



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors
Wednesday, Sept. 20, 7 p.m.
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors
Tuesday, Sept. 12, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

City Council pushes for completion of Lafayette fire station

By Nick Marnell



ConFire Assistant Chief Aaron McAlister updates the Lafayette City Council on Fire Station 16 progress. Photo Nick Marnell

Despite a construction glitch that surfaced at the beginning of August, an official from the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District told the Lafayette City Council Aug. 14 that Fire Station 16 should open as scheduled by the end of 2018.

Assistant Fire Chief Aaron McAlister told the council that the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District has delayed approval of the fire

station plans because a neighboring property has a lateral sewer line on ConFire's property. "We knew about it, the architect knew about it, the civil engineer knew about it," McAlister said. "They want us to dig up the lateral to make sure it's where we say it is. That seems unreasonable."

According to Central San, an easement for a neighboring sewer lateral lies across the fire district

property and Central San needs to confirm that the neighboring property will continue to have sewer access. "None of our requirements are unusual," said Chris Carpenter, a Central San representative. "We have to maintain service for the neighboring property."

McAlister said the county will not do a plan review on the project until the fire district receives every approval from every agency.

"Can you emphasize with the county how important this issue is, and to expedite it for the sake of public safety," said Council Member Cam Burks, who also asked for assurance that the county was still fully committed to the financing of the station. McAlister said that he believes ConFire has the full support of the board.

Supervisor Candace Andersen later provided further confirmation, noting that with property tax revenues rebounding and with the success of the ConFire-American Medical Response partnership to provide ambulance service, the fire district is in a far better place than it was five years ago when the board closed fire stations. "I am confident that the full of Board of Supervisors is supportive of the rebuilding of Fire Station 16," Andersen said. "Over the past year we have approved several expenditures for the design of the fire station which have been accompanied with estimated costs for construction. All votes have been unanimous in support."

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Moraga woman completes 100-mile endurance horse ride

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"My goal was simply to finish the ride," she said.

Describing herself as one of those "horse-crazy kids who only wanted to see horses," Smith began riding when she was quite young and living in Arizona. "I have amazingly wonderful parents who indulged my passion and would take me to ride rented horses on weekends," she said. Moving to Santa Rosa, she started taking riding lessons and by middle school, had saved up enough money to buy her own horse, "an Arabian, which is how I got stuck on this particular breed. I loved her, loved her personality," Smith remembered fondly.

She now owns three Arabians, housing two at the Moraga Horsemen's Association pasture, while the third, the youngest, is being trained at a ranch in Brentwood. "Endurance is what Arabians are best at," Smith noted. "They're very energetic, light, handle heat well and do really well in long, hard rides."

And The Tevis, which has been an annual event since 1955, is exactly that – a long, hard ride. Sponsored by the Western States Trail Foundation, it's described as an "endurance riding event of distinction ... one of the world's best tests of true horsemanship. It's the world's best known and most difficult equestrian endurance ride." As one blogger wrote, "... it may be difficult to believe that people would actually do this sport on purpose."

The ride begins at 5:15 a.m. on Saturday when riders mount their horses and take off on a historic trail over the Sierra Nevada Mountains, "through some of the most beautiful country you can imagine on the backside of Squaw Valley," Smith said. Wendell Robie, one of the founders, said the ride was on a "majestic riding trail penetrating the wild beauty of mountain peaks

and valleys."

Although riders typically take off just south of Truckee (7,000 feet elevation), this year, because of all the snow, the start of the Aug. 5 event was moved to Soda Springs. Climbing to elevations of more than 18,000 feet from the starting point in Soda Springs and then descending almost 23,000 feet, the ride concludes in Auburn. Much of the historic route passes along narrow mountain trails through remote and rugged wilderness territory.

While approximately 200 riders begin the ride, typically only half actually finish, Smith reported. Some horses get pulled off the trail, some people get sick, some decide it's simply too much. "It's a very rocky, challenging course," Smith said. And the ride must be completed by 5:15 a.m. Sunday; riders coming in past that time don't get credit for a completion.

There are two mandatory one-hour holds, as well as several quick "gate and go" stops, where both riders and horses have a chance to rest and eat. Veterinarians are at each stop, checking the horses' health before releasing them to continue.

This year, Smith crossed the finish line 20 hours after she began. "That's about as long as I want to

be out there," she admitted. The winning horse, one that Smith had previously ridden, arrived almost four hours earlier. In fact, when Smith rode him in 2015, she was presented the Haggin Cup, a very prestigious award given by the vets, who, after carefully examining the first 10 horses to finish the ride, choose the one that is in the best physical condition. "That was the pinnacle of my endurance career," Smith proudly stated. "It means I rode him 100 miles, at speed, and he still looked great."

Smith has a nine-person crew, which helps before and during the ride and then celebrates her completion afterward. The Tevis Cup organizers call riders' crews the true "unsung heroes of the Tevis ... your work is equally as difficult and exhausting as your rider's and you spend all day supporting and encouraging him/her on the journey of a lifetime."

And, after all the hard work, sore bodies, exhaustion and stress, every Tevis finisher receives a silver buckle. Or, as Gilbert Cruz wrote in the June 14, 2010 issue of Time Magazine, "That's right: 100 miles in 24 hours. For a belt buckle."

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The multipurpose building at Orinda Intermediate School was completely renovated with a newly refinished gym floor, new interior double doors, new wall veneer and paint, and transformation of the old kitchen into an exercise room for yoga and exercise machines. The OIS library has been reconfigured with 21st century furniture and a new split system HVAC replaced the old, dysfunctional boiler. Del Rey got a new playground with striping, planting and seating, a new electronic marquee sign, new 21st century classroom furniture and additional basketball hoops and a ball wall.

Glorietta's old computer lab has been transformed into a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) classroom with new furnishings and equipment, the lower sports field has been ren-

ovated, the lower play area got new poured-in rubber surfacing, and kindergarten, first and fifth grades got new 21st century furniture.

Sleepy Hollow Elementary School got a new electronic marquee sign, new rubber surfacing for five playgrounds, 21st century classroom furniture for fifth-graders, and a new modular toilet building for adults. The mudslide at the entry driveway to Wagner Ranch Elementary School was repaired and new security cameras installed along the driveway and by the gymnasium. Wagner Ranch also got a new electric marquee sign, new rubber surfacing for the playground, new equipment for the upper grades playground, and new storage cabinets in pod hallways.

In addition to facilities upgrade announcements, the board heard from a number of students and

parents during the public forum portion who urged the the school board to restore advanced Spanish language classes at Orinda Intermediate School and, if necessary, to hire another teacher for those classes. Board Member Cara Hoxie responded to their concerns by asking that the matter be placed on the agenda for a future meeting, and the board agreed to do so.

The board also assigned members to a particular schools as the meeting. The assignments rotate each year so board members become familiar with all the schools in the district. For the upcoming school year the assignments are as follows:

- Del Rey—Carol Brown
- Glorietta—Julie Rossiter
- OIS—Cara Hoxie
- Sleepy Hollow—Hillary Weiner
- Wagner Ranch—Jason Kaune

Seeking calm at midday

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Mozzee is an experienced meditation facilitator, who has been practicing and studying meditation for decades. In 2002, she began meditation with The Natural Path/Sahaj Marg and became an advanced trainer with Heartfulness.org. She has attended many silent retreats, and has facilitated many workshops of Reconciliation of Opposites and other journaling

techniques. She has traveled the world and has been to India seven times in the last decade to pursue her studies and has become a translator for a five-week program for beginner meditators who come from Central and South America and Spain. "Facilitating groups that include psychiatrists, counselors, teachers, engineers, computer programmers and the entire spec-

trum of careers," Mozzee says, she is grateful to hear from them that they gain much from the pointings, or teachings, she shares.

Atma Yoga Studio is located at 99 Brookwood Road in Orinda. Call to confirm the fall schedule if you are interested in attending. Atma can be reached at (925) 317-3302 or info@atma.studio.

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