

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Students from the first and second period wood technology class gather around their Make-A-Wish chair. Teacher Michele Murphy stands to the right of the group. Photo Cathy Tyson

Giving Back While Building Skills

By Cathy Tyson

Smart eighth-graders at Stanley Middle School are giving back to the community in a truly constructive way. Students in Michele Murphy’s wood technology class built a custom-made Adirondack chair to raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The chair will be raffled off at the school open house during the first week in June. The cedar charity chair, personalized with the Make-A-Wish star logo is in addition to students’ own handcrafted chairs that will go home when complete. They all pitched in when they had extra classroom time to build the Make-A-Wish chair.

Creating something this intricate takes work, even with the help of computer-aided design, or CAD. “The students have used not only traditional woodworking machines but also modern technology,” said Murphy. “They have personalized the chair using a CNC (computer numeric controls) machine, designed it on a computer and then built it in the wood shop.”

Her hands-on class is project oriented, with an emphasis on following directions and working in sequential order. Murphy took woodshop in high school and enjoyed it, back when it was a rarity for a girl to be in the class. “Title IX changed all that,” she said. ...continued on page A12

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Why Are the Station 46 Negotiations Taking So Long?

By Nick Marnell



Site of proposed fire station 46 at 1035 Lorinda Lane in Lafayette Photo A. Scheck

Some mergers take just months to complete, like the recent formation of the Kraft Heinz Company between Kraft Foods and ketchup maker H.J. Heinz. Some take longer. The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District board of directors in June authorized Fire Chief Jeff Carman to negotiate a contract with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District to build and operate fire station 46, a joint venture to replace MOFD’s aging station 43 in north Orinda and ConFire’s closed station 16 in western Lafayette. An agreement has yet to be reached.

Frustration with the station 46 negotiations boiled over at the April 20

Lafayette Emergency Services Task Force meeting. “Here we sit, after 18 months, with no fire station,” said Jim Fajardo, task force member. “The taxes continue to be paid, our marbles are all in this basket. At what point do we go back to the initial suggestions, and not hold our breath waiting for this?”

“Our residents are asking us what is going on,” said co-chair Traci Reilly, a Lafayette city council member. The city, unhappy with the closure of station 16, created the task force in 2013 to investigate alternative delivery of its fire and emergency medical service, and the initial options discussed included secession from ConFire and merging with MOFD. “All of us around the table are getting impatient,” said task force member Peter Clark. “It doesn’t seem to be that complex of a problem.”

“From my perspective, it is complex,” said Carman. “It’s a 40-year, \$200 million contract, and you can’t just pull one down from the shelf.” He explained that in substance, both districts are in agreement with the deal, but language changes need to be resolved, because each lawyer sometimes writes language that is not agreeable to the other side. Carman used the example of purchasing new equipment.

What will the equipment be able to do, and who decides? He also pointed out that, since ConFire has agreed to pay half of the station 46 operating costs, what happens if MOFD’s costs rise more than ConFire’s? “We are trying to leave very little to the imagination,” said the chief. “This isn’t a competition. We just want to make sure our agencies and our customers are protected well into the future.” ... continued on page A8

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