

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

Independent, locally owned and operated!

www.lamorindaweekly.com

925-377-0977



The Writing Studio
Where Words Come to Life

- Classroom instruction and individual sessions
- Writing Projects
- Tools to improve fluency and sentence structure
- Grades 3-12

New Classes Start Feb. 13

The Writing Studio
3455 Golden Gate Way, Suite A, Lafayette
(925) 385-0211
www.lafayettewritingstudio.com

26,000 copies delivered biweekly to Lamorinda homes & businesses

FREE



The fallen eucalyptus tree damaged multiple cars and covered the parking lot in front of La Finestra Restaurant in Lafayette.

Photo Gint Federas

Falling trees threaten Lamorinda residents

By John T. Miller

A spate of falling trees in Lamorinda over the past month caused extensive damage and raised concern over future harm from overgrown trees.

A eucalyptus fell on Lafayette Circle, damaging several cars in the La Finestra parking lot and blocking the roadway, while a Valley Oak toppled at the corner of Burton and Lucas Drives, causing extensive damage to one of

the homes on a corner lot.

Mike Moran, Director of Public Works for the City of Lafayette, expressed relief that no one was killed. “The issue of falling trees is keeping me up nights,” he said.

The popular perception is that the combination of five years of prolonged drought, along with the recent above-average rainfall, led to the trees’ demise. However, many

other factors contribute to the danger posed by falling trees.

“Many of the homes in Lafayette were built 60-70 years ago,” said Moran. “The trees were there before and are no longer in the best conditions to grow. Many are now near sidewalks or roadways and, like animal species, have lost their habitat.”

... continued on page A12

Advertising

Letters to the Editor	A9
Community Service	B4
Not to be Missed	B6-B7
HOW TO CONTACT US	B7
Classified	C2
Shop Moraga	C4

PRESENTING
590 SILVERADO DRIVE, LAFAYETTE
1ST OPEN SUNDAY 1-4PM | 590SILVERADODRIVE.COM | OFFERED AT \$1,295,000



Tucked in the heart of Burton Valley on a flat .28± acre lot, this charming 3BR/2BA, 2012± sq. ft. home includes amazing indoor living space & an updated kitchen with built-in dining nook.

DANA GREEN

LAFAYETTE'S #1 REALTOR SINCE 2008
925.339.1918 | DANAGREENTEAM.COM | LICENSE #: 01482454

AUHSD to implement new block schedule for schools

By Sora O’Doherty

If you are noticing less rush in the Lamorinda rush hour this week, it might be due to the one-week trial of the new block schedule at all four high schools in the Acalanes Union High School District. The block schedule, which will be brought into all AUHSD high schools next fall, is being given a test drive from Feb. 6 through Feb. 10.

On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, students will not begin class until 8:35 a.m. This will give them an opportunity for a little extra sleep, which had been shown to be beneficial to adolescents. Their teachers, however, will still be hard at work from 7:30 a.m., using the time for both professional development and collaborative work. And an extra bonus may be rush hour traffic relief for everyone.

The main impetus for the change in schedule is California’s new standards, which, according to Miramonte Principal Julie Parks, really lend themselves into deeper dives into curriculum. This new reality in learning makes it necessary to shift instructional practices. The block schedule, which features longer class periods three days per week, incorporate more technical and project-based learning.

“Project-based learning,” Parks explained, is catch phrase for different ways of assessing student learning. A project allows students to combine different instructional areas, and assessments are not multiple choice. Longer instructional blocks enable the schools to do this more effectively.

The schools have been working towards implementation of the block schedule for a long time. All last year literally hundreds of hours were spent in preparation, including visiting schools with different types of block schedules. Here is what AUHSD block schedule will be like:

Each Monday will be “anchor day.” Starting at 8:35 a.m. and ending at 3:05 p.m., students will have all their seven classes, each for 45 minutes.

Tuesdays and Thursdays are “block days,” with students having



The Miramonte parking lot at rush hour. Photo Sora O’Doherty

90-minute blocks of their first, second, fifth and sixth periods. The passing periods in between classes are being lengthened from five to 10 minutes. Block days start at 8 a.m.

Wednesdays and Fridays are “academy days.” Starting at 8:35 a.m., students will have their third, fourth, and seventh period block classes, plus a 55-minute “academy period” embedded in mid-morning. This time is envisioned as a flexible time when students will have some choices, perhaps some extra help or intervention for students who may be struggling, or additional enrichment for those who require more of a challenge. Other students will be able to avail of some time to get their work done, collaborate with others or meet with teachers.

During this pilot week there will not be full implementation of academy days.

District Attorney drops duct tape case

By Sophie Braccini

The Contra Costa County District Attorney decided at the end of January not to file charges in the case that opposed a Moraga family against a Los Perales teacher, Millie Tang, and the Moraga School District.

The story started last year when a family alleged that Tang had put duct tape on their son’s mouth during class. (See our article in the Jan. 25 issue: www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1024/Moraga-Parents-Rally-to-Defend-Accused-Los-Perales-Teacher.html).

Since the publication of the article more families have reached out to Lamorinda Weekly in support of the teacher. Meanwhile, the MSD confirmed that a civil lawsuit has been filed against it by “John Doe’s” family. Parents have repeatedly asked that the district defend the teacher and not settle with the family.

MSD Superintendent Bruce Burns would not comment at this time and the district’s lawyer was not available to answer questions. “John Doe’s” lawyer has not returned calls for comment.

Civic News A1-A12

Orinda tries to fast-track sinkhole repairs – page A6.

Fire Districts A8

How MOFD responds to new housing – page A8.

Life in Lamorinda B1-B8

Artist Deborah Rhee’s ‘Tiny Talisman’ are springing up in Lamorinda – page B1.



Sports C1-C4

Local boys soccer teams hopes to net NCS berths – page C1.



Our Homes D1-D16

Tips on loving your bedroom this Valentine’s Day – page D1.

