

Lafayette, Millie's Kitchen will miss its founder as Millie Harris dies at 91

By Cathy Dausman



Millie's Kitchen, a Lafayette fixture.

Photo Andy Scheck

The old-fashioned street sign on Oak Hill Road reads "Millie's Kitchen." The sign was designed and contributed by a San Francisco policeman who was a restaurant patron. While the sign and the name remain, Millie Harris, original chef and owner of Millie's Kitchen in Lafayette, died Jan. 29 at age 91.

Harris opened the kitchen in June 1975, said current owner Eva Clement. Clement worked at the restaurant for 14 years, telling Harris, "When you're ready to sell, I'll buy." In 1989 Harris told Clement "I'm ready," and retired to Gualala,

California, where she had property. She continued working, this time as a volunteer for the local food bank.

"She made sure that there were candy canes, cracker jacks, cookies, and something sweet for the children in every food bank distribution," wrote Paul Batchelder on a Lafayette Facebook page.

If children were important to Harris, she and her restaurant were equally important to Lamorinda residents. Sue Callister of Lafayette started eating at Millie's in high school, and continued to patronize the restaurant later in life,

often biking there to eat with her children. Callister called Harris "a wonderful lady" and thinks Harris was once a VIP at a Campolindo High School's homecoming parade. She's seen Millie's Kitchen coffee mugs as far away as Perth, Australia, where a former East Bay resident relocated.

Lamorinda resident Nancy Mooers Brown has eaten at Millie's since high school. "I've enjoyed introducing my husband and our kids to Millie's," Brown said. She says her children also consider the restaurant their favorite Lafayette breakfast spot. "My go-to favorite has always been Millie's coffee cake," she said.

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce executive director Jay Lifson has been a regular at Millie's for 30 years. "During the Art & Wine Festival we have our pre-event meetings at 5 a.m. there each year," he said.

Graveside services are open to the public; they will be held at 12 p.m. Feb. 8 at Queen of Heaven Cemetery, 1965 Reliez Valley Road in Lafayette. At Harris' request there will be no funeral. As she told Clement, she wanted "no hoopla." She is survived by family in Wisconsin.

Moraga

EBMUD put on the spot for failure to address landslide

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It so happens that at the Jan. 11 council meeting council member Dave Trotter had asked that the topic of the trail be put on the agenda of a future meeting. He had asked that both EBMUD, who owns the land, and East Bay Regional Park District that manages the trail be invited to provide a report on what is going on with the landslide, and present their plan to restore the trail and protect the uphill neighbors.

"Leaving it just tarped is not an option," the council member had said. Vice mayor Roger Wykle had proposed during that same meeting that town staff make a formal written request to the water agency, adding that if EBMUD would not answer, "We will go stand on their desk!"

Town manager Bob Priebe said the agency refused to answer any questions because of pending litigation.

After the public outcry on Jan. 25 staff restated the impossibility they had had to get an answer from the utility, and the council members

reaffirmed their determination to get a result. "It takes a village and we are on your team," said Mayor Teresa Onoda after she was able to restore order following the first raucous incident of her short career as mayor. Worked-up by months of frustration and the inability to get a straight answer, some residents lost patience when they understood that the council could not discuss an item that was not on the agenda.

Since the group of residents had come to talk during public comment, the council could not discuss actions other than what had already been decided at the Jan. 11 meeting. One Moragan proposed that the topic be a permanent agenda item. Rather, the mayor asked that a draft letter be put on the agenda for the Feb. 8 meeting, and that the topic be continued if necessary. The council will also discuss if more can be done. The town manager proposed to look into the franchise agreement with EBMUD and see if the town could have any type of leverage over the agency.

Orinda

Rain Fails to dampen spirits of young marchers

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She thought, "how terrible to be a kid, you can't even vote," and tried to conceive of a tangible action for them to demonstrate the things they care about. It was, she thought, important not to be abstract, but to be supportive, standing up, in an action-based way.

They did a post-election march right before the candlelight vigil on Nov. 18, attended by about 100. She had several meetings with groups of children to plan the inaugural event. The idea was to convert concern and to flip it into hope. For example, concern about

war became hope for peace, and the children can think about how to make their hopes happen.

However, not everyone agreed with Reader. When the inaugural event was publicized on the private social media site Nextdoor, it evinced a stream of very negative opinions.

Reader said she had seen the comments, but, she said she felt it was a parent's right and responsibility to teach our values to their children. "We talk," she said, "and children draw their own opinions."

Some of the letters written by the children:

"Dear President Trump, I think you should help the environment by not building stuff in the wild. I also think you should be kind to poor, homeless and immigrant people. The country is meant to be for everyone. You shouldn't drive people such as homeless people, out of the U.S.A. Please do not pollute in habitats. From Ryan Lo"

"Dear President Trump, I am concerned about your policy of immigration. I think you should let all people of ALL races come to the United States after all it is supposed to be united. Sincerely, Isaac Reader-Taatjes"

"Dear White House I suggest, that you try to get people to treat others nicely. Sincerely, Mia"

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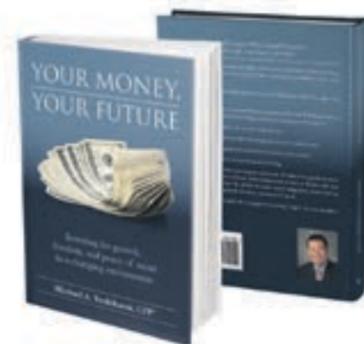


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