

Poppies for Veterans Day raise much needed funds

By Sora O'Doherty

Veterans Day will be commemorated this year on Sunday, Nov. 11. On the weekend before that day, and on the day itself, veterans wearing their caps will be distributing poppies in remembrance of those who have served and those who were lost, according to Terry Murphy, senior vice commander and service officer of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8063 and commander for VFW District 10, which consists of 18 posts in three counties. Poppies will be distributed in the U.S., Canada, England, Holland, France, Australia and New Zealand as well as other countries, said Murphy, who spoke during the public forum at the Oct. 16 Orinda City Council meeting.

Donations to the VFW are restricted by their charter and bylaws to be used to help veterans in need. Murphy says that unlike many other groups that say they are helping veterans, the VFW has no overhead for this program. The local Post has been in existence as long as Orinda has been a city, and in all that time,

Murphy says, no member has even asked to be reimbursed for their mileage.

Donations are used to help local veterans on fixed incomes and in need of medical equipment. Thousands of pre-paid credit cards sent to the Veterans Center in Concord are used to help returning veterans looking for jobs or going to school on the GI Bill. Large donations have also been sent to victims of hurricane Harvey and, last year, to help the victims of the North County fires, including both veterans and others in need. According to Murphy, the list of individuals and organizations helped by the VFW goes on and on, from local scouting troops and packs to historical societies.

"When you see one of us wearing our funny little caps, be it at the Post Office or Diablo Foods, please stop by, say 'Hi' and pick up a poppy and, if you want, make a donation," Murphy said, adding, "We will put the money to good use."

Judge sides with Save Lafayette Trees

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Dawson explains their hope for the meeting. "We'd hope the city might dedicate resources to an independent analysis of pipeline risks in our community. We are looking forward to taking both PG&E and the CPUC up on their commitments to further engagement to create what we are dubbing an alliance for community pipeline safety.

"Our proposal for this group would be to have a community spe-

cific pipeline integrity management program in place, based on an independent assessment, so the public can be assured each part of the gas pipeline system in Lafayette is known and accounted for, and threats are known, ranked, and addressed in order of reducing safety risks," Dawson continues. "That basically is our pitch to getting to trust. ... turning words into action."

Downtown retail workshop

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The responses included a shortage of qualified labor, a lack of convenient parking, the high costs of rent and tenant improvement and, for some more than others, the effect of the internet on business.

As for the positives of doing business in the city, all agreed that customer loyalty and an affluent demographic were strong pluses in Lafayette.

Blodgett pointed out that although his product could be bought online, "We are unique in service. People want to shop locally," he said.

"What can the city do to help?" asked Srivatsa. "I would love to see the Happy Valley Shopping Center remodeled," answered Collier. Perlmutter agreed and made the point that some blocks, such as the one that used to be home to the Rustic Tavern, lack beauty and need external improvement. She urged the city to consider encouragement of arts and culture downtown.

Blodgett raised the question of zoning, saying there is a need to

streamline city processes, loosen zoning restrictions and create a synergy between businesses and retail.

But it was Ford who answered both the question of how the city can help, and Srivatsa's final question regarding their vision for the city in the future with his comment on making the downtown more pedestrian-friendly.

Council Member Ivor Samson made the point that, in order to create a pedestrian-friendly environment, Lafayette needs unique retailers to offer places that pedestrians want to go. Ford agreed and said that filling empty spots with the right tenants would be one of the several components of the solution, along with having more lighting to make the city more night-friendly for pedestrians.

Overall, the discussion echoed many of the points raised at the first workshop back in July. Residents are encouraged to weigh in on the discussion via the online www.lafayettelistens.com forum.

ConnectOrinda launched

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The second walking tour of the theater district and the area between the two sides of downtown was led by Ryan McClain, principal at Fehr and Peers, a Walnut Creek-based transportation planning firm. Community groups (Save Orinda and the Orinda Historical Society) served as volunteer docents along certain points of that tour.

Copies of the ConnectOrinda Briefing Book prepared by Eisen|Leticia were distributed. The Briefing Book contains pertinent facts and figures regarding downtown Orinda gathered by staff and consultants during the first phase of the project.

For children and teens, there were scavenger hunts, with small prizes for all participants and case prizes for the winners in each category. Both scavenger

hunts were developed with input from the Orinda Teen Advisory Council.

Following the collection of public input, the next stage in the process will be in January when there will be a meeting to present a summary of the community feedback and three different sets of near-term projects and longer-term visions that represent the range of comments.

Residents of Orinda can continue to provide input by filling out online surveys and submitting comments regarding specific places or points on an interactive map at <http://connectorindasurvey.fehrandpeers.net/>.

More information regarding the ConnectOrinda project is available at <http://www.cityof-orinda.org/connectorinda>.

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— Open Letter —

Dear Residents of Lafayette,

We are nine former mayors of Lafayette, and we are dismayed by what many see as the negative campaign rhetoric used by two of the five Lafayette City Council candidates. In contrast, Teresa Gerring, Karen Maggio and Dave Smith are conducting positive campaigns.

Negative campaigns are infrequent in Lafayette's 50-year history, and the candidates promoting them have always been rejected by voters. In the past we have had civil discourse and issue discussions during campaigns. When disagreements arose, they were issue-oriented and without personal attacks.

We are upset by the exaggerations, misstatements, and half-truths at candidates' night and in campaign material and campaign ads. Most especially, we are dismayed by the rhetoric against our volunteer commissioners and our City Manager, Steve Falk, who is one of the most respected city managers in California. Lafayette is run on a balanced budget, with ample reserves and no pension debt. Few cities can boast these facts. After 28 years of exemplary service, no one, especially Steve, should be treated with such disrespect.

The attacks on the Planning Commissioners and the City Manager are an attack on us and the voters who elected us. We hired the City Manager and appointed the volunteers who served on our commissions. We, as Mayors and council members, made the policies carried out by the City Manager and commissioners. We are proud of our decisions and are honored by the service that so many have given. Just look at the improvements to our city since its incorporation, and you will appreciate the hard work that our volunteers and professional staff have accomplished. Lafayette's meetings adhere to the state "sunshine" laws for open meetings, and we discipline those who have run afoul of these laws. The city works with all our citizens to get their input.

We need council members who can forge

agreements with each other and with neighboring jurisdictions. Why is this important? Take traffic as an example. Traffic is a regional issue and we must elect council members who are collaborative in nature, not confrontational, to work cooperatively with the nearby cities whose drivers impact our roads.

We support Teresa Gerring and Karen Maggio, who are positive, proactive hard-working volunteers whose years of dedication to Lafayette distinguish them.

Teresa Gerring served 19 years as an elected representative to the Lafayette School Board. She served 17 years on the Lafayette Community Foundation Board and was co-chair of the Lafayette Library Community Campaign, which raised \$13 million to build our award-winning library.

Karen Maggio is a former 10-year Planning Commissioner, served on the Vision 2000 Lafayette Library and Learning Center Committee, was a board member of Sustainable Lafayette, was vice chair of the Lafayette Environmental Task Force and a recipient of the Lafayette School PTA Leadership award.

We endorse and urge you to vote for Teresa and Karen. They are the positive, experienced, dedicated, hard-working leaders Lafayette needs on the City Council.

Sincerely,

- Don Tatzin**, Mayor 1986-87, 1991-92, 1996-97, 2001-02, 2008-09, 2013-14, 2017-18
Mike Anderson, Mayor 2007-08, 2012-13, 2016-17
Brandt Andersson, Mayor 2009-10, 2014-15
Carol Federighi, Mayor 2002-03, 2006-07, 2011-12
Carl Anduri, Mayor 2004-05, 2010-11
Erling Horn, Mayor 1998-99, 2003-04
Anne Grodin, Mayor 1993-94, 1997-98
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