

Community Service

We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

New Troop 249 Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Susan Severson



From left: Spencer Pugh, Alex Linney and Blake Severson

Photo Marci Nelson Photography

Boy Scout Troop 249 honored three scouts for earning their Eagle Scout Award on Feb. 28.

For his Eagle Scout project, Miramonte High School junior Alex Linney interviewed U.S. veterans, mostly from World War II. Their recordings were sent to the Library of Congress and are available for anyone to view. The project included recording different time markers in each veteran's account, so people can look up certain stages of the war and instantly find relevant firsthand accounts from the veterans who served. He enjoyed getting to hear stories from veterans serving in Europe, the Pacific Islands,

and even Alaska. At least two of the veterans have since passed on, including Alex's Grandpa Doug. He is grateful to have chronicled their war experiences for the benefit of our nation's history, and he is thankful for their courageous service.

Miramonte junior Spencer Pugh has an uncommon hobby – speedcubing (solving a Rubik's cube as fast as possible) and his record is 10.77 seconds. For his Eagle project, Pugh organized a peanut butter drive for the Contra Costa Food Bank. He was assisted by scouts and family members, who collected over 1,000 pounds of food from fellow church members

and customers at six different Lamorinda grocery stores.

Blake Severson, a junior at Miramonte High School, chose to repair and improve his local LDS Chapel retaining wall and yard for his Eagle project. He planned with the local facilities management of the LDS church to cut back a significant amount of vegetation in order to expose a retaining wall needing repair and repainting.

BSA Troop 249, sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Moraga, is led by Scoutmaster Craig Anderson.

'Convictions'

An evening of chamber music with Gold Coast Chamber Players

Submitted by Pamela Freund-Striplen



Pamela Freund-Striplen sits with her viola at the piano. Photo provided

Youthful works by composers often display raw talent and impressive musical instincts. At the beginning of their careers, Felix Mendelssohn and Richard Strauss experimented with different types of ensembles, writing for piano trios, string quartets, solo piano, and others. Strauss and Mendelssohn would both go on to write their masterpieces, but the two quartets featured in "Convictions" – the fourth concert of Gold Coast Chamber Players' 2015-16 series starting with a pre-concert talk at 7 p.m. Saturday, March 12 at the Lafayette Library Community Hall – were written when the composers were just starting out.

Mendelssohn was featured prominently in Gold Coast's October concert, "Prodigies," and wrote his Piano Quartet No. 3 when he was only 15 years old. Strauss' Piano Quartet in C Minor is truly an early work; Strauss also completed the score as a teenager. This quartet owes many of its stylistic touches to Johannes Brahms, especially its dark sonority and dramatic scope. David Popper, a great cello virtuoso, wrote the Spanish Serenade for Cello and Piano. Although Popper was a Czech Jew, he clearly shows an affinity for the Spanish, from the rhapsodic cello melodies to the gracefully embellished piano parts.

The Gold Coast Chamber Players are known for their engaging and vibrant performances. Highly acclaimed Chicago-based pianist Yana Reznik has appeared regularly with Gold Coast Chamber Players since 2012, and her exquisite musicality has captivated audiences. Cellist Eugene Lifschitz is the Principal Solo Cello of the Kassel Orchestra in Germany. Violinist Moni Simeonov serves as adjunct instructor of Violin and Chamber Music at University of Southern California and performs and coaches alongside Midori for her Orchestra Residencies Program Ameri-

can and International tours. Artistic Director and violist Pamela Freund-Striplen was recently presented with a 2015 Arts Recognition Award by the Contra Costa County Arts Commission.

Ticket price includes complimentary champagne, the pre-concert talk, and a reception with the musicians following the performance. Tickets are \$37.50 general, \$32.50 seniors and \$15 for students and are available at www.gcplayers.org and by phone at (925) 283-3728. Free garage parking at the library on Golden Gate Way. Limited seating, reserve early.

The Good College: An Engineering Example

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

There has always been great demand for college students with engineering degrees. Engineers and the engineering they do serve to help all of us in our busy modern lives. Engineers design the computers and smartphones we use every day, the medical instruments we rely upon to keep us healthy, the bridges we cross to work in the buildings they help design, and much of the rest of the infrastructure of our daily lives. Good colleges of engineering come in different types and sizes to address all the many different demands for engineers and engineering specialties, and fit the needs of different students. These programs are all properly accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

But accreditation is only one sign of a good engineering program. A good engineering program will also provide opportunities for a rewarding learning experience, often outside of the classroom, as well as connections to employment after graduation. Let's take a look at engineering schools in Pennsylvania.

Check out Penn State's main campus at University Park. It has a large number of undergraduates (over 40,000), larger than any other university in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. This past fall there were nearly 7,900 students in the College of Engineering, more than most universities have for all of their majors. There are 12 engineering majors at Penn State, including separate schools for electrical engineering and computer science. The College of Engineering has its own career development center to support its students and connect them to prospective employers. Of course, the largest schools also have the largest classes, especially in the freshman year, so students may not get all the personalized attention they need. Top engineering students may be admitted to the Schreyer Honors College and receive an education that is more personalized and finish with a senior honors thesis. This experience is also one of the best ways

to stand out in a large group of juniors competing for internships as well as seniors vying for full-time jobs. Penn State's 66 percent four-year graduation rate is quite good for a school of its size.

Heading east toward Philadelphia, Drexel University has nearly 17,000 students and one of the nation's largest cooperative education programs. More than 90 percent of Drexel University students take advantage of cooperative education, the majority working in three six-month placements over five years. Once this feature is taken into account, Drexel's low 4-year graduation rate (24 percent) is cast in a positive light. More than half of Drexel's engineering students graduated into a full-time job with a co-op employer in 2013. Drexel has 21 degree options within the College of Engineering as well as a separate school for Biomedical Engineering. It also has the advantage of being in a large city for employment while in school – as well as for knocking on doors after graduation.

About an hour from Philadelphia, Lehigh University is a much smaller school (about 5,000 students) that also offers its engineering students co-op experiences through the sophomore and junior years, and manages to graduate most students in four years. Lehigh engineering students who are President's Scholars may attend the university for a fifth tuition-free year to pursue a second bachelor's degree in business or the liberal arts or complete a master's degree. Lehigh is a smaller program, offering nine engineering degree options. But this program also has a unique option called Computer Science and Business that is accredited by both ABET and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the worldwide accrediting body for business schools. In addition, Lehigh's career services are also excellent. Over two-thirds of seniors graduating in engineering found jobs through the career center, on-campus recruitment and the university's career fair in

2014.

You can also get a fine engineering education at some liberal arts schools, notably Lafayette College, not far from Lehigh. Lafayette has 2,600 undergraduates and 750 are enrolled in engineering. Lafayette grants degrees in four engineering fields, as well as a bachelor's in engineering studies. You can choose electives across the disciplines such as civil, electrical, chemical and mechanical engineering—and a BA and BS in international studies and engineering. With dedication and effort, the dual degrees can be earned in four years. Lafayette may be a smaller school than Penn State, Drexel or Lehigh, but it is a better choice for students who want to work more closely with the faculty – there are no graduate students because Lafayette grants no graduate degrees. Lafayette also has one of the best career services centers for a school of its size.

In almost every state in America you can find various types of schools that offer fine engineering programs. The challenge and the fun lie in exploring the various alternatives to find the best matches for you!



Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is an independent college advisor who draws upon 25 years of higher education experience to help guide and support the college admissions process for students and their families. Dr. LaScala is a member of NACAC, WACAC and HECA. She can be contacted at (925) 891-4491 or elizabeth@doingcollege.com. Visit www.doingcollege.com for more information about her services.

- ◆ HARDWOODS
- ◆ CARPETS
- ◆ RUGS
- ◆ LINOLEUM
- ◆ TILE
- ◆ LAMINATE

FAMILY -OWNED
30 YEARS !

3344 Mt Diablo Blvd
in Lafayette
925-284-4440
lamorindafloors.com



BAD INC. Bay Area Drainage, Inc.

Are You Ready For El Niño?

- French Drains
- Underfloor Drains
- Downspout Systems
- Subdrain Systems
- Sump Pumps
- Retaining Walls
- Pavestone Driveway & Walkways

A General Engineering Contractor
Locally owned and Operated
Contractor LIC # 762208

925•377•9209



visit our website
www.bayareadrainage.com