

Lafayette

Photo Contest is Back for More

"A Day in the Life of Lafayette" was fascinating this past summer solstice – the longest day of the year; it should be just a bit more challenging on the shortest day of the year. Consider this an open invitation to innovative photographers who live or work in Lafayette. The Public Art Committee wants to know what Lafayette looks like to you. Creative souls will have 24 hours on Dec. 21 to capture their images, then a few weeks to submit them to the "A Day in the Life" photo contest. There are three easy requirements: submit the online registration form to the City of Lafayette Public Art Committee by Jan. 9; pictures should be 11 x 14 photographic prints in black and white or color – smaller photos are acceptable but must be mounted on an 11 x 14 black matboard; a digital image must be submitted as well. For complete details, go to the city website, www.love-lafayette.org/photocontest. - C. Tyson

Lafayette

City Finances Look Healthy

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Although new to the City of Lafayette, Wakeman knows her way around a balance sheet. She was a senior accountant for seven years in Walnut Creek, and worked

for four years as Moraga's finance manager. She has a bachelor's degree from Boston College in finance and marketing and a master's in public administration from Cal

State East Bay. "We are confident that Ms. Wakeman is well qualified to continue the prudent financial practices the City has established and enhance them," said Robinson.

Lafayette

Mayor Don Tatzin Shifts Positions

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Progress has been made to join the Moraga Orinda Fire District and the Contra Costa Fire District in a special shared station. About the ongoing Terraces of Lafayette development off of Deer Hill Road, Tatzin joked, "I successfully punted on that issue."

Due to the very healthy budget situation, he added, "Financially we're in great shape."

Newly installed Mayor Anderson tipped his hat, commenting, "He's had a remarkable career with no signs of slowing down."

Thanks to his efforts, Lafayette celebrated the first ever Dogtown Downtown event to highlight beloved canines with a fun filled party that had an educational component at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. The second annual event is slated for April.

Reilly said she is humbled and honored by the opportunity to serve as vice mayor. She had special thanks for her accommodating family, noting their sacrifice – council meetings can start early, so they have to fend for themselves for dinner. "If you have teenagers, you know that's a very big deal," she said.

Orinda

Orinda Housing Element Draft Headed to State for Initial Review

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"The existing zoning in place that was adopted through the fourth cycle Housing Element remains in place, and satisfies the city's obligation for zoning to meet the Regional Housing Needs Allocation." Orinda could simply "lay out all of the alternatives with the understanding that the city would select a final alternative at a later date prior to adoption of the document."

ment draft to the state, and hopes to have comments back from the Department of Housing and Community Development in late February. In the interim, staff will work with representatives of Pacific Municipal Consultants to draft responses to the numerous public comments received regarding the draft Environmental Impact Report. Once HCD issues its comments, the city will then schedule another meeting to allow further public input. Staff hopes to send Orinda's revised draft back to HCD in March so that the finalized Housing Element can be adopted in April.

After council members received comment from 30 more community members and probed staff and the city's attorney with questions for more than an hour, that is exactly what the council decided to do. Staff will transmit the latest Housing Ele-

Moraga

New School Board Hits the Ground Running

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With her older children now in high school and college, O'Donnell believes that knowing the district's "end-product" and not having a personal agenda are advantages. "It is about all the kids in this community, and educating the whole child," she says. Nickens' children are in second and fifth grade, with a third still in preschool, while Obsitnik's two children attend elementary school. "It is good for the board to have members who are part of the mix, it gets us closer to the topics," noted Obsitnik.

their daughter transferred to another elementary school that had a reputation for handling food allergies more efficiently.

Nickens, who volunteered in the computer lab, is aware of the children's different levels of proficiency. "It's one thing to work on a tablet, but it's another to learn to type, to access a website, to choose what information is valuable and what is not," says Nickens.

ward to a steep learning curve. "I did not ask how much work will come with this volunteer position," says O'Donnell. "I know I will do what has to be done. What is important is the impact on the community, and doing something that matters."

"Yes, this is a new board," says Simon. "Parker (Colvin) and I have a solid understanding of the district, the strategic plan and where we are going. (Superintendent Bruce Burns) is very seasoned, with strong leadership. The new members have been involved in the schools, they bring a breadth of experience, and I'm confident that it will be a very solid board." Simon adds that the district is in very good shape; the biggest challenge remains the funding, a problem that "never goes away."

Each new member has issues he or she is particularly interested in. Obsitnik has a very sharp focus on student safety. He also became interested in how all of the schools work together to establish common practices when he and his wife tried to get

All three express their respect and appreciation for the work the teachers do in the classroom, particularly at this time of profound change in the curriculum. They do not have experience in directly managing public finances, but all have relevant corporate experience. None of them has negotiated with unions before, and they look for-

THIS SEASON SHALL CHANGE ALL GRIEF & QUARREL INTO LOVE.
...Shakespeare

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