

Life in LAMORINDA

Stanley Skaters Take On City Council

By Cathy Tyson

Long time best friends and Stanley Intermediate School students Michael Nevin, Jackson Hagglund and Danny Glascock took on the Lafayette City Council last week, asking for a skateboard park in Lafayette. "One day we just got tired of being kicked out" says Michael Nevin, so they decided to do something about it.

The boys collected one hundred signatures from supportive students at Stanley along with

many of the managers of the stores they usually skate behind, but are asked to leave - Safeway, Jamba Juice, Noah's and Milo's.

"It was more formal than we thought," relates Nevin referring to addressing the City Council. "It felt just like we were in court." All the boys admitted to being a little nervous, but they seemed very composed at the lectern.

They just want a place to

ride their skateboards, and feel like getting to the Moraga Skate Park is too difficult; rides from parents are hard to come by and the bus takes forever, in their opinion. The City Council was receptive to their plea, but noted that Lafayette put up one-third of the money for the Moraga Skate Park. The boys were referred to the Parks and Recreation department for further assistance.



Stanley Skateboard Park Supporters

Photo Cathy Tyson

Doin' the Cycle Recycle

By Lee Borrowman

Tom Preston recalls a day over seven years ago: "It was 'Big Garbage Day,'" he says, referring to what is now the Contra Costa County Solid Waste Authority's bi-annual Re-Use and Clean-Up Day. "There were old bikes everywhere, and we thought, 'there must be a better use for these.'"

Ever since, Bobbie and Tom Preston have annually collected repairable bikes for refurbishing by the inmates at the Marsh Creek Detention Facility. Inmates participating in the Fa-

city's Woodshop Program not only give over 1300 wooden toys to local charitable organizations each year, they also fix up two- and three-wheeled treasures.

The repaired bikes will be given out at Christmas to underprivileged children throughout the county, through such community organizations as Cambridge Community Center and the Volunteer Center.

Over 500 bikes have been retrieved from the Preston's home by the Contra Costa County Sheriff and delivered to

Marsh Creek for repair. "Not only do the kids get the gift of a bike," says Preston, "the inmates learn the marketable skill of bicycle repair."

New and/or used repairable bikes may be delivered to the side driveway of the Preston's home through the month of November only: 1307 Larch Avenue, Moraga. Tricycles and junior bikes are the most needed. You don't have to call ahead to drop off a bike, but if you need more information you may call 376-8474.



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Casual Carpool Gives Commuters Quick Access to SF

By Jennifer Wake

Getting into San Francisco during commute time can not only rattle your nerves, but can seem to take forever - at least for those not carpooling or taking mass transit. For hundreds of Lamorinda residents who work far from one of the many San Francisco BART stations, work odd hours, or who want a friendlier commute, another option has proven beneficial: the casual carpool.

A mainstay of commuting in the East Bay for more than 20 years, three main casual carpool locations in Lafayette (north of the BART station, just outside and to the right of the parking lot), Orinda (in the alley on the north side of Theater Square) and Moraga (north side of Moraga Way, west of School Street) offer Lamorinda commuters a quick and convenient way to get into the city. And during peak hours you don't have to wait long for riders, or for a ride.

At the Lafayette carpool site, Meheriar - who has been driving in casual carpools for the past four years as a way to help the environment - says the longest he's ever had to wait for passengers to fill his car is 15 minutes.

"We're saving the air," said another driver from inside her car.

Moraga resident Rose Camp Blouse is an auditor and uses the casual carpool to fit her changing schedule. "My mother

told me to never hitchhike," she said as she stood at casual carpool site located at the bus stop by the Safeway store on Moraga Way, "yet this is like being chauffeured into work."

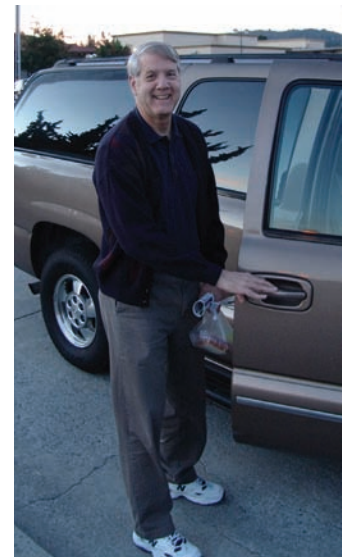
Another Moraga resident who has been using the casual carpool for the past ten years says the program helps reduce his commute time by 30 to 45 minutes because he can bypass long delays at the Bay Bridge toll plaza.

But there are rules.

Created as a mutually beneficial operation where additional riders help drivers save time and a toll, the carpools are not overseen by any specific organization and no money is exchanged.

Over the years, casual carpool etiquette has emerged. For example, there should be no more than three people per car (to maximize the number of car pools), the system is "first come, first served" so it is frowned upon to cut ahead in line, food and loud music are usually inappropriate, and drivers generally should be the ones to initiate any conversation.

A Web site called Casual Car Pool News, which is dedicated to casual carpool information (<http://www.ridenow.org/carpool/what.htm>), offers a way for commuters to post warnings about specific drivers who are reckless or not following the rules. One passenger warned North



Moraga resident gets a ride to SF

Berkeley commuters about a driver who "listens to seriously conservative religious radio, hands out religious propaganda to passengers, and discusses the evil and sin of Victoria's Secret catalogues."

For most casual carpools in Lamorinda, however, the experience has been nothing but enjoyable.

One Orinda resident, who has participated in the casual carpool for the past 25 years and was a member of the committee in Orinda that chose the carpool site, says it works like a charm.

"I've met people from New York who feel incredulous that this system works," he said. "It's the easiest way to get into the city."

J. Lucenti contributed to this story.

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