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FREE



The Original Miracle Melting Snowman, a clever gift from Lafayette's Indigo & Poppy.



Beautiful holiday decor from Orinda's McDonnell's Nursery.



One of the unusual candles by The Austrian Atelier you'll find at Moraga's Across the Way.



Kids clocks from Clocks, Etc.



A Hanukkah display at Orinda's Sanvitalia.



The unique beet parchment bowl from the Moraga Art Gallery. Photos Diane Claytor

Avoid the Malls and Shop Locally This Season

By Diane Claytor

The holiday frenzy has begun. The roads are more congested, parking is harder to find, the to-do lists are getting longer and patience is beginning to thin. If anything is improving, it may be the kids' behavior, in the hopes that Santa does, indeed, know if they're good or bad.

There's no reason to endure the long lines of cars and people, the picked-through inventory or the stressed-out salespeople at the mall. Not when you can shop in Lamorinda.

Here is a sampling of 12 independent family-owned stores in our community, a very small selection of the number of varied and excellent local places to shop, with some hot ideas for cool gifts. The majority of the stores offer complimentary gift wrapping and free nearby parking. All provide outstanding personal service.

Unique Candles and Bath Accessories

Across the Way has been a Moraga institution, providing

beautiful and diverse household and gift items since 2000. A walk through the store inspires new and creative ideas for every room in your house. Manager Susan Marconi notes that, "I want people to feel comfortable looking for really cool items. We have unique candles, soaps, lotions, diffusers, all of the highest quality."

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Roundabout, New Lights will Aid in Fixing Traffic Woes

By Pippa Fisher



The intersection at Olympic and Reliez Station Road. Photo P. Fisher

A hot topic in Lamorinda is the "new" traffic control measure currently being studied or installed in Moraga and Lafayette: roundabouts

In Lafayette, the roundabout at the intersection of Pleasant Hill Road and Olympic Boulevard in Lafayette is nearly complete, bringing this new traffic calming measure to the city.

New, that is, to Lafayette. Many people claim round-

abouts have proved a successful solution to traffic all over the world for many years, but it might take Lamorinda residents a while to get used to driving through their very first roundabout.

As the roundabout gets closer to completion, residents are now using it and for the most part, it seems to be handling the volume of traffic. City Engineer Tony Coe says that it is going very well.

... continued on page A8



Photo Gint Fedaras

Headed to State!

For the first time in the school's history, the Acalanes girls volleyball team is headed to the State Championship match Dec. 3.

Coach Ernie Rodriguez's squad earned their showdown in Orange, California, against Crossroads of Santa Monica, by topping No. 4 Sonora in the NorCal Division 3 State Championship on Nov 26.

See story on page C1.

Carr Ranch Saved

Lamorinda residents had much to be thankful for when it was announced last week that the historic Carr Ranch had been saved.

East Bay Municipal Utility District and the John Muir Land Trust announced Nov. 22 a partnership that saves the 604 acres of pristine Lamorinda land for future use.

EBMUD's Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve \$4.5 million to purchase the land, formalizing a partnership between EBMUD and the JMLT to acquire the land from the Carr family, which has owned the land for over a century. Carr Ranch will be permanently preserved as watershed land, essential wildlife habitat and open space for public enjoyment.

"Carr Ranch is a beautiful area that EBMUD will carefully manage as we do our other protected watershed lands," said EBMUD spokesperson Andrea Pook. "This open space benefits the people in Lamorinda (and all our customers) who will be able to easily access this spectacular land."

JMLT will manage permanent public access to Carr Ranch for light recreation such as hiking, wildlife viewing, dog walking and equestrian activities. No biking will be allowed.

"We couldn't have hoped for an outcome that better serves the public's need for permanent protection and access to this spectacular natural landscape," said Linus Eukel, executive director of JMLT.

—P. Spear and N. Marnell

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MOFD: Improve water flow in Orinda – page A8.

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"Christmas Pageant" is delightful family fun – page B1.

Sports C1-C4

Cross Country teams run strong at State – page B3.



Our Homes D1-D16

Tips on elaborate holiday decorating – page D1.





Public Meetings

City Council
Monday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission
Monday, Dec. 5, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review
Monday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings
Acalanes Union High School District
Wednesday, Dec. 7, 7:30 p.m.
AUHSD Board Room
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District
Wednesday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
District Office Board Room
3477 School St., Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
City of Lafayette:
www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
Phone: (925) 284-1968
Chamber of Commerce:
www.lafayettechamber.org



Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Nov. 6 - Nov. 12

- Alarms** 27
- 911 Calls (incl hang-ups)** 5
- Noise complaints** 5
- Traffic stops** 44
- Suspicious Circumstances** 6
- Suspicious Subjects** 12
- Suspicious Vehicles** 10
- Abandoned Vehicle**
 - 3400 Block Moraga Blvd.
 - Topper Ct./topper Ln.
 - Quandt Rd./stanley Blvd.
 - Mt. Diablo Ct./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - 3700 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - Marianne Dr./Acalanes Rd.
- Auto Burglary**
 - 1200 Block Cambridge Dr.
 - 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - Mt. Diablo Blvd./moraga Rd.
 - 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Civil Standby**
 - 10 Block Greenvalley Dr.
- Commercial Burglary**
 - 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Drunk In Public**
 - 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- DUI Misdemeanor**
 - 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - Mt. Diablo Blvd./Happy Valley Rd.
- Fireworks**
 - 3300 Block Sweet Dr.
- Forgery**
 - 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Grand Theft**
 - 3700 Block Mosswood Dr.
- Hit And Run Misdemeanor**
 - Olympic Blvd./Pleasant Hill Rd.
 - 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - Reliez Station Rd./Glenside Dr.
 - 2nd St./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - 2nd St./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Missing Adult**
 - 90 Block Lafayette Cr.
- Motorist Assist**
 - Oak Hill Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - Acalanes Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Neighbor Dispute**
 - 500 Block Antonio Ct.
- Outside Assist**
 - 900 Block Hough Ave.
- Petty Theft**
 - 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - 3500 Block Terrace Way
 - 30 Block Circle Creek Ct.
- Reckless Driving**
 - Olympic Blvd./Reliez Station Rd.
 - Pleasant Hill Rd./Taylor Blvd.
 - 1st St./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - Pleasant Hill Rd./Eb Sr 24
 - 1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.

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Lafayette Identifies New Home for Police

By Pippa Fisher

City officials have solved the problem of finding a new home for the Lafayette Police Department.

The Lafayette City Council, with all four current members present, unanimously agreed recently to authorize City Manager Steve Falk to lease property and a building located to the east of Boswells at 3471, Mount Diablo Blvd.

With the lease agreement, the council also approved the allocation of \$1.4 million for rent and improvements to the property.

The master lease will include an option to buy in the future, solving not only the short-term problem but also that of the long term.

In a departure from its previous game plan, which was to find a new location for the police department and the city offices together in one location, this property would house the police only, with the administrative offices remaining in their current location at Desco Plaza. The landlord of the current police department building has given the city until June 30, when their current lease expires, to find somewhere else.

Falk explained to the council that they had been looking at four semi-viable options but that this was by far the best of the choices.

“Chief (Eric) Christensen and I are both very excited about this new location for the police station,” Falk said. “Its location in the center of town is perfect for public access, and ideal for response times.”

The building was most recent-



The police department will move to this vacant building at 3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Photo Pippa Fisher

ly used as a workout studio and before that, by Feathered Follies. It was built originally for the Pool Tech Company and has 20 parking spaces in a secure, fenced, onsite parking lot. Since the parking lot would not be shared, cars could be double-parked, further increasing capacity.

The building itself is 3,200 square feet, an increase of 500 square feet over their current location, which, Falk pointed out, would accommodate a women’s locker room — something previously identified as a need. The cost of the lease is \$9,800 per month, slightly under the going rate for retail space in Lafayette but slightly more than the city is currently paying.

Christensen said that this is the

“perfect place.” He particularly liked how readily visible it is to the community and pointed out that it provides easy and fast access to the freeway and all downtown locations.

Council member Traci Reilly brought up the point of defensibility. Christensen said that requirements and guidelines for building police stations will be followed, and listed ways of making the front of the building secure, such as using concrete bollards or even decorative rocks, which can provide a safe yet attractive barrier against the possibility of vehicles crashing into the building.

To some of those who remembered the last city council meeting, when Falk stressed the importance of keeping the location

of both the police and the city offices together, this move for the police only was confusing. Lafayette resident Jim Burns said he didn’t want the city to be “rushed into it.” He said that while he understood how this solves the short-term problem, he couldn’t see where it fits in with the long-term plan.

Falk said, “Co-locating the city’s administrative offices with the police would have been preferable, but this building and its location are too good to pass up. ... It should serve Lafayette and its citizens well for decades to come. With that matter behind us, we will now concentrate on a solution for (finding a location for) the city’s administrative functions.”

Help Keep Your Neighborhood Safe

By Pippa Fisher

The Lafayette Police Department and Lafayette Crime Prevention Commission will host a meeting entitled “Community Neighborhood Watch” on Dec. 7 at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial building, 3780 Mt.

Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

Chief Eric Christensen and other speakers will offer insights and suggestions, as well as answer questions relating to crime prevention in the city of Lafayette.

The meeting will run from 7-9 p.m. Residents, business owners, employees and other interested individuals are invited.

- Shoplift**
 - 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Threats**
 - 3200 Block Judith Ln.
 - 1300 Block Sunset Loop
- Traffic Hazard**
 - Pleasant Hill Rd./Greenvalley Dr.
 - Deer Hill Rd./Brown Ave.
- Vandalism**
 - 900 Block Hough Ave.
 - Upper Happy Valley Rd./El Nido Ranch Rd.
 - 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - 3200 Block Lucas Dr.
- Vehicle Theft**
 - 3100 Block Sunridge Ct.
 - 900 Block Bell St
 - 3100 Block Sunridge Ct.
 - 3100 Block Sunridge Ct.
- Welfare Check**
 - Golden Gate Wy/1st St
 - 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - 900 Block Oak Hill Rd.
 - 900 Block Hough Ave.
 - 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 - Wilkinson Ln./Moraga Rd.

Andersson’s City Council Seat up for Grabs

By Pippa Fisher

Following Brandt Andersson’s midterm resignation, it falls to the current Lafayette City Council to elect a member who will serve out the rest of Andersson’s term until it expires in November 2018.

The board voted at the last city council meeting to accept applicants until Dec. 9, with a plan to conducting interviews from Dec. 13 – 20. Further discussion

on how to proceed with the interview process will take place at the Dec. 12 city council meeting.

Residents interested in applying should fill out and submit the council vacancy application, found on the city website, and may contact the city clerk, Joanne Robbins, at 925-284-1968 for further information.

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by December 7th, 2016

Tatzin Wins 2016 Outstanding Commissioner Award

By Pippa Fisher



Don Tatzin

Photo Pippa Fisher

The Statewide Local Agency Formation Commission recently honored Lafayette City Council member Don Tatzin with the 2016 Outstanding Commissioner achievement award.

The Lafayette City Council recognized Tatzin for his achievement at the Nov. 14 council meeting.

Not only has he spent 30 years on the Lafayette City Council, Tatzin also served on Contra Costa LAFCO since 1998 – initially as an alternate city representative, and since 2011, as a regular city member. LAFCOs are regional planning agencies located in all 58 counties of California.

Lou Ann Texeira, executive officer of Contra Costa LAFCO, presented the award at the city council meeting.

Mayor Mark Mitchell read aloud the nominating letter, which said that Tatzin exemplified the meaning of LAFCO in his ability to balance the competing interests of orderly growth and development while working to preserve agricultural and open-space lands.

In addition to multiple accomplishments for LAFCO, the letter went on, “He is a skilled facilitator (and) negotiator, and (is) always willing to listen to both sides.”

Tatzin commented, “There are many highly qualified and hard-working LAFCO commissioners throughout California. Being selected as Commissioner of the Year for the state was both a surprise and an honor.”

Happy Valley Road Pilot Parking Program to Start Dec. 1

By Pippa Fisher



Photo Pippa Fisher

Forty parking spaces on Happy Valley Road from the freeway to Deer Hill Road are about to be reserved for city of Lafayette residents only, as part of a pilot parking program.

The program is aimed at easing parking frustrations felt toward increasing numbers of BART riders from outside the neighborhood using the Lafayette station who take up parking spaces, leaving residents unable to find parking in their own city.

City Council member Traci Reilly came up with the idea to reserve spots for residents over a year ago when she attended a Parking Task Force meeting.

“I suggested that we require the residents to obtain a permit to allow them the use of the on-street parking,” she said. “Parking permits are common in other cities, so it seemed like a reasonable thing to try. The task force thought that it would be a good idea to give it a try for a limited time period and then assess its

usefulness.”

To sign up for the permit, residents may submit a form found on the city of Lafayette website or fill out a hard copy at the city offices located at 3675 Mount Diablo Blvd., Suite 210. Locals will have to register their car license plates and show their Department of Motor Vehicles registration card, confirming their Lafayette address.

While there is no cost for this permit, residents who are approved for a permit will still have to pay the parking meter adjacent to their parking space. It also does not guarantee space availability.

Permits are being issued to all qualified applicants. One hundred and six vehicles have been signed up for the program with some residents registering multiple cars. The program is set to begin on Dec. 1 and will run for an initial trial period of six months.

Move in for the Holidays!



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1-4



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Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 5, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District
Thursday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Library
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us
Phone: (925) 888-7022

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

Moraga Police Report



Nov. 1 to Nov. 15

11/03 Auto Burglary

Someone wrangled their way into a Jeep Wrangler by smashing the front passenger window. The car valuables were likely brought inside before the attempt occurred, so the joke is on the suspect(s), but the \$500 repair tab is on the owner.

11/03 Hit & Run/DUI

Moraga police assisted a neighboring agency with the arrest for a subject accused of hit and run and DUI. If you drive, don't hit. Or run. Or drink...

11/05 Loud party

Three loud and lubricated residents were initially uncooperative when police arrived to request they tone it down. After a lengthy conversation the residents came to the sobering decision to disperse their partygoers. They still received a warning notice from the town.

11/05 Domestic Dispute

Boyfriend and girlfriend had an argument. Boyfriend agreed it might be best to step away and attempt to settle their differences at a later date.

11/05 Domestic Dispute

Mom wanted to take her daughter hiking. Daughter would rather mom take a hike. Daughter locked herself in the bathroom. Mom tried to McGyver her way in using a towel rack rod. The two had already separated by the time police arrived and agreed to stay away from each other.

11/05 Disturbance

Talk about carside service: an annoyed citizen reported she was tricked into being served (papers, not food) inside her car when her ex's new wife convinced the woman to roll down her window. This low blow came with an aside to order a civil restraining order. Seems the event was anything but civil.

11/06 Medical Assist

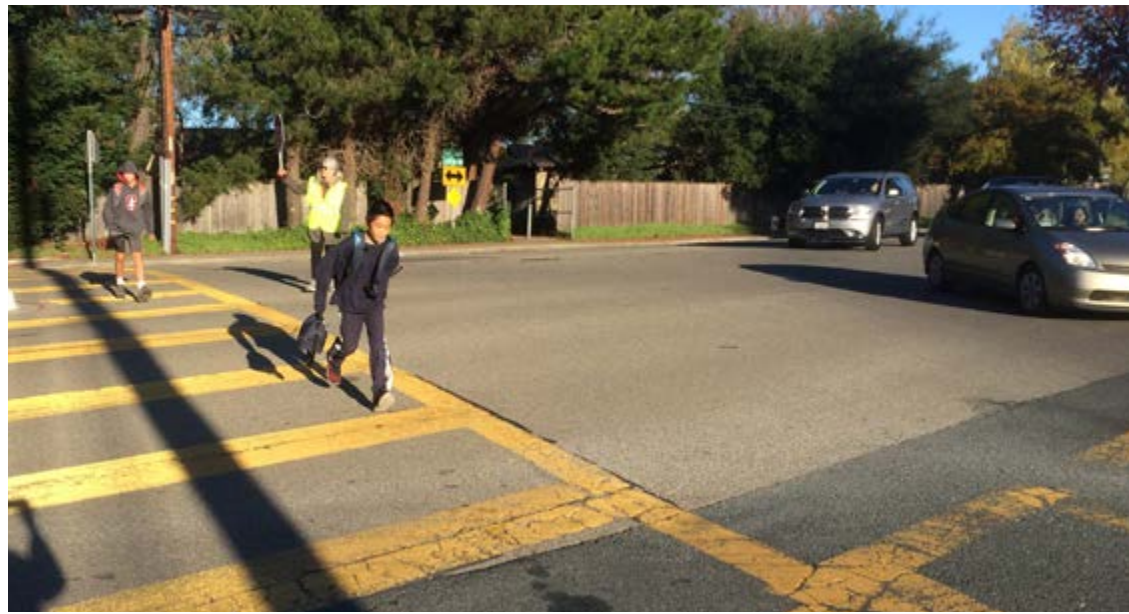
A son was right to be concerned about his mother's welfare. He called Moraga police; they entered the residence and found the woman on the floor. MOFD responders treated the resident at the scene.

11/07 Drunkenness

Weaving in and out of traffic, especially as a pedestrian, is never advised. Then again the male subject displaying such poor judgement was not in possession of all his faculties. Police arrested him for being drunk in public; he was transported and booked into Martinez Detention Facility.

Residents Concerned About More Traffic on Canyon Road, Saying it Endangers Students at JM

By Sophie Braccini



Crossing guard Barbara Espenmiller stops traffic for JM students going to school.

Photo Sophie Braccini

On a typical morning, Barbara Espenmiller interacts constantly with the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School students, asking them to get down from their bike or skates and wait for her to stop traffic first. "People are supposed to stop when they see kids standing there, but they don't," she says. She adds that she very much enjoys the interaction with the young students, that they are fabulous, very responsive and always polite.

Not so some of the drivers. Some say that the mobile apps that minimize traveling time now guide people over the hill, increasing automobile traffic and speed through on Canyon Road and Pine-

hurst in Moraga. Police Chief Jon King says that he has no hard data to substantiate the claim, but that his officers have noticed a lot of fast traffic traveling east and west on Canyon Road.

At a recent Moraga Town Council meeting, Barbara Espenmiller and her husband Allen, who are crossing guards at Joaquin Moraga and Canyon Road, came to ask for support: They say the intersection is very dangerous and they themselves have almost been hit a few times.

Barbara Espenmiller does the morning and Allen patrols in the afternoon. She arrives at 7:30

a.m. to be there for those students who arrive early. The school now starts at 8:30 a.m. and she makes sure to stay until the last student has crossed the intersection.

The Espenmillers are new to the world of crossing guards, but they quickly noticed that the main problem came from traffic traveling west, because drivers sometimes do not see the traffic guards when they are hidden by cars or buses getting ready to make a left on Camino Pablo.

"We get out as far as we can to get people to stop," Allen Espenmiller told the council at the Nov. 9 meeting. "We are successful 95 percent of the time, but some

people won't stop. I had three in a row yesterday!" He and his wife add that parents in a hurry making a left turn on Camino Pablo are not always very eager to stop.

The Espenmillers asked the council for three things: re-stripping of the crosswalks that they think are fading and are not visible enough, installation of flashing lights that would alert drivers that people are crossing the road, and more police enforcement.

Barbara Espenmiller said that the police have recently issued five citations to cars that were speeding or did not stop when asked. She says that having officers there when possible really helps.

King said that his officers are doing all they can to make sure that all the children at all the schools have safe routes to school. He noted that speeding continues to be a rampant problem in Moraga and that it is a threat to the whole population.

As far as increased traffic is concerned, King added that the mobile apps direct people to roads that are opened to the public and that there is nothing that can be done about it. The town of Moraga disassembled the Traffic and Safety Advisory Committee over two years ago, so residents who have concerns about traffic related topics need to address them to Edric Kwan, town engineer and public works director.

Utilities Work On Moraga Road Will Take Months

By Sophie Braccini

For several weeks Moraga residents' commute along Moraga Road between Corliss and Dragger Drives has been disturbed because of road construction that seems to be taking a long time. The purpose of this work is to "underground" —

put beneath the ground's surface — all the utilities that are now carried overhead and supported by poles.

The town manages the project and sees it as a beautification project as well as a means to free up space to implement of the Moraga Livable Roads plan. It is going to be several more months before it is completed, and Public Works Director Edric Kwan couldn't say exactly how many.

Kwan explains that a trench is first being dug for all the utilities.

"PG&E, the town's street lights, AT&T, Comcast will all pull their cables through the conduit," says Kwan, who adds that it is not easy to coordinate all of these different companies. The overhead cables that link homes along Moraga Road to the utilities will also be put underground, paid for by the town.

Kwan says that the town has an inspector on site at all time. However, the disturbance troubled a resident who complained to the Regional Water Quality Control Board

that the work was done with blatant violations of storm water laws.

"An inspector came, and he did not find any illicit discharge," says Kwan.

The same resident, who asked not to be named, told the Lamorinda Weekly that in his view the work had removed landscaping along the scenic corridor, and was done with a lack of pedestrian safety measures.

... continued on next page

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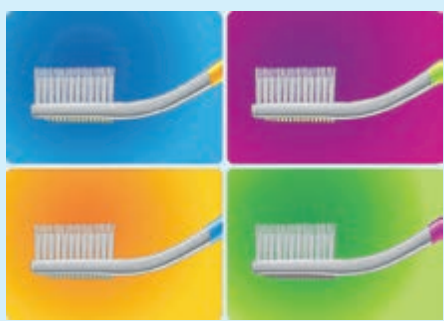
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New Librarian Moss Starts New Chapter for Moraga Library

By Sophie Braccini



Moraga Head Librarian Geneva Moss stands next to the Lucky Day collection.

Moraga has a new full-time head librarian in Geneva Moss, who has plans to set her mark in Moraga. A sweet and gentle personality, she comes with ideas and a sincere drive for serving the public.

It has been challenging these past six years to keep track of Moraga head librarians. They would stay for a few months, start modeling their own style, but be gone with the next season. Whether it

was that the position was then part-time or that better professional opportunities arose, the position was a bit of a revolving door.

But now it is settled. Moss was the children's librarian in Antioch for over five years before she was promoted to Moraga. In Antioch she developed programs funded by grants to serve the needs of the population. In Moraga, where she has now been for a few months, she has discovered that residents that

have complex requests and are interested in a whole gamut of issues.

And this is why Moss left her job in the commercial real estate industry 11 years ago: to interact and serve the public, be challenged by the requests and thrive in bringing answers and new services.

"People are overwhelmed by the amount of information that is available to them online and in print," says the librarian, who sees her role as a pilot in an ocean of information, giving direction to safely navigate to a destination. In Moraga people are looking for current event information and analysis, personal improvement, history and the arts.

Moss, who works Tuesday to Saturday makes sure that she spends a least one hour a day at the public desk, "I need to understand the local needs," she says.

One of the most successful programs at the Moraga library at this time is the "Lucky Day Collection." Popular books can get enormous waiting list of some 200 names in the "hold" queue, and getting them can take months or even years. So the county library system came up with this fun idea: have in each library a rack where one copy of some of the most-wanted books is displayed and can be picked up and rented for three weeks on the spot (no renewals). "What I love about

this is that I see people browsing there all the time and talking to each other about the books," says Moss — and that's how she sees a library as a powerful vector for building community.

Moss has not yet started to implement her own vision for new programs at the library. She is waiting for the new adult services librarian to start up shortly, but she already knows that the library will seek grants to propose cultural and art programs on a grander scale.

She has already started partnering with other local groups. Reaching teens is always a challenge, so Moss reached out to Campolindo High School's librarian to bring teen programs directly to the high school, and also opened it up to Joaquin Moraga Intermediate stu-

dents. Moss is also in touch with the East Bay Regional Park District to propose programs that will combine literature with the exploration of the outdoors.

In her spare time, when she has time off parenting her own child, Moss of course loves to read. Three of her major areas of interest are young adult fiction, politics and Victorian literature or period pieces.

In the first category she recommends "Wintergirls" by Laurie Halse Anderson, which deals with the difficult topic of anorexia. She also recommends "Because of Sex" by Gillian Thomas that analyzes the consequences of the Title VII Law, and Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations."

Developer Cleans Up at West Commons Park

By Sophie Braccini

It was thanks to a resident's alertness that the town was made aware of the fact that SummerHill Homes, which is developing the upscale Harvest Court residences off Camino Ricardo, had dumped dirt and fill on a native meadow that should have been left undisturbed.

The developer acknowledged the fact and replaced the site's construction manager. It will also restore the meadow that is part of the new West Commons Park as much as possible. The town will get a \$40,000 benefit in the form of an irrigation metering system SummerHill is now going to pay for.

"It is a good thing this person is being removed," said Public Works Director Edric Kwan, referring to

the SummerHill construction manager who was, in his view, a little too much of a "cowboy."

When the developer got its approval to build 26 homes on the 14.7 acres of the Chi property off Camino Ricardo, one of the conditions of approval was to create to the east of the site a 1.4 acre passive park that would be a restoration of the natural habitat in Moraga. The land now called West Commons was to be left pristine. So when a resident noticed that the developer had dumped fill on the meadow he alerted a council member, who in turn gave a heads-up to city staff.

Planning Director Ellen Clark notes that the town tried to recruit a temporary employee whose job

would have been to make sure that developers consistently respect their conditions of approval. It was not possible to fill that position. She is not concerned, though, that developers are violating these conditions, because, when they are caught, it costs them a lot more money.

In the case of the West Commons, SummerHill is removing the fill, and will work with a landscape architect to reseed the area with original grasses. Kwan added that he is pleased that the company has also agreed to pay for the new irrigation metering system that was going to be the town's responsibility.

Utilities Work

Kwan believes that the completion of the work will take months. After all the cables have been secured underground they will have to be tested, then the overhead lines

and poles will have to be removed. Moraga Road will then have to be slurry-sealed when all the other work is finished, depending on the weather. Only then will the

... continued from page A4

new stripping of the Moraga Livable Roads scheme will be painted, maintaining two lanes on each side and adding continuous bike and pedestrian paths.



Open For Business, Sweet Business

It's that time of year again: Time for the Kiwanis Club See's candy sale.

The sale will be on through Christmas.

From left, Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley President Sam Sperry, Moraga town officials Mayor Mike Metcalf, Town Manager Bob Priebe and Police Chief Jon King (all three of whom are KCMV members), plus Moraga School District board member and vice president Jon Nickens.

Photo Stan Holcenberg

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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
Orinda Library

Historical Landmarks Committee

Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2016, 3:00pm
Orinda Community Center, Room 7
28 Orinda Way, Orinda

School Board Meetings

Orinda Unified School District
Monday, Dec. 12, 6 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Nov. 6 - Nov. 18

Alarms	32
Noise complaints	5
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	4
Traffic stops	35
Suspicious Circumstances	18
Suspicious Subjects	14
Suspicious Vehicles	9

Barking Dog
10 block Owl Hill Ct.
20 block Haciendas
10 block Scenic Dr.

Buglary, Residential
400 block Ridge Gate Rd.
30 block Zander Dr.

Civil
10 Woodcrest Dr.
50 Monte Vista Rd. (4)
20 block Ivy Dr.

Dependent Child
Glorietta Elementary
Dispute, Verbal
10 block Irwin Way
30 block Claremont Ave

Domestic
10 block Camino Encinas
10 block Irwin Way

DUI
San Pablo Dam/Bear Creek
Drunk in Public
Moraga Way/Ivy Dr.

Fraud
10 block Haciendas
50 block Brookwood

Forgery
100 block Brookwood

Illegal Entry
40 block Heather Ln.

ID Theft
10 block Bolsita
40 block Loma Vista
10 block Rae Dr.

Joyriding Veh. Recovery
Town of Moraga

Juvenile
Miramonte High
10 block Paintbrush

Missing Adult
10 block Altarinda

Petty Theft
10 block Woodcrest Dr.
10 block Oak Flat Rd.
10 block Claremont Ave.
70 block Muth
10 block Via Floreado

Phone Harass
20 block Van Ripper Ln.

Police/Fire/EMS
500 block Moraga Way
Moraga Way/Altamont Dr.
500 block Moraga Way
Orinda Way/Farmers Mkt.
100 block Overhill

Poss. Stolen Property
Bryant/Moraga Way

Promiscuous Shooting
Village Square

Public Nuisance
BART

Reckless Driving
Moraga Way/Brookwood
Bear Creek/Camino Pablo
Moraga Way/Oak Dr.
San Pablo Dam/Wildcat
Safeway
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd (2)
Camino Pablo/Miner Rd.
Bear Creek/San Pablo Dam Rd.
Camino Pablo/Hwy 24
Van Tassel Ln/Katrinka Ct.



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Council, ULI and Mainstreet America Come to Agreement

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda City Council unanimously agreed to enter into a contract with Mainstreet America for assistance with downtown development, and also agreed to contract with the Urban Land Institute, by a vote of 4 to 1, with vice mayor Eve Phillips voting against ULI.

The council did agree to amend the question of what changes are needed in downtown Orinda to "what changes, if any" in case the majority of the residents believe that downtown Orinda is fine the way it is.

Other Council Activity City Attorney Honored

City Attorney Osa Wolff was honored with a proclamation in recognition of her service to Orinda for 10 years. Wolff was presented with flowers by her husband, two children and sister. The proclamation was read aloud at the city council meeting on Nov. 15, and each of the council members spoke warmly of how much they enjoyed working with Wolff. Vice mayor Eve Phillips praised Wolff as a great role model for working mothers and

council member Dolores Gee described Wolff as a great teacher.

No New Stop Sign

The council rejected a proposal put forth by staff for a third stop sign at the intersection of El Toyonal and Loma Vista, which would have made the T intersection an all-way stop. Residents of the area showed up and told the council that there was actually not a problem at the intersection and that putting a stop sign there might cause problems. The council agreed that

if something needed to be done, a sign on Loma Vista stating something to the effect of "Uphill traffic does not stop" would suffice.

Historic Preservation

The council agreed to preservation measures for two pieces of local history. Located on the property of the Orinda Senior Village, a remaining trestle from the train bridge will be preserved, as will be a cast-iron lamp post located on the property of artist and sculptor Joe Cleary.

Wagner Ranch Opens New Kindergarten Playground

By Sora O'Doherty

Orinda Union School District Superintendent Carolyn Seaton wielded giant scissors and cut a blue ribbon to officially open Wagner Ranch Elementary School's new kindergarten playground Monday, Nov. 14.

The superintendent was assisted by OUSD Board President Julie Rossiter, vice president Carol Brown, and board members Sarah Butler, Jason Kaune and Matt Moran. The project, jointly funded by the school district and the Wagner Ranch Parents' Club, benefitted from a collaborative design process that sought input from teachers, aides, principal Jim Manheimer, school board members, and perhaps most importantly, children.

By relocating some parking spaces, the school was able to grow the kindergarten playground from 4,700 to 7,200 square feet. The playground can now accommodate 60-80 children.

Manheimer touted the new playground, which was almost a year in the making, as safe and good looking, and thanked the board of trustees for their vision in funding creativity. He especially credited former OSUD superintendent Dr. Joe Jaconette, current superintendent Seaton, and director of curriculum and instruction Cathy Marshall. Manheimer went on to thank a long list of people who helped bring the playground to life, but his highest praise went to Stuart House, director of facilities, maintenance and operations.

The playground was designed by HY Architects and Gates & Associates Landscape Architects and features a safe rubber surface under a creative play structure with shade features above. There is a twisting tricycle route and shiny red tricycles that were an immediate hit with the children.

Brown showed she was recovering well from her recent shooting during a driveway robbery by trying out the new musical components in the playground, a xylophone with beautiful tone, and getting up an impromptu band on the drums. It may be, as Manheimer quoted from Captain Kangaroo Bob Keeshan, that, "Play is the work of children; it is very serious stuff," but the board



From left, Jason Kaune, OUSD board member, Carol Brown, OUSD vice president and Dr. Carolyn Seaton, OUSD superintendent, jam at the opening of the new Wagner Ranch Kindergarten playground. Photo S. O'Doherty

Kelly Lotosky of Gates and Associates explained how the architects strove for a diverse and balanced play area that would include equipment that helps children develop in a variety of ways. For example, swings benefit inner ear and balance development. Several meetings with both parents and children involved the community in the selection of elements to encourage imaginative play including movement, climbing, music and organization. The tricycle trail was designed to allow the children to engage in a little adventure that could include stops at the different playground elements, and imaginary activities like "filling up with gas."

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Czech Visiting Student Settling into Life at Miramonte High School

By Sora O'Doherty



Adam Kraus

Photo provided

When students at Miramonte High School decided to protest the recent presidential election, visiting student Adam Kraus, 17, from Tabor in the Czech Republic joined them.

He knows something about student protests. The Velvet Revolution that led to the establishment of the Czech Republic was 10 years before Adam was born, but his parents were part of it. He felt it was his duty, even though the U.S. is not his country, to protest policies he disagrees with at this historic moment.

But when he isn't protesting, Adam is a pretty normal guy, albeit very talented. Through Jan. 25, Adam will be Orinda's 16th visiting student from sister city Tabor. He left his historic home in the Czech Republic, where he lives with his parents, to stay in Orinda where he is being hosted by artist Eileen Fitz-Faulkner's family. His entry into Miramonte was eased by being introduced by his host's son.

He has enthusiastically joined campus activities, playing the trumpet in both the jazz and symphonic bands, and participating in sports, such as cross country and soccer. He thought playing his trumpet at Miramonte football games was great fun. He has many hobbies, but photography must rank high: he has an exhibition in the Miramonte library of 10 photographs of notable Tabor characters, including himself, which will remain on view through the end of the academic year.

He came to Orinda pretty well prepared, having read the online journals of former visiting students Michal Vasek and Karel

Balogh. Adam is also journaling his experiences online. He is enjoying Miramonte social life, which he finds more school-oriented than his social life in Tabor.

Adam is surprised at how different the food here is from home. He was really surprised to find sweet and sour and salty tastes being mixed, such as serving fish with fruit salad. He is adapting well, but he confesses that he does miss the cooking of his mother and his grandmother, who lives in the next town over from Tabor. He spoke fondly of their weinerschnitzel, which he claims can't be replicated here for reasons that include the type of bread used on the thin slices of meat.

Adam, who speaks Czech, English, French and can understand most Slavic languages, is a junior at Miramonte. At home in Tabor he attends the public grammar school and has two more years of schooling at home before he takes his exams. Students study 14 subjects during their careers, then select five for the leaving examination. Adam will definitely continue on to higher education. Both of his parents at home are architects, which perhaps explains why they live in a 15th-century home built into the castle walls in Tabor.

When students at Miramonte discover that Adam is a visiting European student, they have so many questions for him. Adam highly recommends that everybody should host an exchange student. He is having a great time experiencing life in a different country, and hopes that his host family is enjoying having him.

Orinda Celebrates Tree of Lights Dec. 3


The annual lighting of the Tree of Lights will take place from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3 at the Bank of America/Rite Aid Orinda shopping center.

The Tree of Lights ceremony celebrates life and families as well as those that have passed on. The Orinda Elementary School Children's Choir will perform.

Hospice of the East Bay will light the tree, a large oak in the parking lot. Each light in intended to symbolize a memory of a beloved departed person. Hospice will accept donations during the event. The event is also supported by McCaulou's, Bank of America, the City of Orinda and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. Boy Scout troop 237 provides volunteers. The tree will remain lit throughout the holiday season.

For more information: <https://hospice.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/29thAnnualTreeofLights/OrindaTree/tabid/721403/Default.aspx> —S. O'Doherty

The Real Estate Market 2016 vs 2015



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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors
Wednesday, Dec. 7, 7 p.m.
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors
Tuesday, Dec. 6, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107,
Administration Building,
651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas,
visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

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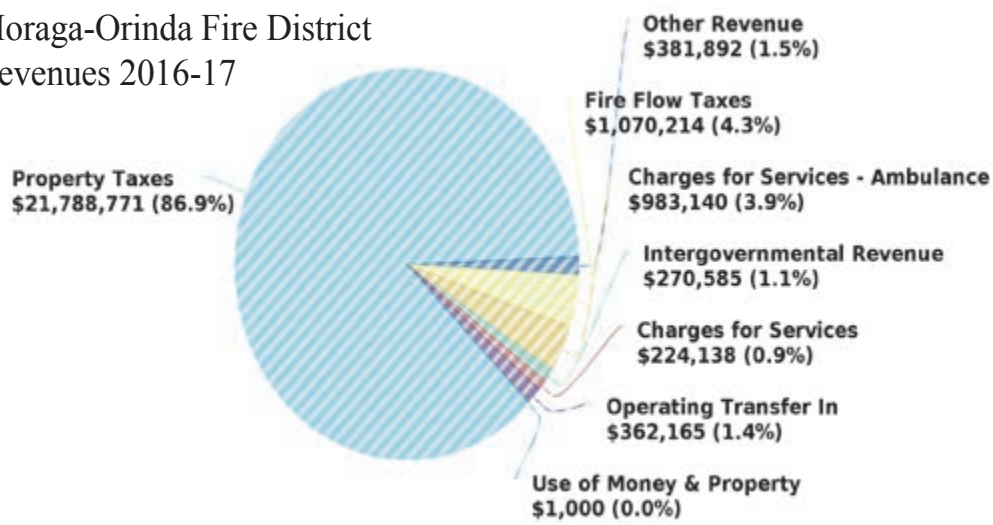
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MOFD Steps Up its Financial Transparency

By Nick Marnell

Moraga-Orinda Fire District
Revenues 2016-17



The Moraga-Orinda Fire District continued its march toward total financial transparency by contracting with OpenGov, a Redwood City consulting company, to produce software that allows complete access to district financial and budget information on the MOFD website.

For years the district struggled through major financial crises, including the miscalculation of a pension for its retiring fire chief,

the discovery of a \$2 million error that reduced its general fund, and the recognition of an unfunded pension and retiree health care liability that hovered near \$100 million. On top of that, thanks to the Great Recession, came the property tax crash. Because revenue was not covering expenses, MOFD was forced to consider an action it had never proposed in its history: laying off firefighters.

In 2013 the turnaround began.

MOFD fired its auditor, hired a new administrative services director and the following year appointed a financial manager to its board of directors. Working in a much improved economic climate, the district was able to not only balance its budget but also secure a 10 percent general fund reserve and reduce its unfunded pension and retiree health care liabilities to \$65 million. With better news came better reporting, and the MOFD Comprehensive

Annual Financial Report, produced in 2014 and 2015, won the Government Finance Officers Association award, presented to agencies that produce easily readable and efficiently organized financials.

The OpenGov financial software, unveiled at the district's Nov. 16 board meeting, could win an award from the public based on its ease of use. Administrative services director Gloriann Sasser led the audience through the new software presentation of district financial accounts, including current and historical revenues and expenses, plus assets and liabilities. Pictured is the chart showing projected revenue for the current fiscal year.

To navigate the new software program, hover on the About tab on the MOFD website home page, then click the Financial Transparency heading. Complete instructions on how to use the software, along with Frequently Asked Questions, are posted there.

"It's terrific," said director Brad Barber, and Barber would know, as he is the financial manager appointed to the board in 2014.

MOFD to Work to Improve Poor Water Flow in Orinda

By Nick Marnell



This hydrant on Charles Hill Circle in Orinda delivers substandard water flow. Photo Nick Marnell

Residents and board members have complained that substandard water flow to fire hydrants in north Orinda is so serious a community shortcoming that the Moraga-Orinda Fire District inserted water flow improvement as an additional element to its recently unveiled five-year Strategic Plan.

Outgoing north Orinda director Alex Evans has advocated for improved water flow in Orinda and Craig Jorgens, elected to fill Evans' seat, pushed for aging water pipe replacement in his campaign literature. Fire Chief Stephen Healy has maintained that even consider-

ing the 2 percent of the 1,430 district hydrants that do not measure up to current water flow standards of at least 500 gallons per minute, MOFD can handle routine emergencies any place in the district. But routine emergencies do not concern Orindans; they fear the potential of a serious wildfire that the inadequate water flow could not handle.

"It represents a significant risk to maybe the most vulnerable part of this district for a major catastrophe," Moraga resident and past board member Dick Olsen said at the Nov. 16 district meeting.

The catch for the district is that the underground piping infrastructure and the fire hydrants are owned by the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Healy recapped a recent meeting he attended with EBMUD officials who told the chief that the water district will pay for 10 percent of a pipe rebuild if MOFD pays for 90 percent. "I have a major problem with that from a public policy perspective," Healy said. "I was very disappointed when I walked out of that meeting."

"EBMUD is tone deaf about replacement of its infrastructure," added board president Steve Anderson.

The water company serves 1.4 million East Bay customers and has to be mindful of everyone's needs, according to EBMUD spokeswoman Andrea Pook. "We've been in conversation with MOFD regarding this issue for years," she said. "Our money is not our money. They are all ratepayers' dollars, and we have to be fair how we allocate them."

Understanding the political issues the district faces in this re-

gard, the MOFD board agreed that just because it adds the water infrastructure project to the strategic plan, Healy will not be effective taking on the water district by himself. "We need to mobilize with cities and citizens' groups to encourage EBMUD to do its job better," director Brad Barber said. "It may mean for the city of Orinda to try again." Orinda residents defeated ballot measures in 2002 and 2006 to raise money for city infrastructure improvements, including hydrant and storm drain repairs.

The water district will hold a Fire Agency forum at its headquarters Dec. 13. On the meeting agenda appears an update on fire hydrant inspections. Healy and the MOFD board members plan to attend.

Though the success of the squeaky wheel may be overrated, "The wheel that never squeaks never gets the grease," Barber said, as he and the other four directors approved the water flow improvement project as part of the MOFD 2016-2021 Strategic Plan.

Roundabout, New Lights will Aid in Fixing Traffic Woes

... continued from page A1



A rendering of the Pleasant Hill Road roundabout.

Image provided

He said that more education is probably needed to get people using it correctly and says that all the cones — still necessary until construction is over — are very distracting visually as you approach. He says there will be further signage as the roundabout is completed.

In fact the city has put together an informational brochure with tips on how to navigate the intersection in a safe and orderly fashion. Hard copy brochures are readily available in the city office lobby (3675 Mt Diablo Blvd., #210) and also at the Lafayette Library, Acalanes High School and the Community Center.

Lafayette Resident John Travale would like to see the city go

further. "I would highly recommend the use of multiple traffic officers with whistles keeping the flow moving through the circle." He says he has driven on roundabouts in Europe that were quite effective. "The difference: (They're) much larger."

Ali Bodden, a recent Lafayette resident, agrees. "Roundabouts work so well in Europe." She says that drivers are used to them, yield where they should, and that the flow of traffic is generally far, far better. "I think introducing local traffic to such a tiny roundabout was a terrible idea — drivers panic and slow down IN the roundabout, causing everyone to come to a stop."

Furthermore, Lafayette resident

Linda Murphy says, "Although the roundabout has improved the delay at Pleasant Hill Road and Olympic, a big part of that might be simply that so many motorists are avoiding that intersection and instead are using smaller side streets designed for local residents to exit their subdivision. These smaller streets are not equipped to handle the volume of cars, causing backups on these small side streets."

Coe recognized that traffic along Reliez Station Road also backs up and says that the two sets of traffic lights which will be installed over the next few months will help remedy this.

Green Light for Traffic Lights

As part of the Olympic Boulevard and Reliez Station Road Corridor improvements, the reality of those two new traffic lights came closer at the Nov. 14 city council meeting.

The council unanimously gave authorization to issue a change order to Bay City Paving and Grading in the amount of \$699,500 to install two traffic signals on Reliez Station Road — a saving to the city of \$42,000 on the original bid.

The first set of lights will be at the top of the hill on Reliez Station Road by the intersection with Las Trampas Road, an area that traditionally sees very heavy traffic during the rush hours. There will be a second light at the bottom of the hill controlling traffic at the intersection of Olympic Boulevard and Reliez Station Road.

Andreason Drive Homeowners Association President Aaron Rosenberg spoke in favor of both sets of lights and pointed out that, with deference to his neighbors at the top of the hill, the Las Trampas light addresses safety concerns and should be done first, while the light at the foot of the hill is more an issue of efficiency. Coe replied that both lights will be worked on concurrently and that both lights will be up and operating by April, weather permitting.

The lights at Las Trampas will be timed to stay green for Reliez Station Road traffic, until triggered by vehicles from the side streets to turn red. However, Coe said that

the timing could be tweaked as necessary to ensure optimal traffic flow.

The council also decided unanimously to retain the crosswalk across the east leg of Olympic Boulevard when the traffic lights are installed at that intersection.

Rosenberg, who is very much in favor of the eastern pedestrian crossing, made the point that residents from Andreason Drive currently have to cross to take their children to the school bus stop on the north side of Reliez Station Road, beyond the trail head parking lot.

In a previous discussion Mayor Mark Mitchell had questioned the need and efficiency of the proposed crosswalk, questioning the demand for such a crossing and pointing out that it would mean pedestrians crossing twice, slowing traffic still further. However, noting the pedestrian and bike only phase of the lights which allows movements in all directions to occur simultaneously under signal protection (know as "scramble" phase), Mitchell said he could support keeping the crosswalk.

Vice mayor Mike Anderson said that it is currently a very dangerous intersection and agreed that many drivers roll right through the stop sign. He said that scramble lights, which are to be found all over the Bay Area, will enable people to go in all directions and seem to work well.



Lafayette City Council Seeks Applicants Vacancy on the City Council

The Lafayette City Council seeks qualified applicants to fill Councilmember Brandt Andersson's seat. The temporary appointment will commence immediately and end November 2018. For application and additional information visit the city's website: lovelafayette.org/city-hall/city-council

Or call City Clerk Joanne Robbins - 925-284-1968.

Application deadline 5pm December 9, 2016. The City Council will interview applicants between December 13th - 20th.

Letters to the Editor

A Letter to the Residents of Lafayette

Dear Editor,

When I was mayor last year, long before we proposed Measure C, we asked Lafayette's citizens to discuss what they wanted the city council to work on for the coming decades, researched the cost of those projects, and developed options to pay for the resulting Citizens' Vision of what Lafayette should be in coming years. Measure C was the resulting effort to raise revenues for that Citizens' Vision.

For most of the past 15 years I have been balancing my work for the Lafayette City Council, the law practice I share with my wife Patricia, and raising two children, just 8 and 12 years old when I joined the council. I have put off too many important projects for too long. I recently decided that Measure C — win or lose — would mark the end of my tenure, so I resigned before the election.

Developing the Citizens' Vision for Lafayette's future has been a key accomplishment. Even without the additional Measure C funds, Lafayette will find a way to pursue our Citizens' Vision. The council has achieved other significant milestones during my tenure:

- The Lafayette Library and Learning Center is a beautiful building, with incredible diversity of programs that are using every corner of the building and redefining the role of the modern library. It is the civic, social, and cultural center of the city, the focus of Lafayette civic pride and identity.
- Rebuilding all of the public roads in Lafayette, a Herculean effort by 50 years of city leadership, will be complete in a year or two.
- Our Downtown Specific Plan, the work of many citizens and endless meetings to preserve the city's character while allowing it to grow into the beautiful, vibrant city center we see maturing today.
- The Crosses of Lafayette were addressed in a calm, professional, and respectful way, diffusing a potentially explosive situation.

I am particularly proud of the leadership I provided to restore fire service to Western Lafayette by the reconstruction of Station 16, providing options to finance individual energy improvements through the PACE program, joining Marin Clean Energy to allow a choice of renewable electricity, creating the Downtown Creeks Master Plan, and inventing the Lamorinda Loop bicycle and pedestrian trail.

I leave the city council with no concern for the quality of lead-

ership. Council members Don Tatzin, Mike Anderson, Mark Mitchell, Traci Reilly, and council member-elect Cam Burks are a finer and more talented group of local leaders than you will find in any other city. They will choose an equally qualified replacement for me. Lafayette's staff is second to none in its dedication and commitment to improving our community. Our commissioners and other volunteers provide the effort and depth of expertise other cities simply cannot match.

Of course, it is Lafayette's citizens that make Lafayette the special place it is. If you stay involved and respect one another, Lafayette will meet any challenge.

Thank you for giving me the honor of serving you.

Brandt Andersson
Lafayette

A Roundabout to a Roundabout

Dear Editor,

For the past 20 years I have been writing about how America, California and Lamorinda would have fewer problems and be better places to live if they had fewer people. I even wrote a book about it, "The Population Fix." But I was wrong! I have finally seen the light. What America, California and Lamorinda need is not fewer people, but more roundabouts!

By all means, a roundabout at the entrance to Saint Mary's, a roundabout at the non-entrance to Saint Mary's, and a roundabout at the outer edge of Saint Mary's. "Pray for me Father for I have spun out . . . in a roundabout." Certainly, a roundabout at the intersection of Moraga Road and St. Mary's Road connecting with a roundabout at the intersection of Moraga Road, Alta Mesa, and that unnamed and unmapped shopping center shortcut known to locals as Fender-Bender Alley. Yes, think about it — a roundabout to a roundabout.

By all means, let's have a roundabout at the intersection of Canyon Drive and Camino Pablo. What fun watching those over-the-hill (if I may use that term) drivers racing into and shooting out of a major league roundabout. Better yet, let's have Moraga Police Department drones fly over that roundabout dropping super slick solvents. We can make that roundabout a gigantic game of roundabout roulette . . . wagers accepted!

Edward C. Hartman
Moraga

Saddened by Measure C's Rejection

Dear Editor,

I am saddened that Lafayette's Measure C (sales tax proposal) on the recent ballot didn't pass.

The opposition to Measure C seems to reflexively distrust anything involving Lafayette city government, which I find odd since from my perspective — and I believe many others' — we are very lucky to have the city council and administrative staff we have. Most all evidence I have seen over my 10-plus years in Lafayette is that the city is run at an enviably high level — fiscally, administratively and ethically. As someone with a long history employed in the private sector, and a current entrepreneur, I would appreciate finding this level of professionalism in any private venture.

Can we get by without Measure C passing? Sure. And of course we will now. But if our aspirations are for Lafayette to continue to excel and be one of the great suburban communities in California, then a modest investment can make a huge difference in quality of life for all. Would a 1 percent increase in a consumption-based tax even be noticed by most? I sincerely doubt it. And, yes, some latitude in how the money is spent is a good thing, not an opposition talking point, as times and needs change quickly.

I choose to keep a watchful eye on our local government, as many of us do, but I also know that we have largely talented and dedicated people in those roles in Lafayette. Local government can and is a force for good and the betterment of people's lives, and I opt for trust and cooperation over cynicism. I hope a future ballot gives our community another chance to consider a forward-thinking measure like this.

Larry Challacombe
Lafayette

Crosses Not Ugly

Dear Editor,

The crosses of Lafayette remind me every day of the near 7,000 brave men and women who gave their lives so we could live in peace in this precious city.

I thank those people who erected and care for the crosses. It is sad some people find them ugly and objectionable. The loss of those lives was ugly and objectionable.

Mary Ann Hoisington
Lafayette

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Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

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Round Table Pizza: Late Night and Group Options for Moraga

By Michael Lupacchino



The new interior of Moraga's Round Table.

Photos provided

The Round Table Pizza restaurant in Moraga is tucked away in between a 24-hour Fitness and the Saint Mary's College Rheem Campus at the intersection of Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard. Though the location has served the Moraga community for years, the store itself hadn't been updated in years and due to its location, there has been unaware that there is even a Round Table in Moraga.

Greg Merritt has owned the Round Table Pizza in neighboring Lafayette since 1992. The opportunity to take over the Moraga location materialized last year and on Nov. 1, 2015, Merritt officially took over. His first task as

new owner, give the store a make-over. "We went through the process of going through the town of Moraga to get permits to remodel the restaurant, and that took a few months. We just completed the remodel of our store," said Merritt.

Round Table is a Northern California institution. Its first restaurant opened in Menlo Park in 1959 and over the years has expanded to become a major pizza chain in California as well as in Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon and Washington. The chain offers a mixed menu of pizzas, wings, sandwiches, and their signature garlic parmesan twists. Some locations, like the one in Moraga, also

feature a salad bar and beer on tap.

A full-service family restaurant, the newly remodeled location features eight large screen TVs —just in time for bowl season — a banquet room that is available for parties and private functions, a game arcade area, and a newly expanded beer selection with eight craft beers on tap. Additionally, Merritt has expanded the hours of operation from the previous owners. Monday through Wednesday the store is open from 11 am to 9 pm, until 10 pm on Thursday and Sunday, and on Friday and Saturday the Round Table is open until 11 pm. These new hours of operation make Round Table one of the few restaurants in Moraga that have operating hours beyond 9 or 9:30 pm.

Chai Saechao, the Operations Manager, said that "we want to be the place for the (Moraga) community to come and to have a good time." Merritt and Saechao want the Round Table to be a gathering place for families and for individuals looking to get a good meal and to even watch the game as well as a variety of other programming on the eight television screens on display throughout the restaurant. The restaurant also offers delivery for those not wanting to make a trip into town.

Next on the agenda is to have the front of the store remodeled. Merritt states that they are in the process of creating plans to present to the town to be able to update the front of the building this spring. Ac-

ording to Merritt, many people in the community had no idea that the inside of the building was recently updated as the outside features the same storefront that has been there for years.

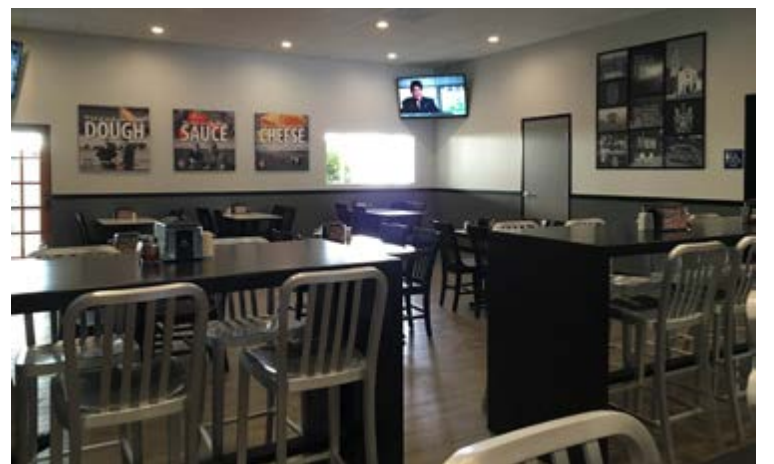
Merritt always knew he wanted to open up shop in Moraga. "Since we were next door for so many years in Lafayette, opening in Moraga seemed like the perfect match for us," he said. Merritt also mentioned having Saint Mary's College as a central fixture in Moraga was a plus. He hopes that the restaurant will become popular among Saint Mary's students, especially with its expanded hours of operations. Students, staff, and faculty can present their Saint Mary's ID for a discount. Merritt and Saechao have also been hard at work building partnerships with the college and other local area schools. They just made a deal with the Saint Mary's basketball team and will be running promotions and handing out pizzas

at games.

Saechao met with leaders of many student organizations on campus and gave a presentation on fundraising opportunities. According to Merritt "We're open to help any organization with fundraisers. We donate 20 percent of the proceeds from these types of events to the organizations and their causes." Both Merritt and Saechao are enthusiastic about building relationships with the community. They would love to see local youth groups and sports teams as well as school groups use their new private dining areas for events.

Stop by the newly remodeled Round Table Pizza at 361 Rheem Blvd, Moraga, CA 94556 or give them a call at (925) 376-1411 for delivery or carry-out.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.



Business Bites

By Paula King

New Restaurant Concept at Theatre Square

For six years, Table 24 in Orinda's Theatre Square brought a neighborhood comfort food vibe to local foodies who appreciated its organic and local ingredients. Table 24 served its final patrons on Nov. 6 and closed the restaurant for a few weeks to make way for its new concept called Wild Magnolia.

"You all have contributed to our years of success and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts," Table 24 owner Michael Karp said to its patrons. "We look forward to seeing you all at our grand opening later in November."

After Thanksgiving, Wild Magnolia will open with a fresh look, a menu featuring seasonal and sustainable items, lighter and healthier options for the lunch crowd and future Jazz Brunch in the works. At the bar, Wild Magnolia will serve local craft beers, an impressive wine list and artisan cocktails.

Another unique element to the new restaurant concept is that it will have a guest chef program for diners to sample the results of diverse culinary skills. Groups of patrons will also be able to enroll in small or medium creative cooking classes there.

Table 24 co-creator with Karp, Dianna Davis-Condon of Dianna Condon Cuisine, is the visionary for Wild Magnolia and plans to bring her catering and cooking background to the mix. Its executive chef will be Jose Ulises Santiago and he will be in charge of the daily changing menu.

Moving Closer to Home

Owners of Pollak & Pollak Wealth Management, Orinda residents Scott and Michelle Pollak, recently moved their head-

quarters to their hometown. An open house recently took place for the office now located 25 Orinda Way, Suite 205.

Pollak & Pollak was formerly located in San Francisco, but the Pollaks have lived in Orinda for a decade and decided to relocate their business last summer. They said that they are very excited to begin a new chapter in Orinda.

As a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc., Pollak & Pollak offers help with retirement planning, employee stocks, tax options and investments. For more information on their services, visit www.pollakandpollak.com or call 925-905-9890.

The Buzz on the New Barbershop in Town



SHARP Barber Shop, which opened just 11 weeks ago at 1001 Oak Hill Rd. in Lafayette, brings a little bit of old-fashioned tradition back to men's hair styling. They offer three services: hot towel straight razor shaves, beard trims

and haircuts.

"Lafayette has been very welcoming and we look forward to meeting more of this amazing community," says SHARP's EJ Colberg. Call for appointments, 925-478-9424.

Chamber Music

The local Chambers of Commerce are busy this time of year. **Moraga Chamber Holiday Mixer**, 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6. Moraga Royale, 1600 Canyon Road \$15 per (payment can be made at the door). RSVP - kathe@moragachamber.org or (925) 323-6524

Please bring an unwrapped toy. They are joining forces with 5 A Rent A Space and the Moraga Lion's Club collecting unwrapped toys for Bay Area Crisis Nursery and other local charities that support underprivileged children locally.

Lafayette Chamber December Holiday Mixer, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 7, Bank of the West, 3583 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Food from award-winning restaurants and caterers. \$10 for members; \$20 for non-members or bring at least 3 canned food items for Food Bank and admission is FREE.

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce will hold a holiday mixer at 5 p.m. on Dec. 8 at Hilton House, 21 Orinda Way in Orinda. Entertainment and refreshments will be served. Free fun and mingling opened to all chamber members and interested guests.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com.

Avoid the Malls and Shop Locally This Season

... continued from page A1



Great gift idea from Sanvitalia: tea towels.

Every corner, table and shelf in the store is filled with something beautiful you likely won't find elsewhere. There are exquisite 100 percent Egyptian bath towels, available in 60 colors; a collection of coffee-table quality cookbooks; the most incredible wooden hand-turned bowls from Spencer Peterman, who gets his wood

from fallen trees; and candles, which are actually more like art pieces, made from 100 percent natural raw materials. There are serving pieces, place mats, cooking utensils and an excellent assortment of the popular Le Creuset cookware (at the same price, or possibly slightly less, than at most high end cookware stores, Marconi said.)

1409 Moraga Way, Moraga. Open Tues. - Fri. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sat. and Sun. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Pomegranate Balsamic Vinegar

Is there a cook on your list? If so, your first stop should absolutely be **Amphora Nueva**, featuring the largest and freshest selection of extra virgin olive oils and aged balsamic vinegars on tap, all available for tasting. Employee Sharon Leone, who is unabashedly passionate about olive oils and balsamic vinegars, is happy to tell you her favorites (Pomegranate balsamic, "my absolute favorite," and **Corancosa** olive oil, "the best thing ever," Leone said), as well as share a variety of recipes and cooking ideas. With over 20 olive oils and an equal number of aged balsamics (with prices starting at \$7 for

a small bottle), as well as jams, tea towels and personalized gift packs, this is the perfect spot to get a gift for your friends, co-workers or yourself.

7 Fiesta Lane, Lafayette. Open Sun. - Thurs., 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Fri. and Sat. 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Clocks and Home Décor

An old song by Chicago asked, "Does anybody really know what time it is?" At **Clocks, Etc.**, everyone who walks in can answer that question. For 40 years, owners Scott Hampton and Wendy Tamis have made sure of that with an inventory of hundreds of clocks in every shape, size, material and style. There are clocks to match every décor and accommodate every age and interest. And then there's the Etc. part: candles, bird feeders, wind chimes, decorative pillows, ceramic boxes, lamps, garden accessories, nightlights, ornaments and holiday décor. There is definitely something for everyone on your list in this incredible store; and if you're there on the hour, you'll enjoy a cheerful symphony of sound.

971 Moraga Rd., Lafayette. Open Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Cookbooks and Fine Serving Dishes

Indigo & Poppy sees the beauty in every room of the house and celebrates fine California living in everything it offers. Owner Thad Mirt believes happiness can be found in any well-chosen object, whether it's a painting, a rug or a vase. Elegant furnishings as well as high-quality accessories that make a home inviting are beautifully showcased, including candles, holiday décor, French soaps, coffee table books and cookbooks, and serving pieces and dinnerware in many different colors and patterns, "not what you'd see in most stores," Mirt said. They also carry their own line of olive oils, balsamic vinegars, marinades and, according to Mirt, their very popular caramel sauce with cognac. Some of their more unique gift items include dog leashes that light up; a Warriors cheese board and, for the kids, the Indoor Snowball Fight, a bucket of white balls that actually feel like snowballs.

1009 Oak Hill Rd., Lafayette. Open Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

... continued on next page

Avoid the Malls and Shop Locally This Season

... continued from page A10



Succulent arrangements from Sanvitalia.

Waterford and Wedgewood at a Discount

For more than 17 years, **Hilton House Consignment and Design**, this upscale Orinda consignment store has been offering top brands, including Waterford, Wedgewood, Baccarat, and Ethan Allen pieces at discounted prices. You'll find furniture and rugs (in case you want to buy a gift for yourself), and an assortment of table-top items: candles, dishes and glasses, serving pieces, cutlery and, of course, holiday décor. All are high-end, name brands. "We're very picky about the items we take for consignment," said owner Cyndi Hilton-Girgis. She noted that they are also a jewelry store; beautiful pieces abound, some used and many new. "Our jewelry comes from three places: estates, private parties and jewelers wanting to rotate their inventory," Hilton-Girgis explained. "Our prices are so much lower than the jewelers." 21 Orinda Way, Orinda. Open Mon.-Sat., 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Beautiful Bird Feeders and Garden Supplies

Everyone driving from Moraga to Orinda has passed it a zillion times. **McDonnell Nursery**, family owned for over 70 years, is passionate about gardening and offering unique and lovely gifts. Manager Sarah McDonnell has turned the front of the store into a gift boutique, including adorable signs (a personal favorite: "when you stop believing in Santa you get underwear"), candles, decorative pillows, mugs, platters, holiday décor, and lighted prints. Then, of course, there are the beautiful garden items: bird feeders, bird baths, containers and pottery, and every type of plant you can imagine. If there's a gardener on your list, this is definitely the place to shop. And especially for the kids: "Sno to Go" an amazing powder that, when water is added, creates "an avalanche of cool, wet 'snow.'" 196 Moraga Way, Orinda. Open daily 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

An Artisan Beet Parchment Bowl

If you've been in the Rheem Shopping Center, you've no doubt seen the **Moraga Art Gallery**, a collective of 16 local artists and artisans, all creating amazing pieces and meeting high standards of workmanship and originality. There are incredible colorful paintings and photos, beautiful ceramics and glassware, hand-painted scarves, lamps, candleholders, unique statues and unusual jewelry



Clever travel valet from Parker-Thatch.

— all objects of true beauty. Margaret Dorfman, a current guest artist, became inspired while cleaning her kitchen — she makes art pieces from dried, pressed and aged fruits and vegetables; her beet parchment bowl is one of the more unusual items you'll see.

522 Center St., Moraga. Open Wed. – Sun 12 noon – 5 p.m. (Open every day in December.)

The Perfect Piece of Jewelry



A unique wooden salad bowl found at Orinda's Morrison's Jewelers.

For 93 years, **Morrison's Jewelers** has been making and selling exquisite pieces of jewelry — or, as they say, "love you can see" — at a variety of price points. There are necklaces, rings, bracelets and earrings. They have gold and silver, diamonds, pearls, sapphires, rubies, and just about any other stone you want. There is a case filled with watches (and even a watch winder, for those that perhaps don't wear their self-winding watch everyday). They also feature high-end elegant gift items, including picture frames, sterling silver baby cups, piggy banks, snow globes, music boxes and a magnificent wooden salad bowl set.

35 Orinda Way, Orinda. Open Tue. – Fri., 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Designer cufflinks

In 2009, designer **Natasha Grasso** took a metal-smithing class and created the first collection of Natasha Grasso Jewelry. Now, boutiques and museums in 14 states, as well as Canada and China, carry her fabulous pieces, all of which are made in the Bay Area. There are necklaces, bracelets, earrings and rings as well as men's gold cufflinks. She uses mostly semi-precious stones but does include some rare Box rough-cut diamonds, sapphires and fresh water pearls. Most pieces are hand-forged in a classic style. "I try not to do anything too trendy," Grasso said, believing that "if you're going to spend good money, you should be able to wear the pieces every season, year after year. Everything I make is meant to enhance what you already have." Everything she makes is beautiful!

386 Park St., Suite A, Moraga. Open Tue. – Sat., 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

A Bag for All Seasons

We all know someone that could use a personalized beautiful canvas bag — for their cosmetics, tennis racket, kids' toys or glasses. **Parker-Thatch** offers heavy-duty canvas bags of every shape and size for carrying anything and everything. Their most popular item is a tote bag, personalized with the recipients' initials, birth or anniversary date, and favorite design. According to co-owner Irene Chen, many people customize the bag even further by including a personal note printed on the inside of the tote. "We have printed some incredible notes — from the kindest to the most emotional," Chen said. "The tote then becomes more than just a bag, it becomes its own special piece." Chen reported that another popular item is the customized valet tray, often personalized with a wifi passcode. "It's a great item for a guest room," she added.

19D Orinda Way, Orinda. Open Mon. - Fri., 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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Stay Home For the Holidays

You have seen the posters and stickers all over LAMORINDA. Shopping Local is not simply a marketing campaign, it's a state of mind. For years your local Chambers of Commerce has been reminding you the many reasons why supporting local merchants makes sense. Whether it's buying holiday gifts, using local services or meeting friends for dinner, shopping local does matter. Consider this: When you stay in town and shop...

- You appreciate the cultural value of a vibrant downtown filled with a wide variety of unique businesses and boutiques.
- You saving on gas and time
- You help create a strong tax-base by circulating money in town versus sending it elsewhere. This helps pay for police, road repairs and other essential services you count on
- You are supporting the businesses that generously donate to local schools and non-profits throughout the year

When you think about it, isn't it more fun to do business with people you know, like and trust? Your local merchants work hard for your loyalty. So please remember them this holiday season. There are more choices in Lamorinda than ever before. So Relax! Stay away from the crazy malls and enjoy the season. We live and work in this amazing place called Lamorinda. Happy Holidays from the Orinda, Moraga and Lafayette Chambers!

Jay Lifson, Lafayette
Kathe Nelson, Moraga
Sophie Braccini, Orinda



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Avoid the Malls and Shop Locally This Season

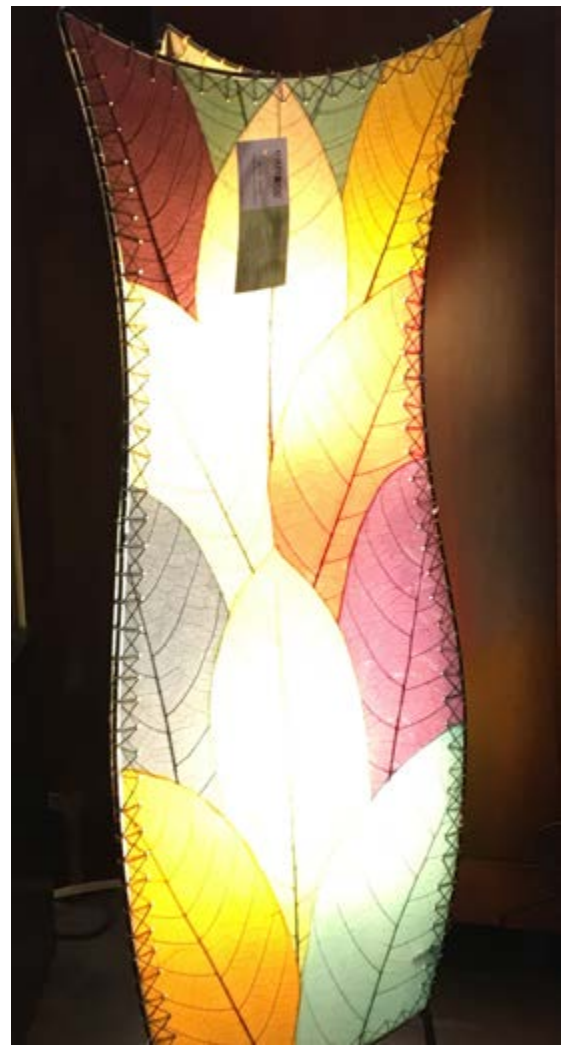
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Unique Flower Arrangements

Opened a year ago, **Sanvitalia Home and Garden** is inspired by indoor and outdoor living. They're a florist with cut flowers, awe-inspiring floral and succulent centerpieces and arrangements and beautiful plants. According to employees, among their most unique items are their succulent arrangements, which come in a variety of sizes and are all made onsite. They carry colorful French linens by Garnier-Thiebaut, known the world over as a designer and manufacturer of the highest quality of table linens; luxurious French soaps, tableware, candles, holiday décor and adorable tea towels stating, "We wish you a Merry Christmas from Orinda." There is a wide array of beautiful cookbooks and adult coloring books. Additionally, Sanvitalia offers an outstanding selection of Hannukah-related items. 2 Theater Square, #110, Orinda. Mon. - Sat., 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

A Calming Tatami Mat

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[Editor's Note: The stores highlighted in this article were some suggestions from the Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda Chambers of Commerce.]



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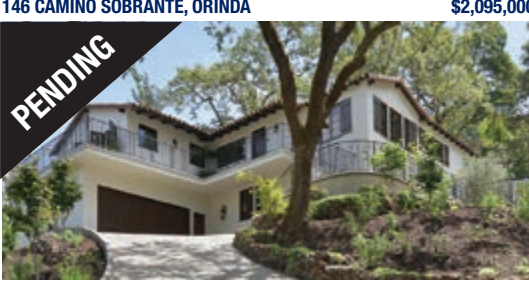







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'The Best Christmas Pageant Ever' is a Funny and Touching Family Affair

By Sophie Braccini



From left: Megan Crane, Brodie Zeigler, Nat Hacoheh, and Hannah Hacoheh. Photo Stu Stelland

There is no better family outing to start the holiday season than going together to a live, festive performance. This year Town Hall Theatre offers that perfect opportunity: a show for all ages, by an all-ages cast in the seasonal appropriate "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever."

The play, based on the 1971 book by Barbara Robinson, tells how a traditional and somewhat boring event gets derailed and invigorated when a group of misfit kids take over the leading roles of the local production of the traditional Christmas Pageant. The effective staging by Lynda Di Vito, directing a cast of very funny and talented actors age 7 to 60, delivers a very witty performance with nonstop surprises and humor. The sweet ending is also perfectly appropriate for a family audience.

In a little town not unlike one of our own in Lamorinda, in the early 80s, the Christmas Pageant is a big yearly affair led by the same group of volunteer mothers who have made it an event that runs like clockwork. But the main woman in charge breaks a leg the year the six

children from the Herdman family — the local somewhat delinquent and misfits of the town — happen to decide it could be fun to join in. The whole pageant is sent topsy-turvy, as the self-righteous people of the town think it is going to be a disaster, and for a while it clearly looks that way. But this would not be a Holiday story without a little Christmas miracle in the end.

The cast of children, teens and adults that bring the story to life are simply terrific. The little ones are adorable, the teens who play either the right-thinking well-bred ones or the abominable Herdmans are impressively professional and funny, while the adults are just as strong and perfectly cast. Di Vito says that for a director, the devil is in the casting. For her directorial debut she made a faultless choice.

"It was fun and challenging to direct this cast," says Di Vito. Twelve children are in the play as well as six adults. Di Vito says that she enjoyed the casting process. She is a veteran equity actress who has been on stages from New York to Europe to the Bay Area over the last 20 years.

She says she's worked with the best directors and when it came time for her to take the helm she first started with analyzing and thinking about the play that had been offered to her. "My goal was to find the heart of this work," she says. Her vision is that the Herdmans are not only elements of disturbance; they are also elements of rejuvenation of the traditional story. Several times in the text it appears that these kids are poor and that Marie and Joseph might have been also in extreme poverty when Jesus was born.

Di Vito also brought her own touch to the play, adding songs and comic elements that really work well and get a lot of laughs.

"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" will run at Town Hall Theatre in Lafayette from Dec. 3 through Dec. 17. Visit www.TownHallTheatre.com or call 925.283.1557 for tickets and more information.

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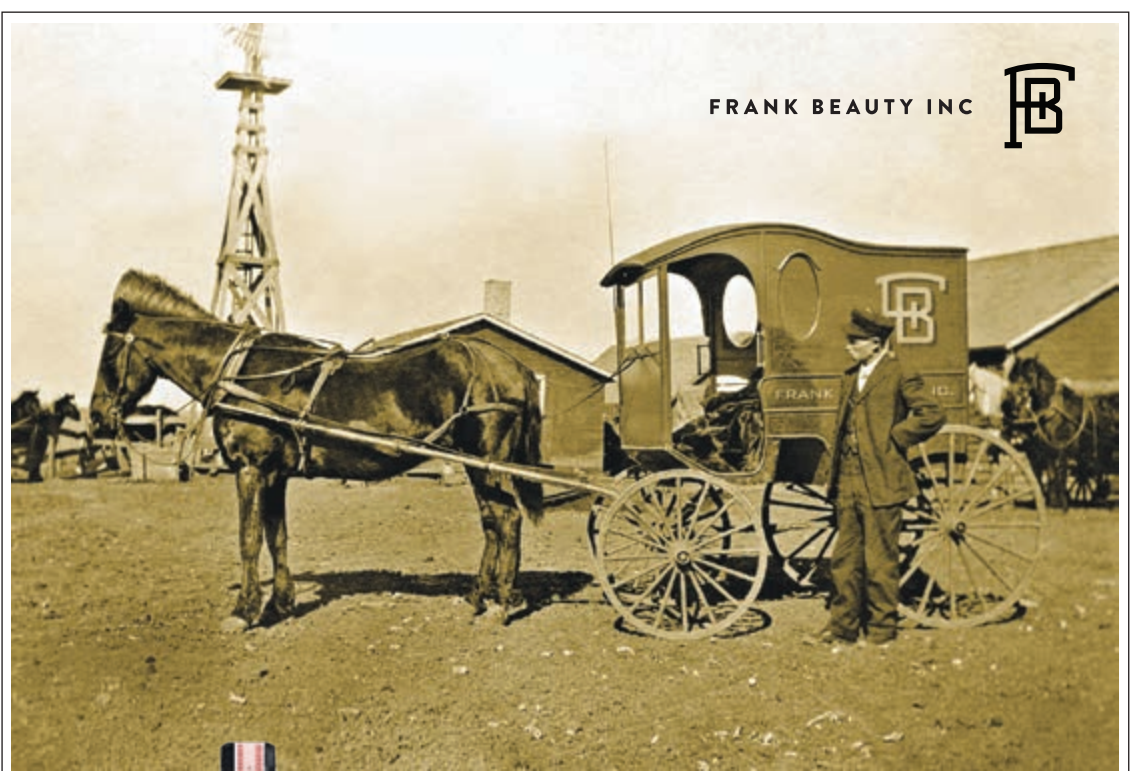


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Lafayette Local Eden Sussenguth to Compete for Miss California Crown

By Pippa Fisher

How hard can it be to compete in a beauty pageant?

That is what 23-year old Lafayette native and Acalanes High School graduate Eden Sussenguth, thought as she watched the Miss Universe pageant with her family. But, "Little did I know all the work that goes into it!" reflects Sussenguth, as she herself now prepares to compete for the Miss California crown.

Sussenguth will be representing the East Bay in the upcoming State Miss California U.S.A. pageant being held Dec. 2-4, 2016 in Long Beach.

Sussenguth did not grow up competing in beauty pageants the way that many contestants do. Her mother's half-sister had been Miss United States, which, she says, "definitely peaked my interest when I was growing up." But, instead she was more focused on athletics and school. "The closest thing to pageants I've ever done was modeling for Teen Vogue in high school."

She attended California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo and graduated with Cum Laude honors in 2015. During college Sussenguth was a member of the Sigma Kappa sorority and



Eden Sussenguth

Photo provided

completed over 1,000 hours of volunteer work with the Alzheimer's Association, Special Olympics and other community organizations.

Currently she works for an East Bay nonprofit organization, STAND For Families Free of Violence, which provides prevention, intervention and recovery for domestic violence victims.

Sussenguth says that this is her first time competing for Miss California U.S.A. "I competed in a preliminary competition, Miss Pacific Coast, this past July to practice before I head to the State competition. I ended up getting First Runner-up and won the Miss Photogenic portion of the competition."

She reflects, "This was a big accomplishment for me considering it was my first pageant and girls have been competing since they were young."

She says her favorite part about pageants is setting a goal for yourself and doing everything in your power to achieve it. "A lot of the preparation is not only physical, like working out everyday and eating very clean, but also becoming mentally strong, confident and re-

ally knowing where you stand on tough political and worldly issues."

She says that she really feels like this process has helped her grow into the best version of herself.

Sussenguth is focused right now on winning the crown and title of Miss California but from there she wants to use the title to get more involved in the community, bringing awareness to the issue of violence against women.

"I'd love to work with young girls in particular and help instill the importance of having confidence, self-worth, and how to make healthy choices for oneself. I love that pageants allow young women the opportunity and platform to share their voice about issues that are important to them."

She says that after the competition she hopes to get more involved in modeling and shares that her ultimate "dream job" would be to have a cooking show.

But for now Sussenguth says, "I'm so thankful for everything in my life right now and I'm looking forward to see what the future has in store for me!"

www.Lamorindaweekly.com Most Frequently Viewed Stories From Our Last Issue:



- Moraga Mom Gives Thanks for Every Breath She Takes
- Miramonte Water Polo Marks 50 Years in Lamorinda
- Lafayette Voters Reject Measure C, City's Sales Tax
- Council Member Brandt Andersson Steps Down
- HopSkipDrive is a Driving Force in Lamorinda for Kids and Youth
- Town Council Decries Out-of-Towners Using Commons Park
- Lamorinda BART Results: One Incumbent Breezes One Pummeled
- Miramonte Boys Edge Campo for NCS Polo Win
- College Bound Whats Your Major Be Ready to Answer
- Acalanes Girls Water Polo Wins NCS D2 Championship

If you wish to view any of the stories above go to www.lamorindaweekly.com and click the link below the story.

Join us for Photos with Santa at 5A Dec. 17th 11am - 3pm



- Saturday, Dec. 17th, Santa will be at 5A 11am - 3pm for Free Photos, frame, cookies, cocoa, arts & crafts
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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from 5A!



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Orindan Pens Dark Holiday Humor

By Sophie Braccini



Sean Murphy evokes some scary holiday fun with his new book, shown here with it at Orinda Books. Photo Sophie Braccini

“An Undead Night Before Christmas” is a delightful, frightfully funny comic book created by young Orinda author and illustrator Sean David Murphy.

“Twas the night before Christmas, though night would soon fall, not a creature was stirring in the old castle hall...” Sean David Murphy’s spin on Clement Clarke Moore’s poem does start with some familiar words, but soon, the quaint feel of an English cottage slides into the frightening cold of a Transylvanian winter that has not had a Santa visit in many centuries. But old St. Nick feels brave this year, and he doesn’t want to postpone his visit to the forsaken land. Will Santa survive

the ordeal, or will he and his reindeers become the Christmas feast for the undead of Transylvania?

Murphy explains that every year, his family meets family friends, the Downs, and that is has become a custom to read a different version of Moore’s 19th century classic tale. “Variations have been written for different regions,” says the author, “but nothing had been done yet for Transylvania. I had to do something!” Humor and good cheer is what gets these two families together, and humor is something that Murphy has in an abundance.

Murphy created with his drawings a very cool atmosphere for the

album. Most of the drawings are in black, white and grey shades, with the powerful red of Santa matching the red eyes of the undead piercing the night. This simple color contrast immediately creates a frightful feeling, though the very primary color red is a reminder that this is all a joke.

The young author, who says that he wants to orient his career toward animation, gives good example here of how drawing can create movement. The first pages are still, to establish the atmosphere of the tale, but as the action unfolds Murphy drew pages where readers get the feeling of the characters moving, faster and faster.

It is obvious that the young man is attracted to the fantastic and mythical world, and that he had a lot of fun drawing his undead monsters.

The text itself rhymes nicely, and the story itself progresses a little bit predictably, but all in good fun. This album is perfect for any tween or teen with a sense of humor and an attraction for what’s a bit out of the ordinary. Don’t worry, parents! Santa will survive in the end.

The author of the book self-published his work on Amazon and it can be purchased locally at Orinda Books.

Murphy was raised in Orinda and still lives there. He graduated from U.C. Santa Cruz with a degree in environmental studies but decided that his passion was in illustration and animation. For more information visit seandavidmurphy.com.

CAPA’s ‘Nutcracker’ is a Holiday Treat

Submitted by Lynn Davis

The California Academy of Performing Arts, Inc., Presents
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• DECEMBER 16TH, 17TH & 18TH at the Campolindo Performing Arts Center •

Snow falls onstage and the Christmas tree magically grows to great heights in the California Academy of Performing Arts presentation of “The Nutcracker” at the Campolindo Per-

forming Arts Center from Dec. 16 through 18 at the Campolindo Performing Arts Center.

This Lamorinda family tradition for over 20 years is a feast for the eyes, filled with surprises

and delights for all ages. The story is narrated as it unfolds, guiding young viewers through the beautiful ballet and making it much more enjoyable for little ones (and grown-ups!) who might not be familiar with the timeless story of Clara and her magical Christmas Eve dream.

Anything is possible with enough talent and enthusiasm, and both are abundant in this group of young dancers. This production is large, with more than 100 local performers, extravagant sets, live narration, and elegant costumes, many of which are new this year including hand-sewn tutus from Russia.

While the studio demands excellence and precision in the dancing, it also seeks to involve ballet students of all ages, adding to the spirit of the performances. Six- and 7-year-olds are delightful as the spun-sugar Christmas angels, and advanced high school ballerinas take on the more demanding, classic roles of the Snow Queen, Rose Queen and Sugar Plum Fairy. Local high school football players and other athletes even appear as party guests.

Two Performances will be held at 5:30 and 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 16, at 2 and 7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 17 and at 1 and 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 18. Tickets for the general public are \$22 and can be purchased at www.capashows.eventbrite.com.

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Peace Poster contest Draws Hundreds of Entries Locally

Submitted by Robert Murtagh



From Joaquin Miller Intermediate School, from left, Lion Dana Glasgow, winner Sara Yuan, Principal Joan Danilson, winner Natalie Tang, teacher M. Wexler, winner Fatima Taymurer and Lion Bob Murtagh.



From Orinda Intermediate School, from left, teacher Susan Weiss, winners Willa Kay, Lydia Gant, Aidan McCart, Maren McDonald and Lion Bob Murtagh.



From Stanley Middle School, from left, teacher Robert Anke, winners Alex Gonzales, Claudia Cruse and Lion Bob Murtagh.

More than 200 Lamorinda intermediate school students participated in the 29th annual Lions International Peace Poster Contest this year.

This contest is sponsored by Lions Clubs around the world to emphasize the importance of world peace to young people everywhere.

The theme this year was “A Celebration of Peace,” and the winners pictured will move on to the next level of competition. It’s estimated that over 600,000 entries from more than 200 countries will compete for a grand prize of \$5,000.

For more information about the contest and the Lamorinda Lions club, contact Bob Murtagh at (925) 283-1841.

Teardrop Trailer Gets a Name

Submitted by Tom Black



Juliette Moore, center, is flanked by Claire Roberts of Orinda, president of Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, and fellow club member Chuck Yeager of Lafayette.

Juliette Moore successfully named the teardrop trailer Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary is building and will raffle next spring as a fundraiser. Proceeds will benefit a variety of community-service programs.

By vote of club members “Teardrop Inn” was selected from among scores of names hopefuls inscribed on the sides of a prototype displayed at the Lafayette Art & Wine Festival in September.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, which has adopted the motto “We Build Stuff,” in recent

years successfully raffled a pair of canoes. Like the trailer, both were hand-built from scratch.

For more information, email lamorindasunriserotary@gmail.com or visit http://www.lamorindasunrise.org.

The club, which in the coming year celebrates its 30th anniversary, meets over breakfast Fridays, beginning at 7 a.m. at Lafayette Hotel & Spa on Mount Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette. Guests are always welcome.

Teen Radio Broadcast Celebrates Five Years on Voice America Kids

Submitted by Cynthia Brian



On Nov. 29, Express Yourself! Teen Radio broadcast its 243rd original program as it celebrates five years on the Voice America Kids Network.

What began in 2011 with two hosts and four reporters from Lamorinda has blossomed into more than 34 young adults hosting and reporting from all around the United States on topics that resonate with millennials and the YA community. This is a show for teens, by teens, and with teens, created and produced by veteran radio host and producer Cynthia Brian, whose radio broadcast has been airing live weekly since 1998 (www.StarStyleRadio.com).

Many teens and young adults from Lamorinda have participated in this radio broadcast including current hosts and reporters Caiseen Kelly, Brigitte Jia, Zahra Hasanian, Maria Wong, Katie Lyons, Katie Choo, Alex Pawlakos, Eric Pawlakos, Jack Pawlakos, Chelsea Pelchat, and Seo Young Kim

Hosts interview authors, athletes, dancers, artists, scientists, astrologers, actors, Olympians and other celebrities as well as outstanding teens making a difference in the world.

See more at www.voiceamerica.com/show/2014/express-yourself and www.bt-sya.com/express_youself_radio_show.html.

The Saklan School Values Kindness

Submitted by Christine Kuckuk



The Saklan “Kindness” bulletin board.

Photo provided

The Saklan School was a proud participant in the Moraga iKind Project, incorporating the topic of “Kindness” into their social and emotional learning curriculum for the month of September. For the entire month, classes at all grade levels — even music, art, Spanish and physical education — included a focus on kindness.

Kindness was also the subject of Saklan’s Family Group activities where teams of students from first grade through middle school are led by eighth graders with seventh-grade assistants. Teams created chains of different

colored construction paper containing their ideas for paying kindness forward at school, with family and in the community. The chains from different teams were then connected with a golden link. Saklan students as young as three-year-old Owlets and four-year-old Hoot Owls pledged to promote and value kindness.

On Friday, Nov. 4, local iKind organizer Wendell Baker attended The Saklan School’s weekly Flag Assembly as an honored guest and was presented with nearly 150 pledge cards from students and staff.

Moraga Teen to Study in Taiwan

Submitted by Gary Irwin

Vasch Elena Gerber of Moraga has been selected by Rotary District 5160 to be a Rotary exchange student to Taiwan for the 2017-2018 school year, and will be sponsored by Rotary Club of Moraga.

She is a Moraga resident and a freshman at Tilden Preparatory School, a 40-student private school in Walnut Creek that individualizes the pace and teaching method to address a wide range of learning needs. Vasch excels at languages and is studying Spanish, French, German, and Mandarin Chinese. She enjoys history and current affairs, and is a valued member of her school debate team.

Rotary District 5160 comprises the 72 northern California clubs, which currently has 11 inbound foreign exchange students and 11 outbound exchange students throughout the world. Vasch will go through many

training sessions with her parents regarding foreign travel, culture shock, youth exchange etiquette, safety, host parents, host clubs, etc. between now and next summer. Moraga Rotary finances this training plus her Rotary blue blazer, and her parents pay all the insurance, visa and travel expenses.

Vasch will be assigned to a host city and host Rotary club in Taiwan in the spring. When she is assigned, she will be hosted for the year by that local Rotary Club which will provide her board and housing, school fees, and a monthly stipend of about \$100.

Regular meetings of the Moraga Rotary are held on most Tuesdays at the Soda Center at St. Mary’s College, and for further information, please call Frank May at 925-376-8195, or check out moragarotary.org.

Positive Aging

10 Tips for Aging Well Despite the Wrinkles

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson

The marketing media has us thinking we want to use anti-aging products to look 20 years younger. Wouldn't you want to wear your wisdom in your body with pride and self-respect? If you are always trying to look younger, will you ever make friends with the "you" you are today? Or, will you be disappointed every time you look into the mirror?

Attitude and outlook have a lot to do with how we hold our bodies and how we appear. Those who I have worked with during my years in the aging field, and that have aged well and whom I admire for their continued contributions and lovely spirits, say it is all in how you look at life that gives you life. When I talk with these people, I only see beauty and wisdom, not wrinkles or gray hair. I see smiles even when they are talking about losses in their long lives as they seemed to have made adjustments and come to acceptance without regrets but only lovely memories.

These people who are still with us, and in their late 80s, 90s, and beyond are almost like magnets you just want to be in their presence and soak up their wisdom while listening to their stories.

So what does it take to have a Positive Life?

1) Attitude: Enjoy some of every day no matter what the day holds. Embrace your life's integrity.

2) Forgiveness: Don't hold grudges.

3) Spirituality: Belief in a "higher self" and practice "mindfulness" activities.

4) Engagement: Take a stand on something you believe in, volunteer and connect with friends and family. Don't ever isolate yourself from others.

5) Health: Eat a fresh food diet, exercise, work on brain health and get regular health check-ups.

6) Interests: Embrace a hobby or an outside interest that gives you joy.

7) Love: Relationships – always have someone in your life that you really "love."

8) Self-Care: Find time in every day to take care of yourself that makes you feel good. If you are ever a caregiver for another, always find time for yourself and your relationships.

9) Grieve: After a loss take the time to grieve but move beyond at a reasonable time.

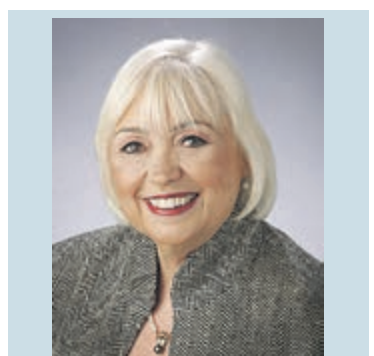
10) Generosity: Give of your time and resources to those who are in need.

If you are down, depressed, over-caring for another or just can't get motivated, seek out a professional therapist or counselor. Positive people find answers and get back on track; life has dips and potholes. The trick is not to get stuck.

If you want to "Age Positively" and you are not quite all

the way there with the above 10 tips (that have come from many of my clients), Eldercare Services will be having a class on "Positive Aging" on Dec. 16 from 2:00-3:30 p.m. in our office. Give us a call 925-937-2018 for location and more information; you are more than welcome to join others as we work on a few of these ideas. We all want to live well and have the best life possible – sometimes we didn't have the best of role models — and when we work on ourselves, the wrinkles will not disappear, but the smiles will make you more attractive than you have ever been.

Affirmation: "I am more than this body – I am spirit and attitude."



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She is the Founder of Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company doing business since 1989. Linda most recently became a partner and Chief Professional Officer of the VillagePlan™. Linda's new e-book "7 Steps to a Healthy Life for You and Your Aging Parents" can be found on Amazon.com.

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Richard Filinson, M.D. announces the opening of his medical office at 925 Village Center in Lafayette, limited to the practice of Homeopathy. Please visit the website at rfilinsonhomeopathy.com. Dr. Filinson is available to give talks on Homeopathy and answer general questions on the subject to groups of 7 or more adults. 925-818-5008

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In Memory

Karen "Lindy" Tipton 1937-2016



Karen "Lindy" Tipton, daughter of Theodore and Gladys Lindblom of Seattle, died Nov. 20 in La Jolla, California, due to complications of advanced dementia. She was 79.

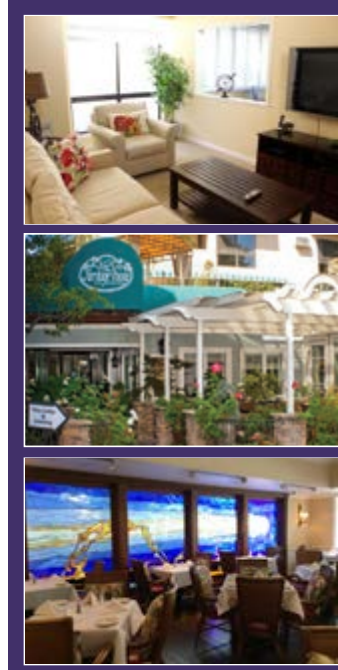
Born in 1937 in Seattle, Lindy received a Bachelor of Education from Washington State University. She taught in Washington, New York and Germany, where she traveled and skied throughout Europe. She was always full of life and loved adventure. Lindy returned from Europe to marry her wonderful husband, Keith, and relocated to San Francisco and shortly thereafter, to Orinda. She spent 46 years in Orinda and cherished her work with the Orinda Women's Club and spending time with all of her incredible friends.

Lindy was a beloved wife, mother and friend. Her husband, Keith, preceded her in death in 1999 from cancer. She is survived by her two daughters, Kim and Kelly, along with Kim's husband, John Tang, and Kelly's fiance, Jon Davis, Jr., all of whom live in San Diego. Lindy would want all of her dear friends in Northern California to know how much she cherished them and that the debilitating effects of dementia precluded her from keeping in touch, as she would have loved so much. God bless you all.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Dementia Society of America, dementiasociety.org.

Services will be held in San Diego at a date to be determined.

Submit stories to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com



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FAMILY HOLIDAY EVENTS

"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever," presented by Town Hall Theatre, runs Dec. 3-17 in Lafayette. For show times and tickets, call 925.283.1557 or see www.TownHallTheatre.com. (See story page B1.)

Find all your handcrafted holiday gifts and support local artisans at the annual holiday faire at the historic Hacienda de las Flores. Hand-crafted gifts, décor and specialty foods by over 45 local artisans. All items hand-made. This event is sponsored by and is a fundraiser for The Hacienda Foundation. 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 2 and 4 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 3. For more information email HaciendaHolidayFaire@gmail.com, www.facebook.com/Hacienda-HolidayFaire/.

150 years. It will run through Dec. 18. 1928 St Mary's Rd., Moraga, (925) 631-4000.

The David Lew Art Exhibition runs through Dec. 7 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. 3491 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette,

Moraga Art Gallery's new exhibit Beauty Near and Far features oil landscapes by Walnut Creek artist Kerima Swain, whose vibrant colors and sun-dappled landscapes transport viewers to sites around the world, from Saint Mary's College and the Golden Gate to the Greek isle of Hydra and beyond. Also featured is a boldly-hued collection of pit and saggar-fired ceramics by guest artist Lesley Jensen. The show runs through Jan. 7. For more information, visit www.moragaartgallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

The Orinda Hospice Tree lighting ceremony will be take place at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 3 outside Bank of America in Orinda Village. (See page A7.)

All are welcome to join the Saint Mary's College Guild to attend their annual Christmas luncheon from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Dec. 8 at Dryden Hall, St. Mary's College. Social hour and a bake sale featuring holiday treats and a money tree raffle will begin at 11 a.m. with a delicious lunch served at noon. Entertainment by the Saint Mary's College award-winning chorale. Cost is \$45 and all proceeds benefit financial aid scholarships. RSVP by Nov. 30. For questions: phone Pat Mc Enaney at 376 - 3306.

Second Annual Afternoon of Gratitude, to be held on Friday, Dec. 9 at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Dr. This end-of-year event is Lamorinda Village's way of thanking members, volunteers, and donors with a nice social gathering for folks to meet each other. Entertainment by a local Irish Celtic group. If you have any interest in helping out with the event, please contact Anne@LamorindaVillage.org.

The Peter Pan Foundation proudly presents its holiday show, "Twas the Opening Night Before Christmas." It follows a high school in the midst of auditions, callbacks, opening night, and all the drama that comes with it. The show will be performed at Northgate High school Little Theater Dec. 9 to 11. Visit www.peterpanfoundation.org for show times and to purchase tickets.

The Contra Costa Mega Challah Bake is 7 p.m. on Thursday Dec. 15 at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. Registration begins at 6:30 p.m. Discover the art of challah making from scratch and the mystique of the time-honored tradition. \$18 with advanced registration. RSVP required at www.Jewishcontracosta.com/ChallahBake.

ART

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art presents Social Justice: It Happens to One It Happens To All. It showcases 43 artists on the themes of social justice that examines timely subject matter being debated during this election year. Through Dec. 11. Also, The American Soldier, A Photographic Tribute, an exhibition of 116 photographs, from the Civil War to the War in Iraq, is on display. This is a dramatic exhibition of photographs from the Civil War to the War in Iraq that captures the essence of American soldiering over more than

Lamorinda Arts Alliance is proud to announce a new show at the Orinda Library, *People, Places and Things*, opening Dec 3 and running through Jan. 2. This show represents all media and many styles from realism to abstraction. Many of the paintings and photographs are scenes that will be familiar to Bay Area residents. A free reception will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. on Dec. 4. Chat with the artists and partake in appetizers and beverages while you enjoy fifty plus pieces of artwork.

Jennifer Permuter Gallery presents *It's the Small Things* holiday small works exhibit Dec. 8 through 23, with a reception from 6 to 9 p.m. on Dec 8. Enjoy wine and refreshments, art by Bay Area artists, priced for gift giving. Original Oils, mixed media, photographs, Pit fired and Raku ceramics.

MUSIC

The Oakland East Bay Gay Men's Chorus, a nonprofit organization, will be performing "Fairy Tales: A Holiday Concert" at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 3 at the Lafayette Christian Church, 584 Glenside Dr. Tickets: \$25 general, \$10 senior and students, kids free. <http://oebgmc.org>.

Handel's "Messiah" remains the most well-known oratorio ever written and will be performed at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 3 at the Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church and 4 p.m. on Dec. 4 at the First Presbyterian Church of Oakland. Cantare's Chorale and Ensemble will join with soloists and a full orchestra to present this masterwork. Tickets: \$40 General and \$35 Senior. For groups of eight or more, tickets are just \$30 per person. Purchase tickets online at www.cantareconvivo.org or call (510) 836-0789.

Diablo Choral Artists presents "Christmas Pudding," a concert of traditional English songs featuring works by Rutter, Tavener, Vaughan Williams, Byrd, Holst, and more at 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 2 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephen's Drive, Orinda, and at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 4 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 1601 Mary Drive, Pleasant Hill. Details and ticket purchase on website www.dcachorus.org Info (925) 680-7089, info@dcachorus.org

... continued on next page

Lamorinda's Religious Services

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WINTER WORSHIP SCHEDULE
 NOVEMBER 20, 2016 - JANUARY 8, 2017

9:30 a.m. Worship Service
 Coffee Fellowship at 10:30 a.m.
 Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

North Shattuck Association presents "Snow? In Berkeley?" from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 4, at Gourmet Ghetto, 1451-1495 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. Bring boots and mittens to play in the snow. There will be a Snow Queen, pony rides, DIY crafts, holiday craft vendors and more. Cost: Free. For more info see www.anotherbullwinkelshow.com/holiday-berkeley/holiday-gourmet-ghetto.html, call (510) 334-6523 or email Lisa@AnotherBullwinkelShow.com.

Kids Mega Challah Bake. Join dozens of children from across Lamorinda in making, kneading, & shaping challah from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on Dec. 7. For youth of all ages. \$10 a child. <http://www.chabadoflamorinda.com>.

You're invited to take a photo with Santa from noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 10 in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center, in the suite directly next door to Starbucks. There will also be holiday clowns and balloon art. Free with your Rheem Valley Shopping Center receipts totaling \$25 or more. www.rheemvalley.net.

Orinda Theatre Square Free Family Holiday Fun is 5 to 8 p.m., tree lighting at 7 p.m. on Dec. 3, Free Santa visits and Photo Op, Kids Ornament Workshop, Horse and carriage rides. 5 to 7 p.m. on Dec. 10, Meet the Frozen Princesses, photo booth/face painting, horse and carriage Rides, free gourmet coffee and hot chocolate.

Holiday Tree Lighting at 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 1 at the Moraga Commons Park. Join Santa and his Moraga Youth Involvement Committee helpers for cookies and hot cocoa in the Moraga Commons Park for the annual Holiday Tree Lighting. Entertainment with the Lamorinda Theatre Academy begins at 6:30 p.m.

"It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette" community holiday celebration is scheduled from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2 in Lafayette's Plaza Park, located in downtown Lafayette. Complimentary admission. Arrive early and plan to stay. This fun and festive event includes visits from Santa, official holiday tree lighting ceremony, one-of-a-kind photo ops, live entertainment, crafts, holiday treats and a holiday sing-along.

See the Christmas story come to life at the 12th annual viewing of the Live Nativity at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church (MVPC). Come by anytime from 5:30 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 3 when the MVPC Courtyard will be transformed into a Bethlehem manger. While the Courtyard will be a reverent scene, there will be additional activities, music and refreshments in the Fellowship Hall. The Sanctuary will be open for prayer and reflection. Free.

Please...



...thanks

Please submit:

Events: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

Stories: storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

Letters: letters@lamorindaweekly.com

Opinion: letters@lamorindaweekly.com

MOVIE REVIEW

Film Clips

Lamorinda Theatres Celebrate the Season with Unique Films and Fun

By Derek Zemrak



Jan Wahl will co-host a lecture on holiday movies on Dec. 10. Photo provided

The Rheem Theatre will get people into the holiday spirit at 7 p.m. on Dec. 2 with the Psychotronic Christmas Film Festival. This crazy, fun-filled evening will include some of the weirdest, wildest and wackiest Christmas short subjects all projected on 16MM film. The shorts will include vintage cartoons, TV commercials, stop-motion animation and oddball clips. Amazing Melanie will host these wild short films, commercials, TV promos and movie trailers.

The modern-day Christmas classic, "Home Alone" will be the FREE movie of the month at the Orinda Theatre at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 8. "Home Alone" is now 26 years old and tells the tale of an 8-year-old troublemaker who must protect his home from a pair of burglars when he is accidentally left at home when his entire family flies off for their Christmas vacation. Bay Area resident Chris Columbus directed the film that stars Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern. Did you know that "Home Alone" was nominated for two Academy Awards in 1991 for Best Music, Original Song, "Somewhere in My Memory" and Best Music Original Score? "Home Alone" is one of my favorite holiday movies.

Speaking of holiday movies, KCBS Entertainment Editor Jan Wahl and I will be presenting a lecture at 4 p.m. on Dec. 10, at the Orinda Theatre entitled "Hollywood Does the Holidays." Learn how Hollywood has portrayed the holidays throughout the years, from the Fourth of July, Halloween, Thanksgiving, to Christmas and Hanukkah, Jan and I will cover it all. The lecture will include film clips, behind-the-

scenes stories, a whole lot of laughs and holiday refreshments. Tickets are \$20 and proceeds will benefit the Moraga Community Foundation.

Do you miss the good ole holiday television specials with Dean Martin, Andy Williams, Perry Como or The Osmonds? Well wish no more! Adam Reeves and Patti Liedecker will be recreating that feeling in the best holiday musical special ever at 7 p.m. on Saturday Dec. 10 at the Rheem Theatre. The evening will include amazing performers, singers, live music, sing-alongs and comedy. Wear your zaniest holiday sweater and win a prize; bring an unwrapped toy for the Toy for Tots program. Come join the fun with Patti, Adam and friends for the warmest holiday special ever. Tickets are \$20

The Silent Movie Night series at the Rheem continues at 7 p.m. Dec. 17 with two delightful versions of the Charles Dickens classic novel, "A Christmas Carol." The first short will be from 1913, a 40-minute film entitled "Old Scrooge," followed by the 30-minute, 1922 version, "Christmas Carol." Pianist Liedecker will be performing the live musical score and I will be doing a lecture on the history for the Dickens classic on the big screen, from the silent period to 2009's Robert Zemeckis version. Santa Claus will also be in attendance for the youngsters and the young at heart! Tickets are \$15.

Tickets for all shows at the Orinda and Rheem Theaters can be purchased online at www.lamorindatheatres.com or the theaters' box office.

I would like to wish everyone the happiest of holiday season. See you at the movies!

Hacienda Holiday Faire

Dec. 2, Noon - 8:00pm Dec. 3 & 4, 11am to 6pm

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6:00 - 8:00 pm Fri., Dec. 2nd 4:00 - 6:00 Sat., Dec. 3rd

This event is sponsored by and is a fundraiser for the Hacienda Foundation

Service Clubs Announcements



We meet Friday mornings at 7:00 am at The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. For more info, please email us at lamorindasunrise@gmail.com

December 2

Nutritionist Jill West discusses Breakthrough Nutrition At Any Age.

December 9

Tom Clement, Executive Director, Save Mt. Diablo

The Teardrop Trailer is emerging anew. With shining skin that will dazzle you!

Lafayette Rotary Club

Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting. Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

December 1:
Mary Jo Marggraff
Far and Away: Leaving Earth without going nuts.

December 8:
Club Assembly

www.rotarylafayette.org
www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-Ca-197392963631366

SOROPTIMIST OF 24/680



Please join us for our next meeting:

WHEN: Wednesday, December 7th
Social 5:30-6:00 p.m.
Meeting 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

WHERE: The Buttercup Grill
660 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek.

Contact us about our Crab Feed Feb 11th at Lafayette Community Center

For more information, contact:
Regina Englehart @925-876-9076
or go to: soroptimist24-680.org

Not to be missed

MUSIC ... continued

Joyous holiday inspired music performed by the Piano Composers chapter of the Contra Costa Performing Arts Society will be featured at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1924 Trinity Avenue in Walnut Creek (a block from the Dean Leshner Center for the Arts) at 7:30 p.m. on Friday Dec. 9. The event is free. Parking is plentiful and light refreshments will be served. Visit www.ccpas.org for more information.

"How Can I Keep From Singing," WomenSing's holiday concert is from 8 to 10 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 14 at Church of Santa Maria, 40 Santa Maria Way, Orinda. WomenSing's holiday concert offers an eclectic mix of carols, classical favorites, and new works, for a joyful and comforting holiday musical event. Cost: \$28 general admission; \$10 for students. For more info see www.womensing.org/content/how-can-i-keep-singing or call (925) 798-4875 or email info@womensing.org.

THEATER

DVC presents the powerful play "The Laramie Project" at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 2:30 p.m. on Sunday from Dec. 2 to Dec. 11 at DVC Drama, located at 321 Golf Club Rd, Pleasant Hill. The Laramie Project is a breathtaking theatrical collage that explores the depths to which humanity can sink and the heights of compassion of

which we are capable. For tickets, call (925) 969-2358 or go to our website at www.dvcdrama.net

LECTURE & LITERATURE

"Rise & Shine: Better Breakfasts for Busy Mornings" with cookbook author, registered dietitian, mother and blogger Katie Sullivan Morford. Enjoy an evening out as Morford samples delicious recipes from her latest cookbook, a great gift for busy parents, at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1 at the Lafayette Library. \$15, includes food samples and sparkling cocktail. To purchase tickets: tinyurl.com/DSSMorford.

Science Café: Engineering Eden with author Jordan Fisher Smith. A former wilderness ranger, Smith discusses his latest book and the scientific dispute over controlling nature. 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 6, at the Lafayette Library & Learning Center. Tickets \$10, Students FREE with ID. To register: tinyurl.com/SciCafeNature.

"A Child's Christmas in Wales" — An illustrated history and reading is at 6 p.m. on Dec 15 in the Lafayette Library Community Hall. Explore the wonder, nostalgia, and Welsh charm of Dylan Thomas's holiday poem in this special celebration and reading by guest presenter Dulais Rhys. Please register for this free event at tinyurl.com/LAFwales.

Not to be missed

SENIORS

Let's Do Lunch! - Discover and explore the various dining experiences in the Lamorinda area. Lunch starts at 11 a.m. on the first Tuesday of the month. Relax, dine, meet new people, socialize and enjoy lively conversation. Space is limited. Contact Lafayette Senior Services for the schedule of restaurants and to make your reservations: Seniors@LoveLafayette.org or 284-5050. Individuals will pay for their own lunches.

Welcome to Medicare is a free class presented by the Contra Costa Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HI-CAP). You will learn when and how to enroll, about Medicare costs and benefits, prescription coverage, Medicare Advantage plans (HMOs), Medicare Supplements and how Medicare coordinates with other coverage. 7 to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 14 at John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek. See www.cchicap.org or call (925) 602-4163 for more information

OTHER

Peyo Love Fest, a celebration and fund raiser will be held 12 to 5 p.m. on Dec. 3 at the Miramonte High School Cafeteria. The celebration will honor Coach Peyovich and his contributions on and off the field for our community. The fundraiser will give the Peyovich family a critical financial boost to help

Not to be missed

with expenses such as his medical treatments, home costs and help with his children's educations. All the funds raised will go directly to Coach Peyo and his family.

Daughters of the Goddess, a Bay Area women-only Goddess Temple, will be holding our yearly Winter Solstice Ritual starting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday,

day, Dec. 21. Location: East Bay address given upon RSVP. New-comers \$15.

Please submit events to:
calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

Lamorinda Weekly

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Thoughtful Food

Chef Hugo's Tasty Croissants May be Tough to Make, but Worth Every Minute

By Susie Iventosch



Susie Iventosch's daughter, Courtney, cuts croissant triangles with her mom.

Photos Susie Iventosch

On a recent trip to Paris I had a hankering to take a cooking class. I wasn't especially picky about what kinds of things we would learn to make, but just thought it would be a really fun thing to do.

When I discovered "Make Your Own Croissants" at Le Foodist cooking school on the Left Bank, I was sold. What better place in the world to learn how to make croissants than Paris? And, the added bonus was that the class was taught by a French pastry chef, in English, but with that gorgeous accent. Although I do speak French, I thought that perhaps it might be a great idea to learn how to make croissants

in my native language. They are kind of tricky and time-consuming in any language, so it really helps to understand the instructions.

With six students in the croissant class, and two cooking stations, we all took turns adding ingredients to the dough, kneading and rolling, and finally forming our croissants. The lesson gave us a really great understanding of what makes croissants so beautifully flaky and layered (81 layers!) and when we were all done and the croissants were in the oven, we sat around the table chatting, telling stories and drinking coffee.

One of the things our instructor,

Hugo Renard, insisted upon, was that we would do all of the measuring in grams using a scale. The scale offers a more accurate measurement than the cups. He said, "No measuring spoons or cups in this class!"

Because the croissants turned out so well and were so delicious, I didn't want to convert this recipe into our usual measuring cup and spoon routine, so you will need to own, buy or borrow a scale for this recipe. If you have not used a cooking scale before, then you should read about how to "tare" the scale, which in effect zeros-out the scale after taking into account the weight of the vessel used to hold the ingredients. We

used a series of small metal bowls in class, but whatever containers you use, be sure to tare the scale to get an accurate reading.

One notable ingredient we used in the class was fresh cake yeast, which gave the croissants a distinct flavor. I had trouble finding fresh yeast in the stores near me, so I went ahead and used dry yeast, and the croissants turned out beautifully, but without that more distinctly yeasty flavor. If you'd like to try the fresh yeast, I checked with Diablo Foods and they carry the Fleischmann's brand in the refrigerator section on Aisle 9. Be sure to note that if converting to dry yeast you will use approximately one-third the amount of fresh yeast called for in the recipe. So, instead of 20 grams of fresh, you will use about 7 grams of dry yeast.

I wanted to be sure to make this recipe soon after returning home, so I wouldn't forget all of

Hugo's great tips. You will probably find some new terminology you've not heard of before. At least, that was the case for me. The whole process from beginning to end will take approximately three- to-four hours, but with some spare time in between, as the dough is chilling or the croissants are proofing and baking. Be sure to have plenty of time when you dive into this project, and you'll enjoy the experience much more than if you are rushed.

Also, once the croissants are formed, they can be frozen before proofing and baking. It's best to freeze them on a tray until firm, and then transfer them to a baggie to save space. When you're ready to bake them, take them out of the freezer the night before, or at least several hours ahead of time, to let them thaw and proof before baking them.

Bon Appetit!

For more information about Le Foodist, visit www.lefoodist.com/. For more information about fresh or cake yeast and how it compares to dry yeast, visit www.thekitchn.com/does-fresh-yeast-make-a-difference-in-breads-lets-try-something-new-217460, or www.traditionaloven.com/conversions_of_measures/yeast_converter.html. For yeast conversion from fresh to dry, visit <http://makebread.com.au/fresh-yeast-conversion/>.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com.

This recipe can be found on our website: 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.

Chef Hugo's Croissants

**Note this recipe calls for just over one pound of butter, and even though it is measured in grams, I thought it would be more helpful for you to know approximately how much butter to have on hand.*

Step 1: Make the Polish (yeast and flour mixture)

Weigh out the following ingredients and place in a bowl: (all measurements are in grams=g)

- 20g fresh, cake yeast (use 7g if using active dry yeast)
- 112g water at about 110 degrees
- 75g all-purpose flour

Gently mix with a fork or whisk, until yeast dissolves. This is called the "polish."

Next cover the polish with:

- 375g cake flour
- 100g all-purpose flour

Be sure to completely cover the yeast mixture

(or polish) with these two types of flour, but do not stir into mixture. Cover bowl with a damp cloth (not directly on dough, but drape cloth over the top of the bowl). Rest 30 minutes covered – until cracks develop.

**Hugo says by completely covering the polish with flour, you can easily see that the yeast is working once it pushes through to form cracks in the flour.*

Step 2: Make the Dough

Weigh the following ingredients and set aside:

- 50g granulated sugar
- 12g salt
- 175g milk
- 110g butter (roughly 1 stick plus 1 Tbsp.)

Add sugar, salt, milk, and butter to polish. Pour this all into the bowl of your KitchenAid. Using the dough hook attachment, mix for 1 minute, or until mixture becomes a soft dough. You will hear the dough beginning to sort of thump against the edges of the bowl. Place dough into a greased, large bowl and cover bowl with a damp cloth. (Again, not directly on dough, but drape cloth over top of bowl.)

Rest at room temperature for 1 hour. Then press dough down, cover and refrigerate for approximately 1 hour.

Step 3: Roll out the Butter

Meanwhile prepare the butter. Cut a large piece of plastic wrap or parchment paper, approximately 15 x 25 inches. Place 350g unsalted butter (this will be slightly more than 3 sticks of butter) in the center of one half of the paper. Fold paper over butter so that the butter is in the center and paper is both under and over butter.

Using a rolling pin, gently beat butter to flatten and then roll out to approximately ¼-inch thickness and in a perfect square that is approximately 10 inches* square. Be careful not to tear the paper. Use the edges of the paper or a knife to get to a straight. Once flattened and shaped, keep butter covered in wrap and refrigerated until ready to use.

**The measurement may differ depending upon thickness, but this is roughly the size you want!*

Step 4: Roll Out Dough and Make the First Turn

Dust a large cutting board or a flat surface with flour. (Always keep extra flour on hand from here on out for dusting both the surface of the dough as well as the rolling surface.) Place dough on surface and roll out into a rectangle slightly more than double the length and three inches wider than your large square of butter. So, this should be about 13 x 23 inches or so.

Remove butter from refrigerator and let sit for about 3-5 minutes to soften ever so slightly.



Now, take your big square of butter and place it on one end of the dough, leaving a ½ -inch border on the sides. (Be sure to peel off paper or plastic wrap around the butter as you place it on the dough!) Fold the other half of the dough over the butter, and then just like wrapping a package, fold the sides over the top, pressing them gently with your fingers in order to seal the butter inside of the dough package.

You now have a big square of dough with the butter tucked inside. Beginning from the middle of the square, work your way up towards the top and from the middle work your way down towards the bottom of the dough to form a large rectangle approximately 12 x 20 inches. Keep checking under the dough and on top of the dough for any butter escaping the package. If it is, dust with flour and be gentle with the dough. If butter escaping becomes a problem, put the dough in the refrigerator until the butter firms up a little bit and then resume.

Once you have the dough rolled out to the desired size, fold the dough in thirds, like a business letter, beginning at the narrow end. So, now you have a rectangle approximately 12 x 6 ½ inches. So, if you count dough, butter, dough, for each of the 3 folds, we now have 9 layers of dough. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Step 5: Make the Second Turn

Remove dough from refrigerator and plastic wrap and place on floured rolling surface with the narrow end towards you. Again, rolling from the center up and from the center down, roll dough out into a 12 x 20 inch rectangle, again being very careful not to allow butter to squeeze through. Again, fold in thirds, wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes to an hour. Now, you have 27 layers of butter and dough.

Step 6: Make the Third Turn

Repeat the process from Step 5, and remember to begin rolling with the narrow end towards you and roll from the center up and down. Fold in thirds, wrap and refrigerate. Now you have 81 layers of butter and dough. Refrigerate again for about 30 minutes.

Step 7: Shape the Croissants

Roll out dough into a large thin (¼-inch thick) rectangle, or cut in half or thirds and roll into several rectangles. Then cut dough into triangles approximately 4 x 7 inches and beginning at the flat end, roll into crescent shapes and curve the ends down a little bit, like a frown. Be sure to end with the tip of the triangle tucked underneath the croissant. **One of Hugo's tricks here was to make two little cuts about ¼ inch long on the 4-inch end, which helps allow the crescent shape to be curved once you roll it.*

Place croissants onto a baking sheet covered with parchment paper, or sprayed with PAM.

**If you plan to freeze some of the uncooked croissants to bake later, freeze them on a tray before the egg wash. Once frozen, store in baggies. When you want to bake them, remove from freezer to thaw, brush with egg wash, proof for about 30 minutes and then bake!*

Step 8: Make the Egg Wash

Whisk one egg plus one egg yolk with a pinch of salt. Apply the egg wash to the rolled croissants with a pastry brush.

Allow to proof at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Apply a second coat of egg wash to areas of the proofed croissant that seem to be missing the egg wash. You will clearly be able to see where you missed the egg wash the first time.

Step 9: Bake the Croissants

Preheat oven to 360 degrees. Bake croissants for approximately 12-14 minutes.



LAMORINDA SPORTS

Acalanes Volleyball Advance to D3 CIF State Title Game

By Karl Buscheck



Photos Gint Federas

Elliott.

“Our two captains are just phenomenal kids – not only talent-wise in volleyball – but they’re just phenomenal leaders,” Rodriguez said of the pair of seniors.

“Those two absolutely did a phenomenal job the entire year getting the team ready, focusing on what we had to focus on and being great communicators.”

While the Dons were the second seed in the D3 bracket, the Mats were seeded No. 1. Miramonte, who posted a 23-11 record (7-3 in league), saw their season end against Sonora, the Dons’ championship opponent. Playing at home in Orinda on Nov. 22, the Mats lost 3-2 to Sonora. Before that defeat, Miramonte had an opening-round bye and topped El Camino, 3-0, on Nov. 19.

Campolindo, which took part in the Open Division competition, also exited the bracket in the regional semifinals. The Cougars – seeded sixth in the tournament – beat Sacred Heart Catholic Preparatory, 3-1, on Nov. 17 before running into No. 2 St. Ignatius on Nov. 22. The match at St. Ignatius’ court in San Francisco ended in a 3-1 defeat for the visitors.

The Cougars, who MaxPreps ranked as the No. 35 team in the state, ended the year with a 30-11 record (10-0 in league).



Parker Jones



Melissa Elliott



From left: Devin Grobeck, Melissa Elliott, Parker Jones, Zoe McPhail and Samantha Darin

Ernie Rodriguez, the head coach of the Acalanes girls volleyball team, can pinpoint the exact moment when it all came together for his squad – the most successful in program history.

“I honestly believe our season turned around when we won the San Ramon Valley Tournament and we beat James Logan in the finals,” Rodriguez said, referring to the end-of-October invitational. “That was the turning point for us. We started really believing as a team.”

That belief helped carry the second-seeded Dons all the way to the Division 3 CIF State title game where they’ll face No. 11 Crossroads of Santa Monica.

Acalanes reached the championship, which will be played on Dec. 3 at Santiago Canyon College in Orange, by topping No. 4 Sonora in the NorCal D3 State Championship on Nov. 26.

Against Sonora, Acalanes fell behind 2-1 at their home gym in Lafayette. The Dons then roared back to win the final two sets and book their spot in the finals.

Prior to this group, no Dons team had advanced to the NorCal title game – much less the state championship. Neither had Rodriguez.

“I as a coach, 18 years of coaching high school, I’ve never been this far,” Rodriguez. “I’ve gotten to NorCal but I’ve never made it to the finals.”

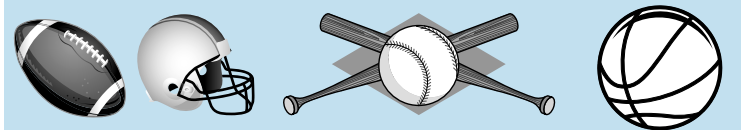
“Not once in my wildest imagination did I think we were going to be at this point. I thought we were going to have a very successful season and I thought we were going to compete for an NCS title, but not once did I ever think beyond that.”

The Dons, who have posted

a 30-9 record (7-3 in DAL), arrived in the championship after securing the second seed in the bracket. Acalanes earned a bye in the opening round, and then cruised past No. 7 Aptos and No. 6 Buhach Colony, 3-0 and 3-1, respectively.

From the outset of the season, the Dons leaned heavily on veterans Parker Jones and Melissa

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Lamorinda Rugby Football Club

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Campo Football Advances to NCS Title Game, Again

By Karl Buscheck



Jacob Westphal

Photos Karen Drinkwater

After hammering No. 5 Ukiah 48-7 in the North Coast Sectional Division 2 semifinals on Nov. 25, Campolindo is back in the section title game for the fourth time in six years.

In the win over Ukiah, which earned the No. 1 Cougars a trip to the championship on Dec. 2 at Diablo Valley College, senior quarterback Jacob Westphal completed 15 of his 23 passes while throwing for 218 yards.

The Cougars' offense received a big assist from its running game, as four different players – senior Branden Bocobo, junior Shun Ishida, senior Matthew Ringquist and senior Tomas Vega – all rushed for touchdowns.

The rise of the team's running backs has been a crucial development for the Cougars on the path to the NCS championship and a 9-3 record (4-1 in DAL).

"At this time of year, we weren't sure what we were going to get out of our running game," head coach Kevin Macy explained after his team beat No. 9 Redwood, 59-28, in the quarterfinals.

Campolindo scored on the ground five times against Redwood after attempting just nine running plays overall against Clayton Valley Charter in the final game of the Diablo Athletic League season.

"For us trying to establish some kind of running game was going to be essential," Macy said. "We couldn't go through the playoffs relying on Jacob exclusively. So, it was nice to establish a little bit of a running game."

Against Redwood, the secondary produced three interceptions, as senior Lev Garcia grabbed two and junior John Torchio secured one.

"When we can get takeaways with our secondary, that just helps us in so many ways," Macy said. "And it covers up for

some of the deficiencies that we're working with our defense."

After drawing the No. 5 seed in the D3 bracket, Miramonte saw their playoff run end in the quarterfinals when they lost to Marin Catholic, 20-18.

"They had a great season and it just kind of wasn't meant to be," head coach Jack Schram said after the narrow defeat to No. 4 Marin Catholic in Kentfield on Nov. 19. "I mean, it was such a sick feeling."

Following the loss, Schram praised the play of Tim Tague, Nick Foster and Casey McGonigle – his trio of senior stars. Tague – the team's quarterback – threw 43 touchdowns on the way to guiding Miramonte to a 9-3 record (3-2 in league).

Foster contributed to all three of the team's units, playing free safety and wide receiver while also returning kicks and punts. During the quarterfinals matchup, Foster tallied 229 all-purpose yards and caught a touchdown from Tague.

McGonigle, who started at left tackle, pulled double duty throughout the fall, as he also played middle linebacker for the defense.

Against Marin Catholic, the Mats were done in by a 13-point fourth-quarter rally by the opposition.

"We definitely should have won that game," Schram said. "And Marin Catholic got some breaks and made the plays they had to make."

The showdown with Marin Catholic was reminiscent of the team's late loss to Campolindo on Oct. 14.

"We felt all along that we let two (games) get away," Schram said. "The two teams that seemed to have our number – Campolindo and Marin Catholic – we felt we should have won both games. We had the lead in both games in the fourth quarter and we just



Tomas Vega

didn't quite finish strong like we anticipated the way we would."

Acalanes, who landed the No. 9 seed in the D3 bracket, bowed out in the opening round of NCS play. Facing off against a bruising El Cerrito squad on the road on Nov. 12, the Dons fell 31-14.

"El Cerrito didn't throw a whole lot," head coach Floyd Burnsed explained after the loss to the No. 8 seed. "They were mainly a line up and run right at you type team and up front, they probably outweighed us 150 pounds per person."

Injuries and a daunting schedule conspired against Acalanes, who ended the season with a 4-7 record (1-4 in DAL) in

Burnsed's first year at the helm.

The Dons lost three offensive linemen to injury early in the season and will focus on building team-wide depth heading into the fall of 2017.

While Acalanes loses standouts like senior linebacker Sterling Butler and senior wide receiver/free safety Matt Burns, junior quarterback Robby Rowell and junior Ryan Nall, who plays both offensive and defensive line, will be back for another go-around.

"Moving forward we are very optimistic about the caliber of players that we have returning on both sides of the ball," Burnsed said.

Lafayette 12-year-old Wins Northern California Taekwondo Association Finals

Submitted by Julie Schmit



Photo Jennifer Frase

Ben Anderson, 12, a seventh grade student at Stanley Middle School in Lafayette, took first place in the Northern California Taekwondo Association finals tournament held in Concord on Nov. 12. This is a year long event where students earn points competing in various NCTA tournaments. Ben received more points than any other student during the year. There were 360 students from around the Bay Area participating in the tournaments. Ben practices with Yu's Martial Arts in Lafayette and has been doing Taekwondo for five years.

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Campo Boys Cross Country Team Finishes 3rd at State

Miramonte's Fierro Places 11th

By Karl Buscheck



Kyle Flett Photos Gint Federas



Navid Boozarpour

After winning their fourth consecutive North Coast Section Division 3 title, the Campolindo boys cross country team finished third overall at the CIF State meet at Woodward Park in Fresno on Nov. 26.

"The boys team is really a homegrown team," said head coach Chuck Woolridge. "All of these boys are kids that came into our program with no prior experience running and really developed over the course of their time with us into quality, high-caliber athletes."

Senior Jared Yabu – the Cougars' No. 1 runner – was Campolindo's top finisher in both races, placing 22nd at State and finishing as the runner-up at the NCS meet at Hayward High School on Nov. 19.

At the State meet, the team's first five runners all finished between 22nd and 46th place, as the Cougars continued to demonstrate a remarkable ability to run in a tight pack. During the NCS race, the Cougars ran second, sixth, seventh, eighth and 16th.

"Having five guys in the top 16 like that, you'd have to go back to our 2008 team to find a lineup that was as good on that particular day," said Woolridge. "These guys are perhaps the best performing team we've ever had at NCS."

After Yabu, the group included seniors Raymond Diaz, Niki Moore, Kyle Flett and Navid Boozarpour.

"The depth of our team – with athletes like Kyle Flett and Niki Moore – really showed up (at Hayward)," Woolridge said. "For Kyle and Niki to finish right behind Ray, our natural No. 2, that was really what bolstered the win."

Miramonte senior Jonathan Fierro – the lone Miramonte Matador in the field at Woodward Park – ran in 11th place in the D4 race at State. Fierro earned his trip to Fresno by finishing fourth overall in the NCS D4 competition.

"He's been consistent all year long," head coach Brian Henderson said. "He's just been phenomenal as our No. 1 (runner). He ran up front with the big boys (at NCS) and he hung around as long as he could."

While Fierro qualified as an individual, the Mats squad missed out on a team berth by a single spot after landing in fourth place at Hayward.

"It was a little bittersweet," Henderson



Jonathon Fierro

admitted. "They were a little disappointed. We had a couple of guys who were not where we thought they'd be. Sometimes that just happens."

On a day when the Mats ended up 24 points off the final qualifying spot, an untimely injury also impacted the team's overall finish. Three weeks before taking the starting line in Hayward, Miramonte lost its No. 3 runner – junior Duran Reyes – to injury.

The Dons, who were running in the D3 competition, also failed to advance to State, but still managed to end the season on a high note.

"No doubt about it, for the boys, NCS was our best race of the year," co-head coach Michael Maloney said.

As had been the case throughout the DAL schedule, senior Zachary Woodworth was the frontrunner for the Dons, running in 34th place at the NCS meet. While Woodworth set a steady tone for the team, one of the most encouraging aspects of the year was that a slew of unexpected contributors emerged for the Dons.

No runner better fits that description than Nick Hutson, the Don's fifth-place runner in Hayward.

"Nick Hutson was a great surprise," Maloney said. "He's a freshman and he did very well at NCS. I believe it was his best race of the season. Hopefully (he) can continue to develop going into next season."

OIS Takes First in East Bay Middle School XC Championship Meet

Submitted by Julie Odlaug-Dulski



From left, Claire Nolet, Amber Lee, Jamie Say, Shannon Murphy, Kate Riley, Caitlin Jenkins and Ella Dulski Photo provided

The seventh- and eighth-grade Orinda Intermediate School girls cross country team finished first overall at the East Bay Middle School League Championships on Nov. 3 at Kennedy Grove Park. The girls were led by Ella Dulski, who was the league champion, followed by Jamie Say, who placed third and Amber Lee, who

placed fifth. It was a total team effort with Shannon Murphy, Kate Riley, Claire Nolet, Caitlin Jenkins, Josie Nelson, Maia Keene and Zoe Sylvester all contributing to the first seventh/eighth-grade cross country championship in OIS school history.

Miramonte Girls XC Run in Fifth Place in D4 Race at State

Campo Finishes 6th in D3

By Karl Buscheck



Cassidy Haskell

Photos Gint Federas

Making their first appearance at CIF State meet since 2005, the Miramonte girls team placed fifth in the D4 race at Woodward Park in Fresno on Nov. 26.

"It's been a long time coming," said head coach Brian Henderson whose team reached the State meet by winning the NCS D4 race.

"It was very satisfying and they worked their butts off," Henderson added. "It was just a very rewarding experience for them because we got done and there was just nothing but smiles and it was very cool."

Sophomore Cassidy Haskell set the tone for the Mats, running in eighth place at State while senior Hannah Fishlow (16th place) was the team's second finisher. A week earlier, Haskell coasted to an NCS win by 20 seconds.

"We knew Cassidy was going to be up front," Henderson said. "I would have been surprised if she wouldn't have won (NCS) because there was not really anyone in that race who I think was capable of lasting the whole way with her."

At NCS, it was all about the pack for the Mats, as the top five runners – Haskell, senior Rosie Cruz, Fishlow, senior Emily Freel and senior Madison Alvarado – all placed in the top 26.

"Our four and five (runners) have really been the key all year as the team part comes into play," Henderson said. "Emily was kind of like the MVP of the day because she ran way out of her head."

The Campo girls team, which finished in sixth place in the D3 State race, arrived in Fresno fresh off its fourth consecutive NCS title.

Frontrunning juniors Isabella Chao and Hannah Ruane turned in dominant performances on both the State and NCS stages. The duo finished sixth and ninth, respectively, at State and third and fourth at NCS.

"We've really relied on our top two girls earning low points and they didn't disappoint," head coach Chuck Woolridge said after NCS. "Hannah and Isabella ran at the front and they hung on for third and fourth place finishes behind two national-caliber athletes."

As was the case at State, the Cougars' top five finishers were all juniors at Hayward. After the NCS race, Woolridge offered praise for the squad's third and fourth runners – Jenna Miles and Jessie Foxworthy, while noting that No. 5 runner Savannah Hilton "really showed heart" to hold on for a 35th place finish.

"They did their part and got those low numbers and then we got a huge performance from Jenna Miles who finished ninth and Jessie Foxworthy who finished 19th," Woolridge said. "So, to put those two girls up in the top 20 that was a little bit unexpected."

Like the Cougars, the Dons ran in the D3 race at NCS, finishing in 18th place as a team. Senior Imani Boggan ran in 80th place, setting the pace for an Acalanes team that only had five runners in the field. Afterward, co-head coach Michael Maloney praised Boggan for her race-day performances and her leadership qualities.

"She really is more of a track standout and essentially did cross country for conditioning – track's a very different sport," Maloney said. "And consistently she was the top varisty runner for the girls this season and she was so great to have around."

"So, for someone who this isn't even her sport, she performed very well."



Rosie Cruz

MCC raises more than \$42K in Annual Turkey Shoot Golf Tourney

Submitted by Gary Irwin



Jim Yeakel, Rich Larsen, John Taggart, and Frank Arthur pose with the new Audi sedan that nobody won. Photo provided

The fourth annual Turkey Shoot charity golf tournament held on Nov. 3 at the Moraga Country Club raised more than \$42,500 to benefit the Contra Costa and Solano Counties Food Bank. This amount is about a 16 percent increase over the \$36,700 raised in 2015.

The total amount raised for the food bank over the four years is almost \$120,000. It was hosted by the Senior Men's Golf Association, and was led by originator and chairman Doug Brown and his committee, and assisted by many SMGA members, spouses and friends.

The 112 participating men and women golfers enjoyed a delicious breakfast and lunch, and many participated in the live and silent auctions, entered the raffle, sponsored a hole, generally underwrote the event or just donated to the cause. MCC resident Craig Oden volunteered his skill as professional auctioneer, and he prompted a lot of spirited bidding. This year, Concord Audi dealership agreed to give a new sedan, displayed at the course, to a golfer who made a hole-in-one on the 165-yard, par 3 hole No. 7, but the Audi went unclaimed.

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Happy Holidays

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 10 Issue 20 Wednesday, November 30, 2016



December Gardening Guide with Cynthia Brian. ...read on page D12

Finding That WOW Design for the Holidays

By Paula King



An elegant dining table with sequined accents highlights the Hacienda's de las Flores' great room.

Photos Andy Scheck

Christmas has always been Moraga designer Joey Chung's favorite holiday and she likes to mix holiday decorating staples with whimsical and trendy pieces to make this festive season more meaningful and memorable.

"I think everybody has a fascination with celebration," said the founder of Arcadia Designs LLC. "When I was a child, just a string of lights was fascinating to me."

Chung makes customized pieces that can accent any holiday decor and every room of the home, from sequined pillows in gold and black and silver and white to sequined table runners and tablecloths in gold, silver and more. According to Chung, those decorating their homes for holiday gatherings should select one focal color and then incorporate hints of other colors.

"Gold is my favorite color, especially for Christmas," she said. "I like a single color because it is not too busy."

... continued on page D4

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	6	\$860,000	\$1,280,000
MORAGA	7	\$407,000	\$1,700,000
ORINDA	8	\$880,000	\$1,920,000

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

- 6 Corte Rinaldo, \$1,280,000, 3 Bdrms, 2624 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 10-27-16;
Previous Sale: \$542,000, 07-12-93
- 3134 Diablo View Road, \$930,000, 3 Bdrms, 1765 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 11-3-16;
Previous Sale: \$130,000, 08-02-83
- 3369 Mildred Lane, \$990,000, 3 Bdrms, 1620 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 11-1-16;
Previous Sale: \$155,000, 12-10-84
- 3328 North Lucille Lane, \$860,000, 4 Bdrms, 1711 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 11-4-16;
Previous Sale: \$39,000, 06-16-72
- 3215 Palomares Avenue, \$930,000, 3 Bdrms, 1532 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 11-1-16
- 1322 Sunset Loop, \$905,000, 3 Bdrms, 1023 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 11-3-16;
Previous Sale: \$535,000, 06-18-03

MORAGA

- 115 Ascot Court #A, \$407,000, 2 Bdrms, 1191 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-27-16;
Previous Sale: \$336,000, 09-12-03
- 1382 Camino Peral, \$702,500, 3 Bdrms, 1360 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 11-3-16
- 816 Country Club Drive, \$700,000, 2 Bdrms, 1743 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-27-16;
Previous Sale: \$357,000, 12-13-99
- 166 Cypress Point Way, \$775,000, 2 Bdrms, 1444 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-4-16;
Previous Sale: \$615,000, 05-17-11
- 398 Fernwood Drive, \$1,700,000, 6 Bdrms, 3928 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 11-4-16;
Previous Sale: \$1,695,000, 12-01-05
- 1537 Moraga Way, \$616,500, 3 Bdrms, 1522 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 10-28-16;
Previous Sale: \$550,000, 06-06-14
- 153 Westchester Street, \$765,000, 2 Bdrms, 1743 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 11-1-16

ORINDA

- 135 Amber Valley Drive, \$1,920,000, 5 Bdrms, 3131 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 11-4-16;
Previous Sale: \$799,000, 11-19-97
- 10 Darnby Court, \$1,293,500, 4 Bdrms, 2333 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-4-16
- 90 Hillcrest Drive, \$880,000, 3 Bdrms, 2129 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 11-1-16;
Previous Sale: \$55,000, 07-29-75
- 144 Las Vegas Road, \$1,125,000, 3 Bdrms, 1703 SqFt, 1940 YrBlt, 11-2-16;
Previous Sale: \$749,000, 09-02-04
- 44 Lucille Way, \$1,035,000, 3 Bdrms, 1877 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 11-2-16;
Previous Sale: \$600,000, 09-18-12
- 11 Moraga Via, \$1,190,000, 5 Bdrms, 2043 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 11-4-16;
Previous Sale: \$829,000, 07-09-12
- 452 Moraga Way, \$975,000, 2 Bdrms, 1682 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 11-1-16
- 15 Snow Court, \$1,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 1906 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-28-16;
Previous Sale: \$978,000, 12-23-14

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS
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Finding that WOW Design for the Holidays

... continued from page D1

To go along with her other signature sequin items, Chung also makes sequined Christmas tree skirts that are a popular item among clients. Her holiday banners that read "Be Merry" are another way to liven up the mantel or a blank wall that needs a pop of color and a statement.

Although sequined pieces are a big part of her collection, Chung also sells tree skirts, table runners and other items with a touch of natural burlap. She noted that burlap is a great decorating material for the holiday period between the fall and the start of winter.

For Lamorinda holiday entertaining, Chung likes to incorporate glittered pine cones on table settings and reindeer pieces throughout the home to bring the outdoors in. Those items are often paired with holiday staples like oversized ornaments, candles and strings of lights.

"I like the earthy, warm and natural items for Lamorinda homes. Plus, deer are like one of the family here in Lamorinda," Chung said of the area's frequent deer sightings.

When decorating a holiday table, Chung said that it is important to not forget to make the chairs look inviting and special. Her ruffled chair covers can be accented with a faux gold poinsettia attached to the back and she likes to use chairs from C&M Party Rental for special occasions and gatherings.

As a mom of a 6-year-old daughter, Chung also likes to utilize pieces that appeal to children in her decorating. Her signature crocheted bears, Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and Santa Baby, are perfect for adding that Christmas magic in the home for children.

... continued on page D6



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Finding that WOW Design for the Holidays

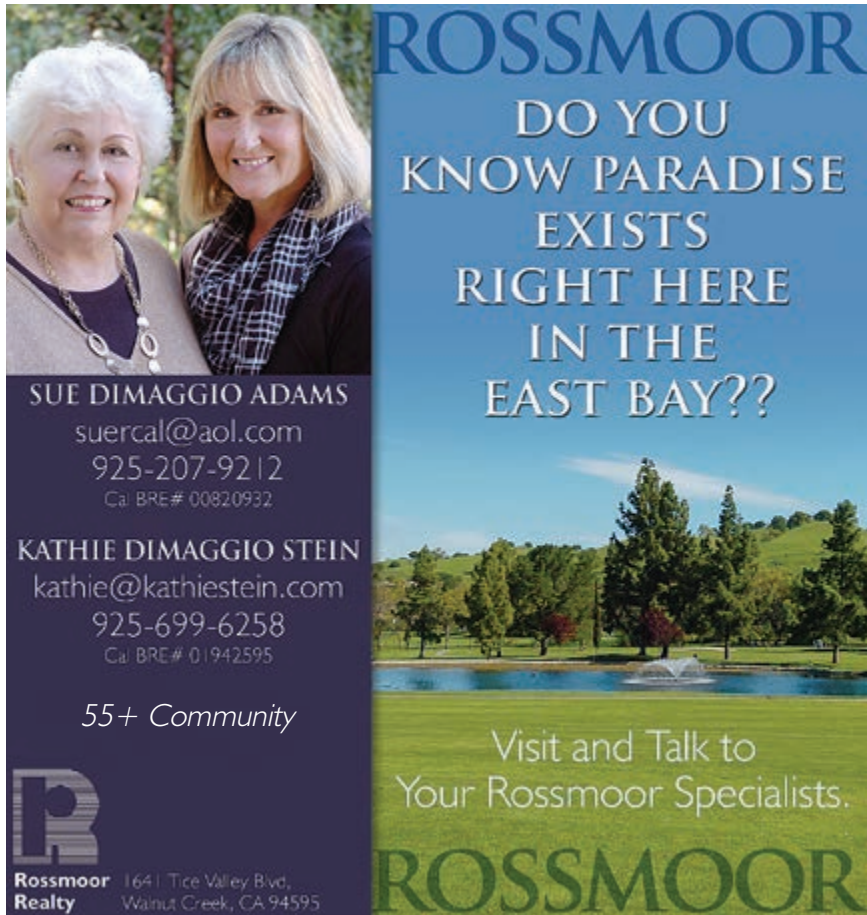
... continued from page D4

Chung said that Christmas decorating doesn't have to be expensive. She said that she often finds gems at craft stores and discount home supply stores.

"There are tons of items out there," said Chung. "You can have a 'wow' factor with your major pieces and add in more trendy accents."

Arcadia Designs is offering a holiday raffle for those who subscribe to their website at www.arcadia-designs.com/subscribe between now and Dec. 18. The raffle drawing date for a gold sequin table runner will be Dec. 19 and broadcasted on their Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/arcadiadesigns) and Instagram (www.instagram.com/arcadia_designs).





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Feng Shui

Bring Joy and Abundance Into Your Home

By Michele Duffy



This Lafayette home attracts wealth with flanking the front door with visibly stylish pots. Photos provided

So many of you have written to me about wondering how feng shui can help to you lead lives with less stress, more personal happiness, greater balance and a deeper experience of abundance & prosperity. One of my favorite quotes is “Gratitude is the doorway to Abundance,” since to truly be abundant we must acknowledge what we are already so lucky to have!

Abundance can be thought as “having the right amount of everything you

truly need to feel prosperous,” so perhaps consider trying to discover the actual wealth-spring of your life. It could be a partner, spiritual journey, career, family, friends, but whatever it is, I would suggest that we all experience that universal energetic exchange and flow of give and take. Generosity is gratitude’s companion and giving back simply magnifies the energies in of our hearts and understands that true happiness rests with serving others.

Deepak Chopra says, “The universe operates through dynamic exchange... giving and receiving are different aspects of the flow of energy in the universe, and in our willingness to give that which we seek, we keep the abundance of the universe circulating in our lives.”

Our minds and hearts create the reality we experience which is also reflected in the environments of our lives, home and office. There is a wonderful book called “Home: How Habitat Made us Human” by John S. Allen and in it he says, “Home is one of the most important cognitive, technological and cultural products of our species’ evolution.” So “Home” is both a feeling and a perception and the more you make your dwelling feel like “home” the more you will actually thrive.

So while our minds are perhaps, in some cases, more difficult to transform, evolve and change on a whole range of issues, it is easy to make changes to home that can have an immediate and lasting effect in a wide variety of ways. So looking around your own home as we prepare for a joyous and reflective holiday season, beyond the seasonal fixes, how can you energize your home to reflect the abundance you seek?

Here are some results-oriented feng shui tips:

- 1) Make the most of your surroundings and build upon your “sense of home. Does your home reflect the feeling of luxury and abundance, and, if not, make it so! If you do not “love” something, what’s it still doing in your house?
- 2) Fully energize your front entrance to include no clutter, dead bugs or cob webs. Ideally, potted red cyclamen, geraniums or the wonderful evergreen Nandina (lucky bamboo) flank the front door, as does an always fresh welcome mat and proper lighting invite abundance into your home.
- 3) Decluttering is not just removing toxic, stagnant chi or energy, it’s also about creating a sense of spaciousness at home which always looks and feels high-end. Consider if pieces actually work in the space or if you are forcing it, and that less is more when it comes to home furnishings.
- 4) The Wealth area of the Feng Shui Bagua is far left from the front entrance. Be sure to make sure you inspect thoroughly what exists in the far left area of your home, master bedroom and yard and immediately apply these handy feng shui tips to all three of these areas.
- 5) Engage all of the senses in your home with green home cleansers, fresh flowers, candles, fresh smelling laundry, fragrant hand soaps, baked cookies, essential oil diffusers, the five-elements of color and warm cozy textures.

... continued on page D10



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Feng Shui

Bringing the Elements Inside This Season

... continued from page D8

- 6) Check your bedroom for having the best sleep possible, including removing clutter, placing a solid bedframe with a headboard, luxurious bedding, proper window coverings, various lighting options — including candles for romance — fresh flowers, and a pair of at least 100-watt reading lights on bedside tables.
- 7) Create a spa sanctuary in your master bath with essential oil bath salts, candles, fresh flowers and music.
- 8) Cultivate your personal energy through positive feng shui adjustments and be sure to make regular (seasonal changes) to your home and workplace.
- 9) Develop richer and broader social networks – have more photos of friends and family around your home. (The middle-left area, if possible.)
- 10) Love your home and have fun!

When you make changes in your environment, please also try to express gratitude on a daily basis, focus on the positive to minimize the “lack” in your life, attract abundance towards you by creating an abundant home and keep a gratitude journal.

If you make some of the changes mentioned in the tips, try to be mindful and notice what shifts in your mind and also in your life. Do you begin to feel more fortunate in your life? Do you recognize that you already enjoy or have created more financial abundance? Do you spend money more wisely? Do people, opportunity and things show up more easily when you need them? Do you consider yourself experiencing more luck?

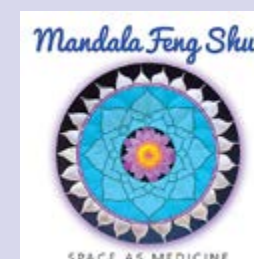
As you look around your newly energized home, indeed, life is abundant and filled with love, possibilities, wellness and happiness.



<p>WEALTH & PROSPERITY "Gratitude"</p> <p>REAR LEFT</p> <p><u>Wood</u> Blues, purple & reds</p>	<p>FAME & REPUTATION "Integrity"</p> <p>REAR MIDDLE</p> <p><u>Fire</u> Reds</p>	<p>LOVE & MARRIAGE "Receptivity"</p> <p>REAR RIGHT</p> <p><u>Earth</u> Reds, pinks, & whites</p>
<p>HEALTH & FAMILY "Strength"</p> <p>MIDDLE LEFT</p> <p><u>Wood</u> Blues & Greens</p>	<p>CENTER "Earth"</p> <p>Yellow & earth tones</p>	<p>CREATIVITY & CHILDREN "Joy"</p> <p>MIDDLE RIGHT</p> <p><u>Metal</u> White & Pastels</p>
<p>KNOWLEDGE & SELF CULTIVATION "Stillness"</p> <p>FRONT LEFT</p> <p><u>Earth</u> Black, blues & greens</p>	<p>CAREER "Depth"</p> <p>FRONT MIDDLE</p> <p><u>Water</u> Black & dark tones</p>	<p>HELPFUL PEOPLE & TRAVEL "Synchronicity"</p> <p>FRONT RIGHT</p> <p><u>Metal</u> White, grey & black</p>

The Bagua Map: Front Door

Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating “Space as Medicine” Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2015 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to spaceharmony@gmail.com.



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December Gardening Guide

Get Rid of Uninvited Guests This Season

By Cynthia Brian

“Regardless of your lot in life, build something beautiful on it.” ~ Zig Ziglar



Cotoneaster berries add sparkle to the season.

I was working in my orchard when I heard the screams. Never in my life had I seen four grown men run so quickly. “Are you okay?” I yelled. “What’s the commotion?” The men had been dismantling an old hot tub in a deck when their saws had unsettled a family of skunks who had made the warm, dark environment their cozy home. If you’ve had your dog sprayed by a skunk, you’ll understand.

With winter on the horizon, the wild things are looking for shelter. Rats, skunks, mice, raccoons, possums and other critters may decide that “su casa es me casa.”

Although we do want to attract birds and pollinators to our gardens by providing food, water and habitats, we don’t want to invite the vermin into our territory.

Rodents carry several diseases harmful to humans, including salmonellosis, leptospirosis, hantavirus, and arenavirus. They are not known to have rabies, but skunks can be carriers of rabies.

For prevention and control I consulted with vector control inspector Joe Cleope at the Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District. After a few hours of discussions and inspections, I came away with effective methods of management and control to share with you.

Here’s a short list of advice:

Eliminate the following plants that are considered “rat condos”:

- Ivy
- Bamboo
- Blackberries
- Juniper
- Honeysuckle
- Pampas grass
- Yucca
- Star Jasmine

... continued on next page



The best rat traps are these quick set reusable snap traps.

Trim shrubbery and trees:

- Keep palm tree fronds pruned or rats will nest in them.
- Prune climbing vegetation on your house to discourage roof rats.
- Store wood and lumber a foot away from structures and at least 18 inches above ground.
- Install rodent barriers as a prevention to climbing.

Eliminate food and water sources that attract rodents:

- Harvest your fruit and vegetables as they ripen.
- Pick up any fruit or nuts that have fallen on the ground.
- Fill pet bowls only with enough food that can be quickly consumed.
- Rid your garden of “escargot (a.k.a. snails), a favorite meal for vermin.
- Keep birdseed and pet food in metal containers.
- Repair leaky faucets.
- Empty containers of standing water.
- Secure garbage cans. Unfortunately rats will gnaw through bins and raccoons will open lids.

Rodent Proof your house:

- Check for openings larger than one-fourth inch in vents, screens, and foundation cracks. Patch the holes with one-fourth-inch galvanized hardware cloth.
- Use sheet metal collars around pipe entrances on wooden walls and use cement patch around pipes in brick, stucco or stone.
- Seal all gaps around electrical conduit.

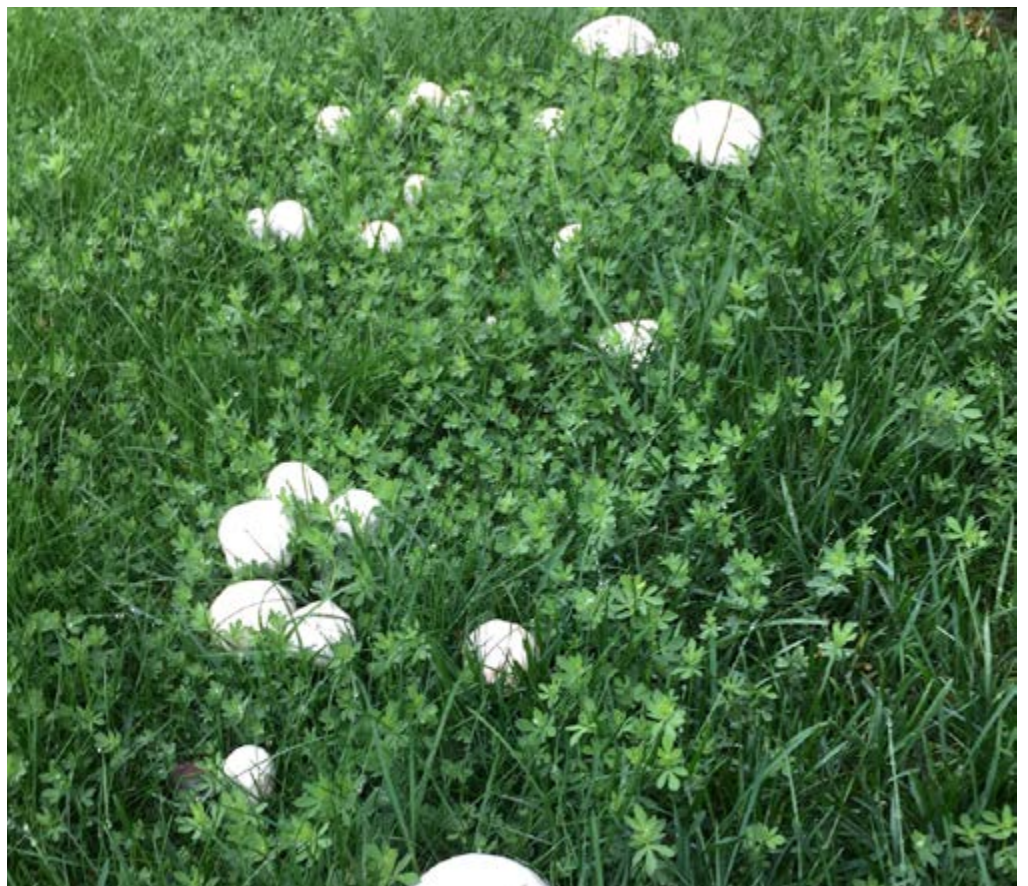
Where the Wild Things Are!

- Varmint Control: The Merriam Webster Dictionary considers “varmint” to be any animal that is considered problematic — rats, mice, skunks, raccoons, prairie dogs, etc.
- Skunks: Besides doing everything above to keep the varmint out of your home, if skunks are visiting your property you can buy skunk traps, which are specially made so that once a skunk has entered, it cannot spray. Vector Control will come to euthanize the skunk. Once skunks have been to your property, they may return. Scatter mothballs in the area and add a radio playing music to deter them.
- Rats and mice: Don't use the old fashioned wooden snap traps. They are too dangerous to humans and small pets. Available at hardware stores, power spring traps or easy, quick-set traps work best. A great way to assure that only the rodents get trapped is to set the trap with a dab of peanut butter placed under a larger plastic container. Cut a small hole in the container. I use a recycled flower pot. Place the container over the trap. Add a brick or rock to the top to keep it from toppling. You will catch the vermin.
- Raccoons: Follow all the instructions above. Add netting to ponds where raccoons will fish.

... continued on page D14



A skunk trap.



Mushrooms sprouting in the clover.

December Gardening Guide

Cleaning the Mess:

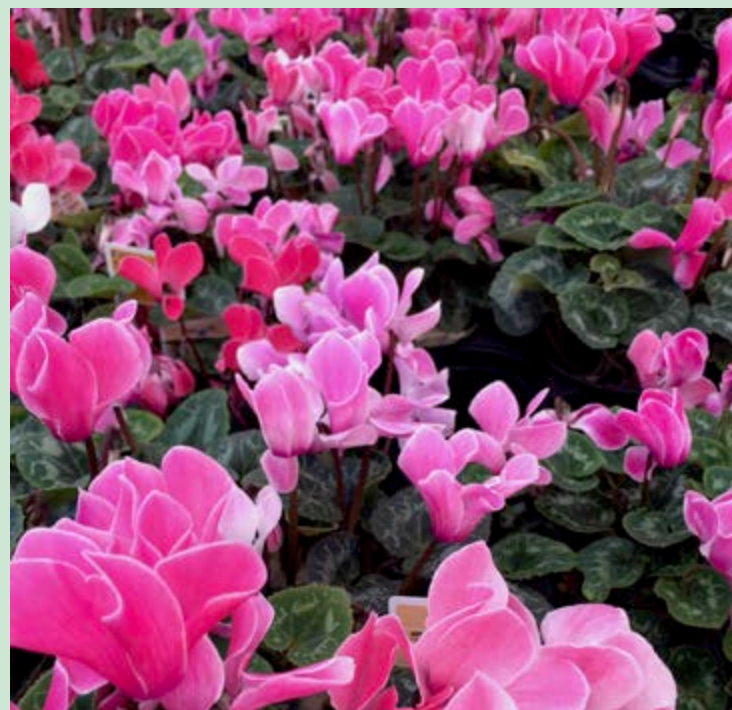
The smells associated with skunks, mice, and rats are nauseating. Their feces and nests could be a danger to your health. When we see droppings our first impulse is to grab a broom or vacuum. DON'T! Sweeping and vacuuming releases virus particles into the air. Inhalation can result in infecting the person with the viruses. Here's how to clean the feces, nesting areas, and dead animals.

- Wear gloves, a mask and goggles.
- Spray the area with Lysol or a disinfectant made with a strong solution of bleach.
- After five or minutes, wipe up the area with paper towels or rags you will toss.
- Pick up a dead rodent with a shovel.
- Spray more of the bleach solution to sanitize the area.
- Put all of the waste materials, rags, dead rodents and paper towels in a plastic bag.
- Seal the bag in another plastic bag and put in the outside garbage can.
- Wash your gloved hands thoroughly.
- Remove the gloves and mask, put in a plastic bag, seal, and put in the outside garbage can.
- Wash your un-gloved hands and your goggles with soap and warm water.
- NEVER vacuum, sweep, or blow out areas that harbor contaminants that could become airborne.

Getting Help:

If you have a problem with rodents or skunks, contact Vector Control at 925-771-6142. The service is free and you'll be able to troubleshoot your issues. They will also pick up skunks that have been trapped.

There is nothing beautiful about pests finding shelter in our homes and gardens but this month does bring beauty to our doorsteps.



Who wouldn't love these hot pink cyclamen?



Yellow mums offer a sunshine welcome.



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WINTER TREE TIPS

Winter brings cold and rainy weather. "While many trees will be dormant in the winter, exposure to the tough conditions can cause them major stress," says Darren Edwards, Certified Arborist with Advance Tree Service. "Minimize that stress by helping your trees through the cold months. If you take care of your trees in the winter, you will be rewarded in the spring."

Winter can be a good time for pruning most trees, while they are dormant, and pines should only be pruned in the winter months. Removal of large, dead, broken, poorly positioned limbs and corrective pruning can minimize winter storm damage, and maximize optimal spring growth.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you with your winter pruning.

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Sheltering the Beautiful

- With the rainfall our lawns and hillsides are green and growing.
- Cyclamen abounds at nurseries and garden centers in an abundance of stunning colors-red, pink, white, burgundy. Plant these perennials to add glamour to the winter beds.
- Sunflower seeds can be scattered for next summer's glory.
- A cover crop blend will choke out weeds, protect soil structure, and increase soil fertility. Sow seeds to over-winter for spring growth.
- Cotoneaster, holly, and pyracantha showcase red pomes or berries that are perfect for holiday décor.
- Watch for the unexpected growing in your garden. Perhaps a prickly pear has taken root next to a pine tree.
- A variety of mushrooms are sprouting throughout our landscapes. Unless you are an expert in mycotoxicology, enjoy these fairy houses, but don't eat them!
- The sounds and sights of fountains flowing are stress reducing and healing.



A sunflower produces seeds for scattering.

Wishing you a very healthy, happy, and beautiful December where the wild things aren't!

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



Cynthia Brian in a nighttime garden.

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For Lease

68 Loma Vista

Beautifully updated mid-century modern lease. Exceptional details throughout. Walls of glass, integrated indoor/ outdoor living. Yard features drought tolerant planting. Serene loc. close to town, BART & schools. **\$7,500/month**

ORINDA



For Lease

407 Miner Road

Contemporary Estate for lease in OCC with 3 beds, 3 baths, 4213 sq. ft. on amazing 1+ acre lot. High ceilings, spacious rooms, walls of glass. Pool/ spa, tennis court, gardens, redwoods & views! **\$8,500/month**

ORINDA



4 Quail Ridge Lane

This 2.87 acre lot enjoys spectacular valley views, filled with mature trees. Complete with approved plans to built 3276 sq. ft. home. Great loc. not far from downtown, BART & award winning schools. **\$650,000**

ORINDA



220 Camino Sobrante

Special location on the lake. Classic, wood crafted 4bd/4ba home has great use of space on two levels, ideal for comfortable living & entertaining. Bonus sports court. Alluring setting of beauty & privacy. **\$1,695,000**

ORINDA



105 Crane Terrace

Exceptional 4.87 acre gated estate traditional of incredible appeal on alluring knoll, private setting of pano views. Custom craftsmanship. Lovely grounds w/ lawns, gardens, mature trees.

\$2,950,000

ORINDA



160 Camino Don Miguel

Spectacular Spanish Mediterranean 5bd/5.5ba 5851sf home overlooks the 4th hole of OCC. Rebuilt from ground up in 1996. Resort quality pool & spa, gardens & views.

\$4,795,000

MORAGA



For Lease

1 Harrington Road

Turnkey exclusive rental with new carpet, new paint & refinished hardwood floors. Open eat-in kitchen/ family room combo. Cathedral ceilings, pool & spa. Desirable Sanders Ranch gated community. **\$6,800/month**

MORAGA



670 Augusta Drive

Updated & ready to move in! Kitchen w/ cherry cabinets, granite & Brazilian cherry flrs thruout main flr. Gardens, private patio. Rare 3 BR+ bonus rm. Close to clubhouse, facilities. Walk to town!

\$879,000

MORAGA



9 Shannon Court

Sanders Ranch estate property over 1.5 acres, 4966 sq. ft., Chef's kitchen, hardwood, new carpet, fresh paint, pool, ideal indoor/ outdoor living spaces.

\$3,125,000

OAKLAND



New Listing

2601 Chelsea Drive

Located in quiet Piedmont Pines this tastefully updated contemporary 1988 sq. ft. home on .28 acre has 3 beds, 2 baths, 2 car garage, spacious light filled rooms, beautiful master suite & epic views of the SF bay. **\$899,000**

PLEASANT HILL



20 Whitfield Court

Great parcel at top of knoll with views of Mount Diablo and ideal privacy. Truly special setting sites for development zoned R-10 & R-15. Wonderful opportunity for investment.

\$1,495,000

RICHMOND



New Listing

3507 Stewarton Drive

Great 3 bedroom home in May Valley area. Dual panes, new carpets, hardwood floors & just painted. Huge living room with brick fireplace, & 2nd fireplace in family room/ kitchen. Close to schools, parks. **\$574,900**

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