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Norman Pease of Orinda stands by his Tesla Model X No. 65. Tesla is one company gaining traction, despite a decrease in electric car sales.

Photo Andy Schreck

Are Electric Cars Losing Their Charge?

Statistics show that U.S. plug-in electric vehicle sales dropped in 2015

By Nick Marnell

Could the electric car be on the brink of fading consumer interest? The electric car has battled the gasoline-powered car through one roadblock after another, from higher prices to cheap oil to a subsidized infrastructure. Today it faces those same challenges, plus limitations of the distance capability of

a charged battery and radical government proposals that seek additional revenue to repair the roads and highways. Electric cars came onto the scene in the late 19th century, about the same time as gasoline-powered cars, but quieter, easier to drive and they smelled better. Then along came Henry Ford, and thanks to mass production, gasoline cars dropped

to one-third the price of electric ones by 1910. The U.S. developed roads to connect its cities, gasoline prices fell and gas stations popped up all over the country, making gasoline — unlike electricity, which was limited to major U.S. cities — readily available in even the smallest towns. By the 1930s, electric cars had all but disappeared. ... continued on page A14

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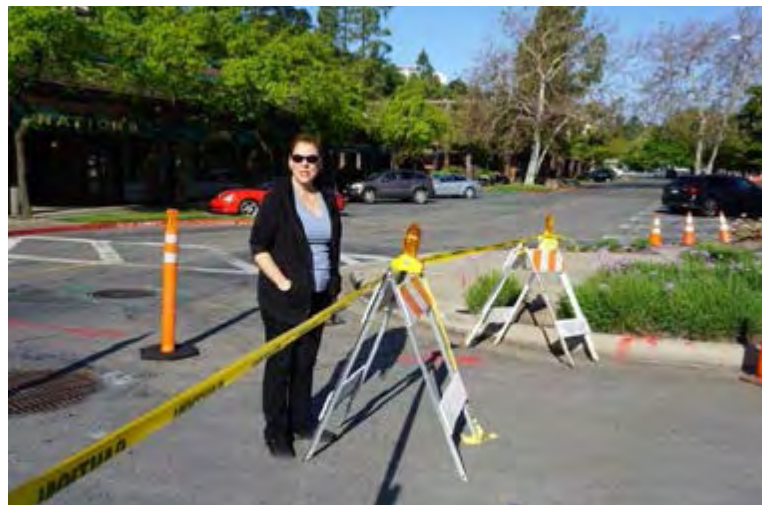
New This Week!

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Orinda

More information inside.

Sinkhole May be Swallowing Local Businesses

By Cathy Dausman



Gayle Somers, Home Made Cafe at the Moraga sinkhole Photo Cathy Dausman

It's not business as usual at the Rheem Center. Life has taken on a twist for the merchants at the center since a sinkhole opened a portion of Rheem Boulevard March 13 and closed a major Moraga intersection. Through traffic has been rerouted along the Rheem Center parking lot, adding to congestion, diminishing parking availability and frustrating some owners and customers. Home/made kitchen café and bakery was scheduled to host a

Moraga Chamber of Commerce event March 14, right when natural gas service was shut off. Owners Gayle Somers and Aly Bean Miller improvised by cooking 10 pounds of pasta over a propane camp stove. "It's a good thing we grew up in the San Joaquin Valley," Somers laughed, referring to their camping know-how. When asked how the detour has affected business, though, Somers gets serious. She says traffic signage is confusing, parking is challenging and people don't even know Rheem Center businesses are open. The week of April 4 was "the toughest week we ever had," Somers said, citing a perfect storm of spring break downturn and traffic detour woes. Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe lost a day of business when the sinkhole appeared. "People drive

crazy," owner Jennifer Lenfestey explained, adding the detour is at times little more than a parking lot and is "getting old at three-plus weeks." The pet store takes deliveries twice weekly from large trucks, and that has been challenging. "Why not open at least half the street?" Lenfestey wondered. Elite Unisex Hair Design owner Martha Estrada was disappointed that the only walk-in one spring break afternoon was not a customer but a Lamorinda Weekly reporter. Estrada says the street closure and detour has definitely affected her business, leaving little or no nearby parking for her customers. She says it has been so quiet many days she has had to close. Estrada makes this plea to those who might visit her shop: "Be patient!" ... continued on page A13

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Moraga Road to become three lanes. — page A5

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MODF paramedics save the life of local man. — page A8

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Carr Gala will showcase scenic beauty of Carr Ranch. — Page B1



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Lamorinda baseball teams have high hopes. — Page C1



Our Homes D1-D20

Garden Tour highlights several local beauties. — Page D1





Lafayette

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, April 25, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, May 2, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, April 25, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
Wednesday, April 20, 7:30 p.m.
AUHSD Board Room
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, May 11, 7 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
District Office Board Room
3477 School St., Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
Phone: (925) 284-1968

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org



Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report March 20 to April 2

Alarms	67
911 Calls (including hang-ups)	6
Noise complaints	6
Traffic stops	95
Suspicious Circumstances	15
Suspicious Subjects	16
Suspicious Vehicles	30
Abandoned Vehicle	
3400 block Moraga Blvd.	
20 block Sanford Ln.	
Hansen Dr./St Mary's Rd.	
El Nido Ranch/Acalanes Rds.	
Assault w/deadly weapon	
500 block Merriewood Dr.	
Battery	
1100 block Laurel Dr.	
Unknown location	
Burglary, Auto	
4000 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
Lamorinda Tow	
Burglary	
10 block Reliez Manor	
Burglary, Commercial	
30 block Lafayette Cr.	
Burglary, Residential	
1100 block Laurel Dr.	
800 block Rosedale Ave.	
3600 block Happy Valley Rd.	
Civil Problem	
3500 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
3200 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
900 block Diablo Dr.	
1000 block Blackwood Ln.	
500 block Florence Dr.	
Dispute	
4200 block El Nido Ranch Rd.	
3600 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
Disturbance	
4000 block Happy Valley Rd.	
Fireworks	
800 block Mt View Dr.	
Forgery	
3500 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
Mechanics Bank.	
Harassment	
800 block Broadmoor Ct. (phone)	
Health & Safety violation	
3600 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
Hit & Run	
3600 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
In Custody	
3500 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
Litter	
4000 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
Loitering	
Dyer Dr./Hampton Rd.	
Missing Adult	
3300 block Reliez Highland Rd.	
1000 block Aileen St.	
Unknown location, Lafayette	
Panhandling	
3500 block Mt Diablo Blvd. (3)	
3400 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
3600 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
Police/Fire/EMS response	
3500 block Mt Diablo Blvd.	
St. Mary's/Las Huertas Rd.	
Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3400 block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Public Nuisance	
1000 block Windsor Dr.	



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Gas Station to be Demolished to Expand Safeway Parking

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Cathy Tyson

Attention Safeway shoppers: more parking spaces are coming soon.

Say goodbye to the Valero gas station at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Oak Hill Road, as it will be demolished so Safeway can expand its parking lot to accommodate more customers and employees.

Although with 152 spaces the store's current parking lot meets the required number of

parking spaces according to the city code, regular shoppers will tell you that it can be tricky to find a spot during peak hours. By removing the gas station, 40 additional parking spots will be added, along with an extension of the surrounding wall and landscaping.

If this sounds vaguely familiar, it should. Back in 2012 the proposal was originally submitted. At that time, it went through the initial parts of the review process, but Safeway put the effort on hold.

City staff support the move as the gas station does not conform to other businesses in the retail business district. Safeway has been at that location for more than 50 years; it was remodeled in 1999.

While the Planning Commission unanimously supports the parking expansion, there were some lingering concerns about the recyclable drop-off area in the far northwest corner of the lot.

Discouraging BART parkers is also a concern. Safeway's Real Estate Manager Todd Paradise did not respond to repeated queries from the Lamorinda Weekly.

Some of the questions residents have are, will the lot be patrolled, and will employees have stickers to identify their vehicles?

It is unknown when demolition will begin.

More Downtown Parking on the Way

In other parking news, city leaders are exploring two downtown locations for public lots.

In late March, the city agreed to pay half of the cost of an appraisal for the nearly half-acre Oak Bridge parking lot at the corner of First Street and Golden Gate Way. The 27 parking spaces could be used to relieve pressure on the Lafayette Library and Learning Center and the Park Theater next door should it reopen. Once the appraisal determines the cost, the city may or may not choose to enter into negotiations with the sellers.

In addition, less than six months ago the Lamorinda Weekly reported the City of Lafayette is also investigating an opportunity for more parking at the site of the Barclay Simpson Gallery-Lescure Building adjacent to Diamond Kay on Mt. Diablo Boulevard with a similar strategy to share the cost of an appraisal.

Parking meter funds and enforcement revenue are used to purchase parcels for off-street parking. That balance is currently over \$1 million.

Is Going Green Worth the Green When Remodeling?

By Cathy Tyson

With Earth Day right around the corner, it's a time to reflect on how homeowners and apartment dwellers, along with the City of Lafayette, weigh the costs and benefits of making sustainable choices. Are residents willing to

spend a bit more to go green?

Obviously, most residents have a budget and do the math when making choices about replacing appliances or in the course of a major, or even minor, remodel. Designer Laura Arkell at Douglass Designs wholeheartedly agrees that the majority of their clients absolutely make green choices that are functional as well as beautiful, even if it may cost a bit more, since they are looking for quality finishes that will stand the test of time.

Moraga resident Judy Rowland did a significant amount of research on all the components of their remodel, looking at, as she puts it, "price and saving the planet," and took into account long term energy savings. Ultimately she and husband Jon, who plan to stay in their home for many years to come, opted to replace all their windows, install a tankless water heater, select energy efficient kitchen appliances and put in an attic fan. They are very happy with the overall results,



Laura Arkell shows a Guildstone countertop and sink in the Douglass Design showroom that is made with 60 percent organic materials. Photo C. Tyson but pleasantly surprised at the fan, based contractor Bob McLaughlin of McLaughlin Renovation and Construction to update a small downtown apartment complex. Lafayette landlords John and Suzie Bannister used Moraga-

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with Greg Gaskin



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Lafayette Festival Plants the Seeds to Save the Earth

By Cathy Tyson



Lafayette's first ever human-powered (with electric assist) tricycle, better known as a Frankentrike, and its inventor Segue Fischlin will be making their debut at the Earth Day Festival. Photo provided

Lafayette residents can celebrate the planet this weekend as the grassroots non-profit organization Sustainable Lafayette, along with the City of Lafayette and the Chamber of Commerce, are holding their 11th annual family-friendly Earth Day Festival and Celebration of Sustainability on Sunday, April 24.

The event will include music, entertainment and yummy "green" food options. This year's Act Local theme will feature activities and exhibitors to inspire making small changes in daily decisions that can have a huge long-term impact.

Getting the ball, or rather, wheel rolling will be the Safe Moves Bike Rodeo from 9:30 to 11 a.m. at Stanley Middle School. Cyclists can practice and develop skills to avoid crashes in a fun, non-competitive atmosphere.

Starting at 11 a.m., just up the path from Stanley, on Golden Gate Way behind the Library, will be a bevy of volunteers demonstrating numerous ways to act locally and more sustainably - including showing a mini-farm in a parking space to highlight how to grow produce in a tight spot. Fresh eggs are a step closer with valuable advice on raising chickens from a Lafayette Community Garden representative. Parents can keep old, beat-up

crayons out of landfills by dropping them off at the Festival's Crayon Initiative station, where they will be recycled. Because crayons are simply colored wax, they aren't biodegradable, so a local entrepreneur started this non-profit to turn trash to treasure by collecting unwanted or broken crayons, melting them down to form new crayons which are provided to schools and hospitals including the UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital.

This will also be ground zero to learn about how to preserve local open space, reduce food waste with White Pony Express, and understand the benefits of choosing renewable energy for your home with MCE. Representatives from Republic Services will also be on hand for those that want to request a larger recycling or compost bin.

Finally, there will be two guided creek walks with Lafayette Creeks Committee members at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. that start from the committee's booth at the festival. Each tour will be about an hour long, and will include visits to several sites for potential creekside enhancements. (See related story, below.)

The Earth Day Festival runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Golden Gate Way, just behind the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

Just days before the Earth Day Festival, local law firm Hunsucker Goodstein PC is hosting its annual Lafayette Reservoir Earth Day lunch-hour clean-up from noon to 1 p.m. on Friday, April 22. They will provide everything you need to tidy up the Reservoir - gloves, garbage buckets, litter sticks and vests, along with a complimentary lunch provided by Byron Park before the clean-up. Everyone is invited to join HG along with the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Green Committee. Meet at the Reservoir Visitor's Center.

Final Downtown Creeks Meeting Will Offer Preview of Plans

By Cathy Tyson



The West Ranch - on Lafayette Creek at Mt. Diablo Blvd, across from veteran's hall - is "catalyst" project for the creek. Image provided

Lafayette residents will have one final opportunity to chime in on what the future of downtown waterways will look like at the third and final public Downtown Creeks Workshop next Wednesday, April 27.

The downtown sections of Happy Valley, Las Trampas and

Lafayette Creeks meander over a mile and a half across the city center, at points partially hemmed in by concrete channels constructed by the Flood Control District in the 1950s and continually face pressure from ongoing development. ... continued on page A12

Mayor Mitchell to Host City's First Fireside Chat

By Cathy Tyson

Residents will have an opportunity to get an update on city activities and a chance to question Lafayette's municipal boss, Mayor Mark Mitchell, at an informal fireside chat at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 20, in the Sequoia Room at the Lafayette Community Center.

He'll give a brief summary of current and future development in town, and discuss ongoing studies that look into downtown ges-

tion and creek enhancement, before taking questions.

This is the first ever Fireside Chat for the new mayor, first elected to the city council in 2012. Prior to that he served on the Planning Commission for a decade. No newbie to local issues, Mitchell has lived in Lafayette for more than a half century. When elected, he promised to be responsive to citizen input.

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Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, April 27, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, May 11, 7 p.m.

Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, May 2, 7 p.m.

Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, April 25, 7 p.m.

Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District

Tuesday, May 10, 7 p.m.

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium

1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga

www.moraga.k12.ca.us

See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us

Phone: (925) 888-7022

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

Moraga

Police

Report

March 23 - April 5



Larceny 3/30/16: Someone entered an unlocked Acura MDX parked overnight in an apartment carport on Moraga Road and stole several items after ransacking the glove box and center console. Jewelry, shoes and cologne which had been left in the rear of the vehicle were taken, but the thief left something behind – a 12-inch knife sharpening rod on the right front seat. No other evidence was found. Estimated loss \$225.

Shoplifting 3/30/16: Safeway's loss prevention professional performed a citizen's arrest on a mystery suspect, who was taken into custody, but was later cited and released at the scene. All the unspecified property was returned to the store.

Out at the light 4/2/16: At about 11 p.m. police found a woman passed out with the car running at an unspecified intersection. Despite being less than alert, she managed to have a foot on the brake pedal. Cops were able to rouse the driver with the assistance of fire department personnel. The "driver" initially lied about her name and birth date, but cops were able to ID her by using a fingerprint reader. She was found to have a \$34,500 warrant for forgery, identity theft and drug possession – so she was arrested and the car was towed.

Pocked pair 4/2/16: A Paseo Grande resident reported that two vehicles parked in front of her residence had been struck by multiple projectiles, causing damage. Cops took a close look and determined that the damage was done by a BB or pellet gun. Nothing was seen or heard, so there are no suspects or leads at this time.

Loud party 4/3/16: An anonymous report of approximately 100 college-age people inside and outside an Ascot Drive residence came in at midnight. Coincidentally, the popular party street is also home to many local college kids. Alas, police party poopers encouraged folks to leave and issued the hosting residents a Town of Moraga Warning Notice.

DVD theft 4/04/16: The Safeway assistant manager on duty around lunchtime reported an approximately 30-years-old male wearing a dark shirt and camouflage pants who left the store after placing a number of DVDs into a backpack and bypassing the check stands. Apparently the camouflage pants did not help him blend into the suburban retail environment. The fellow headed out towards Orinda in a white Cadillac SUV. The car was stopped in Orinda by Orinda

Palos Colorados Finally Gets Green Light

By Sophie Braccini



Palos Colorados final map as approved.

Images provided

It was a monumental moment when the Moraga City Council approved the final map of the Palos Colorados development.

Over 20 years of negotiations ended in a 15 minute-legislative process, opening the door to the construction of 123 homes on 460 acres at the border with Lafayette, located east of Moraga Road and south of Sky Hy Drive.

Vice mayor Dave Trotter seemed to be the one most impressed on the council with what was happening on this night of March 23. "It's the end of a very long process. Twenty-three years ago I started working on this as a

planning commissioner," Trotter said. "It's an historic moment in the history of the town."

Almost immediately, trucks and construction material congregated at a staging area along Moraga Road, where major work will start soon.

That night's decision awarded Bigbury Company the development rights as well as approving the agreements satisfying all the conditions of the project, including an open space easement, and the creation of public trails, many of them dedicated to the East Bay Regional Park District. The final map reflects these agreements, in-

cluding a trail link to cross Moraga Road and continue to the Lafayette Reservoir.

Lori Suggang, Moraga's town engineer, confirmed that the developer had completed all the requirements.

Cecilia Marquee, who owns 28 acres next to Palos Colorados, asked if the proposed trails were not assumed to cross her property to connect to the Moraga-Lafayette trail. The answer was that the map was compliant with previously approved configuration.

The single-family lots range in size from 12,000 square feet to about one acre. During the Precise

Development Plan approval process in 2009 the town accepted the plans of 123 semi-custom homes with a maximum size of 5,500 square foot on the larger lots.

The homes should also reach 90 points in the "Built-It-Green" notation system, a good score. This standard addresses aspects such as water use, energy use and type of material used in construction.

The Design Review Board approved the home plans in 2009; the property developer could now start to build with no need for more public approval.

Town: Sinkhole Repairs Will Take Until September

By Sophie Braccini

Work to repair the sinkhole that formed over a month ago in Moraga is moving according to plan, but final repairs will not be made until fall.

Town Public Works Director Edric Kwan said that his team has worked diligently to analyze all the elements of the incident, including subsurface exploration and laboratory testing.

One of the main problems the city faces, however, is paying for the repairs. Kwan stressed the fact that the forensic report is key to getting the necessary state funding. He said he recalled how in Richmond, where a larger hole formed under his watch, the state first denied the emergency funding. "Getting the forensic (plan) together helped the state change its mind," he said.

The forensic study will be completed in time for a report to be presented to the Moraga Town Council on April 27.

At the meeting Kwan will present repair options. He said he plans to expedite the bid process that will be presented to the council at its May 11 meeting. A few contractors will compete to get the repair work that should start in June. Kwan expects the repair itself to take three months, which puts the finished product sometime in September.

Kwan said he knows that everyone is eager to see repairs start, but he added that even if the town had all the money in the world it would still need to assess the extent and reasons for the damage, including what is happening with the 96-inch Laguna Creek culvert that runs deep at the crossing.

It was the same culvert that broke on the other side of the Moraga Road/Rheem Boulevard intersection 10 years ago. The incident had less civic impact in part because no other utilities were damaged in the first sinkhole.

In the meantime, staff is working at finding funding sources for the repairs. Even if the state declares the emergency, the town will have to front the money. The town council will determine what source of funding will be used, such as the town's reserves, the Palos Colorados fund or Measure K money.

Kwan said that each option will have consequences. There are other ongoing infrastructure projects to be completed, such as the repair of

Bollinger Canyon, Larch Avenue and Corliss Drive.

The state will reimburse the town if it recognizes the Moraga emergency. "(It's a) very lengthy process," Kwan said. As of April 15 the director had not yet been given a date for a visit from the California Office of Emergency Services' representatives.

The whole town staff is mobilized on the issue, from Amy Cunningham, the administrative

director working on the budget and capital improvement plan, to Interim Town Manager Bob Priebe, who is lobbying Sacramento staff and elected officials to speed the process. City staff is also working at improving the signage around the Rheem Shopping Center (See story on page A1), and also at communicating with Lafayette and Orinda that Moraga is still open for business.

Just Listed in Moraga!



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Campolindo Trees Removed for School's Landscape Facelift

By Cathy Dausman



Trees are removed at Campolindo High School.

Photo Cathy Dausman

Tree huggers have fewer trees to hug on the Campolindo High School campus after the Acalanes Union High School District removed 155 trees during the recent spring break, but the problem will be short-lived.

"Those pines were unhealthy," said Principal John Walker, adding that everyone will be pleased with the end result as healthy trees and shrubs will be added.

Taking down the trees was only "step one" of a \$500,000 campus-wide landscaping project funded by Measure E in 2008. Dave Humphrey, director of facilities, maintenance and grounds for AUHSD, explained that the trees were tall but frail and drought-affected. He said some branches were in-

termingled so tightly that the trees couldn't breathe, some branches were dying on the tree and other branches had already fallen to the ground.

While arborists did not formally test for bark beetles, they did visually inspect the downed trees and found some evidence. Because of the noise disruption, the district elected to cut and chip the trees when school was not in session. The trees will be replaced with 130 six- to eight-foot tall saplings plus a variety of shrubs and ground cover. Empire Landscaping of Davis is the contractor.

Humphrey says the project is off to a good start and the work bids were reasonable because it is still early in the landscape season. ... continued on page A13

Moraga Road to be Three Lanes Between Draegger and Corliss

By Sophie Braccini

The decision is in. Moraga Road between Draegger and Corliss will be transformed into a three-lane thoroughfare with the addition of a left turn lane, and bicycle and pedestrian pathways.

It took an additional year, several focus groups, and a townwide survey for the Moraga Town Council to circle back and bring closure to the extensive process that started in 2013.

The decision was a three to two vote. Vice mayor Dave Trotter and Council member Phil Arth opposed the decision based on the fact that the townwide survey indicates that a majority of Moraga residents prefer to keep a four-lane con-

figuration. Mayor Mike Metcalf, as well as council members Teresa Onoda and Roger Wykle, sided with the three-lane option because of safety reasons, and because it had been the choice of all the task forces, committees and public workshops since 2013.

Charles Hester, director of business development for Godbe Research, presented the result of the survey to the council on April 13. The consultant said that 26 questions had been sent to 5,700 households and that 1,108 had been returned, an exceptional response rate, said the Godbe executive.

... continued on page A12

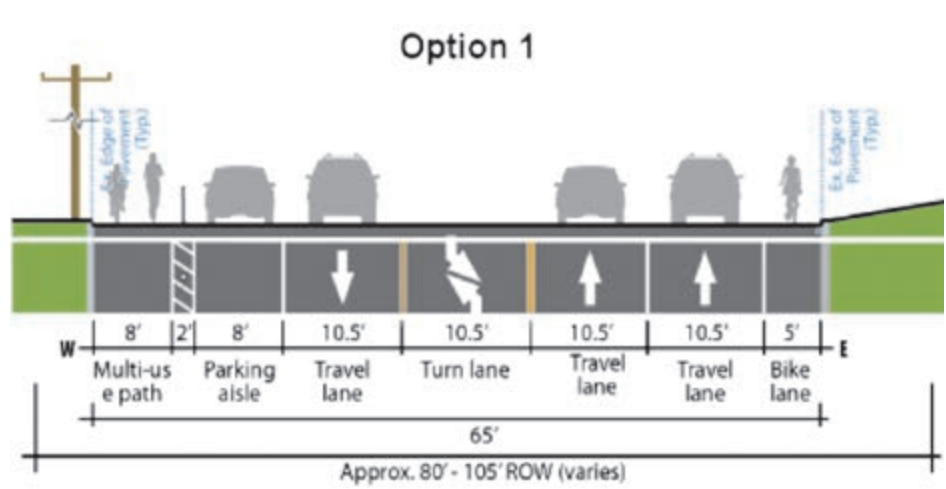


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CalBRE#01029160

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CalBRE#01909766

15 Corliss Lane, Moraga



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CalBRE#01043977

3 Jib Court, Pleasant Hill



Conveniently located near walking trails, shopping and restaurants, this 3-bedroom, 2-bath, home is ready for new owners. It has lovely hardwood floors and an updated kitchen, with 1612 sf of living area. Amenities include a community pool and tennis courts. Offered at \$659,000 by Norla Torres-Turney, 925.323.8123.

CalBRE#01913739

3430 Wren Avenue, Concord



This 3BR/2BA home has been recently renovated and is in move-in condition. Fresh paint, new carpets, and vinyl flooring. The large backyard is fully fenced and the home is a short drive to downtown or BART. Listed at \$449,000. Call Jim Colhoun at 925.200.2795 more information.

CalBRE#01029160

1st Quarter Update

The Real Estate Market is off to a good start! The first quarter of 2016 started slow, but sales in March surged nationwide, with the largest monthly volume increase reported since December 2010. Fannie Mae's Economic and Housing Outlook revealed that economic activity was also suppressed last quarter, due to port disruptions and difficult weather conditions, but this bodes well for mortgage interest rates, which remain very attractive. In fact, we are expecting a slight relaxation of guidelines, too, so getting a loan is getting even better.

In the East Bay, sales are down by about 10% in volume, compared to last year, and up about 9% in sales price. With unemployment ranging from 3 to 6% and job growth projected to increase in the Bay Area, this is a great time to buy and sell!

Meet our Featured Agents ...



Janine Hunt
510.409.6266
CalBRE#01909766



Lisa Shaffer
925.528.9278
CalBRE#00996886



Julie Georgiou
925.200.8246
CalBRE#01043977



Kress Hauri/Larry Jacobs
925.899.5739/925.788.1362
CalBRE#01465617/#01495118



Jim Colhoun
925.200.2795
CalBRE#01029160



Norla Torres-Turney
925.323.8125
CalBRE#01913739



Regina Englehart,
Broker-Manager
925.876.9076
CalBRE# 01308462



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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, May 3, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Planning Commission

Tuesday, April 26, 7 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
Orinda Library

Historical Landmarks Committee

Tuesday, April 26, 2016, 3:00pm
Orinda Community Center, Room 7
28 Orinda Way, Orinda

School Board Meetings

Orinda Unified School District
Monday, May 9, 6 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
Phone: (925) 284-1968

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report March 20 to April 2

Alarms	63
Noise complaints	2
911 Calls (incl. hang-ups)	3
Traffic stops	43
Suspicious Circumstances	14
Suspicious Subjects	14
Suspicious Vehicles	20
Abandoned Vehicle	
Kite Hill Rd./Orindawoods Dr.	
Animal cruelty	
20 block Orinda Way	
Library	
Civil	
10 block La Espiral	
80 block Davis Rd	
Death, non-criminal	
10 block Charles Hill Rd.	
10 block Ardor Dr.	
Disturbance	
100 block Wilder Rd.	
10 block Theatre Square	
Glorietta Elementary School	
DUI	
Hwy 24 at Camino Pablo	
500 block San Pablo Dam Rd.	
Starbucks	
Safeway	
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.	
Forgery	
Mechanic's Bank	
Fraud	
10 block Charles Hill Ln.	
Harassment	
70 block Orchard Rd. (phone)	
30 block Moraga Way (phone)	
Hit & Run	
Hwy 24 at Camino Pablo	
Camino Pablo/BART track	
ID Theft	
20 block Orinda Way	
Reported to police	
Indecent Exposure	
Camino Pablo/BART track	
Litter	
Miramonte High School	
Loitering	
Orinda Theater	
Mentally ill/violent	
100 block Amber Valley Dr.	
Panhandling	
Camino Pablo/BART track	
Police/Fire/ EMS	
500 block Moraga Way	
Miner Rd./Camino Pablo	
30 block Ivy Dr	
30 block Overhill Rd.	
Possession	
Church behind City Hall	
Safeway	
60 block Sunnyside Ln.	
Public Nuisance	
20 block Spring Rd.	
20 block Orinda Way	
Revoke Probation	
500 block Moraga Way	
Reckless Driving	
Camino Pablo/Miner Rd.	
Shoplift	
Rite Aid	
Theft, Petty	
80 block Estates Dr. (from vehicle)	
500 block The Glade (from vehicle)	
300 block Overhill Rd.	
80 block Davis Rd.	



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Curb Your Enthusiasm: Painting Not Authorized By City

By Victor Ryerson

You may be confused if you recently found a very official looking notice taped to your door or mailbox advising that – for the sum of \$30 – you can have your home address painted on your curb.

Titled, "ORINDA NOTICE" in large black letters, it offers to paint your address in black numerals on a reflective white background, using "approved city traffic paint," as "highly recommended by First Responders." At the bottom is a number to call or text to order the service, and you only pay after the job is completed.

The little, 5- by-7 inch flyer does not identify who is making the offer, but it does leave the impression that the City of Orinda is somehow involved.

It is not.

It turns out the notices were distributed by Curb Appeal Addressing, a private company that has been in the business since 2001. (At one time in Orinda, this service was apparently provided by local Boy Scouts as a fundraiser, but that era seems to have passed into history.) Aaron Israel of the company emphasizes that you will not have to pay until you are completely satisfied

with the result.

The bad news is that the curb painting in Orinda is not being done under any City of Orinda authority, and nobody in the city government seems to have heard of Curb Appeal or what it is doing. Consequently, Israel admits that there is no coordination of its work with the city's street repaving program, as surprised Ivy Drive residents recently discovered.

The company has a business license, but is not licensed to solicit in Orinda, according to an Orinda Police Department spokesperson. In order for the

company to run afoul of the licensing law, the police would have to catch the culprits in the act of distributing the flyers, and there are no resources for that unless a resident calls to report the activity in progress.

Contracting for the service is not illegal, so if you have done so, you can rest easy. You will not have to paint over your bright new address number, nor will you receive a visit from the authorities.

Melee Sparks Discussion of Short-term Rentals

By Victor Ryerson

A weekend party that turned violent, leaving one party-goer with life-threatening injuries, prompted Orinda Mayor Victoria Smith to request that the city council a review short-term rental properties in Orinda.

The home where the incident happened was a short-term rental, and although the event was unprecedented, it raised concerns about the financial responsibility of owners who rent their properties to be used for parties or any other reason.

In this instance, homicide investigators from the Contra Costa Sheriff's Office were called, because Orinda does not have its own staff for such duty. Orinda has to reimburse the \$9,000 unbudgeted personnel cost, and the city council is concerned that there is no mechanism in place to seek reimbursement from the property owner.

A broad-ranging discussion took place before the council last week, and a variety of public speakers presented their views on the general topic of short-term rentals, a relatively new phenomenon in Orinda caused by the advent of Airbnb and similar online rental services. While San Francisco has struggled to regulate these rentals because of the impact they have had upon housing, city revenues, and other aspects of community life there, the practice has not yet become a significant factor in Orinda.

One speaker, a mother who was widowed and then reluctantly persuaded by her adolescent children to try Airbnb, spoke glowingly about the experience and the importance the income has become to her life here. Oth-

ers spoke about less pleasant experiences they have had with neighbors' short-term renters, including parking problems and use of their garbage cans. None, however, indicated that they had any problems with renters' parties.

Although Orinda has a transient occupancy tax (TOT) on "hotels," which are broadly defined, it has not imposed that tax on short-term rentals – thought to number about 64 – up to

this point. Smith attributed the absence of efforts to enforce this tax, as well as regulate other aspects of the business, to the "live and let live" nature of the community.

At the end of the evening's discussion, all of the council members came down in favor of some kind of registration of short-term rentals. Council member Amy Worth suggested that Orinda's home business permitting ordinance might be used

as a model.

"Whatever we do needs to be modest," Council member Darlene Gee emphasized, and must respect those who engage in the short-term rental business.

The council directed staff to return with the suggested language of an ordinance at a later date. The matter will then be sent to the Orinda Planning Commission for comments.

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.
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Good Eats, Lively Fun Will be Served up at Orinda's 'Dining al Fresco'



Orinda's Restaurant Tour is April 26. Photo Andy Scheck

It's time again to sample all the good food Orinda has to offer.

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce annual restaurant tour, to be held from 6 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 26, will provide participants an opportunity to enjoy varied cuisine from some 20 local restaurants. This year's edition, dubbed "Dining Al Fresco," is sponsored in partnership with Miramonte High School, and will be a fundraiser for the school's Boosters Club.

Diners will be able to take an easy self-guided walking tour from the Orinda Theater to downtown restaurants to sample their fare. Pie and coffee will be served from 7 to 8:30 p.m. as well. Live entertainment will be provided by Lewiston Jazz in Restaurant Alley, across the street from the theater. Last year's event was well attended, and libations were served up by local dignitaries and Chamber members, making for a lively community event.

Tickets are \$35 per person, and are available online at www.orindachamber.org. They will also be available from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on the day of the event at the Will Call desk next to Cine Cuvee in front of the theater. The Chamber recommends that attendees purchase tickets early, as sales are limited to 250. — V. Ryerson

Reporter Wanted

Lamorinda Weekly is looking for an Orinda City Reporter

Job Description:

Beat reporter for Orinda. Attend 2-4 meetings per month in the town assigned. Maintain relationships with city officials and community leaders. Write 1-2 articles per week covering subjects such as decisions made at City Council or Planning Commission meetings, community events, citizen profiles, police activities, or other interesting news items.

Required Qualifications:

Excellent writing and communication skills. Ethical and professional. Live or work in the Lamorinda area and have the ability to write balanced, researched, well-structured articles. Prior newsroom experience helpful, but not required.

Compensation:

Compensation is made on a per meeting/article basis.

Contact:

Lamorinda Weekly, PO Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570
(925) 377-0977, wendy@lamorindaweekly.com
Attn: Wendy Scheck



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Maram Bata CalBRE #01435229



ORINDA \$1,598,000
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Finola Fellner CalBRE #01428834



LAFAYETTE \$1,195,000
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Elena Hood CalBRE #01221247



ORINDA \$1,150,000
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Suzi O'Brien CalBRE #01482496



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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, April 20, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library Community Room
1500 Saint Mary's Road
Moraga, CA 94556
For meeting times and
agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, April 26, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107,
Administration Building,
651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and
agendas, visit
<http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

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MOFD Directors Give Unexpected Kudos to ConFire Chief

By Nick Marnell

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District chief Jeff Carman outlined the benefits of the new district ambulance transport program at a county fire commissioners' dinner last month, and he received high acclaim for his performance from an unexpected source: the president and the vice president of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District board of directors.

The two districts had attempted to build joint fire station 46 at the Lafayette-Orinda border, and as the deal unraveled, MOFD directors Steve Anderson and Fred Weil

blasted the county leadership, calling it unreliable and blaming it for the failure of the venture. A worn-out Carman recommended the reconstruction of Lafayette station 16 instead.

Could the dinner compliments, delivered at the conclusion of the April 6 district meeting, represent an olive branch from MOFD?

Anderson, board president, said that Carman gave an excellent speech, and Weil noted that of all the commissioners' meetings he has attended, the program featuring Carman was one of the best. "He's

a terrific speaker," Weil said. "He gets right to the point. He's very direct, and he handled himself very well. I hope the commissioners bring in more speakers like him."

Carman said that the highlight of the March 17 commissioners' dinner was being able not only to present the ConFire ambulance program but also to talk about the potential changes to ambulance transport based on the Affordable Care Act. He told his ConFire board April 12 that in the first quarter, despite the uncertainty of the changes, it appeared that the am-

balance program exceeded its revenue goal and expenses were lower than projected.

The chief accepted the positive gesture of the MOFD directors.

"It's nice to know that despite fire station 46 not working out, both Anderson and Weil can see beyond that issue and give me a fair evaluation," Carman said. "It's always nice to be complimented by those that have criticized in the past and I appreciate their objectivity."

New Wheels to Start Rollin' at Station 17 in Lafayette



Lafayette fire station 17 on St. Mary's Road put a new fire engine into service the evening of April 8. The 2008 KME Type-1 engine replaces the 2001 model, which was reassigned to the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District training facility in Concord.

"This new unit will enable us to serve the citizens of Lafayette in a safer, more efficient manner," said 17-C captain Matt DePolo. — N. Marnell

From left, engineer Matt Mastrantonio, captain Roger Harless, firefighter Kevin Piol. Photo Nick Marnell

Moraga Resident Cheats Death Thanks to MOFD Response

By Nick Marnell

Matt Scanlan could hardly breathe. He felt dizzy. As his heart raced, he started to sweat. His arms went numb; he could not raise them over his head. Having had a heart valve replaced, Scanlan knew that these symptoms portended something serious. He yelled from the shower for his wife to call 911.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District station 41 received the dispatch around 11 p.m. March 3. Under the direction of Captain Mike Rattary the ambulance crew arrived at the Sanders Ranch residence in minutes, followed by the engine crew seconds later. They arrived to a chaotic scene, with Scanlan lying in the upstairs master suite, alert, but having difficulty speaking; a neighbor trying to help; and his wife, Martina, answering questions about her husband's medical history.

"It was a monster house, with a



From left: MOFD captain Mike Rattary, firefighter-paramedic Andrew Hess, Martina Scanlan, Matt Scanlan, firefighter-paramedic Andrew Leach, firefighter Mark DeWeese. Photo Gint Federas

sweeping spiral staircase that led up to the suite," said firefighter Mark DeWeese. The firefighters brought Scanlan downstairs, started an IV,

applied oxygen and put him on a heart monitor, which recorded 230 beats per minute. Into Medic 41 they hustled him, off to John Muir Hospital.

"This was a serious enough call that we put two paramedics in the back of the ambulance on the drive to the hospital," DeWeese said. Though it is not the usual protocol, the crew allowed Martina to ride along in the front seat. During the transport, she said she heard a firefighter update her husband's condition. "Code Blue!" he said.

Scanlan had gone into cardiac arrest.

Thanks to the work in the rear of that ambulance by firefighter-paramedics Dave Iman and Andrew Leach, Scanlan pulled through. "I am lucky to be alive," he said. "The doctor told me that, after my crash, I had only a 4 percent chance of survival."

Scanlan, chief executive officer of RS Investments in San Francisco and an executive leader

of the American Heart Association, praised the work of the MOFD responders at an April district board meeting.

"My career has nothing to do with public safety, but I am aware of what makes a good team," Scanlan told the directors. "People who trust each other, who work together and who work well in a time of crisis. These kinds of success stories don't happen without a total team effort. The professionalism, and the calm, that your crew displayed was sensational."

He also stressed the importance of the calm behavior of Martina. DeWeese agreed. "She acted much better than one would have expected," the firefighter said.

Director Fred Weil noted that the district is often criticized for sending both an ambulance and an engine to respond to medical incidents.

"Obviously, in this case, it was necessary," he said.

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Letters to the Editor

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Voters Shouldn't Approve L Without More Discussion

Dear Editor,

Orinda's bad roads need to be fixed, but they need to be fixed properly.

In June 2014, Orinda's voters approved a \$20 million bond for road repair. As of late March 2016, only \$2.5 million of the \$20 million were spent.

Now, Orinda's voters are being asked to approve a \$25 million road-repair bond — Measure L — at the June 2016 election. The measure needs a two-thirds vote to pass. Voters should be given a chance to see how well the \$20 million from 2014 are spent before approving any more money. Holding off additional spending in June 2016 is wise because in November 2016 there will be, on the fall ballot, a large number of competing, tax-raising measures.

The Orinda City Council has refused to hold town-hall meetings (or press conferences) on Measure L of 2016. When so much of Orinda's future — in terms of roads and money — is at stake, the city council should make a special effort to meet with and educate voters. However, the city council, with the notable exception of council member Eve Phillips, refuses to meet with Orinda's taxpayers. Why is the majority of the city council unwilling to have an open and public town-hall meeting about an expensive, \$25 million road bond?

For the 2014 bond measure of \$20 million, Orinda did not appoint a special project manager. Orindans must be assured that if Measure L of 2016 passes, a qualified and experienced project manager will be appointed. There is no guarantee that, with the passage of Measure L, such a manager will be appointed.

I urge Orindans to vote NO on Measure L. Voters must have a sensible plan for road repair before providing Orinda's government with more money!

Richard S. Colman
Chairman, Orindans for Better Roads
Orinda

Measure L Will Not Do the Job

Dear Editor,

On the June ballot, the Orinda City Council will ask the voters to approve a \$25 million property tax increase to repair Orinda's roads. This is the third time the city has come to us for money for this project and it will not be the last. The total cost of repairing all of Orinda's roads will be roughly \$80 million. To date the city has raised only \$35 million, and even if Measure L passes, the city will be still be \$20 million

short. The city council is kicking the can down the road hoping they can to come back to the voters again when the city runs out of money. This approach presents a big risk to the 20 percent of families whose homes will remain on poor roads.

How can they be sure that the 80 percent of lucky voters whose roads are fixed will vote for yet another tax increase?

At a city council meeting in January, State Senator Steve Glazer made an appearance to urge the council to go for the \$25 million rather than be up front about the true cost. Why would he do that? People who follow city politics think Mr. Glazer is afraid that a \$45 million measure for Orinda would reduce the voters' appetite for another tax measure that he is supporting on the same ballot. Furthermore, admitting that the city has been fooling the voters about the true cost of fixing their roads reflects badly on the job he and the council did while he was the city's mayor.

Don't take the risk that your road will not be fixed. Vote NO on Measure L and send a clear message to the city council to come back in November with a comprehensive tax measure that repairs all our roads and provides funds for their long-term maintenance.

For more information go to: www.orindaroadfacts.info.

Roger Squier
Orinda

Vote Yes on L

Dear Editor,

We moved to St. Stephens Drive nine years ago and appreciate living in this beautiful community. However, in the time we have been here many of Orinda's roads have deteriorated badly. We are grateful that our road has been repaired, but we know that the current funds will not stretch far enough to fix all the roads that need it.

Other Orinda residents are desperately waiting for their roads to be repaired as well. Our roads are the foundation of our city, and all of us who live here share the responsibility of keeping them in good shape.

Measure L is necessary in order to continue the progress we have made repairing our roads. We know that Orinda cannot fix all the roads that need repair without additional funds. If we don't finish fixing the roads in Orinda now, the delays will lead to much bigger issues and more costly repairs in the future. Measure L continues the work to restore Orinda roads to a good safe condition. We all need to take responsibility for making sure the roads are repaired. I urge you to VOTE YES ON MEASURE L!

Jay Solmonson & Le Tran-Thi
Orinda

PG&E Says Thank You

Dear Editor,

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Company would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the community for its support during the recent gas outage caused by the sinkhole in Moraga. Mother Nature can often create significant weather-related challenges, including gas and electric outages, and we know how tough this can be on families and businesses. In these situations, a coordinated response is key to safely and quickly restoring service to the communities we serve. I personally was in Moraga and saw firsthand the hard work and collaboration between the town and first responders, including the fire department.

As soon as we learned that a stop light severed our gas line, our crews immediately went to the scene and worked through the night to restore gas service to the 2,500 customers who were without service. I stayed with our team through the night to ensure that we were prioritizing the safety of our community and effectively coordinating our work.

When gas service is lost, it takes two visits to every residence and business. During the first visit, we gain access to the meter and shut off the gas. Once we have resolved the issue, we then revisit each customer to safely restore service by turning the gas on at the meter and relighting pilot lights. When restoring service during an unplanned and immediate response, customers may not be home or available, delaying completion of the restoration process.

During the outage, I met with some of the local leaders and residents who welcomed more than 200 PG&E employees from Northern and Central California to assist in our restoration and customer outreach efforts. We received very positive feedback from Moraga officials and members of the community, and I would personally like to thank you again for your ongoing support. You can be confident that in an emergency situation, we will be there to support our communities. For us, our customers are also our family members, friends, neighbors and colleagues, too and we are proud to serve our community.

John Higgins,
Vice President of Gas Transmission and Distribution Operations
Danville

Public Forum

Join our Public Forum

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda or one of its cities that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum.

Preserve Leigh Creekside Park

By MaryJo and Glen Cass

We lived next to Leigh Creekside Park (LCP) in Lafayette in the 1990s and participated in the grassroots effort to create the park. It's a fascinating story, and an important one, given the fact that the park's rustic, open-space ambiance is currently targeted for development.

Defined in City plans as a "passive neighborhood" park, Leigh Creekside Park is located at Moraga Boulevard and Fourth Street, next to Las Trampas Creek, a few steps from the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail. It's less than one acre, with an open-space ambiance and an inviting wildlife riparian corridor.

The park is named after John and Ethel Leigh, former owners of the property and early Lafayette residents. Developers often knocked on their door over the years, offering to purchase their land. Their answer was always no; they preferred to keep development at bay. After John passed away in August 1998, a developer again tried to purchase the parcels that comprise today's park, to build five homes.

Concerned about development and remembering John and Ethel's wish that their property would one day become a park, neighbors got busy. Lisa and Tom Christophe spearheaded a grassroots neighborhood campaign to honor the Leighs' wish. We joined them in this effort, knocking on doors, asking residents if they would like a park, and make a donation. They said yes to both, but wanted to preserve the property as an undeveloped open space that would not invite noise, vandalism and traffic.

In a recent conversation, Lisa Christophe described our objective at the time. "Donors were told that the property would be preserved in its natural state with no development whatsoever. This was the whole point of the purchase." In a December 22, 1998 letter, she wrote, "John Leigh relished the property's preservation as an open space. Neighbors have been very supportive of acquisition of the

property and its preservation in its natural state. Over 150 people signed a preservation petition."

In a December 18, 1998 letter to the East Bay Regional Parks Land Acquisition Department, Lafayette's Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Russell wrote, "an overwhelming majority would like the land preserved in as natural a state as possible."

A Dec. 19, 1998 article in The Contra Costa Times reported, "A groundswell of neighborhood support and financial pledges for saving the flat site at Fourth Street and Moraga Boulevard and its towering oak tree has helped persuade the [City] to move toward buying it." Residents and grade-school students wrote to state representatives requesting park grants; real estate agents offered 10 percent of their commission.

Neighbors contributed over \$33,000 to help City leaders secure a \$375,000 state grant. In a report to Lafayette's City Council, Russell explained, "State funds plus the donations provided enough money to purchase and develop the property as a passive neighborhood park. The City took title on October 21, 1999."

In many ways, this park was a gift to the city from residents who contributed and campaigned for state funds. They did not sign a legal document to preserve this quiet, passive park, but their intentions were clear. They entrusted the City of Lafayette with this legacy and expected them to honor the park's history and preserve it as a natural, open-space park for future generations.

That history and those expectations are at risk. A so-called LCP Improvement Plan is working its way through City departments with a design concept that would completely transform the quiet natural character of the park into a developed park with added pavement, elaborate play structures and rubberized fall-zone material covering roots and soil. Trees would be cut down and roots compromised with possible impacts on the riparian area and wildlife. Traffic, parking and noise could impact this quiet single-

family residential neighborhood.

The plan is also expensive. At the March 14 city council meeting, gasps of shock filled the room when a \$1 million budget was presented. The council cut in half the budget, but it still surpasses the original combined cost of land purchase and park creation.

In recent months, council members have received over 100 letters asking them to stop the Improvement Plan. Many also attended the meeting and spoke against the project.

Playground parks are great, but not here; two are within walking distance. LCP offers a unique alternative for children, a chance to explore and engage in nature, listen for birds, identify trees and use their imagination in unstructured play. Parents across the country are on waiting lists for outdoor pre-schools costing \$700 a month for an environment that LCP provides for free. Experts claim that today's children have lost touch with nature; they call it a "nature deficit disorder."

Therefore, we residents are offering an alternative to the Improvement Plan. We are offering to hire a professional landscape designer, at our expense, to present a conceptual design of a nature-based playscape for children that include ADA improvements. We want to preserve LCP's natural beauty and at the same time, open new doors for children, to explore and engage with nature.

Last year's Community Conversation survey described Lafayette as "a quiet oasis of civility amidst a turbulent sea of urbanity." If that's true, why then are we about to destroy our oasis in Leigh Creekside Park? Please urge the council to preserve the original wishes of John and Ethel and retain the natural ambiance of the park. Email cityhall@lovelafayette.org.

Lafayette residents MaryJo and Glen Cass are original founders and donors to the park. They lived on Fourth St. when the park was founded in 1999.

Historic Moraga Barn is a Community Asset for New Local Business

By Sophie Braccini



Greg Gaskin and Simran Parhar in front of the new headquarters of Gaskin Wealth Management in the historic Moraga Barn. Photo Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Barn is a valuable asset—at least that what Greg Gaskin is banking on.

He moved his company, Gaskin Wealth Management, into the historic space. A pragmatic capitalist with an appreciation for beauty and sustainability, the financial advisor, who had worked in Danville, had been on the look-out for a place closer to his Moraga home for some time. He wanted a place

for work, but also large enough to hold events and give back to the community. He's found it with this unique building, both a historical landmark and meets the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) platinum certified structure.

Gaskin and his wife, Jenise, are both natives of the East Bay, and they have raised their two children in Moraga. Gaskin has been work-

ing as a professional wealth management and investment advisor for over 23 years, in Walnut Creek with Smith Barney, then opening his own firm in Danville in 2007.

Gaskin says that he manages market risks for his clients' investment portfolios, simply picking up the best performing investments, inside each asset class.

He easily gets into sports metaphors to explain his concept, saying that sports teams are simply ranked according to how well they perform. He says he uses the same philosophy with the performance of financial assets, utilizing the Point and Figure methodology that analyzes the performance of assets, comparing them to their peers.

This purely analytical approach has the benefit of getting away from the emotional aspect, says Gaskin, which gets in the way of sound investing. He adds that he has been able to keep his clients' assets outperforming the market for the past 10 years, whether they are invested in 401K plans, stocks or bonds.

When asked if the Barn is not a bit disproportionate to his needs, as right now only he and his assistant Simran Parhar occupy the three-story building, Gaskin says that he always wanted to own a place that would be big enough to hold events and give back to the community.

The ground floor of the Barn, with its high ceiling and immense bay windows, has always been a great place for gatherings, even after it stopped being a bar. Many remember the wonderful celebrations of the Lamorinda Winegrowers Association, of the Moraga Garden Farms, or the local art exhibits. Gaskin says that he will continue the tradition, starting Saturday May 7 with a free financial seminar. "We will have one every first Saturdays of the month," he says.

And that is only the beginning. Walking through the building, Gaskin points at spaces that will become conference rooms; he moves through the back space and paints with words how a barbecue, a fountain and new landscaping are going to extend the appeal of the building for gatherings and parties. He imagines fundraising events for the Chamber of Commerce or the Campolindo Cougars football team. His son Kyle, now a police officer, was on that team until he graduated in 2008.

The business owner says he hasn't been all work and no play. He has enjoyed raising his two children and appreciated coaching their sports teams. He says that the unique space he bought will allow him to continue the community-building he found in the youth

sports.

Chris Avant, the former owner of the Barn, conceived and executed the renovation of the building with his firm, Canyon Construction. It was during a tour of the property with Avant that Gaskin realized what a special place it was, with its solar tiles, Austrian Bruckner Windows, geothermic piping that supports a radiant heat and cooling system, water catchment and storage, recycled features and green construction material. The benefits, Gaskin says, are not only the beauty of the place, but the very minimal utility bills he has to pay.

"I didn't even turn on the heat in January and February," he says. "It is that well insulated."

For more on the Barn, read the Lamorinda Weekly article "Moraga Barn: On Its Way To Platinum" (<https://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0110/pdf/Moraga-Barn-On-its-Way-to-Platinum.pdf>) in our June 27, 2007 edition.

Gaskin Wealth Management is located at 925 Country Club Drive, Moraga. Contact them at (925) 376-7335 or www.managemarket-risk.com.

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

business briefs

Something to Cheer About: New Beer Garden Coming to Town



Lamorinda Taphouse Photo provided

Something new is brewing in the old spot just vacated by the Lafayette Gallery at 3418 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite A, in Lafayette. The Lamorinda Taphouse Beer Garden and Bar is a local, craft beer

taphouse specializing in offering rare and unique craft beer. They plan to open sometime this summer. For more information, visit their Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/lamorindataphouse.com.

Get that Island Spirit as Way Side Inn Thrift Shop Goes Hawaiian

The volunteers at Assistance League Way Side Inn Thrift Shop are busy preparing for the "lazy, hazy days of summer-like" weather with the Bathing Suits/Hawaiiana event. This popular sale begins at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, "Mei" 3, and continues as long as the inventory lasts. The combined one-stop shopping spree offers a wide selection of bathing suits, cover ups for both adults and children, pareos, beach bags and swim accessories, all "suitable" for poolside and the beach time.



Check out Way Side Inn's "Hawaiiana" event. Photo provided

Hawaiian shirts, purses, artwork, décor and books — all with that "island feel" — will also be available. The Way Side Inn Thrift Shop is located at 3521 Golden Gate Way in Lafayette.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

6 at the Concord Hilton.

Schumacker bought the business in 2001 after working for 13 years at Pepsi Cola as its Fleet Manager. Initially he started off with two mechanics and now has three, a service writer, and the help of Schumacker's wife, Janelle.

He has enjoyed tremendous success in Moraga, and received great reviews on Yelp. He works foreign and domestic vehicles and "does not take short-cuts with any cars," he says. A real plus of his job, he says, is that he also gets to see and work with his son every day and someday hopes to pass the business to him. For tickets and information about the event, call 925-323-6524



Ron Schumacker Photo provided

Learn About Pilates

Absolute Center in Lafayette is celebrating Pilates Day, 2016, with an open house from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 12. Attendees can learn more about the history of Pilates, new approaches, and hear from Theo St. Francis, a competitive swimmer and MIT student who used Pilates to recover from a spinal cord injury. There will also be light refreshments and raffle prizes. Absolute Center is located at 3758 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 101, in Lafayette.

From the Chambers Lafayette

Coffee with the Mayor

Join us for "Coffee with the Mayor" with Mayor Mark Mitchell at 8 a.m. on Friday, April 22 in the Chamber Conference Room. This meeting is open to everyone. Please park on the street.

Chamber Mixer

The Lafayette Chamber Monthly Mixer will be held from 5:30 - 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 27 at Douglas Designs Plumbing, Tile & Lighting, located at 3535 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette.

Ribbon Cuttings

A Ribbon Cutting celebration will be held at 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 28 at the Tail Haven Hotel & Day Lounge, 3399 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette

A Ribbon Cutting celebration will be held at 10 a.m. May 26 for Oakbay Chiropractic-Lamorinda, located at 1080 Carol Lane in Lafayette.

Moraga Small Business of the Year

Ron Schumacker and his Moraga Motors will be recognized as Moraga's Small Business of the Year at the East Bay Leadership Council lunch and award ceremony on May

Moraga Community Fair

Booth registration is now open for the Moraga Community Faire which will take place from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, May 14. Moraga Chamber members and any Moraga business may showcase at the faire with their own booth. Register at www.moragachamber.org.

Orinda Trivia Bee

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce and the Orinda Rotary present the Orinda Trivia Bee on Friday, April 29 at St Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St Stephens Dr. Orinda. Cost is \$360 per team (up to six people per team), which includes a family style dinner. Doors open at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m. and the game begins at 7 p.m. sharp. Winners take a cash prize for the nonprofit of their choice. Reserve a table quickly, as only 16 tables are available. To purchase a table go to orindachamber.org, call 254-3909 or email info@orindachamber.org.

Cinco de Mayo Mixer

Save the date for a Cinco de Mayo-style mixer at Land Home Financial Services after hours on May 3 in Theater Square. For more information, contact the Orinda Chamber at (925) 254-3909.

Celebrating an Anniversary?

If your business is celebrating a significant anniversary (5, 10, 20 years or more ...) send us a photo of your business, the owner(s) or the staff with specific information about your business and what you're celebrating, and we'll include it in an upcoming issue.

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Local Residents Learn Importance of Composting

By Sophie Braccini



Students look for all of the different, very small bugs within different compost samples. Stephen Andrews is on the left. Photo Ashley Louisiana

Now that most everyone knows how to use their black, blue and green trash bins, the agency that manages local garbage, RecycleSmart, has a new aim: getting users to think seriously about composting.

“Source reduction” is the new buzzword in the trash world, meaning that residents should consider reducing the amount of waste going into their curbside carts, and put it to use in their yards. To promote the concept, RecycleSmart has enrolled 14 residents in a seven-week Advanced Composting Series to become CompostSMART Instructors and spread the word.

RecycleSmart Waste Prevention and Compost Manager Ashley Louisiana said that participants in the workshop were visually and verbally instructed on how to train others, present information and simplify the vast topic of home composting.

“CompostSMART cultivates an enthusiastic core of knowledgeable individuals who will expand public interest, education and the practice of home composting in the RecycleSmart service area,” she said.

Four residents from Lamorinda signed up to come for four hours over seven weekends to be part of this first class. It was led by Stephen Andrews, a UC Berkeley professor who has had contracts with many composting-related industries in the Bay Area.

Orinda’s Rachel Lorenz said that the class included lectures on the scientific and technical aspects of composting and vermicomposting, as well as demonstrations, several hands-on exercises and a field trip.

“I’m a UC Master Gardener of Contra Costa County,” she said. “The Advanced Compost training program reinforced my understanding of the importance of soil health and the role it plays in the health of our garden plants.” Feed the soil, not the plant is the rule she goes by.

Lafayette’s Judy Ryan, also a Master Gardener in the program, said that the content was very am-

bitious, that they needed additional time to cover the material and that the future classes will be extended by a couple of weeks.

RecycleSmart is set to reach the state 2020 goal of 75 percent trash diversion. The agency explains that home composting plays an important role in efforts to divert organics. It is the most efficient and least costly diversion practice, since the system is managed at home.

Lorenz is on board to help reduce waste from the source; she is convinced that composting at home is a great way to do that, adding that she now serves as a trainer.

“I am better able to discuss and teach others about the how’s and why’s of composting,” she said, noting that her ability to compost in her own backyard has improved dramatically, to the point that her green “organics” bin goes mostly unused.

Ryan has also been using her new knowledge at home, where she has three regular bins and two worm bins.

RecycleSmart offers several programs to support the effort of source reduction under the name “Home Composting for Busy People,” including CompostSMART once a year, and free ongoing workshops, such as Vermicomposting and Bin Building workshops. The agency provides low-cost compost bins, free brochures and informational materials. It also offers the Home Composter Certification program for a monthly garbage bill discount.

RecycleSmart’s next large group targets are businesses and multi-family residences. Louisiana says that RecycleSmart started the “Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling Act” April 1 with a requirement for all businesses and apartments that generate eight cubic yards or more of organics per week to recycle their organics.

“There will be follow-up requirements for all businesses and apartments to recycle their organics by 2020,” she added. RecycleSmart offers their organics services at no additional costs.

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Lafayette

Downtown Creeks

... continued from page A3

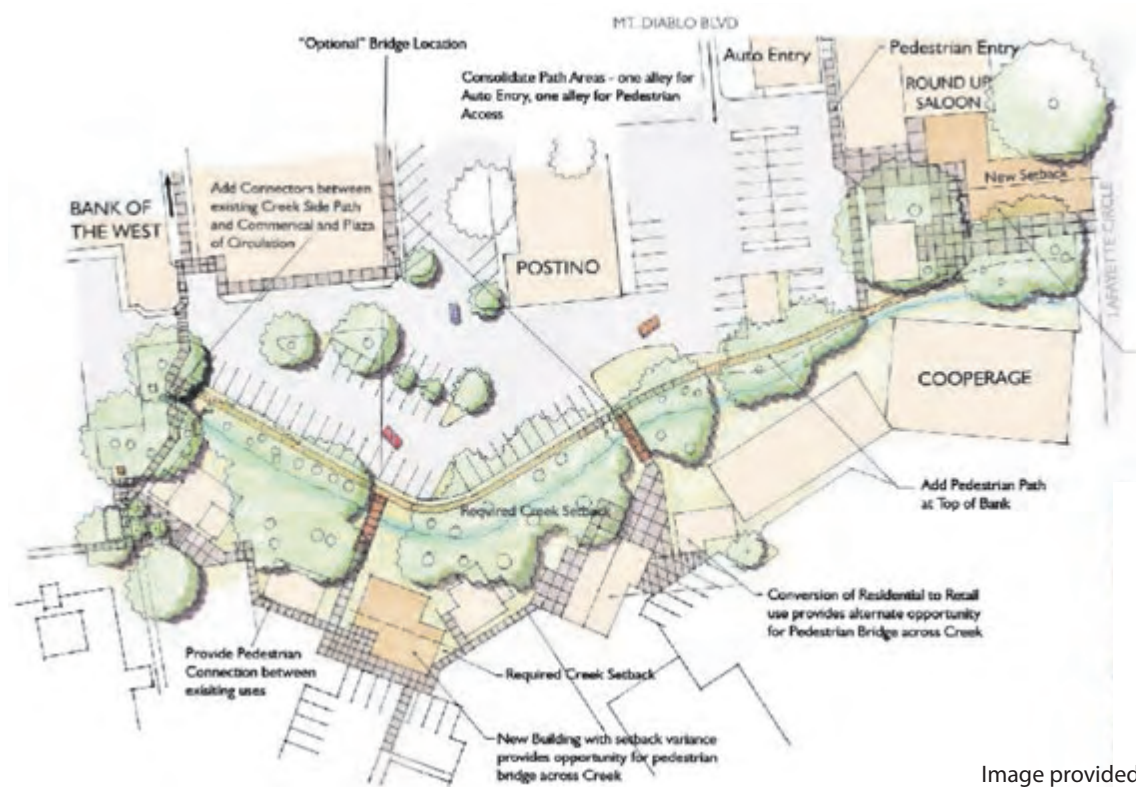


Image provided

This is an effort to craft a plan to protect and enhance them for public enjoyment.

The city, along with consultants Gates and Associates, are working together with the Creeks Committee to develop a comprehensive long-term plan that will preserve and restore the creeks.

"You can't fix them up, if you don't have a plan," said Senior Planner Steve Goetz. He emphasized that having a plan in place is critical to guide future development and to provide opportunities for expanded public access.

Initial concepts for the creeks plan, according to Will Elder, chair of the all-volunteer Lafayette Creeks Committee, include storm-

water retention features, establishing creek overlooks, developing a series of public spaces and reintroducing native riparian plants.

Specifically, the Downtown Creeks Plan will address flood protection, preserve riparian corridors, guide how the creeks will flow and interact with adjacent buildings, offer physical access to the top of creek banks as well as preserve creeks as a significant contributor to downtown character. When complete, the Downtown Creeks Plan will become part of the Downtown Specific Plan.

Since August, the consultants, with expertise in landscape architecture, civil engineering and environmental restoration, have

been working on the project, doing extensive mapping and assessments, then developing concepts and ideas. Workshop attendees can check out and comment on their draft drawings.

While some of the land on the banks of the local creeks is privately owned, there are two large sections that are publicly owned, across from the Veterans Hall, and near the gazebo on the east end of town.

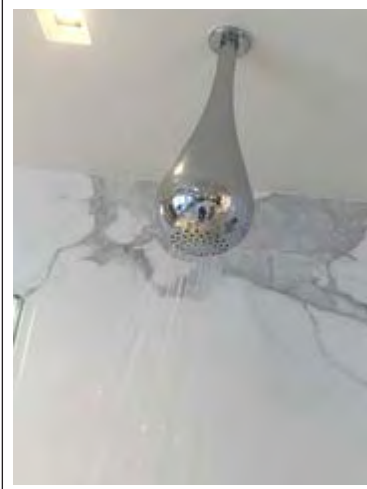
One "catalyst" project, as Goetz calls it—on publicly owned land restoring a stretch of Lafayette Creek near the Veterans Hall—would widen the sidewalk along Mt. Diablo Boulevard and create an overlook plaza area that would stabilize the creek bank.

The meeting is at 6:30 p.m. April 27 at the Lafayette Library's Community Hall. Those looking for a sneak preview can go on guided creek walks with members of the creeks committee to examine creek enhancement opportunities. The walks will start at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. from the Sustainable Lafayette Earth Day celebration on Sunday, April 24, which will also be held at the library.

For more information on the city goals of increasing community appreciation of its downtown creeks go to www.lovelafayette.org/creeksplan or contact planner Goetz at sgoetz@ci.lafayette.ca.us.

Lafayette

Going Green ... continued from page A2



This unusual teardrop-designed shower head is low flow, and meets CALGreen standards. Photo C. Tyson

McLaughlin explained that making more energy efficient choices "makes a lot of sense," paying for themselves in the long run and costs only slightly more. In his experience, his clients usually choose to incorporate a range of more efficient items, including lighting, windows, toilets, showerheads, insulation and especially furnaces.

There are a range of prices for all of these products, but McLaughlin believes that even relatively basic models are a huge step up from older original versions that can be found in many Lamorinda homes. McLaughlin — "Builder Bob" to his friends — said that many of his projects include new windows. Clients can choose more economical vinyl windows, or go with high-end wood windows, but both are durable, have insulation that protects from extreme temperatures and block most of the sun's ultraviolet rays.

He acknowledged that current building regulations spelled out in the state's CALGreen program now requires more environmentally friendly items that nudge buyers in the green direction. For instance high density insulation has to have an R-15 value, compared to the old standard of R-13, the measure of insulation's ability to reduce the rate of heat flow. Also, at least half of all light fixtures in kitchens and bathrooms must be energy efficient, long lasting LED, and not the older incandescent type.

First of its kind in the nation, CALGreen is California's more stringent green building code that mandates new buildings and renovations meet certain sustainability and ecological standards to improve air quality and cut down on energy and water consumption.

According to Pacific Gas & Electric, home heating and cooling typically accounts for 44 percent of an energy bill. Homeowners would be wise to consider long-term savings of updating furnace and air conditioning units.

Desiree Medler, marketing analyst for Clean Air HVAC Company, said that the bigger the home, the

bigger the benefit of a high-efficiency furnace. She adds that ducting should also be taken into consideration, since that's where most of the heat loss happens. Furnaces have an average lifespan of around 20 years, and become less efficient over time. Check out www.pge.com for rebates offers.

Low-flow toilets are now the norm. Responding to California's drought, the Department of Water Resources is encouraging installation of low-flow toilets with a generous rebate program. Swapping out an old fashioned model made between 1980 and 1994, which uses about 3.5 gallons per flush, with a new high efficiency model uses less than half of that amount of water 1.28 gallons per use, which saves on consumer's water bills and gets proud owners a check for \$100.

Even the City of Lafayette has made a real effort to help citizens save energy, water and money with their partnership with Rising Sun Energy Center's California Youth Energy Services program, which provides free home energy and water audits via their Green House Calls. It is slated to start this summer. Call (510) 665-1501, extension 5, or visit the city website at www.lovelafayette.org for more information.

As of July 1, Lafayette city leaders were the first in Lamorinda to ban plastic single use bags, and have instituted a mandatory 10 cent charge, levied by the merchant for each paper bag, to encourage shoppers to bring their own re-usable bags to tote purchases home.

In addition, residents will soon have a choice of where their energy comes from — either greener power from Marin Clean Energy or continue on with PG & E. According to Megan Canales, Assistant Planner, the program should be on-line in late summer or early fall, after an extensive outreach effort.

Residents with solar panels should note that MCE has lower rates for Net Energy Metering than PG&E. For homeowners who use more energy than their system produces, MCE charges a lower amount than PG&E. Energy provider MCE has waived the membership analysis cost, so the cost to the city to offer this option is nothing. In addition, no tax dollars are used to fund MCE, but there is a small monthly exit fee to take into account.

Because many Lamorinda residents tend to stay in their homes, and choose to remodel rather than move away from friends and family, weighing the costs and long term benefits of green home improvements is a necessary part of the equation.

Moraga

Three-lane Moraga Road

... continued from page A5

The survey results show that a large majority of residents, about 80 percent, consider it is important to balance the needs of drivers with pedestrians and bicyclists; 65 percent consider that the road segment between Corliss and Draegger is unsafe for bicyclists and pedestrians; and 60 percent consider the traffic between Corliss and Draegger is satisfactory.

Residents indicated at an 80 percent rate that the three-lane option would make pedestrians and bicyclists safer. However, when asked to choose what new street configuration they would prefer, it was the four-lane configuration that was voted first, followed by the three-lane design.

The three-lane option had been brought to the council in January, 2015. Trotter had said that making the decision to reduce the number of lanes from four to three required a town-wide outreach, such as a survey. He was supported by Wykle. Onoda favored the three lanes option while Arth preferred four lanes. Metcalf was absent at

that meeting.

A year later, the survey results seemed to support Trotter and Arth's position. Wykle said that in his view the southbound portion of Moraga Road between Draegger and Corliss was reduced to one lane "de facto," since one is already used for left turns and a portion becomes a right turn-only as it approaches Corliss.

Onoda stressed the importance of having a dedicated left turn lane, for safety reasons and to secure access to a new entrance to the Hacienda de las Flores.

Metcalf said he based his decision on the previous process, where a lot of people spent time studying the topic, as compared to a survey that was confusing, according to comments he had heard.

Planning Director Ellen Clark, who has initiated and led the Moraga Livable Road project, noted that the new configuration would be only striped on the asphalt with no new construction, to allow the possibility to revert to a four-lane configuration if needed.

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Moraga

Campo Trees Removed

... continued from page A5



Photo Cathy Dausman

He says they are "on track" for a completion in mid-July.

"People just love trees," Humphrey said, "and I'm with 'em!"

Asked if the district has landscape projects slated for Miramonte High School or Acalanes High School, Humphrey said Miramonte is undergoing an irrigation replacement which involves digging up planters and repotting some vegetation. The Acalanes campus landscape "looks gorgeous as it is," Humphrey said.

Here is a partial list of trees removed and some of their replacements.

Removed:

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Arizona cypress | Aleppo Pine | Willow |
| Bottle Brush | Liquid Amber | Ponderosa Pine |
| Canary Island Pine | Ash | Mulberry |

Replacements:

- Trees:**
October Glory Maples
Easter Red Bud
Western Red Bud
Raywood Ash
Deep red Crepe Myrtle
Chinese Pistache
Aristocrat Pear
Coastal Live Oak
Valley Oak
Soquel Redwoods

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Wild lilac
Lantana
Western ferns
Flowering currant
Sage
Periwinkle

Front Page

Sinkhole

Lamorinda resident and businesswoman Natasha Grasso designs and manufactures handcrafted jewelry. Grasso recently moved her studio and boutique from Burlingame to the Rheem Center, but is fearful of a public perception that the area is presently closed or inaccessible.

"The lack of traffic and stigma around the Rheem shopping center is a real problem for my business and I know I am not the only one," she said. "A setback like this threatens the health of our business community and drives our residents and customers to other shopping areas that are more accessible," she said, adding that she thinks it would be helpful to put together a small group "think tank" to brainstorm and spearhead some solutions.

William Chao, of Chef Chao, also reports his restaurant business has been "down significantly" as a result of the sinkhole, saying he has even had to close "for a couple days." Chao told Moraga Chamber Executive Director Kathe Nelson that "PG&E estimates that it will take two to three months to complete repairs; however, I worry that will continue to hurt our business. I'm hoping you can help us by expediting the repair construction."

While Autohaus owner Xiao Zheng agrees the sinkhole detour is inconvenient he cannot complain about business downturn because he does not depend on foot traffic. "It is what it is," he said. Zhen said the customer cars he moved away from the sinkhole "smelled like a gas chamber" inside, noting the town was lucky a stray cigarette didn't ignite any fumes.

Nelson said she feels the Rheem Center owners' pain. Her

... continued from page A1

first challenge was providing the city contact information for the affected businesses. "We started and stopped a comprehensive list of businesses in Moraga," Nelson said, adding she thinks they reached out to "99 percent" of the Rheem Center businesses.

Doing that was complicated because not all Moraga businesses are Chamber of Commerce members. Interim Town Manager Robert Priebe has received a few detour comments himself. "I understand the problems and we're working on it," Priebe said. He says the town administrators are "working very hard to find more assistance."

Addressing Somers' concern, Priebe told the Lamorinda Weekly "we are making changes." He says the town will add a sign underneath the present electronic "Rheem Boulevard closed; detour ahead" sign in Lafayette on southbound Moraga advising drivers that Rheem Center businesses remain open. The town will also post metal traffic signs in both directions along Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard before and after the closure with the same information. Would the police department assign an officer to direct traffic through the intersection?

"We're playing that by ear," Priebe said. According to Priebe the forensic analysis of the hole should be completed approximately April 15, but completion of the project will likely take another three to four months. He remains pleased with how the town is managing the event, saying "I don't think there's much more we can do to keep the public informed," and adds that the work done by Town Engineer Edric Kwan has been "phenomenal."



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Are Electric Cars Losing Their Charge?

... continued from page A1

Thanks in part to government mandates to curb carbon emissions, plug-in electric vehicles were re-born at the end of 20th century. Today, consumers have a choice of over two dozen plug-in electric models, with technologies at work to improve all aspects of driving them.

But could plug-in vehicles be headed for a repeat of the history of 100 years ago? U.S. sales of plug-in electric vehicles experienced their first annual drop in 2015, from 123,000 to 116,000, while overall auto sales set an all-time record of 17.5 million units. The Nissan LEAF, the world's top selling electric vehicle, dropped by nearly 17,000 worldwide last year, according to the Inside EV sales report. Does the public no longer believe that electric cars are worth it?

"You don't save as much as you think," said Steve Allen of Moraga, who puts 12,000 miles a year on his Tesla Model S. "The \$250 I saved in gas per month is now a \$150 increase to my PG&E bill."

The cars themselves are not cheaper, either, because of the extra cost for the lithium-ion battery pack, which runs as high as \$10,000. Federal and state tax credits help offset the higher sticker price.

Owners of gasoline-powered cars rarely drive far to find a filling station; not so for owners of electric cars. "People don't know how far they can drive," said Ravi Singh of Rheem Valley Automotive, voicing what drivers call "electric car range anxiety." For that reason, sales consultant Joseph Woo at Autocom Nissan of Concord said that an electric car like the LEAF makes a good second car, but not a great single car, "unless you use it for only work or school." Woo estimates the range of a Nissan LEAF at 85 miles.

A lack of electric charging stations contributes to drivers' range anxiety. According to PlugShare, a charging station database, Lamorinda has only two non-residential charging stations: a supercharger at Whole Foods Market and a public station at McDonald's on Mt. Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette. To help reduce this deficiency in Contra Costa County, the Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance in December requiring new residential and non-residential buildings to allocate up to six percent of parking spaces for charging stations, nearly double the state requirement.

The drop in oil prices and improved gas mileage have boosted gasoline-powered auto sales, but since California roads are funded out of the state gas sales tax, less gasoline purchased equals less state revenue. Rumbblings about a road usage charge to pare the deficit have caused concern, but a proposal to add a registration premium to zero-emission vehicles is perceived

by many energy-conserving, emissions-reducing electric car owners as a slap in the face.

"There seems to be some interest in the community for doing that," said State Assemblywoman Catharine Baker, speaking of the registration premium. "But first and foremost, we must be better stewards of the money that Californians already pay to fund transportation."

One electric car maker, however, enjoys an Apple cult-like following, as its sales performance flies in the face of the overall EV data and the criticisms of the naysayers. What can explain the hundreds of customers camped in front of the Walnut Creek Tesla showroom last month to place a deposit on a blind prototype of a Tesla Model 3, promising a 215-mile range for \$35,000?

"I had nothing to lose," said Kathy Dickinson of Orinda, who pre-ordered a Model 3 online. "If I don't like it, I can always get back my \$1,000 deposit."

Tesla announced that it had accepted 325,000 reservations for the Model 3 in the first week of the product launch.

Norman Pease of Orinda owns Tesla Model X No. 65. "The car drives itself," he said. "It gives you instant power, it's quiet. You hardly have to use the brake pedal to generate energy." But atop his reasons for ownership came a sincere plea to the masses.

"You will be depriving yourself a lot of enjoyment by not driving an electric car," he said.

With such passion exuded by Tesla customers, who have loaned the company \$325 million to produce the Model 3, at least one electric car maker is poised to halt the U.S. sales slowdown and attempt to shock the world.



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Gala to Give Glimpse of Carr Ranch Property

By Sophie Braccini



Carr Ranch's stunning south view.

Photo Adam Weidenbach

With its 600 acres of open hills, canyons, creeks, trees, shrubs, wildflowers, wildlife and its spectacular views of the East Bay, Carr Ranch is one of the most beautiful open space properties around. While hiking or horseback riding the ranch, it truly seems as if the sky's the limit.

The John Muir Land Trust (JMLT) that is focused on buying the property to open it to the public has raised over two-thirds of the \$7 million purchase price. On April 30, it will host the Pure Muir Gala to help those fundraising efforts. It will be held at the picturesque Campana Farm set at the edge of Moraga.

Pat Rose, owner of Campana Farm, located at 2151 Camino Pablo next to Rancho Laguna Park, joined the JMLT as soon as she heard of its project to purchase Carr

Ranch, "I was so thrilled," she said, "and I wanted to be part of that."

Campana Farm is a six-acre property spread on flat land next to 13,000 acres of EBMUD watershed open space and Carr Ranch. Rose says she had been worried about the Carr Ranch and how it could be developed since it is located outside of the Moraga town limits and development would not have had to abide by such town's rules as the protection of ridgelines.

Campana Farm is the perfect place for an event supporting the purchase of the Carr Ranch property, according to JMLT Executive Director Linus Eukel, because it is close to downtown Moraga, and at the same time secluded and surrounded by open space. Standing on the main lawn where the gala will be held, one has the feeling to

be at the edge of the world, with infinite uncharted territory in sight, inviting exploration.

Rose has developed her property for elegant large events, such as weddings, with a front garden where appetizers and drinks will be served before dinner on the April 30. Native plants, flowing grass, flowers and a pond create an inviting atmosphere.

On the evening of the gala people who purchase VIP tickets will go on a short hike on the trails behind Campana Farm to learn more about Carr Ranch, and see the property from a few key vantage points. Eukel and Chuck Lewis, JMLT board chairman, will be speaking briefly about the trust and Carr Ranch. Well-known television personality Doug McConnell will be the Master of Ceremonies.

... continued on page B8



Campana Farm, next to Rancho Laguna Park, will host the Gala.

Photo Sophie Braccini

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Book Chronicles Life in Cambodia's Killing Fields From a Local's View
Owner of Papillon Cafe's own story of loss and triumph is captured by acclaimed author Jil Plummer

By Jennifer Wake



Jil Plummer Photo provided

Most little girls spend their childhoods dancing in princess dresses or planning tea parties, but Chanhbopha Oum, now known as Brenda Oum, co-owner of Papillon Gourmet Coffees in Lafayette, spent her childhood fighting for her life.

When she was 5-years-old, Oum and her family were forced from their home in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, by the Khmer Rouge army, consisting of teenage peasant guerillas led by Pol Pot beginning in 1975. With a goal to form a communist peasant society, all forms of capitalism, Western civilization, city life, religion and all foreign influences were extinguished by the Pol Pot regime, cities were evacuated, and citizens were forced into slave labor, resulting in approximately 1.5 million deaths due to execution, malnutrition, overwork and disease over the next three years.

Oum's mother, two brothers and her sister joined millions on the four-day death march from Phnom Penh, where they traveled on foot at gunpoint to what has become known as the "killing fields." Oum's family was subjected to a life of hard labor until they escaped to Thailand before coming to America on Feb. 28, 1987.

When local author Jil Plummer heard Oum's childhood story, she approached her about writing a book about it. "Remember to Remember," was released in February, with over 100 people attending

the Feb. 14 book launch at Papillon. While filled with tragedy, the book is a tale of hope, underscoring the resilience and determination of one little girl and her will to persevere.

The book follows Oum through her childhood as she finds inventive ways to survive the labor camps in Cambodia, then as she and her family cross the Thai border to the refugee camp Khoo-I-Dang where she meets Liu Chea, now known as Tom, the other co-owner who greets Papillon customers from behind the counter with his wife, Brenda, by his side.

"The book is really a love story," said Plummer. "It's wonderful having Tom in the background supporting her. People always forget about him, so sweet and quiet."

Chea helped Oum and her family enter the Thai refugee camp illegally, and hid them under a floor while securing their identification tags for the camp. He shared his rations of food with the family and directed them to ensure their safety while they hid. He eventually followed the family to the United States, where he asked Oum to marry him.

To capture the stark prison camp conditions and to describe the Cambodian countryside, which Plummer says is similar to Thailand, the author used detailed diary entries written by her uncle when he was interred in a Japanese prison camp during World War II. She also pulled from her own childhood memories when writing the book, which she calls a fictionalized true story.

While researching the book, Plummer learned many things, such as what currency was used at the time, the different dialects spoken and the types of shoes people wore. She even learned how to grow rice. But she was drawn to research about the brutality of these types of regimes and how people

can learn to be so cruel.

"Education is so important, especially the liberal arts, to see a broader view," she said. "I always thought Pol Pot and Bin Ladin were so well-educated, but they were bitten by a bug that got into their heads."

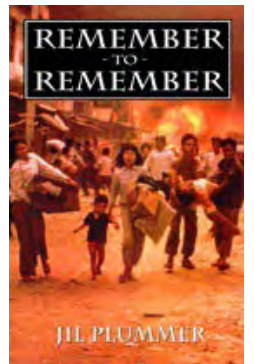
The events of the book are accurate, but small, descriptive pieces were added that Plummer felt might have happened under those circumstances – a water buffalo sighting at the side of a pond; a butterfly floating by in the rice fields.

"Children have short attention spans. I wanted to add what a child would do," said Plummer. "There is so much tragedy in the book, so I added certain parts to lighten it up." The final product is a narrative that flows beautifully, with fully-formed characters that leave you rooting for their success.

"When I started the book I was amazed by the whole story," Plummer said. "It made me realize how petty our problems often are."

She and Oum have recently been invited to speak about the book at local book clubs and Plummer plans to attend an author event at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center this summer.

"Remember to Remember" is available on Amazon.com or you can pick up a copy at Papillon in La Fiesta Square, where you will likely find Oum and Chea smiling behind the counter, and Plummer at a table, coffee in hand, chatting with friends.



Fair Trade Festival Held at SMC

By Sophie Braccini



Photo Sophie Braccini

Students surround Nick van Santen, the assistant director for Justice Education and Im-

College Fair Trade Festival.

Van Santen who initiated the festival, said that some 1,000 students came through for lunch while exploring the fair trade booths. The eclectic mix of vendors included Just Coffee from Mexico, FairTrade Design that imports accessories from all over the world, the women's Bean Project from Denver, San Francisco-based Alter Eco Chocolate, Numi teas, the Asante Network, Tcho chocolate, and the Saint Mary's group Enactus that is partnering with the Christian fair trade movement to bring solar electricity to refugees and homeless communities.

Van Santen said that the fair trade festival was a great way to highlight some of the Saint Mary's Lasallian values through quality education and respect for all people.

Ritual Foods Like Charoset Mark Passover

By Cathy Dausman



Making the Charoset, from left Vivian Poettgen, Tricia Zucker, Heidi Benenson
Photos Cathy Dausman



The Jewish holiday of Passover begins the evening of Friday, April 22 and ends the evening of Saturday, April 30.

“Passover is my favorite Jewish holiday,” said Heidi Benenson, explaining that it is “food, drink and song over a hard topic.”

Passover is an eight-day festival celebrated in early spring that commemorates the Israelite emancipation from slavery in Egypt.

As with most holidays in most religions, it is celebrated with ritual and special foods. Benenson recently joined organizers Vivian and Valerie Poettgen making charoset for the Temple Isaiah Women’s Seder service. The ritual meal features matzo (unleavened bread), parsley, signifying spring, salt water for tears, lamb shank for sacrifice, horseradish as a bitter herb, wine as a blessing and a roasted egg which represents new life.

This charoset was made of apples, nuts and honey; it signifies the mortar which binds everything together.

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‘Peaceful Parenting’ is a Hot Topic for Lamorinda Moms’ Largest Forum

By A.K. Carroll

Dr. Laura Markham is first and foremost a parent. Which made the renowned parenting expert’s presentation in Lamorinda recently even more resounding, especially when she acknowledged, “Parents don’t get enough support. They need support.”

On Wednesday, March 30, the Lamorinda Moms, a local support group for parents, executed their largest community endeavor to date when they brought in Markham, a clinical psychologist, mother of two, author and founding editor of AhaParenting.com.

“I know how hard it is to be a parent,” said Markham, who was hosted at Orinda Intermediate School. More than 370 parents, caregivers and interested community members showed up for the event, a number that delighted one of the organizers for the event, Meighan Baldwin.

“I would imagine this [will be] one of the first larger scale parenting presentations in the East Bay,” she said.

The evening included an hour-long presentation, a substantial question-and-answer period and a book signing.

“I love to answer questions,” Markham said prior to the event. “I’ll come and do a 45-60 min presentation. It’s always useful, but everybody’s favorite part of the evening is when they get to [ask] ‘What about my family?’”

Markham’s presentation outlined the basic concepts laid out in her first book, “Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids: How to Stop Yelling and Start Connecting.” (She has also published a second book, “Peaceful Parent, Happy Siblings.”)

What is peaceful parenting? “It’s an aspiration,” said Markham. “An increasing ability to respond in a calm and mindful manner.” Markham noted that a peaceful parent isn’t always peaceful, but keeps peace in sight as a goal.

“We monitor and regulate our own moods so we can show up and respond and be the parents our children deserve,” she said.

Markham also put a large emphasis on embracing emotions and connecting with your children, no matter what the situation, touting that “Connection is 80 percent of parenting.”

The reaction to Markham’s presentation was overwhelmingly positive. “When she asked for questions I saw 20 hands shoot up right away,” said stay-at-home mom and Lamorinda Moms publicity team member Kathryn Cooper. “Because Lamorinda Moms is targeted at parents with kids under age six, a lot of questions were targeted at [parents] with young kids.”

Much of the Q&A reiterated concepts from Markham’s presentation in a way that hit home with individuals. “Trying playfulness [as a method of engagement] is something I’d used in the past, but had forgotten about,” said Cooper. “It was kind of an ‘Aha’ tool.”

Though parenting can be a tough go (especially when new tactics and tools seem counterintuitive), at the end of the evening Markham’s words were more encouraging than critical.

“I think that we all do the best we can as parents at all times,” said Markham. “We all need support. The more you give yourself the more you’ll be the parent you want to be.”

“Dr. Laura’s calm demeanor, hands-on approach and factual research is a wonderful mix for her talk,” Baldwin said. “Her focus on connection and emotions allows us as parents to realize and center ourselves and strive for better relationships with our children — from toddlerhood to young and mature adults

Markham’s words resonate with Lamorinda Moms, an organization that seeks to bring information to the community, specifically to parents.

“It’s a wonderful resource for new parents or parents moving from one area to the next,” said Baldwin, who hopes that Markham’s presentation will prove to be the first of many in the community. “If you are a new parent or parents of older children looking for community support, we are here for you.”



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Community Service

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

'Macbeth' Comes to Acalanes High

Submitted By Mandy Chivers



From left, students Anna Cain, Callie Zucker, and Emily Gray play the Witches and Siavash Keivani plays Macbeth. Photo Ed Meehan

The Acalanes Drama Dons will present "Macbeth" April 27, 28, 29 and 30 in the Performing Arts Center little theater.

Shakespeare's "Macbeth" is a swift and relentless tragedy that uncovers the terrifying consequences of blind ambition. A dark prophecy leads a warrior and his wife past the point of no return, in a world of ghosts, witches and battlefields. It is set in medieval Scotland.

Shakespeare's great story telling, com-

elling characters, catchy phrasing and illumination of the human experience all come to light in this production, directed by Ed Meehan, Acalanes' drama teacher.

Performances are at 7 p.m., with doors opening at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors. Tickets are available in April during lunch at Acalanes High School and online at ahsperformingarts.org. There will be limited ticket sales available day of the show.

OIS Actors Bring Roald Dahl's 'Masterpeach' to Life

Submitted by Jeanette Lipp



Cast members of OIS's "James and the Giant Peach, JR." get ready to roll. Photo provided

Oroinda Intermediate School's (OIS) Bulldog Theater proudly presents its fall spring musical, "James and the Giant Peach, JR." April 28-30 at OIS. Based on one of Roald Dahl's most poignantly quirky stories, Roald Dahl's "James and the Giant Peach, JR." is a brand new take on this "masterpeach" of a tale. Featuring a wickedly tuneful score and a witty and charming book, this adventurous musical about courage and self-discovery is destined to be a classic.

When James is sent by his conniving aunts to chop down their old fruit tree, he discovers a magic potion that grows a tremendous peach, rolls into the ocean and launches a journey of enormous proportions. James befriends a collection of singing insects that ride the giant piece of fruit across the ocean,

facing hunger, sharks and plenty of disagreements along the way.

The production is directed and produced by Bay Area Children's Theatre (BACT) as part of their Youth Education Program. Caroline Schneider serves as Director with Sidney Spiegel as Choreographer.

There are two casts, comprised of approximately 60 OIS students along with additional 14 OIS students serving on tech crew. Performances will run April 28-30 at the OIS Bulldog Theater. The performance lasts approximately 90 minutes, including one intermission. For show time information and to purchase tickets, please visit www.showtix4u.com. Tickets are also available at OIS Theater one half hour prior to show times.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary to Announce Wine Winners

Submitted By Thomas Black

Winning tickets for the Wine Barrel Raffle contest sponsored by Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary will be drawn Friday, Apr. 29, when the club meets for its weekly breakfast meeting at 7:15 a.m. at the Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa in Lafayette. Winners need not be present.

A total of 50, 750 ml. bottles of wine, donated by club members are valued at "no less than \$1,250 and probably much more," said Hans Englehart, a Moraga resident and co-chair of the raffle. "Each of us contributed a bottle with a known retail value of at least \$25."

Tickets are still available. They are \$10 each or 11 for \$100. To purchase, contact Englehart at 818-642-6260 or via email at

3speeds3@gmail.com. Tickets are tax deductible.

There are three lucky tickets. Draw No. 1 wins 25 bottles, No. 2 wins 15 bottles, and No. 3 takes home 10 bottles.

Proceeds will help to support a variety of community programs, including the club's own Home Team, which provides gratis minor home-maintenance repairs for the elderly; Las Trampas in Lafayette, which provides services for developmentally challenged adults; Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, which offers rent-assisted housing for families; and Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, which annually provides countless thousands of free meals for qualifying families.

Lafayette Girl Scouts Help Winter Nights Guests at Easter

Submitted by Linda Murphy



Girl Scouts, from left, Natalie, Riley, Jordan, Aly, and Tessa have fun filling Easter baskets for Winter Nights guests.

Girl Scout Troop 31881 enjoyed a meaningful evening of giving back to the community. On Friday, March 25, the Lafayette sixth graders and their mothers volunteered with the Winter Nights Program. In addition to helping to serve dinner, the girls in the troop shopped for Easter treats for the 17 children who were staying as Winter Nights guests at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church (MDUUC) in Walnut Creek. The Girl Scouts then assembled the baskets with age-appropriate treats and novelties for the children who ranged in age

from 1 to 19. The baskets were a wonderful surprise on Easter morning.

This is the seventh year that MDUUC has hosted Winter Nights, utilizing 150 volunteers from March 15 to March 29 this year. The Winter Nights program is run by the Contra Costa County Interfaith Council's Social Justice Alliance. From October to May, congregations of all religions take turns hosting a group of homeless families. More information is available at www.cccwinter-nights.org.

Girl Scouts Beautify Park

Submitted By Girl Scout Troop 32787



From left to right: Alicia, Nicole and Kathryn at Leigh Creekside Park. Photo provided

By now, you've probably seen the black tarp around the oak tree at Leigh Creekside Park. This is where members of Lafayette Girl Scout troop 32787, Kathryn, Nicole, and Alicia (Girl Scouts of America have prohibited use of last names in press articles), have planted California native plants for their Silver Award Project. In this project, over a year in the making, the girls visited nurseries and picked out flowers to plant.

They were aided by Jennifer Russell and Susan Agnew at the Lafayette Community

Center, who are part of the Parks and Recreation Committee, as well as being the girls' project advisors. They were also helped by Grace Dixon, who is running a community effort to help fix up the same park.

The girls raised money for their project by painting faces at the Lafayette Art and Wine Festival. They received a generous donation from Orchard Nursery as well.

On Dec. 11, the first plants were finally put in the ground, and on Dec.17, the seeds were scattered.

The species planted include California Poppies, California and Idaho fescue, Blue-eyed grass, Baby Blue eyes, Purple Bee Phacelia, Evening Primrose, Elk Blue Rush and Pacific Coast Hybrid Iris. The flowers are growing quickly, and will likely flower by spring, although they will not reach their full size for another two to three years.

When asked why she wanted to help this park for her project, Alicia said that she had come to this park for a picnic when she was younger, but had found it in such bad condition that she and her family had decided to leave. For their project, the girls decided to fix that. If you peek over the fence, you can see the results of their efforts just beginning to poke out of the ground.

Lafayette residents are urged not to let their dogs go inside the fenced off area.

Annual Kapnek Fun Run Helps Fight AIDS in Zimbabwe

Submitted By Masiy Mills



Young participants enjoyed the 2015 JF Kapnek Fun Run.

The 13th annual JF Kapnek Trust Family Fun and post-race brunch will be held from 9 a.m. to noon on Sunday, May 1, at Miramonte High School, 750 Moraga Way in Orinda.

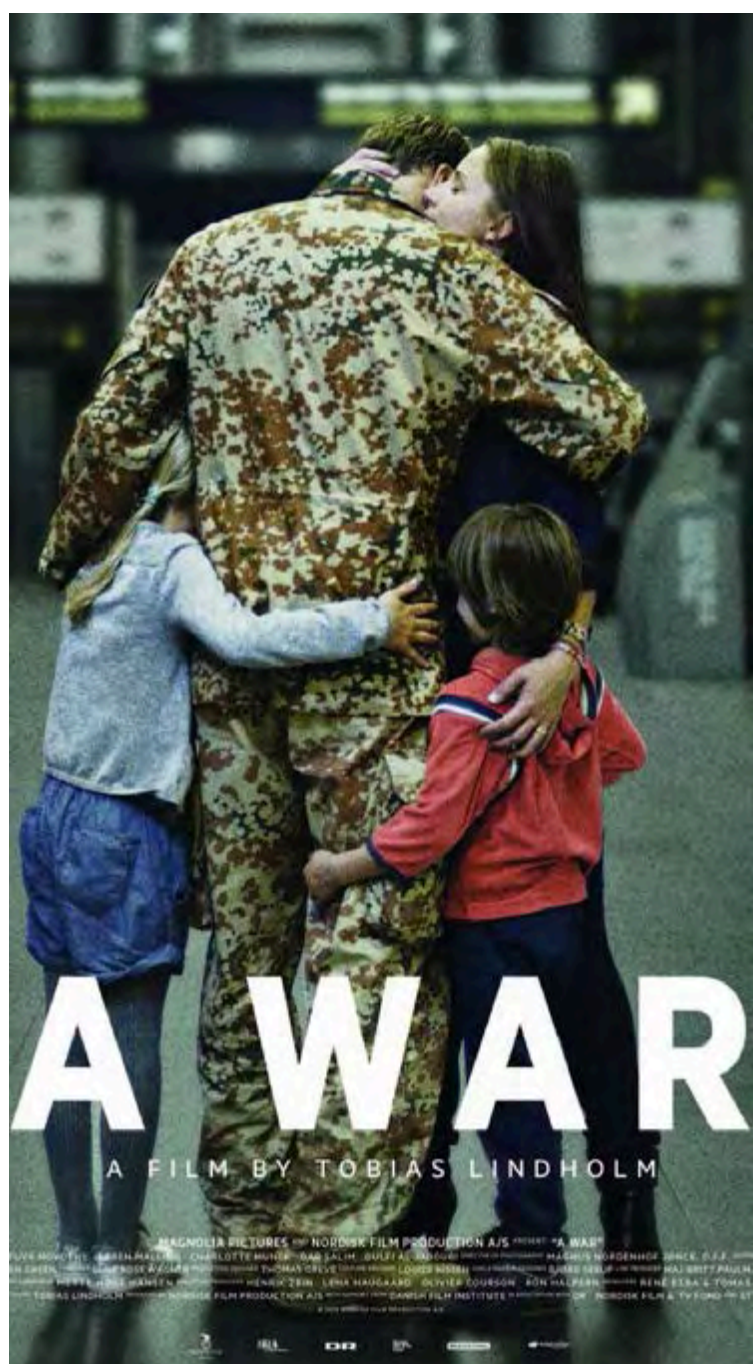
The event helps support children and

families affected by AIDS in Zimbabwe. Besides the race, there will be music, kids' rafts, face painting, prizes for the top finishers and more. All participants will receive a free t-shirt and a healthy brunch after the race.

To register, visit www.JFKapnekTrust.com.

Danish Film Shows Human Side of 'A War'

By Sophie Braccini



The point of the movie, "A War," is simple: War is a tragedy and even the best soldiers, with the best intentions, cannot escape actions that will haunt them for a very long time.

This movie, along with the also recently released "Eyes In The Sky," doesn't really judge the situations and the people. It doesn't glorify these soldiers that are sent to faraway lands. Rather, it aims to establish facts and expose human vulnerability when confronted with inhuman situations.

"A War" is a 2015 Danish movie written and directed by Tobias Lindholm. It is playing at the Orinda Theater for a week, beginning on April 29, as part of the International Film Showcase.

Danish soldiers were sent to

Afghanistan to fight the Taliban in 2002-2003 and try to win over civilians. The movie shows them as good men, most of them very young. Their captain, Claus Pedersen (Pilou Asbæk, who plays Euron Greyjoy in the upcoming "Game of Thrones," season), is a more mature family man who feels for his soldiers and wants to be there for them in the most dangerous situations. At some point, he will go out with his men and make a decision to save one of them that will lead to serious collateral damage. Back in Denmark, he is tried under accusations of a war crime.

The movie starts on at the frontline, getting the spectator to live the everyday hard and trying life of the soldiers. For the Af-

ghans, life is also harsh, caught between soldiers from another country they can barely understand and Taliban that spreads another kind of terror.

In an interview with Awards Daily, Lindholm said that in making this film, he wanted the audience to live this story, rather than tell them what was right and wrong.

As the situation spirals and the soldiers go back home, the movie very powerfully shows the contrast and difficulty to come back to a country of peace, where no one can really fathom what the soldiers have been going through. Family issues are no less difficult for the captain and he has to make choices there too that will also have deep consequences.

The last part of the movie is a courtroom drama, very well mastered with a lot of suspense, until a denouement that, like in "Eyes In The Sky," leaves a bitter taste.

The acting is restrained and always feels very true. Asbæk as the captain is not immediately likeable, but his efforts to make sense of the situation and protect his men gain him the audiences' support. He is a man trapped, so human and fallible, striving to live according to his principles in a world that is very messy.

The direction of the film is controlled, precise and realistic, sometimes a bit too realistic when people are hurt. The Afghan part was filmed in the Turkish province of Konya. Lindholm interviewed several Danish Afghan war veterans, and also conducted years of investigation in the Middle East, interviewing refugees, some of them former Taliban from the province where Danish soldiers fought. He said the process helped his team realize how complex a war situation is. Some of them even play in the movie.

Asbæk is one of his favorite actors; this is the fourth time they worked together. "A War" was chosen to represent Denmark as Best Foreign Film at the Academy Awards

This is a very strong movie, for adults only, in Danish with subtitles. For more information visit lamorindatheatres.com.

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Celebrations

Singing for 100 Years

Submitted By Kate Elliot



Freda Taylor

Photo provided

Grace Healthcare of Moraga celebrated the 100th birthday of one of its residents on April 9 and 10.

Freda Taylor was born April 10, 1916 in Minneapolis. She, her parents and four siblings eventually moved to Portland, Ore.

As an adult, Taylor was a homemaker and part-time secretary, and she and her husband, Leonard, also worked a small farm.

In later years, she moved to Rossmoor in Walnut Creek, and was active in her church and sang in the Rossmoor Barbershop Quartet.

Taylor had three children: Dan, Michael and Gayle. She has grandchildren and great-grandchildren who visit her often. Her favorite pastime is singing along with music at Grace Moraga.

Early Intervention Can Help Families Deal With Loved Ones' Memory Loss

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC

You may notice that a close family member or friend is having more and more challenges with memory or making sound decisions. What do you do and how should you approach this sensitive subject?

Recently, I was asked to do a podcast interview with a geriatrician. She asked me if there were any books for families dealing with this beginning stage of a dementia that brings on worry and concern. Sadly, my answer is that I could think of none that just addressed this issue.

When my mother first started to exhibit some lapses of judgment or memory I didn't want to confront it head on for two reasons: 1) I did not wish to see this fiercely independent woman (who was driving all over San Francisco with friends a decade younger than her) lose her independence. I needed her to be my strong role model even at 86. This is called denial. 2) My clinical background said I just needed to gather more information before jumping to conclusions. So, I started a log of times she forgot to take the keys out of her garage door as she drove away, or repeated the same story to me five times, or going to see six different doctors with vague symptoms.

I had been providing my mother a personal assistant once a week since she was about 80 years old. She just needed someone to help

her with organizing paperwork and following up on the telephone for her when she had questions regarding a bill or an upcoming medical appointment because her hearing was impaired and phone calls were challenging. The personal assistant came for just two hours a week and was amazed at how well my mother was. She was my gatekeeper as mom's memory and judgment started to fail. Her dementia, we determined, was from small strokes.

Not everyone has this type of information and monitoring of a parent at a distance or even nearby. Often those with dementia like Alzheimer's disease are socially appropriate for a long time into the illness, and even the family doctor might miss it on routine appointments. But, when you have the "red-flags" that safety is at risk, it is time, or probably past time, to jump in. When bringing in a personal assistant, start slowly.

If you jump in and say, "Mom your memory is failing" you most likely will be faced with resistance and denial. How each of us approaches a parent can make all the difference in the success of the intervention.

The best way to design a good plan is to bring in a third-party expert, Aging Life Care Manager (formerly called Care Managers), that will give you the best chance of success with your intervention. You might have a hard time with being

entirely honest with a parent, but a professional care manager can help you to design "therapeutic fiblets." These are sometimes called "white lies" that are to be used to reduce stress for everyone and most of all, protect the self-esteem of the person with the early stage dementia.


If an evaluation has not been done, the care manager will help you make that happen and connect you with the best dementia screening clinic in your area.

At Eldercare Services, we have classes and support groups for families dealing with the early stages of dementia — it is challenging to do this without some good advice and support. These classes are free and open to everyone - friends and family.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management (now called Aging Life Care™) since 1984.

Lamorinda's Religious Services



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Not to be missed

ART

Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery presents: Kurt Oskar Weber (1938-2011) "Boundless." The Exhibit runs March 24 through April 23, with a reception from 7 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, March 24.

Painting the Natural World runs at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 3 at the Moraga Library. Local artist and naturalist Barbara Hudler Cella will share her process and motivation in creating works of art inspired by the natural world. It's part of the National Parks Service' Centennial Celebration event.

The City of Lafayette Public Art Committee welcomes its latest art exhibit "Oscar's Excellent Year," featuring local artist Joanne Taeuffer. The exhibit is on display in the Homework Center at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center now through June. For info, visit www.joannetaeuffer.com.

MUSIC

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School student Owen Pan will give an hour-long piano recital presented by Diablo Valley College, performing with Miramonte junior and DVC graduate Hannah Pan as guest pianist. He will perform the works of Scarlatti, Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, Balakirev and Bartok. 7 p.m. Thursday, April 21, at the DVC Music Building, Room M101.

Boundless, the fifth and final concert of Gold Coast Chamber Player's 2015-2016 series, showcases music by J.S. Bach, Claude Debussy and Dmitri Shostakovich for piano and strings. The concert will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 7, at the Lafayette Library Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. A pre-concert talk will start the evening at 7 p.m. Ticket price includes complimentary champagne, the pre-concert talk and a reception with the musicians following the performance. Tickets are \$37.50 general, \$32.50 seniors and \$15 for students and are available at www.gcplayers.org and by phone at (925) 283-3728.

The Lafayette Rotary Club's Annual Concert at the Res will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 14 at the Lafayette Reservoir stage. Pack a picnic and enjoy performances by the Stanley Symphonic Band, the Acalanes Wind Ensemble, the Big Band of Rossmoor, the Bentley School Jazz combo and a special guest band

THEATER

The Acalanes Drama Dons present "Macbeth" at 7 p.m. on April 27, 28, 29 and 30 in the Performing Arts Center little theater. Tickets are available in April during lunch at Acalanes High School and online at ahsperformingarts.org. Limited ticket sales available day of the show. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Adults \$12; students and seniors \$7. (See story on page B4)

Orinda Intermediate School's Bulldog Theater presents "James and the Giant Peach JR." at 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. April 28 and 29 and 2 and 5 p.m. April 30, 80 Ivy Dr., Orinda. Ticket prices range from \$3-10 and are available for advance purchase at www.showtix4u.com. Tickets will also be sold at the door.

LECTURE & LITERATURE

A Conversation with Two Bay Area Authors: Stories Focus on Women Risking All. Join Lafayette's Lynn Carey as she hosts a conversation with two up-and-coming Bay Area authors at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 21 at the Del Valle Theatre, 1963 Tice Valley Rd. Sponsored by Acalanes Adult Education with Carey, former Contra Costa Times Book Club host, the event features Jan Ellison and Meg Waite Clayton who will read from and discuss their novels. Books will be available for purchase. Tickets are \$15 and can be ordered online

Not to be missed

OTHER

The internationally acclaimed documentary "An American Ascent," about the first African American expedition to tackle North America's highest peak, Denali, will be screened at the Orinda Library Auditorium at 7 p.m. on April 20. Expedition member Scott Briscoe will introduce the film and speak about his on-going work. Free and open to the public. First come, first seated. For more information, call (925) 254-2184 or email bgirshma@ccclib.org.

Join National Park Service rangers for a full moon walk beginning at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday April 21 on Mt. Wanda, part of the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez, CA. This free, two-hour program begins with a one-mile, moderately strenuous hike to watch the full moon rise over nearby Mt. Diablo. Bring water, a flashlight, warm clothes, and binoculars (if you have them). If it rains heavily, the walk will be canceled. Please call the John Muir NHS visitor center at (925) 228-8860 to make your reservations or if you have questions. For more information, please visit the park website at www.nps.gov/jomu.

The City of Orinda will be beautified and cleaned during the eighth annual Orinda Action Day of Community Service by community volunteers from 9:30 to noon Saturday, April 23. A new theme this year is "Keep Orinda Beautiful!" There is a poster contest for K-12 students in conjunction with Orinda Action Day, with cash prizes for the winners. Completed posters are due by noon April 23. They may be turned in at the Library Plaza on Orinda Action Day April 23, or dropped off before at Mechanics Bank, 77 Moraga Way, Orinda. Back of poster must be marked with name, grade and contact information.

Join Friends of Orinda Creeks for Orinda Action Day 2016 and help clean up San Pablo Creek from 9:30 to noon on Saturday, April 23. Meet at the booth in front of the Library. Wear long pants and a hat, bring gloves if you have them. Other tools will be provided.

Make this Earth Day a true celebration by opening your home to a new kitten or cat. See the precious kitties of Community Concern for Cats at an adoption event from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, April 23 and 24 at Pet Food Express in Lafayette and Pleasant Hill, and Petco in Walnut Creek. For more information see www.communityconcernforcats.org.

The Lafayette Earth Day Celebration will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 24 at the Lafayette Library & Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

The City of Lafayette's Downtown Creeks Plan is moving forward. A third public workshop is now scheduled for 7 p.m. on April 27 at the Lafayette Library's Community Hall. At this workshop the City will present the draft plan and review implementation strategies. For more information, contact Steven Goetz via email at sgoetz@ci.lafayette.ca.us and visit our website at www.lovelafayette.org/creeksplan.

Celebrate Judy Dinkle as Moraga's 2016 Citizen of the Year on Friday, April 29 at the Soda Center at Saint Mary's College. Social hour will begin at 6 p.m., followed by the dinner and program at 7 p.m. Cost is \$55 and reservations may be made at www.moragachamber.org or by contacting Kathe Nelson at the Chamber of Commerce, kathe@moragachamber.org or 925 323-6524. Reservation deadline is Monday, April 25.

... continued on next page

Please submit:
Events: calendar@
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Please...



...thanks



Film Clips

Enjoy Fatty Arbuckle Day at the Rheem Theatre

By Derek Zemrak

Coming off last month's near sell-out audience for the Buster Keaton Festival, the Rheem Theatre will be hosting an evening of four Fatty Arbuckle silent short films at 7 p.m. on Saturday April 23. A live baby grand piano score, written and performed by the amazing pianist Patti Liedecker, will accompany the short films; plus I will be lecturing on the life and career of Fatty Arbuckle.

Just a quick overview: Roscoe Arbuckle, better known as "Fatty" Arbuckle, was born in Smith Center, Kansas, on March 24 1887. Arbuckle started working in silent films in 1909, at Selig Polyscope Company. He moved over to the Keystone Film Company in 1913, where his career began to take off and he became one of Hollywood's highest paid actors. Arbuckle was influential in launching the careers of Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin and Bob Hope. He lived a very interesting life that played out like a Hollywood movie: infidelity, wild parties, murder, scandals and unsolved mysteries. Learn more about this iconic Hollywood pioneer and his close ties to San Francisco on Saturday, April 23.

The four silent short films that will be screened are:

"Fatty and Minnie-He-Haw" (1918): Fatty is courted by an enormous Indian princess, who proposes marriage. He accepts when she draws a hunting knife to his throat. Starring Minnie Devereaux and Minta Durfee. Directed by Fatty Arbuckle.

"Fatty Joins the Police" (1913): After rescuing the commissioner's daughter, Fatty is rewarded with a job on the police force. He finds that life on the beat is a little more than he

bargained for. Starring Edgar Kennedy, Minta Durfee and Dot Farley. Directed by George Nichols.

"Fatty's Spooning Days" (1918): In a film that's way ahead of its time, two couples engage in a little wife swapping at the park. Starring Mabel Normand and Minta Durfee. Directed by Fatty Arbuckle.

"Fatty's Suitless Day" (1914): Fatty needs formal wear so he can bring his sweetheart to the big dance. He steals a tux from his rival, who shows up at the ball seeking revenge. Starring Charlie Chase, Minta Durfee and Al St. John. Directed by Fatty Arbuckle.

Tickets are \$15 and it is recommended that you get your tickets early. They can be purchased online at www.lamorindatheatres.com or at the Rheem Theatre Box Office. If you would like to get in for free, just dress in early 1900s attire. Also, the Rheem Theatre will be selling a small popcorn for 5 cents with the purchase of a "Fatty Arbuckle Festival" ticket.

Come join the fun and learn about early history of movie making.

Upcoming Rheem and Orinda Theatre Events:

7 p.m. May 12: FREE Movie Night at Orinda Theatre – "The Wizard of Oz"

7 p.m. May 21: The Rheem USO Canteen – A Memorial Day Tribute to the songs and memories of war ballads, patriotic songs and just good old American patriotism with Adam Reeves and Patti Liedecker.

7 p.m. May 28 – Harold Lloyd Festival with live piano score written and performed by Patti Liedecker.

Not to be missed

OTHER

Area residents who own classic cars are invited to participate in the eighth annual Moraga Classic Car Show, which takes place from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, May 14 as part of the 2016 Moraga Community Faire. The \$30 registration fee includes an entry ribbon, lunch for two, a commemorative photo, and a chance for owners to display their restoration work to the public. Prizes will be awarded. The registration deadline is May 1. To register, go to www.moragachamber.org/faire or call Gloria at (925) 247-4473.

Help support children and families affected by AIDS in Zimbabwe. Get your family and friends together for the 13th Annual JF Kapnek Trust Family Fun Run and post-race brunch from 9 a.m. to noon on May 1 at Miramonte High School, 750 Moraga Way, Orinda. All race participants receive a T-shirt and a post-race brunch. There will also be music, a kids' craft booth, face painting, prizes for the top finishers and more.

Come out and Party for a Purpose at Bay Functional Fitness (BFF) from 6 to 9 p.m. on Friday, May 6 in Rockridge, 5255 College Ave., Oakland. BFF is hosting a fun event and donating ALL proceeds to benefit ARM (Art, Recreation, Movement) of Care. ARM's mission is to use the Creative Arts to restore and empower local girls and young women who have been commercially sexually exploited through human trafficking. Tickets are \$20 at <http://partyforapurpose.brownpapertickets.com/> (\$25 at the door.) www.armofcare.net.

Friends Corner Book Shop Half Price Sale is from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 7, Corner of 1st & Golden Gate Way, Lafayette.

Lafayette Juniors 17th Annual Kitchen Tour. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 14. Tour six Lafayette kitchens for a good cause benefiting Youth Homes, Diablo Ballet's PEEK Outreach Program, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, and Lamorinda Spirit Van. Tickets are \$40 and available at www.lafayette-juniors.org and Lafayette's Premier Kitchens.

The Moraga Community Faire & Car Show will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 14 in the town's Rheem Valley Shopping Center, offering a wonderful opportunity for a "family fun day" with a

climbing wall, bounce house, games, music, arts and crafts, local food trucks, local wine and over 70 amazing classic cars. Free to attend, the Faire is organized and sponsored by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce; visit www.moragachamber.org/faire.

The Orinda Park and Recreation Foundation is hosting the Doggone Fun Fest at the Orinda Community Center Park from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, May 15. Join the fun with your dogs on leash to parade around the park. Prizes for best dressed, looks most like their owner, and best in show. Rescue organizations will have dogs for adoption and there will be dog product vendors in attendance. Contact Carolyn Mills at 254-5292 or bandcmills@comcast.net if you need more details."

Don't Miss the Hacienda de las Flores Centennial de Mayo celebration from noon to 5 p.m. on May 15, 2100 Donald Drive. Step back in time, enjoy the beautiful grounds and learn about the Hacienda's rich history. Fun for all ages! Free admission, authentic Mexican food and drinks, live Mariachi Band, hourly piñata contests, tortilla making, Mexican tile painting, cupcake walks and more. Limited onsite parking; shuttle available from Rheem Elementary, 90 Laird Drive.

Mark your calendars for A Taste of Lafayette, the city's 14th Annual Restaurant Walk on Tuesday, May 17. This is an opportunity to tour Lafayette's finest dining establishments and sample the signature cuisine of each restaurant. Cost is \$45 per person if purchased by May 6, 2016; \$50 per person after that date. Visit www.lafayettechamber.org/events/taste-of-lafayette/ for more information.

CCI Greenheart is currently seeking volunteer host families in the Lafayette area. Program Dates: July 7 through 27. Provide a secure and inviting home for a teenaged student from France for three weeks. Families with or without children, single parents, empty nesters all welcome. Please contact Local Coordinator Randi Grant for more information Email: rgrant194@gmail.com Phone: (805) 660-1314

SENIORS

Mindful Aging at the Moraga Library: Technology Petting Zoo at 1 p.m. on Thursday, April 28. Join us for a demonstration of wireless streaming devices, eReaders, iPads

and tablets by Best Buy's Geek Squad. Have questions about using your smartphone? Bring your own device (BYOD) for assistance.

GARDEN

UC Master Gardeners of Contra Costa and Moraga Library present Container Gardening & Gardening in Small Spaces at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 26. Master Gardener Terry Lippert will inspire you to grow your own fruits and vegetables even in limited space. The program will cover building and preparing raised beds, conventional and unique methods for container gardening, watering and how to espalier fruit trees.

Man's War Against Weeds, Insects and Rodents: How we shoot ourselves in the foot with pesticides, and smarter, least toxic alternatives for a decent future. 3 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, May 1, at the Lafayette Community Garden, 3932 Mt Diablo Blvd. Be ready for an hour of funny stories and serious data that provides evidence for taking a precautionary approach to commonly used pesticides. You will become informed on topics you took for granted and learn about the least toxic alternatives to any pest problem. There will be a Q&A. Classes are free. However, a \$5 donation is appreciated to support their education programs.

The Gardens at Heather Farm is celebrating "National Public Gardens Day" between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Friday, May 6. There will be free activities throughout the day in its six-acre public garden and wildlife habitat nestled on a picturesque hillside in Walnut Creek. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the day. For more information, visit www.gardenshf.org.

Annual Compost Giveaway, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 7. RecycleSmart has partnered with the UC Master Gardeners of Contra Costa to provide residents free compost. Bring your own rigid container and take up to 96 gallons of compost while supplies last. There will also be presentations, booths, raffles and more. Register online and see schedule too at <http://getsmartsaturday-compostsmart.eventbrite.com>.

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Service Clubs Announcements

Explore Lamorinda Rotary clubs The heart of Rotary is our clubs- dedicated people who share a passion for both community service and friendship. Learn about Lamorinda's Rotary clubs.

A global volunteer organization working to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

April 22
Angela Mason, Executive Director, PINCC "Vinegar, volunteers and Vigor!"

We meet Friday mornings at 7:00 am at **The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa**, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. For more info, please email us at lamorindasunrise@gmail.com

Wine Barrel Raffle: 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winner drawings on April 29, 2016 Proceeds fund various community service projects. Buy \$10 raffle tickets from our Rotary Club members. See particulars at lamorindasunrise.org

Lafayette Rotary Club

Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting.
Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

April 21:
Celebration of Club's 70th anniversary

April 28:
Jay Hoyer,
Chief Executive Officer of the Walnut Creek Chamber

www.rotarylafayette.org

SOROPTIMIST OF 24/680

"Improving the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment"

Please join us for our next meeting:

WHEN: Wednesday, May 4th
Social 5:30-6:00 p.m.
Meeting 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

WHERE: The Buttercup Grill
660 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek.

For more information, contact:
Regina Englehart @925-876-9076
or go to: sorooptimist24-680.org

Lamorinda Weekly

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Thoughtful Food

Jump Into Spring With Green Risotto

By Susie Iventosch



Spring green risotto

Photo Susie Iventosch

This is the perfect time of year for making spring green risotto, because the asparagus is tender and the snap peas are amazing and sweet. And you still have plenty of time to harvest your own crops from the garden.

Last year, we had a crop of snap peas that were just wonderful and that was the first time we'd ever tried growing them. The only difficult thing about working with snap peas is to make sure you don't eat all of them before you start cook-

ing.

They are so crunchy and delicious and make a fresh and healthy snack. Last summer, I could hardly get them from the garden to the kitchen before most of them were devoured. Since our garden has not yet been planted, let alone harvested, we just bought these emerald gems at the produce market last week.

When I wandered into Diablo Foods to buy the ingredients for this risotto, I was so pleased to find

Hen-of-the-Woods mushrooms. We once had a special appetizer at a restaurant in Asheville, NC, that focused on these special mushrooms, but I had never cooked with them before. They are incredibly beautiful mushrooms. Diablo Foods also had baby shitakes, and I thought that together these two varieties of mushrooms would be a nice complement to the crunchy greens in this risotto. I simply roasted the mushrooms ahead of time, and tossed the raw asparagus and snap peas into the risotto near the very end of the cooking. This way they stay nice and crunchy, but were warmed through.

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.



Spring Green Risotto

(Serves 5-6)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup uncooked Arborio rice
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup water
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and sliced diagonally into very thin 1/8-inch pieces
- 12 ounce package snap peas, ends barely trimmed and cut into ¼-inch slices
- ½ lb. Hen-of-the-Woods mushrooms
- ½ lb. baby shitake mushrooms
- 1-2 additional Tbsp. olive oil (for roasting mushrooms)
- 2 cups freshly grated Pecorino-Romano (split)
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Once you begin making the risotto, it's game on, so be sure to prepare ahead of time all of these ingredients: snap peas, asparagus, mushrooms, shallots and garlic, heated broth and grated Pecorino Romano cheese.

Snap Peas: Clean and barely trim off the ends. Cut the whole pea pod into several small slices, keeping as many of the peas intact as possible. Some will fall out, and that's okay, but collect them and use them, too.

Asparagus: Clean and trim off top and bottoms, leaving just the stalks. I also peeled off the little sharp points along the sides. Now, slice very thinly on the diagonal.

Mushrooms: Clean mushrooms and trim off the bottoms. For the Hen-of-the-Woods mushrooms, trim off the bottoms and separate the big clumps into smaller, individual pieces. This way you can check for dirt. Then gently rinse them off with water and dry with paper towels. Lightly and gently toss both shitake and Hen-of-the-Woods with 2 Tbsp. olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast in 425-degree oven for approximately 15 minutes, or until liquid is dehydrated and mushrooms are just beginning to brown. Remove from oven and save to use in the risotto.

Shallots/Garlic: Finely chop shallots and mince garlic.

Chicken Broth: Heat chicken broth with water and lemon juice over medium heat until simmering. Keep warm while making the risotto.

Risotto: In a large pot, heat olive oil on medium-high and cook shallots and garlic until translucent. Add rice, and cook and stir until rice is glossy. Add wine and cook until liquid is evaporated. Continue adding heated broth, ½ cup at a time, stirring frequently, until broth is absorbed. Continue this process until risotto is cooked and creamy, but still slightly al dente. Save any remaining broth for another time, or discard.

Stir mushrooms, snap peas, asparagus and half of the grated cheese into risotto. Stir well and season with salt and pepper. Serve piping hot and pass additional Pecorino-Romano as a garnish.

You can find most of the recipes published in the Lamorinda Weekly on our website. Click Food tab.

Gala to Give Glimpse of Carr Ranch Property

... continued from page B1

Rose says that JMLT expects 350 people and she anticipates the event to be a big success, with music by the Charles Wheel Band, catering by Classic Catering of Pleasant Hill, and a live auction. Items up for bid include a horse-drawn carriage tour with John Muir's great-grandson, Mike Muir; a Carr Ranch private hike followed by dinner at Campana Farm; a week at the New Jersey shore for eight; eight nights at the River View Cabin inside Yosemite; a wine tasting experience for six supplied by Urban Wineries with Chef/Sommelier Melissa Lavrinc Smith; and a sail on the San Francisco Bay on a racing Trimaran.

Eukel said that he has been very impressed by the level of support Lamorinda residents, and Moragans especially, have

given to the project, many of whom were not affiliated with the JMLT before. The town of Moraga recently gave \$10,000 to add to the campaign.

Rose expects the crowd to be an eclectic group, which she says is part of the charm of the kind of people she has met at JMLT events: a wide cross-section of suburbanites and city-dwellers, often passionate hikers, and enthusiastic about preserving the hills.

"The dilemma will be the fashion," she says with a smile referring to the fact that some will hike before dinner. Participants may have to pack a change of hiking boots in their trunk. Tickets are \$250 and can be purchased at www.jmlt.org/gala2016.



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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Baseball Teams Have High Hopes as DFAL Ramps Up

By Karl Buscheck

All three Lamorinda baseball programs have lofty expectations for 2016. Nowhere is that more true than Acalanes.

"We set the goals before each season and our goal is always to win an NCS," said Dons head coach Justin Santich-Hughes. His team is currently MaxPreps' No. 20 team in the state.

Despite falling to Clayton Valley Charter 8-4 on April 15 in Walnut Creek, Acalanes is an early DFAL front-runner, holding a 3-0 record in league and a 13-2 mark overall.

"League titles are nice, but winning the last game of the season – if you make the playoffs – is really the ultimate goal," Santich-Hughes said. "So, that's our goal: To win the NCS championship and we don't have any problems talking about it."

For the reigning DFAL champs, the secret to success is simple.

"We have a lot of good players. I think that's where it always starts," Santich-Hughes explained. "Not only do they have a lot of talent, (but) they really bought into the system that we had in place."

The Dons aren't just good – they're experienced – as seven starters return from last year's squad. Seniors Jake Berry and Tommy Henderson headline the offense, while senior Grant Young is the team's ace.

"Grant Young on the mound has been amazing. Santich-Hughes said of the lefty. "It's unbelievable. He's really anchored the staff and given us a lot of tough innings."

Like the Dons, the Mats also have postseason designs, even if the regular season has just begun. "Our goals are usually the same

every year," said Miramonte head coach Vince Dell'Aquila. "We just want to make the NCS tournament."

After falling 3-2 at Dublin on April 13, the Mats sit at 8-7 overall and 1-3 in DFAL – leaving the team tied for fifth place in the standings.

As Miramonte aims to climb back up the DFAL pecking order, the team will be relying on seniors to lead the way. James Vaccaro, who will be pitching at USC next spring, is the team's number one starter, and Tim Tague, the starting quarterback for the football team last fall, is the second starter.

At the plate, Eric Nyman, who recently broke his finger, powers the lineup. Meanwhile, Zach Wong wears a number of hats.

"Zach Wong is our shortstop and he pitches," Dell'Aquila said. "And he's our leadoff hitter and he's doing real well."

Campolindo recently got back to the .500 mark – 7-7 overall

and 2-1 in DFAL – after drubbing Dougherty Valley 9-2 in Moraga on April 12, and then edging out Redwood Christian 3-1 on the road April 14.

As the season rolls on, the Cougars will be zeroing in on the same objective as their local rivals.

"Our goal is to win NCS," explained senior Max Flower, a Cal baseball commit who patrols the outfield for the baseball team and was a star wide receiver for the school's football team that advanced to the CIF State Division III-AA championship bowl game. "And the only obstacle we have ever faced and will ever face is ourselves. If we play our best baseball, we will have no problem."

Before the end of the league slate, the Cougars will have a crack at both of their neighbors, as they hit the road to face Miramonte on April 28 and host Acalanes less than a week later on May 3.



Senior Jake Berry is a key part of the Acalanes offensive success so far this spring.

Photos Gint Federas



Cal-bound senior Max Flower patrols center field for the Cougars and hits in the middle of their lineup.



USC-bound senior James Vaccaro anchors both the Mats' lineup and pitching rotation.

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Lacrosse Heavyweights Fighting for DFAL Supremacy

By Karl Buscheck

As league play reaches the midway point, the Acalanes and Campolindo boys' lacrosse teams, both local powerhouses, are busy battling for the DFAL

crown.

The Dons – last year's DFAL champs – are attempting to match their perfect run from a season ago.

"The team goal is to be undefeated in league, if possible, win the league," said Acalanes head coach Brent Ringwood. "And then (the goal is to) get in

the playoffs and have a chance to play for an NCS championship."

If the Dons are going to repeat that feat, the team will have to go about doing so in a different fashion.

"All of our wins and most of our losses have just been grinds. Whereas in years past, we've been able to look at one or two guys and say, 'alright, we're to these plays for you. You just take over,'" said Ringwood, whose team owns a flawless 7-0 mark in league play and an 8-5 mark overall after thumping Dougherty Valley 14-0 at home on April 15.

"We don't have that this year," Ringwood admitted. "Our offense has to lock in for every game and our offense has to find ways to get it done."

Fortunately for the Dons, players have been stepping up. Senior captains Nathan Brickman and Brian Maiken have been the stars of the offense and defense, respectively. Then there's the goalie.

"Nate Welcomer has been special," Ringwood said of the junior.

The next test will for the Dons will be a clash with Campo on April 19 in Moraga. After tak-

ing care of Miramonte 15-9 on April 15 in a road tilt and hammering Dublin 20-0 on April 12 at home, the Cougars are just a game behind their neighbors in the standings, with a record of 6-1 in league and a 9-4 mark overall.

After claiming the second spot in the DFAL table last spring, the Cougars have even grander aims for 2016.

"Our team goals this year are to win DFAL and to win NCS," declared head coach Mitchel Frey. "The competition in our league and the North Coast Section (are the only obstacles that stand in our way)."

With a 4-3 record in league play and a 7-6 mark overall, the Mats also still have an outside shot at making a run at the DFAL title.

Those hopes took a hit after dropping back-to-back games against Acalanes and Campolindo, but the schedule plays into the Mats' favor. Miramonte plays host to Acalanes on May 6 in the final league contest, offering the Mats the opportunity to potentially wreck the Dons' bid for back-to-back unblemished campaigns.



John Berg (5)

Photo Gint Federas



Nathan Brickman (24 Dons) and Stefan Marinac (24 Mats)



Will Rack

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As League Play Begins, Softball Teams Face Uphill Battle

By Alex Crook



Photo Gint Federas

Rosetta Shackett
Luck has not been kind to Lamorinda's high school softball programs lately. All three programs look to turn the page, however, as they embark on a brand new season.

Campolindo is captained by its lone senior, Grace Deskin, who's

hitting .419 this year with a .514 on-base percentage to go along with an 80.8 fielding percentage. She, along with co-captains Ashley Thoms and Abby Morris – who ranks third in DFAL with 35 strikeouts – will be the go-to playmakers for coach Wayne Stephens' Cou-

gars.

Although Campo retains familiar talent, they graduated all-DFAL shortstop Danielle Thomas, who now plays for Boston College. With the loss of Thomas, the Cougars' infield defense has receded, and the team ERA has

subsequently suffered. On offense, however, the team's on-base percentage and batting averages are significantly higher than previous years. Campolindo sits at the bottom of the league standings, but don't count out a team that was involved in six one-run games last season, including a nine-inning 11-10 win at Las Lomas.

Acalanes held their own last season, tying Las Lomas at 6-6 in league play for third behind Dougherty Valley and nationally ranked Alhambra. The Dons are keeping afloat in 2016 at an even 4-4 but are without three starters, including infielder and captain Zoe Marrott for the remainder of the season due to a shoulder injury. Marrott, who made last year's second team all-DFAL as a shortstop, is headed to Cal next year on a scholarship.

Head coach Victor Silva will field a young team this season for the Dons, as four junior varsity freshmen have since answered the call to varsity.

"We're a really young team," says Silva. "They're all freshmen, and we're really young. They're getting better every day, but it's a learning process."

"We've really been an up-and-down team. With a young team, it's hard to be consistent, and that's been our biggest problem...the younger kids have never played at the varsity level before, and it's tough. The game's really fast, and

the girls are stronger, it's hard. And when you're 14 years old playing against girls 17 and 18, it's tough. But they're learning."

After graduating several players, it's fair to say the Mats will have an uphill battle in the DFAL this spring. The Matadors are 5-8 on the year and just 1-3 in league play – they claimed their first and only DFAL victory against Campo on March 29.

Head coach Steve Renfro's team doesn't have the senior depth of Acalanes, but the Matadors' lone senior, Amanda DeVecchi, has played all four years on varsity and is "very productive on the team," Renfro said.

Despite this lack of experience, however, Renfro remains optimistic.

"The younger classmen have been doing a really good job helping the team out," Renfro said. "Our younger classmen have really been stepping up and playing above themselves so I'm actually quite excited about the future. This season is going to be touch and go, we'll play it along as we go from game to game, but I think down the road, they're still going to get stronger and stronger."

Renfro sees his offense strengthening over time, but believes the Matadors still need to hone their pitching and the skills of their younger players.

2015-2016 DFAL All League, Winter Sports

Boys' Basketball

Most Valuable Player:

Eddy Ionescu, senior (Miramonte)

Second Team All-League:

Charlie Hocking, junior (Miramonte)
Austin Clarke, senior (Campolindo)

Honorable Mention:

Ryan Anderson, senior (Miramonte)
Sterling Strother, senior (Campolindo)

Girls' Basketball

Most Valuable Player:

Sabrina Ionescu, senior (Miramonte)

First Team All-League:

Haley Van Dyke, sophomore (Campolindo)
Uriah Howard, senior (Miramonte)
Keana Delos Santos, senior (Miramonte)
Emma Godfrey, junior (Acalanes)
Ellie Louie, junior (Miramonte)

Second Team All-League:

Ashley Thoms, sophomore (Campolindo)
Brooke Panfili, junior (Acalanes)
Honorable Mention:
Julia Lyons, senior (Acalanes)
Aubrey Wagner, sophomore (Campolindo)
Jessi O'Reilly, sophomore (Campolindo)
Emily Lyall, senior (Campolindo)
Clair Steele, sophomore (Miramonte)
Jordyn Bryant, sophomore (Miramonte)

Boys' Soccer

Most Valuable Defensive Player:

Ryan Rossi, senior (Campolindo)

First Team All-League:

Ian Franklin, senior (Acalanes)
Matty Ringquist, junior (Campolindo)
Amir Aliakbari, senior (Campolindo)
Joseph Wang, senior (Miramonte)

Second Team All-League:

Gabe Singer, junior (Acalanes)
Seppi Ortman, sophomore (Campolindo)
Rupert Dusauzay, junior (Campolindo)
Sam Pinto, sophomore (Miramonte)

Girls' Soccer

Most Valuable Offensive Player:

Gina Crosetti, senior (Miramonte)

Most Valuable Defensive Player:

Callie Ericksen, junior (Acalanes)

First Team All-League:

Samantha DeVecchi, junior (Miramonte)
Sydney Yuen, freshman (Campolindo)
Megan McQuain, senior (Acalanes)
Cate Combi, sophomore (Acalanes)
Emily Smith, sophomore (Acalanes)

Second Team All-League:

Mariah Brown, junior (Campolindo)
Morgan Johnson, junior (Miramonte)
Sophia Giordano, sophomore (Acalanes)
Allison Merrill, junior (Acalanes)
Kierra Krawec, sophomore (Acalanes)

Campolindo Golf Continues Early-Season Success

Submitted by Gary O'Neill



Assistant coach Gary O'Neill, Jay Thomas, Perry Walker, Ryan Burnett, Mitch DiRaimondo, Jack Moeller and head coach Steve Robinson. Photo provided

The Campolindo Boys Golf team continued their successful run in area tournaments last month. On March 21, the team traveled to the Meadow Club (Fairfax, Calif.). The Campo Team took on approximately two dozen other teams in weather conditions that were similar to what one would find in Ireland in March. The team – composed of Austin Fischer, Will Lagomarsino, Mitch DiRaimondo, Ryan Burnett

and Jay Thomas – finished second overall. Mitch DiRaimondo shot two over par (74), which put him in a six-way tie for second. The ensuing playoff went three additional holes and Mitch wound up fourth overall. The following Monday, the team faced off against another two dozen Northern California schools at the Transbay Tournament held at The Dollar Point Golf Course at Rossmoor. The Campo men took first place.

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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 10 Issue 4 Wednesday, April 20, 2016



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...read on page D16

Beyond the Garden Gate

Moraga Juniors Garden Tour offers beautiful foliage and sweeping vistas

By Cathy Dausman



Cozy cooking: Graceful pillars, elevated carriage lights and even the standing heat lamp vertically extend the Sitzmann's garden skyward.

Photo Shari Sullivan, Enchanting Planting

Moraga Junior Women's Club member Lena Cooper admits "this was a tough year" to recruit volunteers to show their home gardens. She blames the challenge on the rains falling in early 2016. But like new grass after the rain, the 11th annual Moraga Junior's Garden Tour on April 30 promises to be lush and colorful.

Proceeds from the fundraiser benefit Contra Costa County Shelter, Inc. this year. The self-guided tour features five Lamorinda gardens and offers an optional on-site luncheon. Here is a preview:

Heather Davis uses words like "whimsy" and "pretty magical" to describe the oversized lot with a view her family is lucky enough to inhabit in Moraga. The site is not flat, but "flat-ish," Davis said, and they've used that, and terracing, to their advantage.

"Families are a big deal to us," Davis said; she and husband Greg Davis have four children plus extended family nearby. The hillside was largely weeds when the family moved in four years ago, and an in-ground pool took up most of the flat backyard space. When the pool was removed it left a wide swath of grass where the sun and rain green it up. Davis explains that in deference to the drought, it has been nearly a year since they have watered that area.

"We lost a garden [due to the drought]," she said. So what's to see? An array of fruit trees — lime, lemon, peach, cherry, apricot, plum and nectarine, says Greg; a berry patch, a cutting garden, a raised garden set in oversized containers, roses with names like "hot chocolate," blueberries, strawberries, black raspberries and white raspberries; a chicken coop with five laying hens; and a 180-degree open vista sweeping from Mt. Diablo to Saint Mary's College and the Berkeley hills.

Orinda's Dixie Anderson readily admits she is not a gardener, but she certainly admires the extensive, long-term relandscaping project she and husband Chris undertook with professional guidance from Shari Sullivan at Orinda's Enchanting Planting. When they removed a large Monterey Pine and pulled the side yard fence forward it gave the couple what Dixie calls her "enchanted garden." Her yard, she says, is currently "exploding" with roses. ... continued on page D4

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City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	9	\$495,000	\$3,900,000
MORAGA	7	\$390,000	\$1,615,000
ORINDA	5	\$1,370,000	\$2,545,000

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

- 3182 Acalanes Avenue #B, \$915,000, 4 Bdrms, 1512 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 3-18-16
 15 Amber Lane, \$743,500, 4 Bdrms, 1843 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 3-11-16
 955 Diablo Drive, \$495,000, 3 Bdrms, 1587 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 3-16-16;
 Previous Sale: \$596,500, 07-02-12
 3790 Happy Valley Road #A, \$3,900,000, 5 Bdrms, 4407 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 3-15-16
 3435 Little Lane, \$1,425,000, 3 Bdrms, 1925 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 3-17-16;
 Previous Sale: \$1,250,000, 09-12-13
 3212 Los Palos Circle, \$1,126,000, 3 Bdrms, 1691 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 3-24-16;
 Previous Sale: \$290,000, 11-25-87
 3993 North Peardale Drive, \$3,000,000, 2 Bdrms, 2102 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 3-11-16;
 Previous Sale: \$1,275,000, 07-21-14
 14 Reliez Valley Court, \$1,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 2084 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 3-23-16;
 Previous Sale: \$1,175,000, 05-29-02
 1105 Via Media, \$1,525,000, 4 Bdrms, 2936 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 3-23-16;
 Previous Sale: \$895,000, 07-31-03

MORAGA

- 2063 Ascot Drive #114, \$390,000, 2 Bdrms, 1068 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 3-17-16;
 Previous Sale: \$375,000, 09-28-15
 316 Calle La Montana, \$1,615,000, 4 Bdrms, 2369 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 3-24-16;
 Previous Sale: \$1,600,000, 07-01-14
 80 Corte Yolanda, \$1,165,000, 4 Bdrms, 1947 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 3-16-16;
 Previous Sale: \$447,500, 10-02-98
 109 Cypress Point Way, \$825,000, 3 Bdrms, 1518 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 3-16-16;
 Previous Sale: \$682,000, 05-11-10
 107 Greenbriar, \$1,525,000, 3 Bdrms, 2828 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 3-23-16;
 Previous Sale: \$875,000, 06-13-14
 1099 Larch Avenue, \$1,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 1705 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 3-23-16;
 Previous Sale: \$361,500, 04-27-94
 30 Miramonte Drive, \$519,000, 2 Bdrms, 1152 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 3-11-16;
 Previous Sale: \$409,000, 06-25-08

ORINDA

- 56 Bates Boulevard, \$1,370,000, 4 Bdrms, 2113 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 3-11-16;
 Previous Sale: \$508,000, 10-26-90
 345 Camino Sobrante, \$1,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 3073 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 3-15-16;
 Previous Sale: \$1,270,000, 04-21-15
 452 Dalewood Drive, \$2,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 4716 SqFt, 1982 YrBlt, 3-24-16
 25 Frogs Leap Way, \$2,545,000, 5 Bdrms, 4127 SqFt, 2014 YrBlt, 3-18-16;
 Previous Sale: \$750,000, 08-15-14
 120 Sleepy Hollow Lane, \$2,175,000, 4 Bdrms, 3083 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 3-18-16;
 Previous Sale: \$1,975,000, 08-15-06



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Beyond the Garden Gate

... continued from page D1



At the top of the yard the Anderson garden transitions from planned, formal space (Double Delight roses) to California wildflower poppies--for now. The couple says they may reinvent that space at a later date.

Photos Cathy Dausman



Visitors feel on top of the world from patio at the highest part of the Davis' yard.

... continued on page D6



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Beyond the Garden Gate

The Andersons removed an aging kidney-shaped back yard pool snuggled up against the house and pushed the new rectangular shaped pool back from the house, gaining level outdoor living space for their nicely updated 70s rancher. "We love to be outside," Dixie explains, as she ticks off their back yard events – casual morning coffee, barbecues with neighbors and family Easter parties. She uses words like "warm" and "inviting" and talks about how the landscape project has opened up an "awesome" view.

Technically Anderson is talking about the view from the top of their up slope yard, but in reality, the view from the house-level looking up is equally awesome. Fifteen years ago the space was juniper at the bottom and bare at the top. Now boulders create a living hillside wall, surrounded by flowers and plants. A serpentine hillside path, three weeks in the making, beckons children to run along its length while gently climbing the hill. A final stretch of as-yet under-realized space at the top, awash with California poppies, buffers the end of the Anderson property with their neighbor's lot.

When it comes to beautiful gardens Lindy and Gary Sitzmann have something in common with the Andersons — both used Sullivan from Enchanting Planting as their landscape designer. Where the Anderson yard is larger, the Sitzmann's Orinda garden is jewel box in size; a space Sullivan rightfully calls "super beautiful."

The earlier concrete patio was at best nondescript when the parties sat down to talk about their wish list. The backyard spaces were disconnected, so Sullivan dropped the grade in one area to link the hardscape to a deck off the dining and living room. Their outdoor space includes the nearly requisite lounge area, barbecue, fireplace, arbor and view of neighboring hills, but if you're lucky enough to enter the outdoors from the master bedroom, you'll find a pocket-sized Japanese garden. It might not be beyond the garden gate, but it's

definitely worth seeing.

Beyond the Garden Gate, the 2016 Moraga Juniors Garden and Outdoor Living Tour, will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 30, rain or shine. Tickets are \$40, and available online at www.moragajuniors.org or at the following locations: Across the Way, Moraga; McDonnell Nursery, Orinda; and Orchard Nursery, Lafayette. A portion of each ticket is tax-deductible and lunch is available for an additional fee.



The Anderson's "Secret Garden" is a gem.

Photo Cathy Dausman



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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

Housing Prices Continue to Climb in Lamorinda

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS-T

The first quarter of 2016 showed a continued fast pace in activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate. For the first time in several quarters, supply has increased but most of those homes that have recently come on the market have gone quickly pending. Closed sales remain relatively low only because the supply has been down. The average sales price continues to increase in Lafayette and Moraga and Orinda versus the year ago period.

Per the Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from Jan. 1 through March 31, here are Lamorinda housing sale statistics:

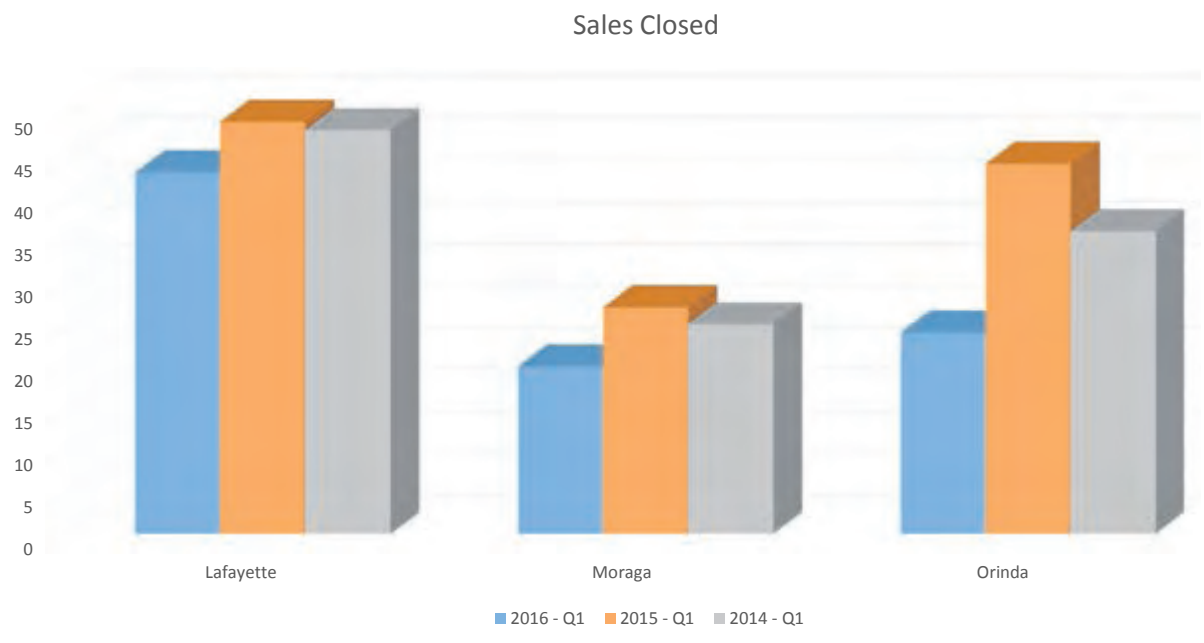
Lafayette	2016 - Q1	2015 - Q1	2014 - Q1
Sales Closed:	43	49	48
<i>Sale Price Range:</i>	\$655,000- \$3,900,000		
Ave. Day on Market:	38	39	39
*Average Price:	\$1,570,712	\$1,411,281	\$1,323,841
*The average sales price was \$1,283,618 in the same period in 2013 and continuing the upward trend from the \$971,889 in the first quarter of 2012.			

Moraga	2016 - Q1	2015 - Q1	2014 - Q1
Sales Closed:	20	27	25
<i>Sale Price Range:</i>	\$700,000 to \$2,254,000.		
Ave. Day on Market:	13	27	-
*Average Price:	\$1,278,575	\$1,195,451	\$1,151,360
*Note that the 2014 is an increase from the \$1,137,226 in the first quarter of 2013, and a huge increase from the same quarter in 2012 when it was \$959,857 and the \$823,931 in the same period of 2011.			

Orinda	2016 - Q1	2015 - Q1	2014 - Q1
Sales Closed:	24	44	36
<i>Sale Price Range:</i>	\$840,000 to \$2,725,125		
Ave. Day on Market:	22	26	-
*Average Price:	\$1,634,327	\$1,511,044	\$1,128,161
* In that same time in 2013 it was \$1,151,882. In the first 90 days of 2012 it was \$934,541. In 2011 it was 894,857.			

In the first quarter of 2016, Lafayette homes

sold at an average of \$615.46 per square foot, a huge increase from 2015 when the average was at \$524.42 per square foot; Moraga came in at \$601.28 a square foot versus \$509.81 a year ago and Orinda at \$581.86, up from \$563.91 in 2015. To this point in 2014, the average price per square foot in Lafayette homes was \$542 per square foot, Moraga was \$462 and Orinda was at \$495. This is the first quarter ever where the average price per square foot exceeded \$580 in all three communities. ... continued on page D12



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Patti Camras

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Whether helping first-time home buyers & move-up buyers or downsizing empty nesters & seniors, I want my clients to live well at every stage of their lives. I'll do whatever it takes to help them enjoy a seamless transition from one of life's passages to the next. This is my promise.



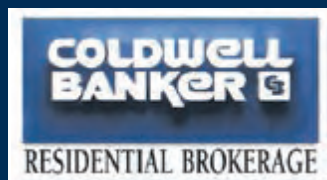
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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

Housing Prices Continue to Climb in Lamorinda

... continued from page D10

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had only two closings reported to the MLS and both were new construction sales. Moraga had 11 ranging from \$375,000 to \$1,100,000 and Orinda had none.

As of April 10, there were 65 homes under contract per the MLS in the three combined communities (a year ago there were 88) with asking prices of \$439,000 to \$3,950,000. It should be pointed out that there is only one pending "Potential Short Sale." This is the same as a year ago. In 2013 there were 13 and 23 in 2012. There are no pending sales that are REOs (bank owned properties) at this time.

Inventory is up with 105 properties available as of April 10. A year ago there were only 71 properties of any type available for sale. Two years ago there were 117 condominiums, town homes and single family homes on the market.

There are 47 Lafayette properties currently on the market versus 33 properties on the market in April, 2015. Asking prices in Lafayette currently range from \$799,000 to \$6,485,000. There are no distressed sales available. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of 18 homes, up from 10 homes at this time in 2015. They are listed between \$449,900 and \$1,850,000. There is one REO listed in the MLS and it is in Moraga.

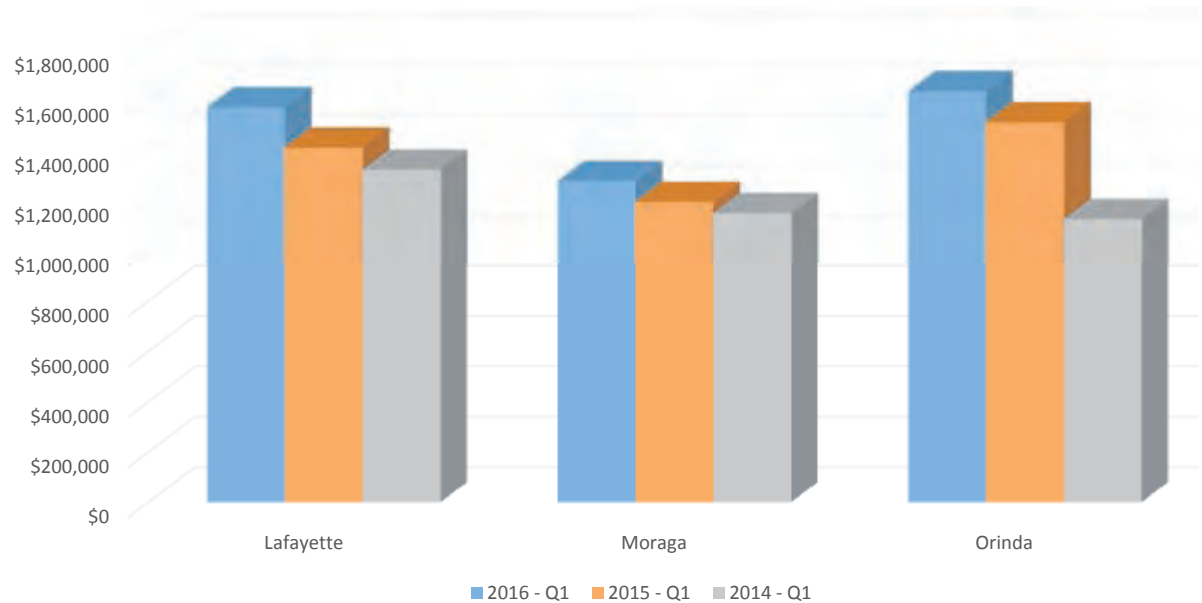
In Orinda there are 40 homes on the market. A year ago there were 28. The list prices range from \$795,000 to \$6,200,000.

As is the case nearly every quarter, the most active price range is in the more "affordable" price ranges. At the high end, 17 homes sold above \$2,000,000 in the three communities combined. A year ago there were 12. There are 32 currently available above this amount in the three communities combined.

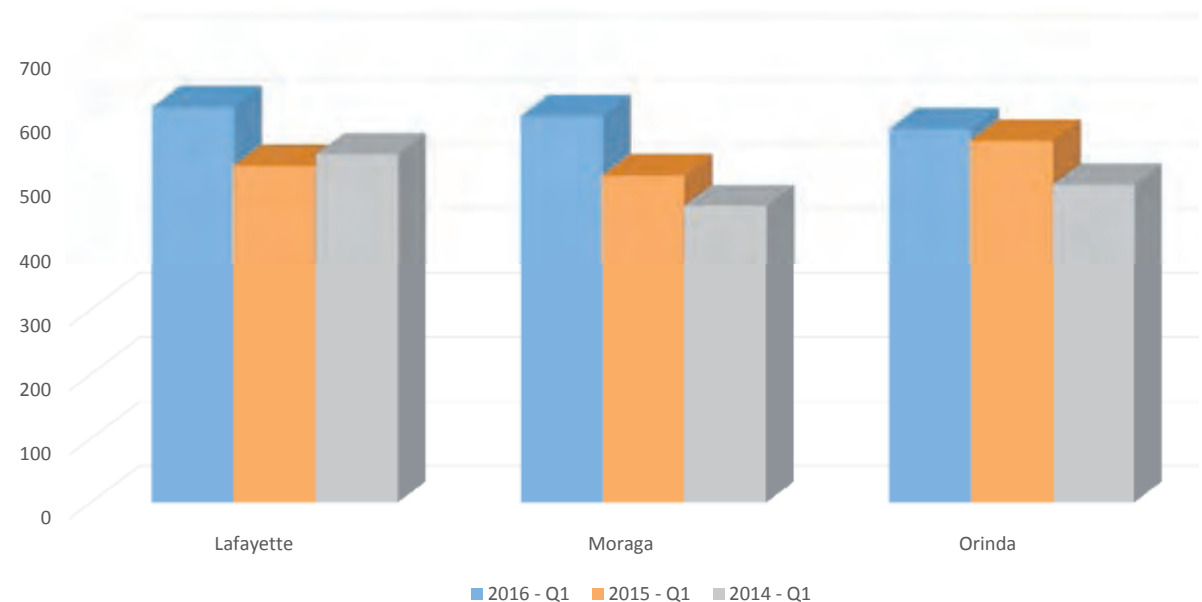
Interest rates continue to be attractive and many corporations continue to relocate families both into and out of the area. The real estate markets in San Francisco, the Peninsula, and the other side of the hill in Oakland and Piedmont have been even more active so there has been some spillover effect where buyers are willing to make longer commutes in order to find more "affordable housing." Of course, Lamorinda and affordable housing are seldom mentioned in the same breath.

... continued on page D14

Average Price



Average Price per square foot





107 Bates Court, Orinda

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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

Housing Prices Continue to Climb in Lamorinda

... continued from page D12

Lastly, it is important to look at what homes are selling for versus their list prices. Often homes come on the market at unrealistic prices and they do not sell. We also are seeing more homes listed well below true values so that it may encourage bidding wars that might generate a higher overall sales price. In the first quarter of this year many homes have had multiple offers and have sold at or above the list price.

Of the 43 single-family home sales that closed in Lafayette in the first quarter of 2015, 27 sold at or above the list price. In Moraga, 16 of the 20 sales were at or above the asking price and in Orinda, 14 of the 23 sold at or above the final listing price.

This will typically happen when a house goes pending in the first two weeks on the market. Of the 65 currently pending sales in the three Lamorinda communities combined, 47 went pending in 21 days or less. The actual average days on the market would be markedly lower but many agents are setting up marketing plans where they hold the home open to the public and to brokers and follow with an offer date in a week or so after exposing the property to the market — pointing to a high likelihood of a continued trend in homes selling above the asking price.

In the detached home category in the first quarter of 2015, the average sale price in Lafayette was 102 percent of the asking price, the same as a year ago. In Moraga it was 102.9 percent and in Orinda it was 102.8 percent of the final asking price.

JUST LISTED in Rossmoor!

1332 Singingwood Court, #11

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Digging Deep

Care For Your Trees and They Will Care for You

By Cynthia Brian

“Trees are poems the earth writes upon the sky” — Kahlil Gibran



The ivy growing up the cottonwood and the shaggy palms.

It was a glorious sunny day, almost mocking the tragedy that was to come. As my grandfather mowed his lawn — something he'd done many times before — the limb of a diseased elm tree came crashing down on him. He was killed instantly.

I write this week's article as a cautionary tale. My grandfather knew the tree was diseased, but the city he lived in had not yet issued the permits needed to remove it. With this tragedy always in my heart, I am forever diligent in inspecting my trees.

Trees are the life source of our world, offering so much for so little. Trees clean our air, provide shade, offer oxygen, filter runoff drainage, and cool the air. Without trees, many species of birds, squirrels, bees, and other wildlife would not have habitat. Trees beautify a neighborhood, conserve energy in our homes, bear fruit and offer climbing structures for adventurous children. Trees are harvested to make furniture, paper products, and firewood. Sitting next to a tree recalibrates our bodily energy. Property values are higher in residential areas with mature trees. Trees are indeed poems written in the sky.



Using a bucket to cut down the cottonwood tree. Photos Cynthia Brian

This past year moss began to form on the branches of the gigantic cottonwood tree that had voluntarily seeded itself in my front yard. Over the winter, mistletoe dangled from the heights, ivy strangled the trunk, and giant ugly mushrooms sprouted along the base. While other trees on the property had leaves unfurling when the vernal equinox approached, my cottonwood remained haunted.

Over the years, Advance Tree Service had delivered free wood chips to my property as mulch for my garden. It was time to call the arborist cavalry there. Owner and President Darren Edwards confirmed that the tree was dead and needed prompt removal. He offered a reasonable bid and we set up a time for his crew to prune my palm fronds and cut down the dead cottonwood. I used the occasion to find out more about the company, proper tree care and how to spot trouble.

Growing up in Moraga, Edwards was nicknamed “Dedwards”, AKA “Dead Wood” in junior high. The name would prove prophetic. In 1987 he began working for a tree care company and realized he loved everything about the work: being outdoors in nature, climbing trees, meet-

ing people and taking care of the environment. By 1991 he had started his own business with a single pick-up truck and climbing gear. His entrepreneurial father, Lew, realized how much Edwards enjoyed what he was doing and partnered with him in 1994 to form the official Advance Tree Service, Inc. It became a family affair with his mom, Fay, and two sisters, Lorie and Lisa, also involved.

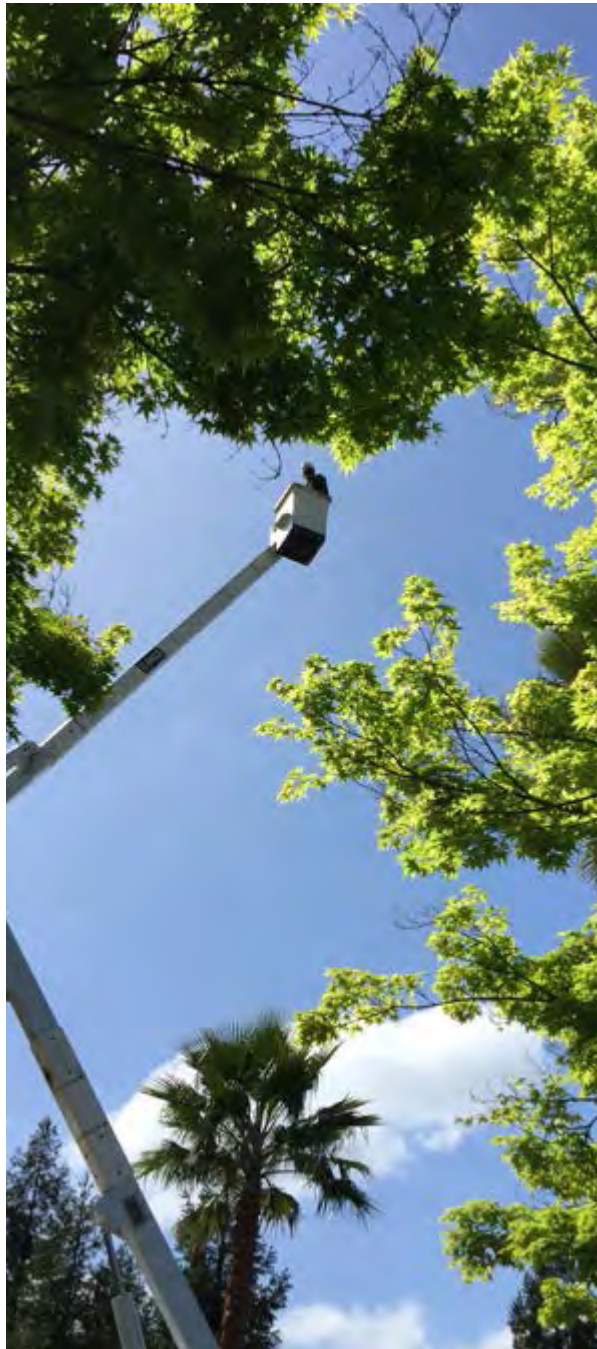
Both father and son went back to school to become certified arborists so that they would have the professional knowledge necessary to understand the internal biology, growth habits, pests, diseases, and best pruning and removal practices.

Edwards indicated that by the end of April deciduous trees have leafed out and should be looking fresh and healthy. Because of our California drought, many trees have suffered injury. Many have died, are dying or are extremely stressed. It's time to take a walk around your property to inspect your trees and larger shrubs. Check for dead, dry, brittle branches and holes in the bark or trunk. If you have a suspicion that a tree may be impaired, it's critical to contact a certified arborist who will be able to identify hazards and offer advice. If your tree needs a treatment or removal, they will help identify your options.

... continued on page D18



Free wood chips and firewood are offered to customers.



A view through the trees of the tree trimmer in the bucket.

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Digging Deep ... continued from page D16

What YOU can do to protect your trees:

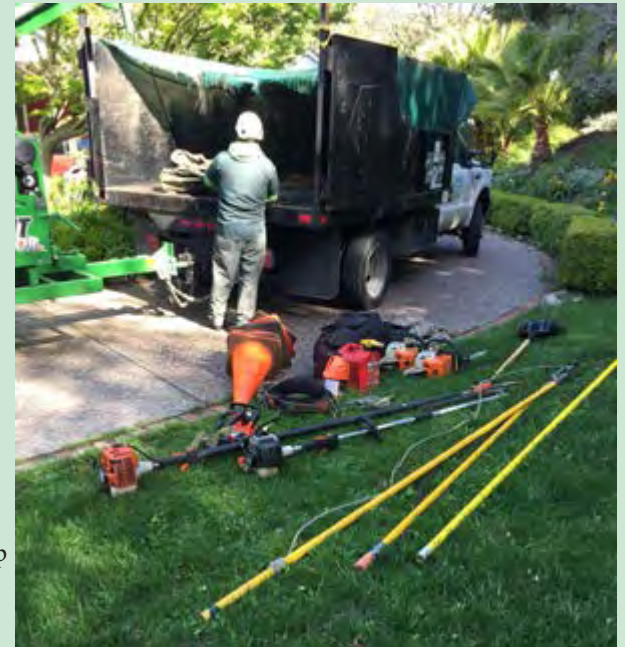
1. Plant the correct tree in the correct area. Before planting a tree, learn more about its habits.

Considerations include:

- How tall and wide will the tree be at maturity?
- How much water does this specimen require?
- Is it disease prone?
- Will it survive in a drought?
- Does it bear fruit?
- Is it evergreen or deciduous?
- Will your tree block a neighbor's view?
- Is it appropriate for your landscape?
- How will it look in all four seasons?
- Keep rocks away from around the base. Rocks get hot and the heat is not good for the roots. Use mulch instead.
- Trees are thirsty, especially redwoods. They need water all year long. Large trees need more hydration with a deep watering wand.
- Prune correctly. Improper pruning damages trees. Watch for crossovers.
- Remove suckers from the base of trees.
- Hire a certified arborist to inspect your trees. Ask questions and learn.



The ugly tree mushroom growing at the base of the tree.



Equipment for tree cutting.

Signs of Trouble:

- Mushrooms growing at the base of the tree. These are poisonous, do not consider eating them.
- Mistletoe hanging from the branches. As much as we love mistletoe at Christmas, it is always a sign of concern when it invades a tree.
- Branches without leaves and no new growth evident.
- Ivy or other vines climbing the trunk. Remove quickly.

What to Look for in a Tree Specialist for Hire:

- Arborist certification
- Valid state contractor's license
- Certified Tree Care Safety Professional by the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA)
- Insurance
- Workers' Compensation
- Experience over cost
- Ask for recommendations and do your research
- Get an evaluation and a written bid before proceeding

My cottonwood exhibited all of the warning signs. The branches were so brittle that a bucket truck was necessary to elevate a worker with a chainsaw to cut the branches. When a tree is healthy, it can be climbed for pruning, but if the tree is dead, it could be too dangerous to attempt to climb it. The crew placed plywood in a "V" position to catch the cut branches as they fell. They then cut the pieces into firewood. Another option is to chip all of the wood for mulch.


After the cottonwood was finished, the bucket was used to cut the dry branches from the Mexican palms. Advance cleaned up the area and left the mulch for me to use in my garden.

If you are considering planting trees this spring, consider this:

- Redwoods and pines need copious amounts of water. Don't plant them. Pines are also very flammable.
- Ornamental trees such as red buds, pistachio, and Japanese maple do well with little water.
- The most drought resistant species are the natives: oaks, buckeye, manzanita and madrone, as they need very little water and in fact, won't thrive with too much.

The danger of a falling tree is real. Most homeowners are not really aware of the signals that trees exhibit when they are suffering. Don't wait too long to have your trees inspected. It's far better to be safe than sorry.

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now." – Chinese Proverb



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SITE FACTORS

Site factors have significant influence on both the likelihood and consequences of tree failure. When our ISA certified arborist from Advance Tree Service comes to perform a free risk assessment, the site is often first evaluated for targets and consequences of failure. Site factors that can be used to evaluate the likelihood of tree failure impacting the target include the history of previous failures. This includes branch, trunk, root, and soil failure. Wind and other natural winter conditions can be a high risk factor as well.

So don't wait until it's too late, Call your local ISA certified Arborist at Advance Tree Service for all your tree needs.

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Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Reminders:

CELEBRATE Arbor Day on April 29. Plant a tree or offer gratitude for the trees you already have.

AERATE lawns to help with proper drainage and root growth.

PREVENT unwanted pests, including termites, ants, grubs, etc. with an organic spray. Cedar oil contained in Yard Guard is safe for pets and children.

PROTECT peony buds from freezing once they've sprouted by putting a sheet over them before frost is expected.

ALLOW the leaves from bulbs that have completed blooming to turn brown and crispy. Daffodils and narcissi require this procedure to refuel the bulb for next year's flowering.

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Cynthia Brian

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Crew of Advance Tree Service with owner Darren "Deadwood" Edwards and Cynthia Brian.



A stellar showing of short lived grape-like clusters of purple wisteria twine through an arbor.

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49 Scenic Drive Charming traditional ranch on private .4 acre knoll w/views, patio, lawn & pool. Great room w/vaulted open beam ceiling; formal dining; sparkling kitchen + eating area. Exclusive close-in neighborhood. **\$1,065,000**

ORINDA



New Listing

42 Michael Lane Down a private lane, in the sought after Glorietta nghbrhd, this welcoming Tahoe style split level home features 4bd/3ba w/ 2228sf on a .83ac lot. Solar heated pool, spa & large level yard. **\$1,295,000**

ORINDA



New Listing

40 Sunnyside Lane Located in Orinda's sought after Sleepy Hollow. 2 story traditional on cul-de-sac overlooking Orinda Hills w/stunning kit. remodel, Marvin windows & drs, updated baths, hdwd flrs, 3 car garage. **\$1,595,000**

ORINDA



New Price

15 Estates Drive Redesigned & renovated. Living, dining & island kitchen all in a "Great Room." 4bd/3bath + study/den. Hardwood flrs. Patio & side yard. Close in location on .53 acre lot. Top rated Orinda schools. **\$1,648,000**

ORINDA



New Listing

16 Valley View Lane Sophisticated fully renovated home of exceptional quality & ideal craftsmanship. Bonus ofc, den, recreation rm + family rm. Fabulous interiors open to spectacular setting of privacy & views. **\$2,655,000**

ORINDA



New Listing

68 Southwood Drive Beautiful fully renovated w/high-end features in/outside. Perfect for family & ideal entertaining all on one level. Exceptional grounds, views & privacy + close-in loc. Separate studio suite. **\$2,675,000**

ORINDA



New Price

160 Camino Don Miguel Magnificent Spanish Med. estate on two adj. lots, located on 4th hole of OCC. Main house completely rebuilt in 1996 is over 5800sf with 5bd/5.5ba & separate 627sf 1bd/1ba guest house. **\$5,800,000**

MORAGA



New Price

135 Devin Drive Sweet Rheem Valley Manor 3bd/2ba, 1,545sf rancher on .24ac. Updates, hwd flrs & prof. Indsepd yard. Eat-in kit. w/ bay window overlooking trees & patio. Near shops, park & trails. Top schools! **\$899,000**

MORAGA



New Listing

3 Haven Court Lovely 3bd/2ba 2,283 sq. ft. home. Great level floor plan. Eat-in kitchen/ family room open to private flat back yard. Cul-de-sac corner lot. Walk to shops and top CA schools! **\$1,225,000**

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3222 Apache Court Dream location & darling home. Charming 4bd/2ba ranch style on quiet cul-de-sac in Burton Valley. Open floor plan & vaulted ceilings. Raised vegetable beds, lawn & covered patio. **\$1,249,000**

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3723 Crestmont Place Piedmont in Lafayette! Gorgeous Tudor style estate in Happy Valley w/level lawn & fabulous views of hills & Mt. Diablo. Vaulted ceilings, lead glass windows, hdwd flrs, main level master suite. **\$1,995,000**

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3461 Stage Coach Drive Amazing Baywood gated entry single-story 5bd/3.5ba, 3700+ sf home w/pool on lvl lot! Chef's gourmet kit./fam rm opens to pool/ gardens/ decks. Formal din. rm. Laf. schls w/buses K-8. **\$2,100,000**

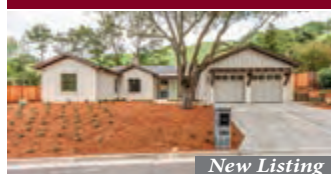
LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3 Dead Horse Canyon Spectacular 2003 custom 4220sf home & apx. 1200sf 2005 out building on 2.47ac in heart of Burton Valley. High ceilings, open gourmet kit./fam rm, 1st flr master. Walk to elem. schl & swim club. **\$2,495,000**

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3184 Lucas Drive New construction 4+bd/3.5ba home by SpringHill Homes in Burton Valley w/open living spaces, impeccable craftsmanship, gourmet kitchen, level lawn backs to open space, 3 car garage. **\$2,495,000**

WALNUT CREEK



New Listing

3531 Freeman Road Located on coveted Freeman Rd, this wonderful trad. rancher has endless potential. .29 acre w/plenty of room for expansion. Newly refinished hrdwd flrs, eat-in kitchen, formal dining/living. **\$899,000**

WALNUT CREEK



New Listing

1859 Rainbow View Drive Beautiful in every detail! Exquisitely updated thruout. RH & PB cabinets & fixtures, light oak hrdwd & high ceils. Lovely terraced gardens w/hill views. Cul de sac loc. & Acalanes Schl district. **\$1,595,000**



THE VILLAGE ASSOCIATES:

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