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Photos Sora O'Doherty

## “I Am Your Father” zucchini racer squashes the competition on Fathers’ Day

By Sora O'Doherty

A sunny Fathers' Day at the Moraga Farmers Market saw a zucchini car named for an infamous father win a \$100 "most creative" prize as the Zucchini Car Races returned to the market on Sunday June 16. Their car was called "I Am Your Father," after the Darth Vader character in the Star Wars movie series.

The first place winners took home a \$200 cash award for their car, "The California" constructed from a zucchini and deemed the fastest race winner of the day. Another two entries, "Zoe" and "LYZOO2"

were also deemed most creative winners and took home \$100 each. The four winners ranged from ages four to 12.

Dozens of zucchini cars zoomed down the track to the finish line. Some didn't quite make it, others smashed through the ping pong net barrier erected to protect the crowd of spectators.

Competitors were able to build their own zucchini race cars at the pit stop set up by the market and test them out on the track. The market provided

all the materials for wheels and decorations.

The rule provided that zucchini cars could not be wider than 6.5 inches with wheels or longer than 16 inches. No weights or motorized devices were allowed, and the axles of the car were required to go through the zucchini. All of the zucchini had to be farm fresh from the farmers' market or locally grown. Competitors were allowed to bring zucchini cars constructed at home also.

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## First of July ban on gas leaf blowers powering e-device education push

By David Scholz



Photo David Scholz

Dorothy Walker uses a handheld e-leaf blower to clear leaves on the road across from her Lafayette home. She checked out the device from the City's Parks and Recreation Department through its leaf blower loaner program that is available to citizens to try out handheld and back-pack e-devices.

As residents prepare for the looming July 1 ban on gas powered leaf blowers in the City of Lafayette, an increasing number have been readying for the change by taking out electric models for test drives around their residences.

Among them is Dorothy Walker, who recently checked out the handheld e-leaf blower to gauge its effectiveness around her yard as well as for clearing street in

front of her of Yorkshire Court residence.

Recreation Manager John Warshaw, with the city's Parks and Recreation Department, noted there's been an uptick interest in the leaf blower loaner program, which allows for a two-week check out period, since it was initiated last October to help residents transition to the new city law regulating leaf blowers in the community.

As of the close of mid June, Warshaw noted there has been 25 applications tallied for borrowing four handheld e-leaf blowers, while the one available backpack leaf blower, mostly being checked out by residents for their hired landscape crews to try out, has had 20 applications.

Before Walker started signing out e-handheld leaf blowers through the program, a rake has long been her tool of choice with four large oaks in her backyard.

"These blowers are easy to use and the battery is easy to install after charging. Initially I had trouble disengaging the battery from the charger, but after I pushed the right button hard enough it was no problem," said Walker, who has since checked out the handheld unit several times. ... continued on Page 2

## App helps EV owners to save money and help environment while charging at home

By Elaine Borden Chandler

For electric car and other EV owners in Lafayette and Moraga, there is an app that can help them to save money and use clean energy. Released by Marin Clean Energy (MCE) and ev.energy in 2022, the app is called "MCE Sync". It works by automatically charging cars during the hours when electricity is cheapest and when the energy is most green. Because demand for electricity is lower at night, prices for electricity are lower as well. Instead of having the vehicle begin charging as soon as it is plugged in, MCE Sync regulates the timing of charging to take advantage of times when electricity is less expensive.

MCE Sync has a list of ranked priorities, some of which are decided by the EV owner, that it uses to guide how it charges the EV. These priorities in descending order are: charging the EV by the owner's chosen "get ready" time, charging the EV from the grid at the cheapest times to reduce electricity



Photo Elaine Borden Chandler

Ahmed Shiblin looks at his car's charging patterns on the MCE Sync app.

costs, charging when there is less demand on the grid, and charging when grid energy is greenest.

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