opportunity - families will need to bring their own camera/phone. Light refreshments

will also be provided.

The Hospice East Bay Tree of Lights, which offers members a way to honor the lives of friends and loved ones, will be held in Lafayette at 4:30 p.m. Dec. 2 at 21 Lafayette Circle (by the big tree at the Roundup parking lot), in Moraga at 4:30 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Moraga Country Club (1600 St. Andrew's Dr.), and in Orinda on Dec. 2 at 4:30 p.m. in Village Square by McCaulou's. All events will be livestreamed on Zoom. Donations directly support end-of-life patient care. www.hospiceeastbay.org/community-event/tree-of-lights/ "A Christmas Story" at Town Hall Theatre in Lafayette opens Dec. 2 and

runs through Dec. 17. The classic story of Ralphie Parker's mission to own a "Red Ryder 220-Shot Carbine Action Range Model Air Rifle, with a compass and a thing which tells the time built right into the stock!" Audiences will delight in both the familiar and unexpected in this stage adaptation of the beloved movie. A romping tale of the joys and woes of childhood (and adulthood!) around the holidays, "A Christmas Story" is a play for the whole family. Info at www.townhalltheatre.com/christmas-story "It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette" returns to Plaza Park on Dec. 3, presented by the Lafayette Chamber, and



sponsored by The Dana Green Team, Branagh Development and the city of Lafayette, and includes Santa sightings, free train rides on the Lafayette Express, official holiday tree lighting ceremony, one-of-a-kind photo ops, live musical entertainment, kid's activities, holiday treats and more.

... continued on Page 15

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Art

LAA is pleased to announce their member show "Brilliance" Nov. 4 to Dec. 15 at the Village Theatre & Art Gallery in Danville, located at 233 Front Street, Danville.

The November art show at Orinda Books features the paintings of Lisa Gunn. Lisa has long had a prominent 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.

Oakland Art Murmur is excited to continue the rich, 48-year-old history of East Bay Open Studios during its Winter Event, Dec. 2 and 3 from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. each day. Hundreds of East Bay artists will open their studios to the public in this free, family-friendly self-guided tour of the East Bay's unique art scene. Visitors to artists' studios will find unique and affordable artwork, with some artists offering work starting at \$20. The event provides an opportunity to connect with artists in your community and purchase gifts with heART! Details at <https://eastbayopenstudios.com/>

Art Gallery at the Orinda Library: Four Men And A Gallery – Reception Saturday Nov. 18, from 3 - 5 p.m. In the past, the Lamorinda Arts Council hosted more than half a dozen exhibits solely with women artists. They're balancing the scales in November by presenting "Four Men and a Gallery." You are invited to view paintings by Lance Jackson and David Lew; ceramics by David Shapiro and small scale framed

paintings by Bill Russell from Nov. 4 to Dec. 2. View their artwork at <https://lamorindaarts.org/current-exhibits/>

Valley Art Gallery announces their 58th annual Holiday Collection for Artful Giving from Nov. 18 - Dec. 30. Special holiday gift Trunk Shows on Dec. 7, 8, and 9 featuring glass and silver Jewelry and on Dec. 15,16, and17 featuring mixed fiber art. 1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 110, Walnut Creek, www.valleyartgallery.org; (925) 935-4311

Music

Cantare, an Oakland-based non-profit community choral organization, presents its annual December Holiday Concert, featuring the 100-voice adult Chorale and Nova Youth Choir accompanied by full orchestra and organ on Sunday, Dec. 3, at 4 p.m., First Presbyterian Church of Oakland, 2619 Broadway, Oakland and Monday, Dec. 4, at 7:30 p.m., Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, 1801 Lacassie Ave, Walnut Creek. General admission is \$40; Seniors, \$35; Students, \$10. Tickets at www.cantareconvivo.org or (510) 836-0789.

The Diablo Symphony joins forces with storyteller Susan Strauss and local choir WomenSing on Saturday, Dec. 2 at 2 p.m. for a joyous holiday celebration geared for all ages. Held at the Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, the program features "Winter Stories" by Chris Castro, holiday songs, and orchestral favorites from "Hannukah Overture" to "Sleigh Ride. Visit www.diablosymphony.org for details and a ticketing link.

California Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA) in Moraga presents the Nutcracker Ballet & Concerto at Campolindo HS Performing Arts Center - Dec. 7 - 11. A fun and traditional outing for many

Bay Area families, and just in time for the Holidays! The Nutcracker is a narrated ballet in two acts, and several shows will also have a Holiday Concerto right after the Nutcracker. Tickets on sale now. Visit www.capadance.net/nutcracker for show schedule & link to purchase tickets.

Voci Women's Vocal Ensemble performs their 21st Annual Voices in Peace concert. This year's theme is "Transitions," a program of music that explores and embraces change, from seasonal transitions to milestones such as birth, marriage, leaving and returning home. Features the premiere of Edna Yeh's setting of Sara Teasdale's "Twilight." The concert will be held on Saturday, Dec. 2 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 1601 Mary Dr., Pleasant Hill and Sunday, Dec. 3 at 4 p.m. at Montclair Presbyterian Church, 5701 Thornhill Dr., Oakland. Tickets: \$15-\$30. Website: VociSings.org.

"The Diablo Women's Chorale presents Under A Winter's Sky, a joyous musical program celebrating holiday magic and performed alongside live musicians and a children's choir. Performances will be held on Friday, Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 10 at 3 p.m. at the Walnut Creek United Methodist Church (1543 Sunnyvale, Avenue in Walnut Creek). Advance tickets are \$28 for adults, \$18 for Students, and free for children under 6. Information is available on their website, diablowomenschorale.org".

Berkeley Symphony presents Holiday Winds on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 4 - 6 p.m., at Piedmont Center for the Arts, 801 Magnolia Ave, Piedmont. Enjoy a selection of holiday favorites at this Berkeley Symphony concert. Cost: \$40. For more info see www.berkeleysymphony.org/event/holiday-winds/ or call (510) 841-

2800 or email tickets@berkeley-symphony.org.

Theatre

Aurora Theatre Company presents Felonious Mixtape Nov. 30 - Dec. 9 on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8 p.m., at Aurora Theatre Company, 2081 Addison Street, Berkeley. Join Felonious for an evening of exhilarating hip hop theatre that will fuse the power and traditions of theater, music, dance, and education. Cost: \$30/\$27 for subscribers. For more info see <https://auroratheatre.org> or call (510) 843-4042 or email info@auroratheatre.org.

Other

The Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley will once again be selling See's Candies in the Rheem Shopping Center near CVS from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Dec. 23. Kiwanis is all about charities, youth organizations and families in need, and what better way to support the community, give a helping hand to those in need, and spread the cheer of See's candy than by shopping at the Kiwanis store. 100% of the net proceeds going to worthy local charities and organizations that benefit the community.

The Orinda Historical Society is having an Open House on Thursday Nov. 30 from 5 - 7 p.m. Enjoy home baked cookies, soft drinks, wine and lilted guitar music while you explore Orinda's History Museum and get to grips with your holiday shopping. They will have unique Woven Throws showing Orinda's old landmarks plus signed copies of Arcadia's Images of America: Orinda. Below the Library, opposite the elevator and Cafe Teatro www.orindahistory.org. (925) 254-1353

It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette Holiday Celebration, Dec. 3 at 4:30 p.m. This free, fun, family-friendly

celebration includes Santa sightings, free train rides on the Lafayette Express, official holiday tree lighting ceremony, one-of-a-kind photo ops, live musical entertainment, kid's crafts, holiday treats and more! Arrive early and plan to stay! Festivities begin at 4:30 p.m. when Santa is scheduled to parade along Golden Gate Way starting at the Lafayette Historical Society and arriving at Lafayette Plaza (corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Moraga Road) at 5 p.m. The "It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette" event is presented by the Lafayette Chamber, and sponsored by local Lafayette Realtor The Dana Green Team and Branagh Development, who together are also hosting the environmentally-friendly downtown Lafayette twinkle lights for the Holiday Season. Learn more at <https://lafayettechamber.org/holiday>.

The local branch of AAUW-OML (American Association of University Women - Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette) is offering an opportunity for families to bring their children to the Rheem Shopping Center in Moraga on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 1 - 3 p.m. to meet Santa! Look for Santa right outside the Moraga Art Gallery at 432 Center Street.

Wine and Tapas Speaker Series Presents: Ex-Clergy who broke new ground and lived to tell the tale as massive cultural shifts began emptying the pews, clergy attempted to respond by initiating a transformation within the institutions they served. Our guests will share their stories; successes, failures, insights, surprises, and perspectives gained from their work. Their story might hint at the future of spirituality for our time. The event will take place on Sunday, Nov. 26, 4:30 - 6 p.m. Creekside Commons 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Free and open to the public, bring a drink or small plate to share, donations welcome.

Santa Day at 5A in Moraga on Saturday, Dec. 2. Be the Star You Are!® collaborates with 5 A Rent-A-Space to provide this annual family-fun event. Volunteers will help kids write letters to Santa and enjoy crafts. Enjoy hot cocoa and snacks, plus get a photo with Jolly St. Nick. Free event. 5 A Rent-A-Space: 455 Moraga Rd. #F, Moraga. www.bethestaryouare.org/events-1/santa-day-at-5a

... continued on Page 15

Lamorinda's Religious Services



JOIN US SUNDAYS AT 9:30 AM OR ONLINE AT MVPCTODAY.ORG



St. Anselm's Episcopal Church WE WELCOME ALL! Sundays, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. 682 Michael Lane, Lafayette Zoom Link for 10 a.m. service at www.stanselms.us



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WORSHIP SCHEDULE In person worship at 9:30 a.m. Live stream on facebook.com/HSLCOrinda/
Visit our website to access the current and recent sermons.

Lamorinda Weekly

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website: www.lamorindaweekly.com

Not to be missed

.Other ... continued

Hospice East Bay is proud to be celebrating their Annual Tree of Lights. The Moraga tree will be on Saturday, Dec. 2 at 4:30 p.m. At the Moraga Country Club, 1600 St. Andrews Dr. The Lafayette tree will be on Saturday, Dec. 2 at 4:30 p.m., located at 21 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. The Orinda event will be on Saturday, Dec. 2 at 4:30 p.m. In the Village Square by McCaulou's. All ceremonies will be held in the Village Square by McCaulou's.

The Acalanes Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and VFW Post 8063 will host a ceremony at the historic Lafayette Cemetery on Saturday, Dec. 16 at noon. Following the ceremony, wreaths will be placed at the graves of nearly 300 veterans who lie at rest in the historic Lafayette Cemetery. The public is invited to attend the cere-

mony and assist Scout Troop 284 place the wreaths as they say each veteran's name out loud. Learn more about the event at www.wreathscrossamerica.org/CA0565.

All are cordially invited to attend St. Mary's College Guild's Christmas Luncheon held at SMC's Soda Center, Moraga, on Dec. 12, featuring pianist Sharon Lee Kim and the Award Winning St. Mary's College Choir. Social Hour is at 11 a.m. There will be a Holiday Bake Sale and a Raffle for a Money Tree. All proceeds benefit SMC Scholarship Fund for needy students of St. Mary's College. Cost \$50 per person. Menu: Salmon Piccata or Chicken a la King. Send your order with your check, (payable to: St. Mary's College Guild) and reservations to: Marybeth Dyer - 6410 Valley Oak Plaza, Martinez, CA. 94553. For Questions Call: Marybeth Dyer: (925) 387-

Not to be missed

5283 Please RSVP by Wednesday, Dec. 6.

Calling all elves and holiday helpers: join us at the Winter Workshop for Kids! This second annual event will be held Saturday, Dec. 16, at Lafayette Plaza Park, from 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Children will have the opportunity to make a gift for someone they love. All materials and assistance will be provided, and parents/guardians can help with assembly too. Weather-permitting choices include Giant Jenga, Giant Connect 4, chess, wooden train track, and more. This event is brought to you by Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary in partnership with Lafayette Parks and Recreation. We invite you to join us and help spread the spirit of giving! (925) 309-9275, terrylpicker-ing@gmail.com, <https://lamorindasunrise.org>



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Don't miss these festive Lamorinda holiday events

... continued from Page 13

The free festivities begin at 4:30 p.m. when Santa is scheduled to parade along Golden Gate Way starting at the Lafayette Historical Society and arriving at Lafayette Plaza (corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Moraga Road) at 5 p.m.

Santa will also be headed to the Rheem Shopping Center, right outside the Moraga Art Gallery at 432 Center Street in Moraga, for "Mingle and Jingle" on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 1 to 3 p.m. The local branch of

AAUW-OML (American Association of University Women - Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette) is offering an opportunity for families to bring their children to meet Santa. "Mingle and Jingle" will benefit many community outreach projects, including scholarships for local graduating high school young women and a day-long STEM Conference for middle school girls at Saint Mary's College.

Want to hear directly from Santa? The town of Moraga has made arrangements with the elves at the North Pole to accept mail for delivery to

Santa. Drop a note to Santa and receive a letter in return! Letters can be dropped off from Dec. 1 to Dec. 15 in the North Pole Mailbox located at Moraga Commons Park near the Holiday Tree. Letters must be in an envelope and have a name and return address.

And there's another opportunity to connect with "the big guy" at the Breakfast with Santa in Moraga on Dec. 16 and Dec. 17. Seatings where a hot breakfast will be served are at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. for approximately one hour at the Hacienda de las Flores. Tickets

are \$40/adult; \$15/child over 2 years old; and free for ages 0-2. (Pre-registration is required, no tickets will be sold at the door.) Bring your own camera for individual photo opportunities with Santa.

Finally, are you looking for more unique holiday gifts? The Orinda Village Holiday Market is bringing together a lot of local boutiques and vendors from Orinda and the surrounding area from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Paymun building, including ReChic, Garden Nest, GCD Provisions, Camino Brands, Bush Poppy

Farm, Biinu Studios, and St. Anthony's. Additional vendors from the surrounding areas will be offering up original art, vintage home decor and decorations, handmade soaps, candles, ceramics, leather goods, holiday goodies and more. A local Orinda DJ (and Orinda dad) will be spinning some quirky holiday music, and there will be complimentary treats and cocktails, entertainment for the kiddos and a food truck.

We hope you have a happy and healthy holiday season!

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Sunday, December 3

at the Moraga Art Gallery
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The Gallery is located at 432 Center Street, in the Rheem Shopping Center.

Open every day in December, 12 noon to 5 pm (Closed December 25 & 26)

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Dec. 6

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Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 17 Issue 20 Wednesday, November 22, 2023



Lamorinda Home Sales

... read on Page D2

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Growing with gratitude

By Cynthia Brian

Photos Cynthia Brian



A glorious garden of mums and maples.



A whimsical gardenscape for Thanksgiving.



Gigantic green guavas will ripen on the counter.

"Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul." ~ Henry Ward Beecher

What a difference a fortnight makes!

Just in time to celebrate Thanksgiving, my trees and shrubs have finally donned their fiery fall finery. The show is spectacular as my numerous trees burst into colors of amber, gold, orange, crimson, purple, sienna, and red. Leaves on my grapevines and fruit trees of apple, prune, peach, apricot, cherry, mulberry, persimmon, fig, pomegranate, pear, and plum all boast a cornucopia of glorious hues that complement the shades of other deciduous trees including maple, pistache, sumac, tupelo, liquidambar, and crape myrtle. How grateful I am to witness this spectacular seasonal wardrobe change. Two of the most fascinating trees to me are my Chinese pistache. The male tree is tall, robust, sturdy, and golden. The female pistache is petite, graceful, and filled with clusters of crimson fruit

that provide tasty treats for the birds and squirrels. If any berries remain in December, their colors will morph to aqua and pink, and I will pluck them to tuck into the branches of a holiday tree. I have allowed some seeds from my Chinese pistache tree to sprout in specified areas where I prune the plants to keep them small. As the weather cools, these volunteers resemble colorful blossoms.

What else has me charmed this November? Chrysanthemums, blue plumbago, and crimson fountain grass are attractive plants that add color and interest to autumn gardens. The tips of pencil cactus have turned a brilliant orange, matching the pumpkins I've seen decorating porches. My gigantic green guavas self-harvested. I gathered them and will let them ripen on the counter before either eating them raw or making jam or juice.

... continued on Page OH 6



ORINDAWOODS | 114 RAVENHILL ROAD | 3BD | 3 BA | \$1,650,000

Step inside and experience the grandeur of this home. High ceilings and walls of glass create a dramatic living area that immerses you in natural light and the picturesque landscape beyond. Rich, cherry hardwoods grace the floors throughout much of the home and with a touch of a button you can effortlessly control the lighting and privacy with electric shades. These are just a few of the modern conveniences this impressive home has to offer.



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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	11	\$1,035,000	\$3,650,000
MORAGA	6	\$888,000	\$2,470,000
ORINDA	9	\$1,300,000	\$4,000,000

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

- 1000 Dewing Avenue #316, \$1,035,000, 2 Bdrms, 1123 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 10-17-23
- 8 Greenvalley Drive, \$1,585,000, 3 Bdrms, 2244 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 10-10-23
- 1074 Laurel Drive, \$1,700,000, 3 Bdrms, 1699 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 10-16-23, Previous Sale: \$1,975,000, 05-02-22
- 1409 Meadowlark Court, \$3,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 2974 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-11-23, Previous Sale: \$2,125,000, 07-26-22
- 1736 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,830,000, 3 Bdrms, 2635 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 10-16-23, Previous Sale: \$330,000, 05-01-87
- 7 Roxanne Lane, \$1,200,000, 2 Bdrms, 2571 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 10-11-23, Previous Sale: \$340,000, 05-01-87
- 224 Seclusion Valley Way, \$3,600,000, 5 Bdrms, 3828 SqFt, 2019 YrBlt, 10-09-23, Previous Sale: \$2,662,000, 10-16-19
- 1070 Serrano Court, \$1,460,000, 3 Bdrms, 2250 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 10-12-23
- 549 Silverado Drive, \$2,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 1950 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-12-23, Previous Sale: \$550,000, 12-14-99
- 832 Solana Drive, \$1,310,000, 3 Bdrms, 1852 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 10-19-23
- 3461 Springhill Road, \$1,670,000, 3 Bdrms, 2443 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 10-13-23

MORAGA

- 919 Augusta Drive, \$1,675,000, 3 Bdrms, 3000 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 10-17-23, Previous Sale: \$925,000, 04-30-13
- 1457 Camino Peral, \$888,000, 2 Bdrms, 1159 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-12-23, Previous Sale: \$480,000, 10-14-13
- 18 Laird Drive, \$900,000, 5 Bdrms, 2453 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 10-17-23
- 13 Lisa Lane, \$2,470,000, 4 Bdrms, 3536 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 10-19-23
- 206 Sheila Court, \$1,650,000, 3 Bdrms, 1909 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 10-11-23
- 24 Via Barcelona, \$998,000, 3 Bdrms, 2114 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 10-11-23

ORINDA

- 7 Easton Court, \$1,650,000, 3 Bdrms, 1624 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 10-11-23, Previous Sale: \$1,200,000, 08-24-18
- 107 Fiesta Circle, \$1,585,000, 4 Bdrms, 1930 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 10-10-23
- 84 La Espiral, \$1,300,000, 2 Bdrms, 2132 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 10-19-23
- 531 Miner Road, \$4,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 6092 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 10-17-23, Previous Sale: \$2,150,000, 03-20-15
- 15 Overhill Road, \$2,910,000, 5 Bdrms, 3610 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 10-10-23, Previous Sale: \$935,000, 10-19-12
- 20 Saint Hill Road, \$2,030,000, 5 Bdrms, 3693 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 10-19-23, Previous Sale: \$1,565,000, 07-17-15
- 124 Sleepy Hollow Lane, \$2,600,000, 5 Bdrms, 3239 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-16-23, Previous Sale: \$915,000, 04-06-98
- 132 Spring Road, \$1,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 2664 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 10-10-23
- 13 Valley View Road, \$3,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 3949 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-13-23, Previous Sale: \$2,950,000, 02-18-21

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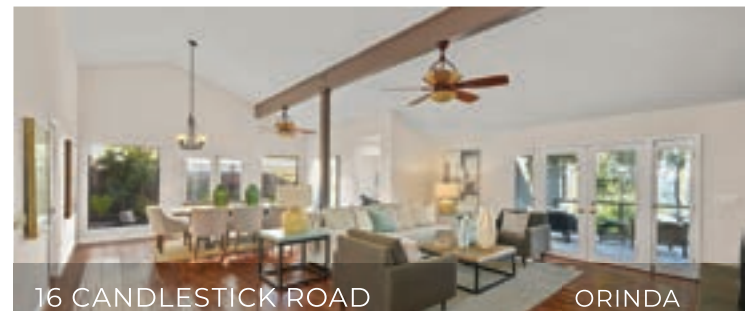
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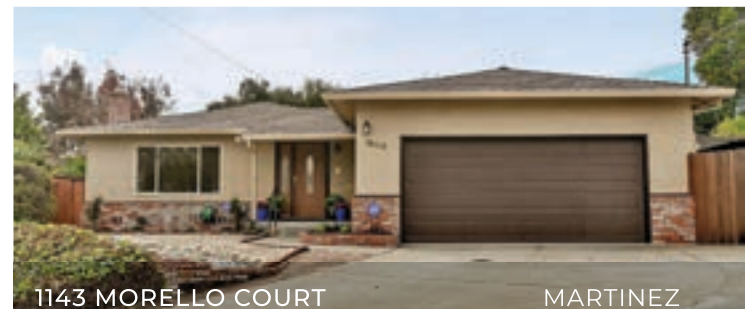
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Village
ASSOCIATES





SORAYA GOLESORKHI
REALTOR®

Happy
Thanksgiving!

Wishing you and your loved ones a healthy, peaceful, joyful and bountiful Thanksgiving! My sincere gratitude for the exceptional people I've had the privilege of working with this year and for the beautiful properties I helped them buy and sell.



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More info at: www.holcenberg.com/giving-back

Michelle Holcenberg
www.holcenberg.com



michelle@holcenberg.com
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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Growing with gratitude



Photo Cynthia Brian

The colorful fruit on the arching branches of a graceful female pistache tree.

... continued from OH1

While visiting a small town, I happened upon a front yard that featured a rusty tricycle, alongside pumpkins, hydrangeas, and a vintage bicycle with a basket filled with yellow mums. The gardenscape could have been tidier, yet it was an interesting combination of elements that piqued my imagination and brought a big smile to my face.

This is the time of year when gratitude is at the forefront of our thoughts and intentions. For me, being grateful for nature and gardens is rooted in the numerous benefits to our well-being, physical, emotional, and mental. Nature is my cathedral where I feel connected to the earth and the cycles of life.

How can we grow with gratitude this autumn? The benefits are immense. Let us count the ways!

1. Spending time surrounded by nature promotes a healthier lifestyle by encouraging physical activity.
2. Gardening is a moderate-intensity exercise that contributes to stronger hearts and body flexibility.
3. To reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, while increasing positivity in mental health, get your hands in the dirt.
4. Experiencing the fall colors, smells, and sounds of the rustling leaves calms our nerves and rejuvenates our minds.

... continued on Page OH 7

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Growing with gratitude

... continued from OH6

5. An awareness of our natural environment with its biodiversity and living organism interdependence helps us appreciate living on our beautiful planet.

6. Humans are uplifted by the sensory-rich visual impact of the shapes and textures found in nature.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Be the Star You Are!® charity volunteers will once again collaborate for Santa Day at 5A, Dec. 2 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., 5 A Rent-a-Space, 455 Moraga Rd. #F, Moraga. FREE crafts, holiday treats, plus a photo with Santa and his elf! Thanks to Mark Hoogs State Farm Insurance, www.TeamHoogs.com, for sponsoring BTSYA. More info: www.bethestaryouare.org/copy-of-events

7. A garden is a growing university of higher education. Nature offers a hands-on laboratory for learning about biology, ecology, geology, and all earth science.

8. Growing our groceries is an exercise in sustainable living. We don't need a green thumb to grow fresh produce, just patience and play.

9. Essential ecosystems such as pollination, air purification, and soil fertility maintain the biodiversity and balance of our natural world.

10. Gardens foster a sense of community. Community gardens provide opportunities to collaborate, share knowledge, and build relationships.

11. By absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen, trees and plants play a crucial role in mitigating climate change. Green spaces cool the environment.

12. Recreational activities abound in nature.

Birdwatching is a personal favorite as I attempt to learn more about our avian friends. Walking, picnicking, or just being outside in the fresh fall air offers a sense of satisfaction, relaxation, and enjoyment.

To achieve a fulfilling and balanced life, gratitude for all things is a necessary component. When we recognize the myriad ways that nature enhances our well-being, we begin to cultivate an attitude of gratitude that will permeate everything we do. Go into the garden and grow with gratitude. It is the fairest blossom of all.

Wishing you a healthy and happy day of thanks. Celebrate living with grace and gratitude.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Thanksgiving!



Cynthia Brian advocates to continue to deadhead roses through winter.

For more gardening advice for all seasons, check out Growing with the Goddess Gardener at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books>. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Her newest children's picture book, Family Forever, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures is available now at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com>

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56 Wandell Drive

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\$5,700/mo.

MORAGA

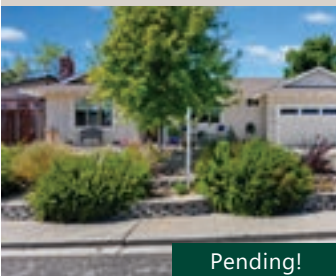


1944 Ascot Drive

Amazing 2 bd/ 1.5 bd 1234 sqft Moraga townhome w/ views of the hills from the upper & lower decks!

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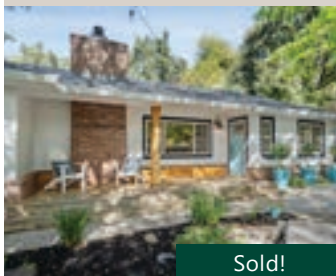


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