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Larry and Betty Sydora and Patrick Lowry respect social distancing at the Moraga Country Club. Photo Sophie Braccini

# Slow reopening of outdoor spaces begins

By Sophie Braccini

On a beautiful afternoon during the first week of May, Larry and Betty Sydora and their friend Patrick Lowry took their first swings in weeks at the Moraga Country Club. The happy golfers were part of those tennis players, golfers, skaters, and frisbee throwers who were allowed once again to play, provided they did it safely. Little-by-little, outside recreation facilities in Lamorinda are reopening and residents are loving it.

The manager of the Orinda Country Club, Brian Thomas, explained that club members registered to play have to arrive wearing a mask, that carts are single-person use only, and that players are encouraged to walk; no guests are allowed at this time. Members of the same family can play together and when friends join in, social distancing must be happening from teeing grounds to putting greens. The Sydoras in Moraga, subjected to similar

rules, drove a "family" cart together while Lowry walked the 18 holes, something he found a bit challenging after the long weeks of confinement. Tennis courts that reopened May 4 also saw instant bookings caused by six weeks of pent-up demand, despite the strict rules such as only single play allowed, and no sharing of tennis balls. Brent De Groot who teaches tennis at OCC, was booked for lessons from day one until 8 p.m. every day. ... continued on Page A10

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# Volunteers spearhead collaborative push to test seniors at all Lamorinda residential facilities



Photo Pippa Fisher

From left: De'Janae Gideon, Dr. Armando Samaniego, Dr. Brian Candell, Vice Mayor Susan Candell, Dr. Yenjean Hwang, Crystal Mendes, Anna Callanta before heading into Merrill Gardens to test residents and staff May 1.

By Pippa Fisher

Under the leadership of Lafayette Vice Mayor Susan Candell, acting as a private citizen, volunteers are expediting

COVID-19 testing for some of the most vulnerable across Lamorinda in all residential senior living facilities. What started as a Lafayette initiative, as Candell worked with her husband, Dr. Brian Candell of the Orinda Medical Group, his partner Infectious Disease Specialist Dr. Yenjean Hwang, and Dr. Armando Samaniego of Lafayette StatMed, in conjunction with County Health Director Chris Farnitano to test all residents and staff at the three facilities in Lafayette, has now expanded to Orinda and Moraga. Candell is working with the Lafayette Community Foundation to raise the \$17,000 needed for the initiative in the city and is excited to report that the Orinda and Moraga Community Foundations are also fundraising for the testing in Orinda and Moraga. "Many of our senior residents in

Lafayette are low and very-low income, so we need to make sure they have access to this testing too," says Candell. Contra Costa County has begun offering free testing to all residents but, in order to expedite testing to seniors for whom attending a drive-through site or clinic is not feasible, the testing initiative is hugely appreciated. The first facility tested was Merrill Gardens in Lafayette on May 1. General Manager Aubrey Goo expressed his deep appreciation for Dr. Hwang and Dr. Candell for performing the tests so quickly: "The support of these physicians means the world to us." And in Merrill Gardens the news was good, with all but three tests that needed redoing completed. ... continued on Page A2

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## Town Hall Theatre music, comedy live shows go on – virtually



Photo Craig Isaacs

The Sun Kings at a previous performance, from left: Scott Southard, Bruce Coe, Tom Stack, and Drew Harrison. Harrison will be performing live May 21.

By Pippa Fisher

At Town Hall Theatre it takes more than a pandemic to stop the music, as they pivot instead to online live performances.

As with all nonprofits, Lafayette's THT is struggling with the financial cost of the shelter-in-place shutdown but, since no one understands "the show must go on" philosophy better than a

theater, Interim Board President Tom Stack barely missed a beat to keep the music playing – virtually –

turning instead to live streaming performances.

The series kicked off with a performance by Stevie Coyle from Mighty Fine Guitars and since then, says Stack, shows are building on each other, increasing in viewers.

The shows, sponsored by Canyon Club Brewery in Moraga and by Lamorinda Music, take place every Thursday evening at 7 p.m. and have an impressive lineup for its remaining performances, including comedian Johnny Steele on May 14, and Drew Harrison, leader of the Beatles tribute band the Sun Kings on May 21.

Mark Shaw covering music of the Rat Pack, Ralph Woodson from the Jimi Hendrix tribute band Purple Haze, and Dave Martin from Dave Martin's House Party and the Buzztones will bring the series through the middle of June.

"We have had live music at Town Hall Theatre for the

past 10 years. We have painstakingly built an audience, show by show. I am counting on those folks, who want to see it happen again, to support this series, enjoy it in this medium, and help keep us afloat," says Stack.

Stack hopes people will donate what they can to help generate some income and support the arts during these tough times. There is a link for those wishing to donate on the Facebook live streaming page.

Stack explains that for him it's always been about the educational component. "This medium gives these musicians a chance to tell you how they got into a particular artist, who their influences were, and why. I find that part fascinating – that's what I hope to accomplish with this streaming series."

"Week to week will be different, engaging, informative," says Stack. "Get on the bus, it's gonna be a great ride!"

**All performances start at 7 p.m. on Thursdays. Details can be found on the THT website <https://www.townhalltheatre.com/up-next-music-comedy>**

## Volunteers spearhead collaborative push to test seniors at all Lamorinda residential facilities

... continued from Page A1

"We are pleased to report that all of the 124 tests that were administered to residents and team members came back negative for the virus," says Goo. "In addition, a resident who had previously tested positive on April 26 has now tested negative for the virus."

Goo says that while this

gives peace of mind, they remain vigilant in the fight against COVID-19. "Our Enhanced Resident Protection Protocol remains in place at the community."

Orinda Vice Mayor Amy Worth, who is leading the project like Candell as a private citizen in Orinda, echoes the sentiment of gratitude for the initiative and especially the

generosity of the community. She also acknowledges the immediate response by OCF President Sue Severson in getting the fundraising up so quickly.

Lafayette City Manager Niroop Srivatsa who was pre-

sent as the doctors and their assistants went into Merrill Gardens says that it was a privilege to see them walk into the facility with their kits to test the residents and staff members.

"Everywhere in Lafayette," says Srivatsa, "people are stepping up to help each other and this great endeavor by local doctors and nurses is no exception. #LafayetteStrong."

To donate to this joint initiative, residents should visit the Community Foundation websites:  
 Orinda Community Foundation website: <https://orinda2010.wixsite.com/ocfwebsite>  
 Lafayette Community Foundation website: <https://lafayettecf.org/>  
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## When and how will businesses come back?



Photo Pippa Fisher

Some believe it is possible to operate a small business like this jewelry shop with strict adherence to safety protocols.

### By Pippa Fisher

Even as the state begins to ease restrictions in incremental steps, questions remain about how and when Lafayette's small businesses can reopen and how many will survive.

In a May 6 virtual meeting, Lafayette residents heard from city and county leaders who took time to answer residents' questions, assuring the public that "business as normal" to resume, Lafayette will be getting there with caution and will be following county guidelines which may be more restrictive than those issued by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Contra Costa County Deputy Health Officer Dr. Rohan Radhakrishna explained the five indicators that health officers in the Bay Area are tracking to assess progress that will determine to what extent and how fast the community can move away from the current shelter-in-place. These include ensuring the total number of COVID-19 cases in the community and in hospitals is flat or decreasing, having sufficient hospital capacity, having sufficient testing completed daily, having sufficient contact tracing capability, and having a sufficient supply of personal protective equipment.

Radhakrishna explained that the numbers of cases is likely to rise with increased testing but in order for businesses to reopen, health officials will be looking at all five of these indicators together for trends. And he explained that gradual small steps are needed to make sure the community does not see a spike in numbers as a result of relaxation.

A May 7 press release from Contra Costa Health Services confirmed the county's cautious approach, saying, "The Bay Area orders do not currently permit curbside pickup from non-essential, non-outdoor businesses, and that is not allowed to begin on Friday, May 8."

But Lamorinda businesses are struggling. No one is more aware of that than Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson, who is inundated daily by phone calls.

The chamber has about 600 members. "More than half of our members are businesses of one to two people. It is no secret they are struggling," says Lifson.

In a letter from the chamber to county health officials, Lifson expressed the chamber's gratitude for all the steps taken in managing the crisis. "Understandably, the measures were made with a broad brush and those decisions save thousands of lives," he says. "However," he explains, "we do believe that there are some prudent steps the county could allow that would keep our residents safe and let many of our small businesses get back to work."

Lifson says that the chamber recognizes the basic safety precautions that need to be followed by all businesses and customers, including crowd control, distancing, extra space in aisles, wearing of masks and gloves, but suggests two requests that would safely allow modest business activity to resume.

"If it has been deemed safe to do food pickup curbside, we believe that retail can do curbside pickup safely as well," says Lifson.

Lifson says they would also like the county to consider allowing retail business and the service industry to have one-on-one appointments within the business establishment while allowing time between visits to practice reoccurring sanitation procedures.

Lifson says that they believe that these small steps could allow many of Lafayette's small businesses get back on their feet and begin contributing to the local economy. "There has never been a more important time in our history for the disposable income our residents spend to stay in Lafayette and Contra Costa County."

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### COMPASS

## Town of Moraga continues to explore possibilities for Hacienda

By Vera Kochan

In mid-January, the town of Moraga released request for proposals to lease a portion of the first floor for an on-site restaurant at the Hacienda de las Flores that could also serve as the lead caterer to any events held on the property. The RFP targeted 44 prospects and 398 retail brokers, but

garnered only one proposal: Hacienda Partners, LLC, a joint-partnership between Thomas Capital Investments and Pacific Meritage, a restaurant business based in Danville, proposed a public-private partnership with the town.

Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt explained to the town council during its April 22 meeting that while the



Photo Andy Scheck

### Hacienda de la Flores

proposal didn't include an on-site restaurant, it did consider providing catering and alcohol service for events with a future exploration into accommodating larger rental events and possibly an on-site restaurant.

According to Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg, six or seven interested parties toured the property, but made note of the economic challenges involved with the Hacienda as a restaurant venue. It soon became clear that the property was preferable as an event space rather than a restaurant-only facility.

Based on the fact that only one proposal was received, town staff presented three options to

the council: Begin discussions with Hacienda Partners, LLC to form an investment partnership to find a balance between a private venture with public access, which would include the possibility of bringing catering and alcohol services to the Hacienda; work with Wedgewood, a wedding venue operator that was aware of the RFP but did not submit a proposal because they do not operate restaurants, but did show interest in partnering with the town to operate the Hacienda as an event venue; or re-release the Hacienda Restaurant Operator RFP after the county's shelter-in-place order is lifted, since the coronavirus outbreak may have had some bearing on the lack of responses to the RFP.


Wedgewood operates 28 venues in California and would offer an "all-inclusive" model for the

town to generate percentage sales revenue from food, beverage, invitations, accessories, DJ and MC services, chairs/linens, photography, lighting and ceremony officiate services.

Town staff recommended either the first or second option, and with that in mind, the council directed staff to continue preliminary discussions with Hacienda Partners, in addition to exploring other opportunities for the site, including event management possibilities. Meanwhile the Parks and Recreation Department will continue to utilize the Hacienda site for the town's After School Enrichment Program classes during the fall and winter, and the town will continue to book special events on the property for future dates.

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The Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley Foundation is committed to help, and is asking those who are able, to help too. Hunger must not be a casualty of this pandemic.

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano County, Monument Crisis Center in

Concord and Meals On Wheels of CC County are three local organizations with long successful records of fighting hunger by putting food on the table for children, adults and the elderly in need. These agencies are experiencing an unprecedented demand for food and support and need help to avoid turning away those in need.

The club will match tax-deductible donations up to a maximum of \$40,000, and accept non-matching donations beyond this amount, during its fundraiser through May 21. All donations will be distributed equally to these three outstanding nonprofit agencies.

Go to [moragavalleykiwanis.org](http://moragavalleykiwanis.org) to learn more about this campaign and to donate. Thank you in advance for your generosity to help Feed The Need, by partnering with Kiwanis to help feed those in our community who are in peril, as we all step up to fight this pandemic, together.

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## SMC president announces retirement



Photo provided

**SMC President James A. Donahue**

**By Vera Kochan**

Saint Mary's College President James A. Donahue made an official announcement last month to the Gael Nation, sharing his plans to retire in June 2021, at which point he will have served eight years. "It seems there is no perfect moment for announcing one's future retirement," Donahue said, "but I believe the right time for me to do

that has come now."

Donahue is currently the 29th president of SMC, having previously been president of the Graduate Theological Union (a consortium of nine independent theological schools and Affiliate Centers) in Berkeley. He is the first layperson to serve as president in SMC's 150-year history.

Looking back over his eight-year tenure, Donahue acknowledged his pride in leading such an academically rich institution. "What makes this the right time to transfer the reins of leadership is that Saint Mary's today stands securely in a strong position with a promising future." Donahue added, "We are fully prepared to move on to our next stage - academically, financially, culturally, and educationally." He credits the passion of the students, faculty, staff, alumni, the Christian Brothers, the board of trustees, donors and the Moraga community with

SMC's success.

Among the many achievements that Donahue is proud of is that SMC continues to be a diverse community with regards to race, religion, economic class, ethnicity and gender. He also made mention of the athletic program's remarkable student-athletes who have raised SMC's profile globally. Most recently, The Campaign for the Future of Saint Mary's has exceeded its goal to raise \$125 million which will help strengthen the college's programs and infrastructure.

Donahue ascertained that SMC will rise to the challenge presented by the coronavirus and adapt in whatever way is necessary to fulfill every student's academic needs with strength, creativity and commitment.

"The Saint Mary's community will always be my home going forward," Donahue stated. "Be assured I will continue to provide service in whatever ways I can."

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## Longtime Moraga employee Dan Bernie passes away

**By Vera Kochan**

Longtime employee for the Town of Moraga, Dan Bernie (62), passed away on April 22, two months after a brain tumor diagnosis. Bernie was on Moraga's staff for 35 years - 29 of them as Parks and Public Works Superintendent. He retired in 2014.

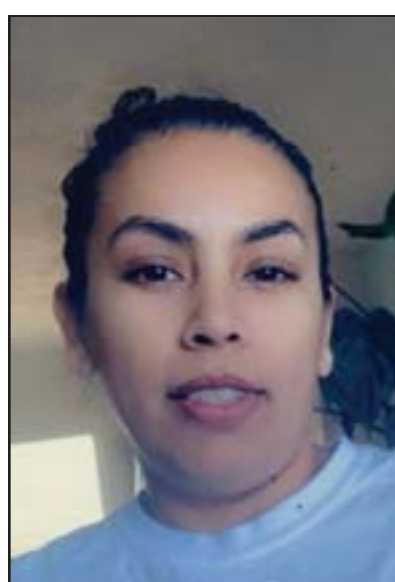
His time in Moraga began in the 1970s; he graduated from Campolindo High School in 1974. After a five-year stint in the U.S. Marines as a drill instructor, Bernie returned to Moraga in a job that kept him in tune with his love of the outdoors.

Bernie's former staff, current Parks and Public Works Superintendent Kyle M. Salvin, along with maintenance crew Ruben Ochoa, Jose Limon and Steve Riechhold had high praise for their former boss, colleague and friend. "He was very rank and file and was an enforcer of rules, but didn't mind breaking them at times," they recalled. "He pushed us as workers for our betterment, and always stressed to us the need to plan for our retirement, even to the youngest of workers. Dan always took the time to get to know his subordinates on a personal level and kept in touch with us after his retirement and would call us on our birthdays." With his small crew,

Bernie was responsible for maintaining all of Moraga's public buildings, the Hacienda de las Flores, the town's streets, parks, storm water drains, road median landscaping, street sign replacement, tree planting and the use of non-toxic weed eradication. He also orchestrated the Work Alternative Program in town for juvenile offenders from the Lamorinda area and hired Future Explorers to help keep the parks clean.

According to his former staff, Bernie was a man who loved his family and would do anything to help them or a friend. While he loved living in Lafayette and attending the annual Art and Wine Festival, Bernie often answered the call of the wild. "He was an avid outdoorsman that loved to kayak and travel the United States in his customized camper," they explained. "Dan loved to work hard and play even harder. He loved the nightlife and enjoyed good food and entertainment."

Bernie's hard work and love of Moraga is evident across the well-maintained town he left upon his retirement. "Dan was extremely outgoing and touched the lives of many people," agreed Salvin, Ochoa, Limon and Riechhold. "He will be missed, and we will do our best to carry on his legacy."



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# Orinda approves revised accessory dwelling unit law

By Sora O'Doherty

The city of Orinda is ready to adopt a revised ordinance on accessory dwelling units (ADUs) prepared by staff in response to changes in the law at the state level. According to Planning Director Drummond Buckley, the state shows no signs of letting up in its push to somehow accommodate more housing in California and to limit the discretion of the cities to restrict building. The new law is scheduled to be adopted upon its second reading on May 19.

Orinda has chosen to avail of its right to limit ADUs to 16 feet in height with the exceptions that an ADU that is built over a garage or is attached to a residence and within the required set-back for the zone in which it is located can rise to 27 feet. In accordance with state law, an ADU that is limited to 16 feet can now be as close as 4 feet to the side and rear lot lines. Beyond that,

things have gotten somewhat more complex, with several different categories of ADU. A junior ADU (JADU) is very small, only a maximum of 500 square feet, and is wholly within an existing residence. Residents of Orinda are now allowed to have one ADU and one JADU on their property.

A streamlined ADU, which includes JADUs, applies to wholly contained units within the existing residence as well as smaller detached ADUs to a maximum of 800 square feet. Streamlined ADUs and JADUs within the allowable size are never subject to design review. A standard ADU is now limited to 850 square feet for a one-bedroom unit and 1,000 square feet for a two-bedroom unit. Standard ADUs no longer trigger the maximum FAR (floor area ratio) and design review is not required under any circumstances.

When Council Member Nick Kosla asked about the difference between variance and an exception, Buckley

said that a variance is type of permit for something that does not comply with local rules, and Orinda has something like a "variance light permit," called an exception. Variances do not apply to uses, but only to development standards, and exceptions are even more limited.

Deputy city attorney Sara Clark explained that variances usually accommodate unusual circumstances, for example, a lot shaped like a pie or steeply sloped in one area. A variance provides very limited discretion, has to comply with state regulations and can't be used, for example, to ask for a variance of 300 square feet to build an ADU of 1,500 square feet. Kosla asked if the city could set conditions for approving a variance and Buckley said that they can.

Council Member Inga Miller complimented staff on their really thoughtful proposals. She said she thinks that the 27 feet allowed for an over-the-garage unit is a nice

thing for the city to adopt, while not obligated to do so.

Vice Mayor Amy Worth thanked the planning and legal staffs for their work on "very complex issues as we weave our way through the state requirements." The ordinance, she said, "enables members of our community to have the opportunity to provide ADUs for their families." There are "more and more multi-generational families, people who would need care in their homes," or otherwise have need of an ADU. Worth supported the ordinance, and praised the incredible care that went into crafting it.

However, she also urged that staff return to the council as soon as possible with an ordinance on accessory structures. In the interests of preserving aesthetics and privacy, she said that both ordinances should be consistent. Mayor Darlene Gee agreed.

There was no public comment on the ordinance.

# Orinda is moving forward on downtown development

By Sora O'Doherty

Downtown development subcommittee members Inga Miller and Nick Kosla were delighted by a large virtual turnout for the subcommittee meeting at the end of April.

Having received a presentation on progress and heard public comments, the subcommittee gave Planning Director Drummond Buckley further direction on how to proceed. Four months ago the city, having failed to obtain a robust response to a request for proposals for development of a downtown specific plan, decided to use its own planning department to develop a downtown precise plan. The project is chiefly being worked on by Buckley and Senior Planner Mayank Patel, with additional work by Senior Planner Adam Foster and intern Darren Hughes.

Buckley began by reviewing the work done on downtown development during the past decade, including the work done by the National Main Street Center and Urban Land Institute in 2016 and 2017,

and the downtown streetscape Connect Orinda work undertaken in 2018. In addition to working closely with the Friends of the Orinda Creeks on daylighting San Pablo Creek in downtown, the work has focused on near-term projects, limited to the public realm and predicated on existing conditions. This has included a concerted, coordinated effort to improve parking downtown by means of enhanced parking enforcement, residential parking permits in certain areas, a pilot employee parking scheme, and revisions to the parking in lieu fees ordinance, including changes in use.

Staff is currently working on an existing conditions report, and the draft report is about 90% complete. Buckley explained that this report will be an educational tool to help the public better understand the constraints on development, which include natural features, infrastructure and existing development standards. For example, he pointed out,

current standards call for 10-foot setbacks and a maximum lot coverage of 50%, which leaves less than 20% available for development.

One topic that was discussed both by the public and the subcommittee members involves potentially moving or undergrounding the electrical lines that run through downtown. Unfortunately, undergrounding them would help only aesthetics, but would not enable more development because building over the lines would be prohibited. Additionally, moving the lines would be prohibitively expensive.

Hughes presented the models he has been developing in two and three dimensions, to aid in visualizing the massing and density of the existing build conditions within the project area. Both the subcommittee members and the public praised his work, and members of the public suggested that the models should be included with upcoming surveys to give residents more information.

Another informational tool that staff has been developing are property profiles. The profiles are the project of Adam Foster, who is using the Airtable Data Base with images. Each property profile shows the APN, parcel size, square feet, zoning existing and future developments standards and the applicability of existing and proposed regulations, which could later be changed to show regulations before and after any change. Patel said that the planning department is excited about this tool, which he called "a living and dynamic document that can be updated over time."

Buckley sought input from the meeting on next steps, which include an online survey, new stakeholder

interviews on the precise plan, and three visioning workshops, culminating in a city council meeting.

Orinda resident Nick Waranoff told the subcommittee members that the city should be "ashamed of themselves" for failing to express empathy with its business community who have, he said, served the city for decades. He also urged the planning department to conduct a "scientific study" before proceeding, stating that the last survey showed that citizens didn't want any changes. "I don't know what Mr. Buckley and his department are afraid of in a scientific study," he said. He criticized the city for undertaking "all this costly work ... including the cost of staff to be working on something this complex and extravagant," and accused the city of "freely spending other people's money." Charles Porges said he was also concerned that this is going a little too fast during Covid. He asked the subcommittee, "Please don't spend money on downtown development until you know what your financial shortfall is going to be owing to Covid."

Tom Trowbridge and Aaran Schultz of Orinda Vision, who are glad that Orinda is going through a robust downtown planning effort, enthusiastically approved the work. Richard Weston, a member of the 2012 task force that met over a hundred times on downtown development was also positive. Michelle Jacobson warned that in the current environment things will take longer than anticipated, as many people are not yet fully comfortable with online communications. She reiterated her previous belief that Orinda needs a very able community engagement consultant, but praised "some creative and thoughtful work to be on board so quickly."

## Broad Goals for Orinda's Downtown Planning Process Ahead



OrindaVision is a volunteer group of local citizens who see the potential for significant improvement of downtown Orinda. **Visit our website [www.orindavision.org](http://www.orindavision.org)** The vision is of a lively and intimate town center that provides better-designed places in which to work, shop and dine,

a more pedestrian-friendly circulation pattern and the introduction of attractive and convenient in-town residential living. The vision embraces thoughtfully planned renewal of downtown that preserves its village character. We offer the following broad goals for the community's planning process ahead:

### Goal #1: Preserve Orinda's history and sense of community; complement its beautiful natural setting with better design in downtown.

Reflect the existing community that values its strong brand as an established, beautiful, friendly, safe, stable, family-oriented place to live. Build upon and enhance Orinda's village character while preserving buildings of historic value. Preserve views of the hills from downtown. Protect downtown's heritage trees. Create access to San Pablo Creek and investigate the feasibility of its restoration in relation to adjoining land uses.

### Goal #2: Generate vibrancy in downtown. Create a sense of place, a downtown that serves better as the heart of our community.

Through comprehensive downtown planning and City-led initiatives, give local residents more reasons to shop, dine, recreate, gather and obtain services in downtown. Plan for and incentivize a network of public spaces, pedestrian/bicyclist access and circulation, a more pleasant link to BART and more consistent streetscape design standards. Plan for more rational and attractive parking arrangements for the Theater and Village Districts. Promote the development of in-town housing to bring more life to downtown. Commit to engage in business development to create a healthy mix of retail, services and restaurants to meet the needs of the community.

### Goal #3: Renew downtown Orinda and improve the commercial environment.

Create a cohesive, connected vision for downtown, providing better direction for commercial property owners. Update zoning codes to provide greater clarity and increase flexibility for downtown development. Incentivize desired development of targeted commercial zones.

### Goal #4: Realize to a greater extent the potential of under-utilized downtown property.

Protect Orinda's interests in potential future development of the 20-acre Orinda BART property by pursuing a joint planning effort with BART and CalTrans. Encourage and incentivize property owners to better-utilize creek-facing parcels.

Arran Schultz  
Chair  
arranschultz@gmail.com

Tom Trowbridge  
Co-Founder  
tomtrow@comcast.net

Peter Hasselman  
Co-Founder  
hassel2@comcast.net

## GoFundMe campaign helps keep Orinda Theatre afloat during SIP

Submitted by Jenny Perillo

A GoFundMe campaign organized by Orinda Theatre operator Derek Zemrak to help offset fixed costs during the coronavirus pandemic raised over \$11,000 in nearly four days. "The outpouring of donations is simply amazing," Zemrak wrote about the campaign. "It really shows how we all love our historic iconic theater."

The theatre first opened in 1941, but has been closed since March 16 due to the county's shelter-in-place or-

der. While Zemrak said they have been doing wine, popcorn and Red Vine sales each Friday to help them through this difficult time, with the stay-at-home order extended until May 31, the sales drive was not enough to cover the theatre's fixed operating costs of \$15,000 a month, such as rent, utilities, insurance, and equipment maintenance.

"Every donation is so very much appreciated," Zemrak wrote. "I look forward to the day that I can welcome you all back into the theatre."

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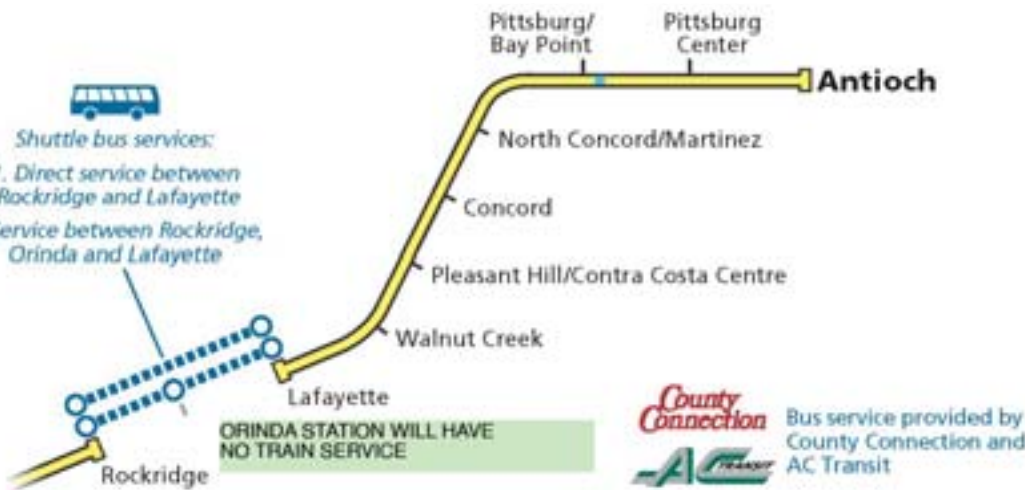
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## BART begins critical rail replacement near Orinda Station



By Sora O'Doherty

Bay Area Rapid Transit has begun weekend closure of the Orinda BART station in order to upgrade rails. In many cases, the critical track components to be replaced date back to when BART first began service on its main Contra Costa line in 1973. BART crews will work around the clock on shutdown weekends to replace critical railway components. The project, which is being conducted to the safety of passengers and staff, has been designated as an essential public works project in the Contra Costa public health orders on the novel coronavirus.

The first weekend shutdown was May 9-10. The station will be closed for four additional weekends, including the Memorial Day weekend, May 23-25, the weekends of June 6-7 and 20-21, as well as Saturday, July 4 and the following Sunday. Free buses will replace trains on those weekends but riders should expect delays of 20 to 25 minutes.

The work will also require temporary, late night and early morning lane closures of Highway 24 in Orinda to make way for construction equipment, but will not require weekend daytime lane closures on Highway 24 as was needed last year for BART work in Lafayette. Periodic overnight lane closures in Orinda began in mid-April. These overnight lane closures will involve no more than two lanes and are expected to have minimal impact on Highway 24 drivers.

BART reports that it is making gains on capital work during the stay-at-home order.

The utility closely examined the possibility of moving up the track shutdown weekends to minimize impacts to the public, but it wasn't possible as needed materials could not be acquired ahead of the previously-set schedule. Workers and contractors will follow social distancing guidelines established for all critical infrastructure projects that are allowed to proceed under state and regional stay-at-home orders.

Extremely low ridership and the new 9 p.m. service closure are allowing new opportunities for progress on capital projects. Capital projects are not paid for by operating funds, which means the huge revenue loss from the ridership decline isn't delaying infrastructure work. Many capital projects, such as the Orinda rail replacement project, are supported by Measure RR, which was approved by BART District voters in 2016. The bond measure provides BART with \$3.5 billion in funding for infrastructure work.

Project highlights include replacing four track switches that are at the end of their useful lives. These are large track components that can measure up to 200 feet in length and allow trains to move from line to line. In addition, BART will install approximately 3,000 feet of new rail and replace approximately 300 badly worn wooden ties with longer-lasting, concrete ones; 600 to 800 tons of rock ballast will also be replaced, which is essential for stabilizing the rail. Once the project is completed, BART expects customers to experience a more comfortable ride and trains will be quieter for riders and neighbors.

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## MOFD board declines to fully staff ambulance in downtown Orinda



Photo courtesy MOFD

By Nick Marnell

A split Moraga-Orinda Fire District board rejected a staffing model that would have placed a fully staffed ambulance at Fire Station 45 in Orinda, instead voting to maintain the cross-staffing model in use since 2013.

Station 41 in Moraga and Station 45 deploy both an ambulance and a fire engine on site. Station 41 fully staffs each vehicle, with a crew of three on the engine and a two-person crew for Medic 41.

It doesn't work that way at Station 45. The station maintains only a three-person crew which responds on either the engine of the ambulance, whichever is dispatched. When Medic 45 is off to a medical call, Engine 45 sits idle at the station.

According to a district staff report, when Medic 45 is out of the district, a call for service in Station 45's coverage area requires a response from either Engine 43 or Truck 44, which can result in extended response times as those units travel farther to the scene of the

incident.

"I truly do not understand why we would not have staff personnel at Station 45 at all times," said Director Greg Baitx, who at the April 29 district meeting made the motion to fully staff the Orinda ambulance.

From 2007 until 2013, the ambulance at Station 45 was fully staffed. Then came the financial crisis, and the district reverted to the cross-staff model. "When our financial situation improved, those positions were to be restored," President Steven Danziger said.

But they weren't, despite the district's securing a federal grant for that purpose. Instead, the district used the grant money for floaters to cover sick days and vacation relief, permitted uses of the federal funds.

To fully staff Medic 45, the district would have to hire six additional personnel at a cost of \$1.44 million per year, or MOFD could cover the ambulance with increased overtime of approximately \$1 million.

Danziger and Director Michael Donner have long pushed for the fully staffed Orinda ambulance, but at the district meeting, their support waned, largely because of the unknown financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic. "I don't think it would be prudent for us to increase staffing now," Donner said.

"I intended to fully support increased staffing, but right now I feel it would not be responsible to direct the chief to do it," Danziger said. "In my heart, I want to do it, and if things were different I'd be right there with Director Baitx."

The motion to fully staff Medic 45 was rejected by the board 3-1, with Baitx voting yes and Danziger abstaining.

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# Fire district ambulance revenue plummets since onset of pandemic

By Nick Marnell

In March and April, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District saw such a steep decline in hospital transports that the district lowered its ambulance revenue forecast by nearly \$400,000 for this fiscal year.

It is unclear how long the dearth in ambulance demand will continue. According to Battalion Chief Jerry Lee, with people staying home since the onset of COVID-19 there is less potential for injuries, and

with not as many people on the roads there have been fewer traffic accidents. Patients have used alternative methods for their health care evaluation, such as a Zoom consultation, instead of visiting the doctor.

"People don't want to go to the hospital because hospitals are generally viewed as having a higher potential for COVID-19 exposure," Lee said.

MOFD ran 1,605 ambulance transports in 2018 and 1,554 in 2019, nearly all to either John Muir Medical Center or Kaiser Permanente in

Walnut Creek. In March the district transported patients to hospitals 111 times, and in April, 60 times – far below its 133 monthly average. The district is preparing for the steep drop in transports to continue, as it projects a decrease in ambulance revenue from \$1.3 million this year to \$500,000 next year.

"If that's all we're going to get, that will be a tough pill to swallow," Director John Jex said. "If we were a commercial ambulance operation we'd be bankrupt."

Fire Chief Dave Win-

nacker listed options for higher ambulance revenue. Increase the rates, which recently occurred. Add fees, such as a facilities fee to institutional users. Or require payments for patient transport beyond district reimbursement levels.

MOFD charges \$2,300 for an ambulance transport but its reimbursement rates come nowhere near that figure. Medicare payments range from \$350 to \$800, Medi-Cal payments are somewhat lower and reimbursements from private insurers widely

vary. Anything higher than the district reimbursement rate is forgiven for district residents.

Should the district stop writing off ambulance charges in excess of its reimbursement rates, "That would result in district residents receiving a significant bill for transport from an MOFD ambulance," Winnacker said.

"We need to take a hard look at those numbers and really address a change," Jex said.

## Letters to the editor

### A perspective about pandemic

In response to last week's letter regarding Covid19 and MCC by Ethan Bortman, from how he phrased his letter he's really alarmed by this virus, which has been both demonized and politicized.

Well here are some facts about the virus that he and an enormous amount of folks don't know. Facts that have been known for months and

are readily available from Italian death statistics, Scottish death statistics, WHO reports, Worldometer, Bloomberg and our own CDC. They are:

- Only 4% of any population is actually at risk;
- Children are bulletproof. In Italy of 25,000 deaths, ONLY two were under 19. In fact, in the US, children are 10 times more at risk from pneumonia than Covid 19;
- The mortality rate climbs

exponentially with age; - 75% of all Covid19 fatalities are age 75 and over. In Italy, 83% were over 70. And lastly, - 50% of all deaths occur in care homes.

So to put this into perspective, Covid19 is lethal at any age if you have the well documented underlying conditions. Conditions that very, very few kids are born with but are acquired with age and lifestyle. The older you get,

the more they're acquired and the more you're at risk. Unfortunately, care home residents being frail, have a life expectancy of only months and will likely succumb to any virus.

Which means that currently, we're committing economic suicide, our kids are out of school, 30 million folks are out of work and terrified they may be evicted. All to save lives, half of whom will likely die in months anyway!!! That's a sobering thought, isn't it?

Sure I'd like to save lives; I'm taking care of my wife now. She has advanced Alzheimer's. But certainly not at the expense of my grand kids future, three of whom should be at Campo right now.

And here's the other point. It's likely there never will be an effective vaccine. So until 70% of the population not at risk, actually contract it, and develop herd immunity, the threat continues indefinitely. And, the CIDRAP just published a report confirming that!!! However, that's not possible, because the CDC needs us to social distance and limit the infection rate! Confused? Wow, really! Joseph Heller will be proud, Catch 22 is back.

Why am I telling you this? Because knowledge is power, and the more that folks understand the costs and risks, the better the decisions. And

the first intelligent decision should be to reopen our schools. So when the Governor finally puts our kids first, don't worry. The schools should never have been closed in the first place as that's where herd immunity needs to start. With our bulletproof kids.

And beware of phrases like "we're following the science and saving lives". Wrecking millions of lives to extend the life of someone who, unfortunately, has only months to live, makes no sense. If you're young and healthy you were never at risk from the virus, but your finances will likely be crushed, and you'll be feeling that pain for years and years. Bounce back? Never happened in history and certainly not after a worldwide depression, which all economists agree is happening.

However no matter what age you are, if you have the well documented, underlying health conditions, protect yourself. And, let's collectively try to limit the financial damage of everyone else.

Dave Cummins  
Moraga

*Editor's Note: While children have a much lower rate of infection, there have been multiple documented cases of children suffering from COVID-19.*



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94549Tip@gmail.com

Police Department Traffic Issues  
94549Traffic@gmail.com  
**Moraga Police Department:**  
329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055

Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049  
**Orinda Police Department:**  
22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820  
Chief of Police, David M. Cook  
925-254-6820  
[Orindatip@cityoforinda.org](mailto:Orindatip@cityoforinda.org)

### Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report April 19 - May 2



Alarms	29
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	8
Traffic	19
Suspicious Circumstances	12
Suspicious Subject	19
Suspicious Vehicle	16
Service to Citizen	46
Patrol Req./Security Check	84
Public/School Assembly Check	34
Supplemental Report	28
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	19
Ordinance Violation	21
<b>Vehicle violations</b>	
Auto Burglary	
3300 Block Dyer Dr.	
1200 Block Vacation Dr.	
3600 Block Bickerstaff St.	
1200 Block Rose Ln.	
1100 Block Monticello Rd.	
Dui Misd	
Moraga Blvd./2Nd St.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
Village Center/Sundae Rd.	
3500 Block S Silver Springs Rd. (2)	

1200 Block Monticello Rd.  
Petty Theft From Veh  
900 Block Moon Ct.  
1200 Block Vacation Dr.  
900 Block S Thompson Rd.

Reckless Driving  
St. Marys Rd./Moraga Rd.  
Moraga Rd./Via Granada, Mor

Tc - Property Damage  
Pleasant Hill Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Happy Valley Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
1000 Block Oak Hill Rd.

Trailer Theft  
1000 Block Blackwood Ln.

**Other criminal activity**  
Commercial Burglary  
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Extortion  
10 Block Dianne Ct.  
1100 Block Bacon Way  
800 Block Avalon Ave.

Extortion - Email  
600 Block Glorietta Blvd.  
Fraud False Pretenses  
1800 Block Del Rey St.

1500 Block Rancho View Dr.  
Wells Fargo  
4000 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Grand Theft  
1300 Block Reliez Valley Rd.

Identity Theft  
1800 Block Del Rey St. (2)  
Police Department  
3100 Block Somerset Dr.

1100 Block Bacon Way  
Misc Burglary  
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Panhandling  
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Petty Theft  
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

1200 Block Quandt Ct.  
3700 Block St Francis Dr.  
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

1100 Block Monticello Rd.  
200 Block Lafayette Cr  
Shoplift  
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)  
**Nuisance to the Community**  
Disturbance-domestic  
Olympic Blvd./Reliez Station Rd.

3200 Block Mt. Diablo Ct.  
3700 Block St Francis Dr. (2)  
900 Block Hough Ave.

Disturbing The Peace  
Janet Ln./Carol Ln.  
1600 Block Reliez Valley Rd.

Loud Noise  
3400 Block School St.  
Brook St./Mountain View Dr.

Loud Party  
3300 Block Springhill Rd.  
600 Block Lucas Dr.  
3100 Block Somerset Dr.

Public Nuisance

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Golden Gate Way/Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Acalanes Rd/Wb Sr 24

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
4000 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

900 Block Oak View Cr  
3300 Block Springhill Rd.  
Glenside Dr./Los Palos Dr.

Vandalism  
3300 Block Springhill Rd.  
20 Block Olympic Oaks Dr.

3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
N Thompson Rd./Dollis Park Rd.  
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**Other**  
Animal Cruelty  
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

H&S Violation  
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Vista Bella/Martino Rd.  
3400 Block School St.

Harassment  
900 Block Hough Ave. (2)  
3400 Block Moraga Blvd.

K9 Outside Assist Request  
Douglas Ln/Oak Park Blvd., Phi  
Nb 680/Passing Livorna  
So Bay Point Annex, Bpo

Loitering  
3400 Block School St.  
Surveillance  
St. Marys Rd./Glenside Dr.

Threats  
El Nido Ranch Rd./Wb Sr 24  
El Nido Ranch Rd./Acalanes Rd.

20 Block Bacon Ct.  
3200 Block Elvia St.  
Trespass  
800 Block Carl Rd.

Unwanted Guest  
3200 Block Mt. Diablo Ct.  
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
900 Block Moraga Rd.  
Violation Custody Order  
Police Department

**Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report April 21 - May 4**

Alarms	9
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	8
Traffic	12
Suspicious Circumstances	4
Suspicious Subject	4
Suspicious Vehicle	3
Service to Citizen	40
Patrol Req./Security Check	33
Supplemental Report	3

Vacation House Check 0  
Welfare Check 5

**Vehicle violations**  
Accident Property  
Moraga Rd./Ascot Dr.  
Alta Mesa Dr./Alta Mesa Ct.

Excessive Speed  
Moraga Rd./Corliss Dr  
Moraga Way/Camino Ricardo

Reckless Driving  
Moraga Rd./Ascot Dr.  
Rheem Elementary School

Tc - Property Damage  
Fayhill Rd./Fay Hill Rd.

**Other criminal activity**  
Fraud False Pretenses  
1000 Block Sanders Dr.

Grand Theft  
Police Department  
Grand Theft From Vehicle  
Alta Mesa Dr./Paseo Bernal

Identity Theft  
100 Block Natalie Dr.  
Shoplift  
Safeway (2)

Warrant Arrest  
Canyon Rd./Country Club Dr.

**Nuisance to the Community**  
Disturbance-fight  
Police Department

Loud Music  
300 Block Rheem Blvd.  
1200 Block Rimer Dr. (3)

300 Block Rheem Blvd.  
Not Available  
Loud Noise  
Hacienda  
100 Block Donald Dr.

100 Block Ascot Ct.  
Loud Party  
Not Available  
1600 Block Camino Pablo

Eileen Ct./Camino Pablo  
Public Nuisance  
1100 Block Rimer Dr.

Vandalism  
Moraga Commons Park (2)  
Moraga Rd./St Marys Rd., Laf

**Other**  
Indecent Exposure  
10 Block Natividad Ln.

Litter  
St Marys Rd./Alemany Dr.  
Loitering  
Campolindo Dr./Calle La Montana

Ordinance Violation  
1100 Block Rimer Dr. (2)  
400 Block Tharp Dr.

Moraga Commons Park (3)  
Skate Park  
Surveillance  
200 Block Corliss Dr.



### Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report April 26 - May 2

Alarms	12
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	8
Traffic	3
Suspicious Circumstances	3
Suspicious Subject	3
Suspicious Vehicle	4
Service to Citizen	35
Patrol Req./Security Check	44
Public/School Assembly Check	0
Supplemental Report	1
Welfare Check	1
Ordinance Violation	14
<b>Vehicle violations</b>	
Auto Burglary	
50 Block Don Gabriel Way	
Reckless Driving	
San Pablo Creek/Orinda Way	
Glorietta Elementary School,	
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.	
Tc - Property Damage	
50 Block Via Farallon	
<b>Other criminal activity</b>	
Fraud False Pretenses	
30 Block Orinda Way	
Identity Theft	
20 Block Parkway Ct.	
Misc Burglary	
200 Block Lomas Cantadas	
Residential Burglary	
400 Block Lomas Cantadas	
200 Block El Toyonal	
<b>Nuisance to the Community</b>	
Loud Music	
10 Block La Fond Ln.	
Vandalism	
100 Block Stein Way	
Vandalism - Felony	
200 Block Holly Ln.	
<b>Other</b>	
Barking Dog	
10 Block Cascade Ln. (2)	
Battery	
Rabble Rd./Wild Rye Way	
Prom Shoot	
Knickerbocker Ln./Stein Way	
Trespass	
Manzanita Dr./Acacia Dr.	



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**A delightful post-Cinco de Mayo menu**



Chicken Enchiladas

Photo Susie Iventosch

**By Susie Iventosch**

A few weeks ago, one of our Lamorinda Weekly readers wrote to inquire about freezing the chicken enchiladas we featured in our Jan. 18, 2012 issue. I truly loved hearing that someone is still enjoying a recipe that we published eight years ago. But I told her that since that publication, I've made a few changes to the recipe and sent her the new one. I thought it might be a good idea to share these changes with all of our readers. One of the main changes was substituting fresh diced Anaheim, poblano and jalapeno peppers in place of the canned fire-roasted Ortega chilies. This makes the en-

chiladas taste so fresh and even if you plan to freeze them before baking, the peppers hold up very well. I also incorporated nonfat plain yogurt and cilantro into the chicken filling, instead of just using these as garnishes. (We also still use them as garnishes, because we love cilantro, and yogurt is so

yummy on top.) And finally, I had to change from Marilyn Greco's enchilada sauce when I accidentally bought a chili powder that was smoking hot and nearly killed our houseguests! From that day forward, I decided to go the safe route and I doctor up either Lawry's or McCormick's Enchilada Seasoning packets for our sauce and it's consistent and perfect every time and no one has caught on fire as a result! That recipe is included in this column. When my sister was giving a big 50th birthday party, she wanted a meal plan to go along with the enchiladas, so I included one of our favorite Costa Rican dishes, Gallo Pinto, as well as a crunchy Southwest Chopped Salad with Salsa Vinaigrette. I know we just celebrated Cinco de Mayo, but this is a super fun meal any time of the year.

Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://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.



Salsa Lizano is similar to Worcestershire Sauce and is used in the Gallo Pinto recipe. You can purchase it through Amazon if you can't find it in your local markets. For more about Salsa Lizano: <https://theculturetrip.com/central-america/costa-rica/articles/how-lizano-became-costa-ricas-national-sauce/>

**Beware of rattlesnakes when venturing outside the home**



Photo provided

lying down with the affected limb lower than the heart. Getting medical attention quickly is critical – do not spend time on tourniquets, "sucking," or snake bite kits. If you are by yourself, walk calmly to the nearest source of help to dial 911. Do not run.

1. If bitten by any other kind of snake, wash the wound with soap and water or an antiseptic and seek medical attention.
2. If you are not sure what kind of snake bit you, check the bite for two puncture marks (in rare cases one puncture mark) associated with intense, burning pain. This is typical of a rattlesnake bite. Other snakebites may leave multiple teeth marks without associated burning pain.

Snakes are an important resource in the natural environment. They are prime controlling agents of rodents, insects, and other reptile populations. Enjoy them from afar and leave them where they are found. It is illegal to collect, kill, or remove any plants or animals from the East Bay Regional Park District. Please help us to protect wildlife and their environment for present and future generations. Additional information is available at [ebparks.org/SnakeSafety](http://ebparks.org/SnakeSafety).

**Submitted by Jen Vanya, EBRPD**

With the warm weather on the rise, the East Bay Area has been seeing a spike in rat-tlesnake encounters and the East Bay Regional Park District is advising that the public take snake safety precautions when visiting Regional Parks.

**Safety tips include:**

1. Avoid hiking alone so you have help in case of emergency. (Per local health orders, hike only with members of your immediate household during COVID-19)
2. Scan the ground ahead of you as you walk, jog, or ride. Stay on trails and avoid walking in tall grass.
3. Look carefully around and under logs and rocks before sitting down.
4. Avoid placing your hands

or feet where you cannot see clearly.

5. Keep leashed pets on designated trails and away from snakes if they see one. (All dogs should be on-leash at all times, in all parks during COVID-19)
6. Bring plenty of water for yourself and your pets as drinking fountains are temporarily closed. Many parks do not have a direct water supply.

If you see a rattlesnake, leave it alone – do not try to capture or harm it. All park wildlife is protected by law. If you see a snake on a trail, wait for it to cross and do not approach. Then move carefully and slowly away.

**What to do if bitten by a snake:**

1. If bitten by a rattlesnake, stay calm and send someone to call 911. Remain calm by

**Chicken Enchiladas**

(Makes about 14-16 enchiladas)

**INGREDIENTS**

- 16 flour tortillas (about 8" diameter)
- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, (cut into smaller pieces if large)
- 1/2 cup salsa
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground pepper
- Water to almost cover chicken
- 2 poblano peppers, seeded and diced
- 2 Anaheim chilies, seeded and diced
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely diced
- 1/2 bunch fresh cilantro leaves, snipped with kitchen scissors to smaller pieces
- 3 cups grated mixed Mexican cheese (split 1 cup for filling and 2 cups for on top of enchiladas)
- 1 cup plain non-fat yogurt
- 1 batch enchilada sauce (recipe below)
- Garnishes: sliced avocado or guacamole, sliced black olives, fresh cilantro leaves

**DIRECTIONS**

Place chicken breasts in a large frying pan with a tight-fitting lid. Pour salsa over chicken and fill pan with enough water to cover chicken. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and bring to a boil. Immediately reduce heat and simmer just until chicken is fully cooked. Remove from heat and cool. When cool enough to handle, shred with two forks or clean fingers. Discard liquid.

Mix shredded chicken with all three diced peppers, cilantro and cheese. (Can freeze chicken-pepper mixture at this point and thaw when ready to continue.) Stir in yogurt and about 1/2 cup of the enchilada sauce. Mix well.

To assemble enchiladas, heat the stack of tortillas in the microwave for just about 1 minute to make them more pliable. (Take them out of the plastic wrap before doing this!) Then lay the tortillas out on a flat surface and spoon about 1/4 cup of filling in the center of each tortilla. Drizzle one spoonful of enchilada sauce and a light sprinkling of cheese and roll tightly. Lay in a greased or sprayed 9x13 baking dish. Can cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate or freeze at this point, too. If you want to make ahead and freeze, the aluminum pans are great, and the 8-inch ones fit right inside of a gallon Ziploc baggie.

To bake, drizzle remaining enchilada sauce over the tops of the enchiladas and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake at 350 F for approximately 25 minutes, or until cheese is bubbly and beginning to brown. Serve any extra enchilada sauce on the side.

**Enchilada Sauce (can make up to a week ahead)**

**INGREDIENTS**

- 2 tablespoons olive oil or canola oil
- 2 packets of enchilada sauce seasoning (McCormick or Lawry's)
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cider vinegar

**DIRECTIONS**

Heat oil in a medium-sized pot. Add seasoning packets, flour, cumin, oregano and salt. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring with a wire whisk, for about 3-4 minutes, just to slightly bloom the spices and brown the flour. Slowly add water, stirring with a wire whisk, until desired consistency. Bring to a boil and simmer for about 5 minutes. Stir in cider vinegar. You may need to add more water as you cook the sauce.

**Gallo Pinto**

**INGREDIENTS**

- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 2 tablespoons red bell peppers, chopped
- 2 tablespoons onions, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups black beans, cooked (I use canned black beans)
- 2 1/2 cups rice, cooked
- 1 tablespoon Salsa Lizano or Worcestershire Sauce
- 2 tablespoons of your favorite hot sauce (optional)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro

**DIRECTIONS**

Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Sauté onion and bell pepper, along with cumin seeds for about 2 minutes. Add the black beans and salsa and simmer for about 10 minutes on medium heat. Then, add the cooked rice and mix in the cilantro. Cooked bacon, pork, chicken or sausage can be added. For breakfast, scrambled eggs can be added.

**Southwest Chopped Salad with salsa vinaigrette**

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 head romaine, chopped
- 1 orange bell pepper, chopped
- 1 Anaheim chili, chopped
- 1/2 jicama, julienned or chopped
- 2 tomatillos, chopped
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 cup black or green olives, chopped or sliced
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves
- 1/2 cup grated cheese (Mixed Mexican or Monterey Jack or sharp cheddar)
- 1 recipe salsa vinaigrette:
- 1/2 cup salsa
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 1-2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2/3 cup olive oil (more or less as needed to taste)

**DIRECTIONS**

Toss all with salsa vinaigrette. Serve with crunchy tortilla strips or just all by itself!

# Slow reopening of outdoor spaces begins



Photo Sophie Braccini

**Some residents play volleyball – although without a net – at the Moraga Commons Park.**

... continued from Page A1

The tennis courts in the Orinda Community Park reopened on May 4, but are subject to closure if health guidelines are not adhered to, as noted by Parks and Recreation Director Todd Trimble. The tennis courts in the high schools remain closed.

If adults on golf courses and tennis courts took the rules seriously and abided

by them, it was a bit more difficult for the fully energized teens to do the same. On Wednesday, May 6, groups of very happy skaters who weren't paying much attention to rules of social distancing were spotted in the Moraga Commons' skate park, which had just reopened in compliance with the county's ordinance.

All the park's playgrounds remain closed for now, nets on basketball and volleyball courts are still

missing, but of course people continue to use sand areas to play, hopefully members of the same family/unit when sharing a ball. Moraga's frisbee golf course is open. Gyms and pools are still closed for now.

In Lafayette, the Rim trail that circles high in the hills above the Reservoir was reopened by the East Bay Municipal Utility District, but its website notes that the Reservoir itself remains closed and that the Rim will be monitored for responsible public health protecting behaviors. EBMUD maintains the closure of the parking lots, restrooms, drinking fountains, picnic areas, and the playgrounds of the many trails the public utility manages, though walking the trails is permitted.

The ordinance allows for some summer camp plans to get under way. Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Breyanna Brandt explained that her team had opened registration for Moraga day camp programs for different age groups for children whose parents are considered essential workers, as required by the current order. She described the Hacienda de las Flores' multiple rooms that will allow to separate different 12-children cohorts as the current order mandates. Brandt hopes that by June restrictions will relax further and more activities can be allowed for all ages.

"Parks and open space support healthy minds, bodies, and spirits and we want to provide residents those opportunities," she affirmed.

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# ~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

## Home alone during COVID-19



Photo J. Wake

This Lafayette resident, who lives alone, is grateful for her apartment's garden area.

By Vera Kochan

According to the National Institutes of Health, research has linked social isolation and loneliness to higher risks for a variety of physical and mental conditions: high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, a weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease, and even death.

With 80 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the three Lamorinda cities as of May 5, according to Contra Costa Health Services data, and new infections being reported in Contra Costa County, finding new ways to interact and stay busy has become imperative for many older residents who are stuck at home alone during this shelter-in-place order.

One 88-year-old Moraga widower, who asked that we use his initials, DB, for this

story, misses going to the gym. Besides getting a workout, he always looked forward to the human interaction. Instead, he has found exercise apps that he can follow at home. "I also walk around Moraga a lot," DB said. "When you pass someone on the sidewalk, some people start to walk in the street to keep their distance. They don't even care that cars are driving down the road."

DB uses his cell phone to see and talk with family and friends, listens to music stations on the TV, and gardens to keep busy. "I keep in contact with people and talk to more people now than I used to all across the country." He added, "I do a little more telephone socializing." Fortunately, he has daughters close by who have made him masks and bring him groceries, but he says he still heads out to the grocery store if he really

needs something.

An 81-year-old Lafayette resident who lives alone uses her iPad to connect with family in other states and with friends who also find themselves home alone. She has scheduled regular weekly FaceTime appointments with friends, which she says helps her keep track of the days as they turn to weeks. "On Sundays I talk to my friend in Mexico, on Tuesdays, another friend at Rossmore, and I get one or two video chats in a day from my daughter-in-law in Alabama," she says. She misses going out to group lunches, and to her church, but is grateful for the friends she has and the different ways they've found to keep in touch.

For anyone living alone, Gov. Gavin Newsom has recently expanded the Friendship Line California 1-888-670-1360. The line provides a warm voice, a listening ear and human connection to those feeling alone throughout California.

One 60-year-old independent contractor from St. Louis who typically flies all over the United States for his job is using his shelter-in-place time to "improve my cooking skills a hundred times more than they were before. I've also used my dishwasher more in one week than I could have in a month."

He has become quite the Mr. Fix-it. Besides decluttering drawers and closets, "I'm doing all the projects I've never had time for – touch-up painting, putting a new tile floor in a bathroom, replacing broken screen doors, tons of yard work and planting seeds – stuff you never get around to." He's also fixed four broken computer printers located in various rooms throughout the house.

A 90-year-old widow who lives in Vero Beach, Florida doesn't own a computer, and doesn't seem to miss having one. She keeps in touch with family and friends by telephone and watches the news on television to stay abreast of the COVID-19 situation. Ex-

perts recommend limiting the amount of time watching the news. In a recent study by Pew Research Center four in 10 Americans say they feel worse emotionally as a result of following the news.

But like others across the country, recreational facilities in the 90-year-old's retirement condominium complex are closed for now. "Nothing is going on. The club house is locked and the pool is closed, so I can't use those," she said. Luckily she has a neighbor in the complex with whom she plays rummikub or mahjong. "We used to take turns going

to each other's place for dinner every day, but the longer this goes on we decided to only do it a couple of times a week," adding, "It's too hard trying to plan a menu each night."

When asked if she has taken to cleaning out closets, like so many others have while sheltering in place, her response was, "Are you kidding!?"

For those feeling emotional or psychological distress, contact the Contra Costa Crisis Center at 1-800-833-2900 for free support and counseling.

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## The International Film Showcase continues online



Image provided

By Sophie Braccini

Each month for nearly 10 years the International Film Showcase has brought to Orinda – and for a time to Moraga – internationally acclaimed movies that predominantly had not been released in the state or even in the country. These Oscar-worthy movies are treats for the curious moviegoers and often a window into other worlds. IFS organizers Efi Lubliner and Jo Alice Canterbury have found a way to continue giving access to some of these treasures that are not available on the regular platforms, through a partnership with Music Box Films. Every month three different movies are available for rent for three days, enough time for the whole family to enjoy. This month the three features, "A Regular Woman," "And Then We Danced," and "Corpus Christi" tell intensely human stories showing that wherever

we live, however we speak, we suffer and thrive sharing the same humanity.

"Corpus Christi," Poland's Oscar finalist this year in the International Film category is a true story. It was released by the IFS just before the shelter-in-place order. A full review by Lamorinda Weekly can be found online at [www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1402/Corpus-Christi-challenges-our-perceptions-of-good-and-evil.html](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1402/Corpus-Christi-challenges-our-perceptions-of-good-and-evil.html).

"A Regular Woman" – also a true drama – tells the story of a young German mother of Turkish descent whose extremely bigoted family goes to extremes to stop her from blemishing what they perceive as their honor. The movie is told by the young mother herself, digging into her past and telling the events that lead to the catastrophic ending, presenting facts and testimony like an investigative journalist.

... continued on Page B3

## LAMORINDA WEEKLY

### 2020 Graduation Advertising Opportunity, May 27th edition

This year we are offering an advertising opportunity for families of graduates to go with a list of all graduating seniors that we will publish in our May 27 issue.

To order ad space and submit content and selections please use our online form or contact Wendy Scheck at [wendy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:wendy@lamorindaweekly.com) or 925-377-0977.

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## The impact of COVID-19 on college admissions

By Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D.

As college counselors, we frequently hear concerns from parents and students. For high school juniors, concerns have revolved around how COVID-19 will impact the college admissions process. Our efforts to address these concerns give us unique insights into what the upcoming admissions cycle may have in store for current juniors (Class of 2021). In this article we consider several major factors: the US Department of Justice mandate, standardized testing delays and college transfer plans.

### Effect of the 2019 USDOJ mandate

College admissions was expected to be under pressure even before COVID-19 because of recent changes to the National Association for College Admission Counseling's Code of Ethics and Professional Practices. Prompted by a federal antitrust investigation, the US Department of Justice mandated that the NACAC change its college admissions restrictions on recruiting students who have already committed to another school. Now, colleges are free to "poach" students who have already pledged attendance elsewhere. Colleges may also compete for early decision (ED) applicants using various incentives, recruit students after the traditional May 1 decision deadline, and recruit transfer students who have

committed to other schools.

Nearly 200 schools across the U.S. admit students through ED. In the past, if ED applicants were admitted, they had to enroll. Many highly selective colleges fill more than half of their incoming freshmen classes through ED applications. The most successful ED applicants include legacy applicants, large donors, and athletes. Other popular and selective private schools such as Boston University and New York University also use ED. But these schools may not have the financial resources of the more well-endowed Ivy League and Ivy-like schools and may not have the same ability to offer incentives.

Interestingly, incentives may not be actual monetary awards; some examples include early housing registration and special research opportunities. These incentives are more likely to go to students who would otherwise be full-pay, since if they matriculate, they will bring in more tuition dollars over time. Admissions offices might offer small awards to a larger number of full-pay students, hoping to entice more of them to deposit.

Admissions through Restrictive Early Action (REA) is used by six schools: Georgetown, Harvard, Notre Dame, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale. An acceptance through REA is non-binding, but if you apply to any one of these five schools through REA, you may

not apply ED to another college. Therefore, whatever happens with changes to ED next cycle will have an impact on REA. It is certain that college enrollment offices are considering their options right now, and we will not know about the status of these programs until each school releases admission information. In the past, this information was provided by late summer. This year, the unpredictability occasioned by COVID-19 may cause delays.

### Standardized testing delays add another layer of confusion

Standardized test companies are trying to figure out when, where and how to offer testing through the summer and fall. Given the uncertainty of standardized testing, many current high school juniors may opt not to apply ED or Early Action, unless they have already achieved their ideal score. More students might apply Regular Decision in order to show test scores as well as fall grades to all schools on their college list or give themselves more time to decide where they want to apply. Some schools may drop ED, only offer EA, and accept the students they want early. Schools can then offer incentives to get the strongest candidates to deposit and keep them on course for matriculation. In the past, some students would take the early offer and others would turn it down and wait to see if a better offer came along. But now,

due to the USDOJ mandate, an applicant can accept an offer of admission and even deposit at a college and still change course if a better opportunity comes along.

### Transfer planning

Another factor to consider is the transfer applicant. For example, college-bound high school seniors might choose a lower cost, in-state, four-year school with an eye towards transferring into another school that has more selective admissions for their sophomore or junior year. It has always been risky to plan such a move, because at the most selective schools in the U.S., freshman and sophomore retention rates are very high. Admitted students work hard and do not leave. And, while the more selective public universities such as UC Berkeley, UNC-Chapel Hill and the University of Michigan welcome large numbers of junior transfer students, they greatly favor in-state transfer applicants who followed specific transfer path requirements that involved two years of specific coursework at a community college.

### My best advice: stay on task and stay informed

With the continued uncertainty in these rapidly changing times, it is important to stay on task and stay informed. Instead of assuming the worst, practice optimism. Encourage students to conduct research online about schools, prepare for tests, and find something extracurricular

(and probably online) to build their skills and interests. To stay informed, check regularly for updates on testing and college websites. It is in the best interest of schools to communicate with potential applicants about changes to their processes, so they should be forthcoming in their communications.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD personally guides each student through each step of selecting and applying to well-matched schools for undergraduate and graduate school study. Over the past two decades, Elizabeth has placed hundreds of students in some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. The number of clients taken is limited to ensure each applicant has personalized attention. Contact Elizabeth early in the process to make a difference in your outcomes. Write [elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:elizabeth@doingcollege.com); Visit [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com); or Call: 925.385.0562.

## Incredible gift from those who can sew



Photo provided

Martha de Laveaga Stewart, Maria Mord and Trudi Robinson during a mask distribution day.

Orinda resident Martha de Laveaga Stewart, Lafayette resident Maria Mord and Trudi Robinson who lives in Concord have sewn over 300 masks, along with about 10 others who have helped as well, and they continue to sew as the need continues. All members of Hillside Covenant Church in Walnut Creek, the group on April 18 had a drive-in and drive-out mask distribution for the Hillside community, distributing over 180 masks in a two-hour period.

them for our families," Stewart said. The group has also made over 40 children's masks and has distributed those who have children under 13 (and over 2).

"For those of us who love sewing it is a great project," said Stewart. "I work as a psychotherapist and do see my clients via Zoom, but I have plenty of time to sew. Just didn't know how wonderful it is to give masks to others so we all stay safe."  
- J. Wake

The group has distributed masks to a urology clinic which had none for their workers, made a dozen or more for residents of the Restore House in Concord, which is a men and women's sober living home, and Stewart has made some for her gardeners, her hairdresser, and her cleaning ladies. "And of course, we have sewn

## Winners of Youth Ink 2020 announced

Submitted by Erika Rosenberg

The Orinda Junior Women's Club is pleased to announce the winners of Youth Ink 2020, the annual creative writing contest open to all middle school students who live in or attend school in Orinda. This year's prompt was The Gift, though entrants were welcomed to write on the theme of their choice.

### This year's top three prize winners are:

- 1st Place: Kaylin Chang, Bright as the Sun  
2nd Place: Emma Wong, Jin's Gift  
3rd Place: Holly Carysforth, East

### The following were awarded honorable mentions for their commendable entries:

- |                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Carson Blair     | The Gift                       |
| Kaia Bonham      | Bea                            |
| Josslyn Grover   | Song of Life                   |
| Pateel Haroupien | The Monarch                    |
|                  | Butterflies Plead for Our Help |
| Indie Lee        | A Well of Memories             |
| Jewel Mendiola   | The Gift                       |
| Hana Shukairy    | The Everlasting Break          |
| Elise Vansant    | Four Words                     |
| Jason Wagner     | The Gift of Immigrants         |
| Jialei Zhang     | Home at Last                   |

The first, second, and third-place recipients received cash prizes of \$250, \$125, and \$75, respectively. The Honorable Mention recipients received gift certificates to Orinda Books.

While Youth Ink writers are normally celebrated at a springtime awards ceremony, given the circumstances of the global pandemic, an in-person ceremony was not



Kaylin Chang



Emma Wong

possible this year. The Orinda Junior Women's Club thanks all of the entrants for sharing their talents and is also very thankful to its Youth Ink volunteer judges, who thoughtfully provided time and expertise in reading each entry and contemplating this year's winners among a stellar pool of entries. This year's judges were Sally Bolger, Cynthia Leslie-Bole, Michelle Meyers and Colleen Weems.

The following community sponsors enabled the Orinda Junior Women's Club to offer this year's Youth Ink writing contest to Orinda middle schoolers with their financial support: Friends of the Orinda Library, The Intuitive Writing Project, Lamorinda Arts Council and Orinda Community Foundation. Emma Wong recorded a video of herself reading her winning entry, Jin's Gift. The video can be seen here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emN-JkCRcExs&t=6s>.

◆ **Not to be missed** ◆ **Not to be missed** ◆

**ART**

The Lamorinda Arts Alliance is pleased to announce the Moraga Art Gallery "Shelter In Place" Virtual Tour. Early in February the Moraga Art Gallery opened "Kaleidoscope," their first show of 2020, highlighting the art of two dozen member and guest artists. A little over a month later the gallery closed due to the shelter-in-place directive. Fortunately, the gallery and the exhibit are open again for you to visit – that is to visit virtually! Now, from the comfort of your home, you can view the Moraga Art Gallery exhibit and hear from the artists about their artwork and what motivates them. The tour was produced by gallery president Lucy Beck and filmed and edited by Ben Ellis. Please go to the Lamorinda Arts Alliance website for the link to the virtual tour: <https://laa4art.org>

**MUSIC**

Gold Coast Chamber Players are offering "Immersive Experiences" that include a live concert hosted via Zoom, a backstage pass to talk to the musicians, delivery of dinner or brunch by a master chef, handcrafted cocktail or wine pairings, and much more. The Italian Serenade brunch and concert is scheduled from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sunday, May 17 with an Italian Brunch by Locando Positano Chef Tullio. The 11:45 a.m. Concert Live from Bologna, Italy will feature music by Vivaldi, Corelli, and Tartini with Grazia Raimondi on violin and Luigi Piovano on cello. Cost for the Immersive Experience, which includes brunch and concert is \$75; Concert only is \$20. For information, visit [www.gccpmusic.com/immersiveexperiences](http://www.gccpmusic.com/immersiveexperiences).

Please submit events to: [calendar@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:calendar@lamorindaweekly.com)

**Service Clubs Announcements**

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**The International Film Showcase continues online**

... continued from Page B1

The excellent actors' performances, the mix of black and white, the neutral and almost detached tone, create a powerful chilling effect. The movie denounces all extreme religious deviations.

"And Then We Danced" is a beautiful film from Georgia that talks about passion, dance, coming of age

and addresses tactfully the sometimes difficult process to find one's sexual identity, and societal pressures to conform. It has a lovely unexpected ending.

The films range from \$10 to \$12. Details can be found on the website links at <http://internationalshowcase.org>. Some people reported difficulty accessing the movies using the Firefox browser. Lubliner recommended using Chrome for easier viewing.

Efi Lubliner is offering a Zoom discussion about "A Regular Woman" at 1:30 p.m. May 17. He recommends that people watch the film before joining the discussion. The meeting is hosted by Bob Levine and the Men's club but open to all. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81784884764>; meeting ID: 817 8488 4764. Interested individuals are asked to confirm their participation to the meeting by replying to [justiceguy@aol.com](mailto:justiceguy@aol.com).

**Lamorinda Weekly**  
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# LAMORINDA SPORTS



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## Margaux McDonald – Success in and out of the water



Margaux McDonald



Photos provided

### By Jon Kingdon

When you see the term student-athlete, usually there is an emphasis on either the former or the latter. In the case of Margaux McDonald, who will be graduating this year from Miramonte High School, in racing terms, it would have to be called a dead heat. Besides being an all-American swimmer and the team captain at Miramonte, she was the long course junior National Qualifier, swimmer of the year and the team captain at Orinda Aquatics. All of these accomplishments required countless hours in the pool, yet McDonald was able to attain similar results academically, leading to her being recruited and accepted by Princeton University.

McDonald began swimming at the age of 6 at Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis Club, under the tutelage of Matt Ehrenberger, before moving on to Orinda Aquatics when she was 10 where Ehrenberger coached her up to freshman year. Besides swimming, she also played soccer, basketball, ran cross country and track and field and danced through middle school. McDonald comes by her athletic talents honestly with both of her parents having been athletes themselves: “My Dad (Trent) was a water polo player and my Mom (Catja) ran cross country and track. They wanted me to know how to swim and I really liked it.”

When McDonald moved up to the senior group as a freshman at Orinda Aquatics and Ron Heidary became her coach, he already knew the qualities she brought to the pool: “Margaux was a very good swimmer at the beginning. She was one of the top 11- to 12-year-old swimmers in the Bay Area and I knew she had a lot of potential. She had the talent and was disci-

plined and conscientious. Those are the things that we built on as she got older.”

The demands required to be a top swimmer and the ultimate results are what McDonald finds most satisfying in the sport: “I like that swimming is completely time based so you can see all of your hard work pay off in your times getting better over the years.”

Heidary’s brother, Don, is McDonald’s coach at Miramonte and shares Ron’s appreciation of McDonald’s talents. “Margaux is an elite swimmer, athlete and leader,” Don Heidary said. “She has been a blessing to the Miramonte swim team.”

It was Don Heidary who pushed McDonald to focus on the backstroke, an event that was new to her. “When I started training year round, I was swimming the individual medley and the butterfly,” said McDonald. “I then began training in the backstroke which was a new event for me and I swam really well at the Junior Nationals in Texas. Donnie put me in the 100-yard Back-stroke at the North Coast Championship where I finished second and then third at the state meet.”

It was her success in these events that prompted McDonald to contact Princeton head coach Brent Lundgaard, who soon after invited her to take a recruiting visit which she did last summer.

Prior to McDonald’s visit, Lundgaard made a call to Ron Heidary to learn more about her, which very much worked in her favor. “It wasn’t until the spring of 2019 that we first learned about Margaux,” said Lundgaard. “We only had one or two spots left when Margaux came on our radar. I reached out to Ron, her club coach at Orinda Aquatics where they have a very established culture with coaches who literally have written the book on character

development in swimming. The nice part is, when you come across club coaches who know what they’re talking about, you really listen. I had a wonderful conversation and he sold me right away.”

Ron Heidary, who has had numerous swimmers go on to college, found it easy to recommend McDonald. “She is a straight-A student who is very coachable and always positive. Her time management is excellent and she has a character that is flawless. When you put those things together, she is a ‘can’t miss’ recruit. Fortunately, they saw that and they wanted her in the program.”

It turned out to be a great recruiting visit for McDonald. “I loved the campus,” she said. “I loved Coach Lundgaard and his training philosophy and the facilities are amazing so it was certainly my first choice.”

There was only one spot on the team left for a freshman and soon after meeting with Lundgaard and his assistant coach, McDonald was offered that spot and immediately accepted. It was more than her grades and swimming ability that earned her a place on the team, said Lundgaard: “Margaux’s visit was in line with everything we had heard about her and more. We had an instinct that we were going to offer her. On the day that she sat down with me and my assistant – I remember we were eating ice cream – we probably talked for about two hours. We just shot the breeze and right afterwards, my assistant sent me a text that said, ‘There’s no way we can’t offer her.’ We both felt that Margaux has this disposition, wisdom and self-awareness which is so far beyond her years. When we are forming our team, that’s hard to ignore when you come across that.”

Besides her backstroke, McDonald’s skill in the

freestyle, breaststroke and butterfly were also selling points to Lundgaard. “She swims four strokes; it’s all there and you can see the athleticism. As long as she’s eager in learning, which she is, and as long as she’s competitive and really has a passion for it, then we feel confident that she is going to continue to blossom. Margaux’s swimming is great and is going to be impactful for us in any number of events. In fact, I think that she is probably even more versatile than she knows she is.”

McDonald feels that there is a lot of room for improvement in her performance, taking the long-term perspective from Orinda Aquatics: “Ronnie’s key philosophy is that when you enter high school, it’s not how fast you can swim at the end of your senior year, it’s how fast you can get by the end of your senior year of college. He sees it as an eight-year process which has been helpful for me because I do have room for improvement in all of my events.”

Lundgaard is also looking for McDonald to take that next step: “At Princeton, our swimmers will improve on multiple levels. There was kind of a stereotype that women did not really get faster past 18. The last 20 years have put that on its head. It’s common to see women improving not only through college but you’re seeing professional swimmers now into their late 20s going with their best times. At 5’7”, Margaux will be at the lower end height-wise but she swims big and she swims athletic.”

With practices six days a week (double practices three days a week), time management and discipline are essential for swimmers like McDonald to keep up academically: “My days are really structured. I have a sleep schedule so I get to bed at a

reasonable time and that has really helped me with my time management. This began my freshman year because it had to.”

McDonald is still taking her classes online at Miramonte and looks back with great fondness at her decision to attend Miramonte: “When I began high school, it was between Campolindo and Miramonte because I train every day at Campolindo, but after four years I can say that I am very grateful that I made the decision to go to Miramonte. I really loved having two groups of friends, the people that I swim with (who mostly went to Campolindo) and the people that I go to school with. It was really beneficial for me to have a separate environment that I spend my day in rather than where I train because swimming can be so overwhelming. I knew that I could spend the day with my school friends and not think about swimming and it was a nice break during the day.”

It was more than swimming techniques that McDonald took away from Ron Heidary and Orinda Aquatics: “Ronnie was really key in my development. I love the lessons that he taught all of us through swimming and also out of the pool. He’s such a positive and encouraging mentor and has amazing morals which he tries to encourage us to also have so he has not only been a key in my swimming but in my development as a teenager into an adult.”

Despite all of the travails that everyone is living under, McDonald has still managed to keep her eye on the prize: “Even with the pools closed, I’ve been able to swim in the pool in my backyard. It’s not very long, but it’s something just to feel the water.”

# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Lamorinda Water Polo Club celebrates its recruited student athletes

Submitted by Tyler Painter

Lamorinda Water Polo Club celebrates 11 graduating seniors that have committed to play water polo in college. The club recognizes these outstanding student athletes for their excellence and dedication to water polo and academics as they join over 200 Lamorinda Water Polo Alumni that have gone on to play in successful NCAA water polo programs. The Club thanks its coaches and staff led by Guy Baker (Executive Director), James Lathrop (Boys Director and 18U Boys Coach) and Kim Everist (Girls Director and 16U Girls Coach) for their commitment to helping these graduating athletes achieve their academic and athletic goals.

Lamorinda Water Polo Club offers year-round age-group programs and Splashball for boys and girls, age 5-18, and introductory water polo summer camps for kids age 5-12. Current news and updates on changing schedules due to Covid-19 are available at Lamorindawaterpolo.org.



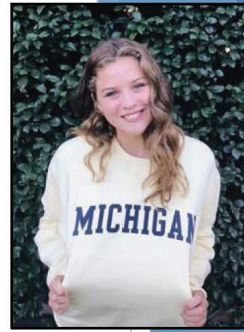
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Will Thomas  
Claremont  
McKenna



Mala Neuman  
Cal State  
East Bay



Haley Hunter  
Indiana  
University

Photos provided

## Cal Magic takes time out for community support

Submitted by Katie Rogers

This spring, California Magic Soccer Club teams participated in community service projects as part of creating Magical Moments on and off the field. Magic maintains that community outreach is an important cornerstone of teaching leadership and responsibility. Haris Obic, the executive director of coaching states, "There is no greater victory than seeing our players make a direct impact in their communities and adding value to the world in their unique ways."

Each of Magic's teams has been encouraged to identify outreach opportunities in the community that feels meaningful and they believe will have an impact on someone's life. Thus far in 2020, the U13 Boys volunteered at St. Mary's Center in Oakland where they prepared and served meals to homeless, at-risk seniors. The U11 Girls partnered with Blue Star Moms and assembled

care packages for deployed U.S. soldiers. And, the U12 Girls volunteered at Turning Point in Oakland, a transitional home for homeless women who are supported in reclaiming their independence. The team planned, prepared, and served a meal to the women onsite. The U13 Girls assisted with food distribution at White Pony Express, a distribution center where high quality food is delivered to over 70 local nonprofits serving those suffering from food shortages or hunger. Other organizations where Magic teams have volunteered include ARF and Contra Costa Food Bank.

Magic aims to educate, inspire, and empower not just on the field, but off as well. Magic is proud of how their players have chosen to represent themselves in the community. Obic adds, "Our players have reflected Magic's

ideals with pride as they experience the value of giving back which is especially crucial right now. It is our greatest goal to continue teaching these important values within our club."

California Magic Soccer Club was selected for the 2019 Best of Orinda Award in the Association or Organization category by the Orinda Award Program. To learn more about Magic, it's programs, and upcoming tryouts visit their website: calmagicssc.com.



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# Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary launches campaign to aid Food Bank

Submitted by Tom Black

At a time when demand for food among the neediest is particularly acute, Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club has launched a fundraising initiative aimed at lending a hand.

The plan involves active partnership with another local Rotary club, Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise. They are working together in accepting donations of motor vehicles that are reconditioned and sold to the general public. The campaign is called Cars2ndChance.

The effort is headed by Dave Kemnitz, a longtime Rotarian who "conveniently" is owner of D&H Enterprises, an auto repair shop in Concord. Kemnitz hatched the idea while a member of the Clayton Valley Club. He recently transferred to Lamorinda Sunrise.

"The Clayton club did fine on its own," said Kemnitz, "but partnering with Lamorinda Sunrise marks a big step forward for the program."

Vehicles accepted as donations undergo a thorough inspection, reconditioned as necessary and sold publicly. All work is performed at his repair shop on Monument Boulevard. "The labor, which we do at cost, comes off the top of the resale price," he added.

Proceeds from each sale are split evenly between the two Rotary clubs. Lamorinda Sunrise has pledged that half of its share, or 25% of net proceeds, will be earmarked to support the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

A total of 150 vehicles were processed in 2019. Through three months of this year 50 have been processed. "We hope to do at least

200," said Kemnitz.

To date, proceeds from the sale of 55 donated vehicles and three RVs went in support of relief efforts involving the 2018 Camp Fire, which destroyed the town of Paradise. Total market value exceeded \$160,000, said Kemnitz.

Any vehicle with a title will be accepted, he added, and it need not be in running condition.

Topping the list in market value is a 2007 luxe motor home that sold for \$125,000. The fanciest two cars so far are a 2008 Lexus convertible and a 2007 Corvette, valued at \$16,000 and \$15,000, respectively.

On the lot at the repair shop when we spoke with Kemnitz was a freshly rehabbed 1999 red Mazda Miata convertible, stickered at \$6,999.

Kemnitz has cast a broad partnering net. In addition to the two Rotary clubs mentioned, there are 56 other partners, mostly additional Rotary clubs, but also churches, schools and other nonprofits.

There is no sunset date for the program, he said. "We plan to keep this going till the cows come home."

Those interested in an automobile, truck, RV, motorcycle or boat are asked to visit the [www.cars2ndchance.org](http://www.cars2ndchance.org) for instructions or to call (925) 326-5868. Any donation is tax deductible as a charitable gift.

Since its founding in 1975, Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has distributed more than \$56 million in food. Between the two counties, one resident in eight relies on the Food Bank for daily sustenance.

# Matching grant increases Lafayette Rotary's food bank donation to \$60K



Photo provided

Lafayette Rotary Foundation president Larry Blodgett delivers the \$30,000 food bank donation on May 8.

Submitted by Larry Blodgett

The Lafayette Rotary Club hand delivered a \$30,000 donation on May 8 to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano County. The sense of urgency to

deliver the donation that day was so the club could qualify for a matching grant made available by Steve and Susan Chamberlin, which in turn doubled the Rotary's original donation to \$60,000.

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# Lamorinda

# OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 14 Issue 6 Wednesday, May 13, 2020



Lamorinda Home Sales

... read on Page D2

## *Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

## **Cultivating artful gratefulness**



Photos Cynthia Brian

**A painter's palette of purple, gold, cream, and orange include bearded iris, statice, calendula, rose, and euphorbia.**

**By Cynthia Brian**

*"My garden is my most beautiful work of art" – Claude Monet*

A vase filled with cascading jasmine sits on my nightstand just inches from my bed, its heady scent perfuming the entire room. Not only is it beautiful, but it is my sentinel alerting me when I awake that I still have my sense of smell. Since one of the symptoms of contracting COVID-19 is the loss of taste and smell, I appreciate the fact that I can smell the roses as well as all the marvelous fragrances breezing through my garden. I have always been filled with gratitude for the simple things in life, but now, more than ever, I am cultivating artful gratefulness with increased urgency.

I am so thankful for my lush landscape. I live in what I call my "private botanical garden" where every day I am greeted by surprising

sprouts, sounds, and sights. It's been eight weeks since I've worn any make-up. My daily wardrobe consists of my grubby garden garb, tool apron, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, and boots. Splinters, scratches, bites, and itchy poison oak are a blight to my body, yet I am so joyful to spend my days weeding, seeding, and feeding as I witness the magnificence unfolding in this labyrinth of blossoms. Rose entwined arches, mustard growing 15 feet into the trees, clematis bowered on trellises, a mosaic of colorful floral layers dazzling on the hillside, a parterre of bearded iris, cornflags, daylilies, and roses hemmed by clipped boxwood, butterflies flitting from flower to flower, bees humming in the citrus ... nature is a living painting!

My garden is my most spectacular artwork. Some of it is messy and wild, other parts are formal and civilized. As my camellias wane, my fluorescent pink rhododendrons take center stage. Azaleas in containers, as well as those planted in the ground, are on a continual blooming cycle.

... continued on Page D4



**The lush hillside luxuriates in a mosaic of verdant green foliage.**

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## Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	8	\$875,000	\$2,153,000
MORAGA	8	\$775,000	\$2,305,000
ORINDA	9	\$860,000	\$2,950,000

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

- 3277 Fairholm Court, \$1,947,500, 5 Bdrms, 3000 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 04-01-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,575,000, 07-05-01
- 3347 Helen Lane, \$1,470,000, 4 Bdrms, 2292 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 03-30-20,  
Previous Sale: \$702,500, 08-02-11
- 917 Hough Avenue #7, \$875,000, 2 Bdrms, 1038 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 03-26-20,  
Previous Sale: \$728,000, 03-16-17
- 1006 Katherine Lane, \$1,320,000, 4 Bdrms, 1901 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 03-31-20,  
Previous Sale: \$545,000, 01-15-02
- 1163 Pleasant Hill Circle, \$2,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 2446 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 03-27-20,  
Previous Sale: \$825,000, 01-06-11
- 1548 Rancho Del Hambre, \$2,153,000, 6 Bdrms, 5985 SqFt, 1994 YrBlt, 03-27-20
- 3372 Walnut Lane, \$1,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 2952 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 03-30-20,  
Previous Sale: \$420,000, 06-01-91
- 3098 Withers Avenue, \$1,149,000, 4 Bdrms, 2830 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 03-25-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,227,000, 06-18-15

### MORAGA

- 58 Corte Maria, \$1,825,000, 5 Bdrms, 3169 SqFt, 2001 YrBlt, 03-31-20,  
Previous Sale: \$970,000, 10-16-01
- 747 Crossbrook Drive, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2323 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 04-01-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,255,000, 04-06-17
- 115 Devin Drive, \$1,375,000, 3 Bdrms, 1693 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 04-01-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,035,000, 03-27-15
- 182 Fernwood Drive, \$1,537,000, 4 Bdrms, 2955 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 03-27-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,260,000, 10-23-18
- 206 Fronteras Drive, \$2,305,000, 3 Bdrms, 3832 SqFt, 2016 YrBlt, 03-27-20
- 188 Miramonte Drive, \$805,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 03-27-20,  
Previous Sale: \$415,000, 04-28-11
- 223 Sonora Road, \$2,190,000, 3 Bdrms, 4685 SqFt, 2018 YrBlt, 03-27-20
- 484 Woodminster Drive, \$775,000, 3 Bdrms, 1572 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 03-23-20,  
Previous Sale: \$147,000, 07-01-87

### ORINDA

- 25 El Toyonal, \$860,000, 2 Bdrms, 1339 SqFt, 1918 YrBlt, 04-01-20
- 100 Estates Drive, \$1,350,000, 5 Bdrms, 3462 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 03-30-20
- 511 Hawkridge Terrace, \$2,950,000, 4 Bdrms, 2959 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 03-30-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,840,000, 11-07-18
- 5 Hartford Road, \$1,850,000, 3 Bdrms, 2801 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 03-23-20
- 7 Lloyd Lane, \$1,930,000, 4 Bdrms, 3222 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 03-25-20,  
Previous Sale: \$805,000, 08-06-99
- 36 Oak Drive, \$2,225,000, 5 Bdrms, 4205 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 03-27-20,  
Previous Sale: \$410,000, 05-27-98
- 17 Sleepy Hollow Lane, \$1,500,000, 3 Bdrms, 1803 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 03-26-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,285,000, 06-26-17
- 13 Sleepy Hollow Lane, \$1,780,000, 4 Bdrms, 2451 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 03-25-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,160,000, 06-08-06
- 14 Zander Drive, \$2,200,000, 6 Bdrms, 3165 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 03-27-20

# We've never seen a spring housing market quite like this one!



1045 Timothy Lane, Lafayette



8 Vista Via, Lafayette

## The Paddy Kehoe Team Just Sold 1045 Timothy Lane and 8 Vista Via

In April 2020, 17 homes sold compared to 30 homes sold in April 2019. Home sales fell by almost 50% over the same month last year. List to sell price is flat or even. The homes that the Paddy Kehoe Team sold, sold well over asking with multiple offers.

There is still a lack of inventory for the amount of buyers in the market. Compass data shows that home searches are up 40% and buyers searching for pools has tripled!

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## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

# Cultivating artful gratefulness

... continued from Page D1

A variety of trees, both deciduous and evergreen, fruiting and flowering, screen and define the property. I've been pruning, thinning, and cutting deadwood in anticipation of fire season.

My goal during this coronavirus crisis is to keep our immune systems strong by eating as many fresh vegetables, herbs, and fruits from my garden as possible. Artichokes are almost ready to be harvested. My citrus crop has been supplying my family and friends with daily doses of vitamin C. After delivering lemon limes to my neighbor, she offered me a goji berry plant which I am excited to grow as a living fence. Also called the matrimony vine, goji berry plants can be pruned and shaped to keep them small so that the red fruit which will ripen from July to October can be easily harvested. The berries contain more vitamin C than oranges, more potassium than a banana, and more iron than a steak. In addition, I learned that goji berries contain a high concentrate of vitamins B1, B2, B6, C, E, and 18 different amino acids and

zinc. I am so thankful to grow this new specimen that will enhance our health.

Gardening is not a hobby; it is an essential part of my creative being. Gardening is a survival skill and an art form. It is gratifying to sow a seed, water, fertilize, prune, and nurture that tiny seedling to full bloom. No matter how small a home is, we can always grow herbs in a pot on a windowsill or fill containers with vegetables and flowers displayed on a balcony or porch. With a garden, we bring beauty into our lives. Especially in troubling times, beauty is critical to grow our hopes and dreams. This lockdown has sparked an increased appreciation for the solitude and splendor of gardening.

Let your garden be your most attractive work of art. Plant a painter's palette of exquisite color. A garden is a refuge, a sanctuary, a quiet, safe place. Propagate positive possibilities and cultivate artful gratitude.

Stay healthy. Stay safe. Stay home. Stay grateful.



**Snails snacked on Jackmanii clematis wrestled from the roses.**

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**3347 Helen Lane**  
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**3711 Highland Court**  
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**1248 Larch Avenue**  
Moraga | Pending



**133 Lombardy Lane**  
Orinda | Sold



**2102 Torrington Court**  
Martinez | Sold



**1049 Via Nueva**  
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All information herein deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



# In This Together

## Navigating through COVID-19

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Stunning state of the art, architecturally designed Estate by Orinda's highly regarded Richard Bartlett is comfortably situated on a flat 1.3-acre site adjacent to the Orinda Country Club's 13th hole.

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*Thank-you to all of our fearless and dedicated first responders, doctors, and nurses during these challenging times.*

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## Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Gardening Guide for May

**SCATTER** snail and slug bait before they destroy all your sprouts.

**PREPARE** for fire season. Cut out the deadwood from bushes and trees, prune limbs and clear brush.

**CLEAN** leaves from gutters.

**CUT** tall wild grass to the ground.

**CHOP** leaves and flowers from wild mustard for salads and sandwiches.

**WATER** deeply and when needed.

**PULL** daffodil and other bulbs spears as they dry.

**DEADHEAD** roses, calla lilies, and calendulas as blossoms fade.

**CLEAN** greener this spring by using friendlier ingredients found in your garden such as lemon juice to remove grease, mildew and stains.

**WALK** a nature trail for exercise, beauty, and curiosity satisfaction, keeping your distance from others and bringing a mask.

**PLANT** beans, squash, cucumbers, corn, gourds, melons, and pumpkins directly into the garden now. Because of their tender taproots, they do not transplant well.

**BUY** tomato seedlings to plant anytime.

**COMPOST** your coffee grinds, eggshells, vegetable peelings and tea leaves.

**BAG** your lawn clippings only every other mow. It's best to leave the clippings on the lawn as feed for the roots, but many people find the extra grass too messy.

**TUCK** edibles into your flowerbeds. Parsley and garlic chives look especially handsome as a border.

**REGROW** scallions by sticking the root ends in water after snipping. You'll get a fresh crop very quickly.

**THIN** apples and stone fruit to ensure a bigger, healthier harvest. Leave two to three fruit per cluster.

**HARVEST** artichokes, arugula and Swiss chard.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



An overabundance of blossoms on citron lemon trees are perfumed bee magnets.



Artichokes will be ready to harvest soon.



Rhododendrons burst into fluorescent bloom as the camellia flowers wane.



Clipped boxwood hem a parterre of bearded iris, cornflags, roses, and daylilies.

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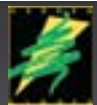
**Selfie of Cynthia Brian, without make-up, standing under the 15-foot mustard flowers.**

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your spring garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach, as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com). Buy copies of her best-selling books, including, *Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul*, *Growing with the Goddess Gardener*, and *Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers* at [www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store](http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store). Cynthia is available for virtual writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) [www.GoddessGardener.com](http://www.GoddessGardener.com)

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