Calendar, Notes, News

Lafayette

Calendar

Lamorinda Community

City Council 7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, Feb 11

The Strategy for Downtown Lafayette, Community Workshop: Feb. 12 - 7pm,

Lafayette Methodist Church Planning Comm. 7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, Feb 7

Design Review 7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Tuesday, Feb 12

Park, Trails, Rec. Community Center 500 St Mary's Road Wednesday, Feb 13

Circulation Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, Feb 19

Emergency Prep. 9:15am City Offices 3675 Mt, Diablo Blvd. Suite 265 Wednesday, Feb 13

check online: Town of Lafayette: http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us

• all meeting notes

• calendar updates Chamber of Commerce:

http://www.lafayettechamber.org local businesses

upcomming events



Good deed, 1/27/08 Allyson Edwards, stellar employee of Toot Sweets Bakery on Mount Diablo Blvd. found and turned in this reporter's wallet. Everything was still in it, credit cards, drivers license, even cash. Yours truly is eternally grateful, not only for the fabulous cookies, but for your honesty.

Car theft, 1/28/08 A 1990 Honda Accord was parked on Leland Drive and locked. Some stealthy thief came during the night and stole it. License plate number 2TKS621 4-door blue Accord.

Check theft, 1/16/08 The suspect, a resident of Richmond, stole 6 business checks from the owner of Crème de la Crème, a business on Lafayette Circle. The suspect attempted to case one of the checks, but was unsuccessful. The suspect claimed she needed the money for rent.

Burglary, 1/14/08 Two females entered Queen Bee on Lafayette Circle, one spoke to the owner, while the other stole the owner's wallet from her purse at the other end of the store. They left on foot.

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Business Person of the Year



Meet City Planner Niroop Srivatsa

By Cathy Tyson



Niroop Srivatsa, Planning & Building Manager

Photo Andy Scheck

came back from India at midnight on September 10, 2001. We had eight pieces of luggage, the kids were exhausted from the flight, and the customs official looked at us, said the kids looked tired and just let us go," said Niroop Srivatsa of the start of her second time around as Lafayette's Planning and Building Manager. "I thought the next day, that wouldn't have happened. We came back to a different

country. We had to start from scratch; we lived in a hotel for a month. It was rough, but we got over it." At the time her two children were in ninth and seventh grades.

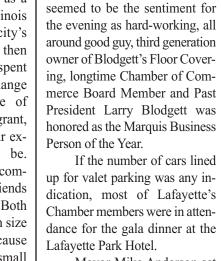
It's been a bit of a circuitous route for Srivatsa. Born and raised in Madras, in southern India, she has a bachelor's degree in architecture. Because an aunt and uncle are architects, she says she was naturally drawn to that. "They were

building fairly contemporary houses in India, it was so different from the house in which I grew up. Our ancestral home is over 200 years old; several generations lived in the same home."

Seeing the mix of old and new influenced how she sees city planning. "It made me realize that there isn't one single form or shape or design that's correct." Srivatsa continues, "I moved to city planning after being an architect because it impacts a greater number of people. It deals with the physical form of an entire city rather than just a building."

Coming to the U.S. exposed her to new concepts and ideas, "It opened my entire world. My first job was as a planner for Naperville, Illinois near Chicago. I did the city's first General Plan, and then came here." The family spent 10 years there, a big change from the tropical locale of Madras. "As a new immigrant, you never know what your experience is going to be. Naperville was a most welcoming town. We still have friends there, we loved the place. Both cities, although different in size are so similar because Naperville was a big "small town," and that's the beauty of Lafayette as well."

... continued on page 19



ou're the man, congrat-ulations!" said longtime

pal Greg Woehrle before the of-

ficial festivities began. That

Larry Blodgett,

By Cathy Tyson

Mayor Mike Anderson set

Karen and Larry Blodgett at the gala dinner Photo Andy Scheck the tone for the evening. "The City now faces a major crisis," he said very seriously. "There's a great potential for a lot of really bad puns this evening." He went on to say, "...pulling the rug out from under him. We will ultimately have to give him the floor."

> Anderson went on to give a brief State of the City address, concluding with an invitation for everyone to attend the Downtown Strategic Plan Workshop on February 12 at 7:00 at the Methodist Church. "It's absolutely critical to engage in the process," insisted Anderson.

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Handlebar Toys Icon Passes By Andrea A. Firth

or the past 38 years, Freda Mary Challis helped parents and kids throughout Lamorinda to pick the perfect birthday present, find a favorite toy, and get rolling on a new bike. As the proprietor of Handlebar Toys, one of the oldest retailers in Lafayette, Freda was a well-known fixture in the community. "She loved the community of Lafayette. This was her home," describes Freda's daughter Jennifer, an artist now residing in Oakland. Working up until the day she was hospitalized, Freda Challis passed away following a brief illness on January 15th, 2008.

Born in Yorkshire England in 1923, Freda did not like to tell people her age. "She always acted younger than her chronological age," notes Jennifer—not surprising for someone who spent her life surrounded by kids and toys. After marrying, Freda emigrated to Canada with her young family for an eight year stint and then found her way to Lafayette in the early 1960s's. Freda and her former husband, John Booth, established Handlebar Toys in 1970 in the historic Pioneer Building in down-Lafayette. Jennifer remembers her mom spending much of her time at work and play at Handlebar Toys. "She loved that store. That was her passion." In the 1980's, Handlebar stopped selling bikes, and Freda took sole control of the business focusing on the "tried and true" quality toys that were a trademark of the store. Although she loved the central Lafayette location at 3535 Plaza Way, Freda was a pragmatic businesswoman; and in April of 2007, Handlebar Toys relocated up the road to 3631 Mount Diablo Boulevard in the shopping center with Diablo Foods and Trader Joe's. The family is currently evaluating options for future plans for

the toy store. Also a talented musician, Freda performed in piano in



recitals and taught piano lessons for many years. She also played the organ at several area churches. Always active in the music community, Freda served as President of both the local Music Teachers Association and the Performing Arts Society and was a member of the Berkeley Piano Club. In addition, Freda actively supported new interventions for the diagnosis and treatment of autism after her youngest child, Jonathan, was diagnosed with the condition. Freda is survived by her three children, daughters Jennifer and Adrienne and son Jonathan; two grandchildren, Robert and Andre; and a brother, Brian Challis.

Done Deal on Deer Hill

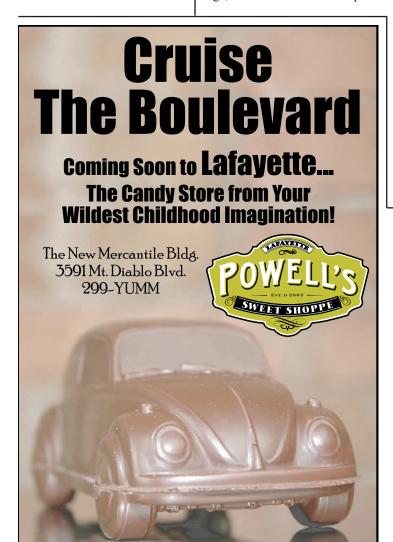
By Cathy Tyson

eer Hill Ranch, a 20-acre property listed at \$2.35 million, was available for sale but after some discussion with the East Bay Regional Park District and some tentative options drawn up by Lafayette's Parks, Trails and Recreation Director, the owners have found a buyer who will take control of the property as of May 1st of this year.

This is a win-win for both Lafayette and Hunter and Ann Holding, the owners. According to the Holdings, "The new owners have the full intention of continuing some of the programs currently offered at Deer

Hill Ranch and potentially offering other opportunities to the community. In evaluating options for our home as well as the non-profit educational programs we created, we believe this one will be a terrific fit and we're very pleased to be able to take into account both our familv needs and the needs and desires of the community."

Because they have an offer on another property, the owners were interested in a quick sale. This matter was taken off last week's City Council agenda at the last minute due to the sale.



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Big Band Dance