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Orinda's Fourth of July parade featured a nod to the time of the country's founding, featuring Orinda Masonic Lodge No. 122 members. Photo Sora O'Doherty

Orinda celebrates USA's 250th anniversary with parade and festivities

By Sora O'Doherty

On a moderate, sunny morning, The Orinda Association, with the help of many sponsors, threw a giant Fourth of July party to mark 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Starting at 7:30 a.m. the pancake breakfast was open for business, with tables set on the Orinda Library Plaza. The annual pancake breakfast cost \$15 per person, with proceeds benefiting the Cub Scouts and the Orinda Network for Education (ONE).

At 7:55 a.m. there was an official flag raising ceremony. The flag was raised by members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8063, and Orinda Mayor Brandon Iverson made brief remarks on the significance of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Acalanes Chapter Regent Terry Lucido of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution also spoke and read a portion of the Dec-

laration. The DAR had a table on the Library Plaza with a facsimile of the Declaration of Independence, which attendees were invited to sign.

The Library Book Sale began at 9 a.m. and continued until 1 p.m., with patrons stocking up on bags of reading material for the whole family.

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Notable improvements to Rheem Valley Shopping Center

By Vera Kochan

The scaffolding has come down, and anyone visiting the Rheem Valley Shopping Center recently has noticed the visible improvements to the buildings' façades. Repairs have been made to rotting wood along with a different color scheme. White and golden-brown paint has replaced the chocolate brown and dark green exteriors. Large gold lettering identifies each business by name. Additionally, progress on Grocery Outlet has gone full speed ahead with locals anticipating the grand opening projected for early 2027.

During the June 24 Town Council meeting, Town Manager Scott Mitnick gave an Economic Development Update Report. "This community is clamoring for positive redevelopment. Not to have a whole bunch of density and make it look like Walnut Creek, or Palo Alto, or San Jose – that's not in the cards – but to have a more vibrant and self-sustaining local economy that offers opportunities to people that live here in Lamorinda. Everybody pretty much wants that."

The façade improvements came about because the Town made a request to property owners that buildings get "spruced up" to make the shopping center more "cheerful." At a recent outside event, this reporter heard several residents make comments to the effect of, "When will the same improvements come to the Moraga Shopping Center?"

In January, according to Mitnick's staff report, the Town entered into a one-year professional services agreement with Kosmont Companies to the tune of \$60,000. The purpose was "to provide on-call real estate and economic development advisory services to the Town to facilitate private investment and the development and/or redevelopment of key properties throughout the community. Over the past few months, there has been development progress at the Rheem Shopping Center and in other parts of Town."

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Recent cosmetic improvements at Rheem Valley Shopping Center. Photo Vera Kochan

Civic News

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Gardening times for when to pick veggies for peak flavor – Page OH1





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City of Lafayette:
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 Phone: (925) 284-1968
Chamber of Commerce:
 www.lafayettechamber.org

Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council: Regular Meeting: Monday, July 13, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall
Planning Commission: Monday, July 20, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall
Design Review: Monday, July 13, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Arts & Science Discovery Room

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Lafayette and Housing Action Coalition Settle Lawsuit over Housing Element Laws



Map shows parcels impacted by the City of Lafayette's settlement agreement with Housing Action Coalition.

Image provided

The City of Lafayette has reached a settlement of a lawsuit brought by Housing Action Coalition ("HAC"), which alleged that the City's Housing Element failed to comply with California's Housing Element Laws. As part of the settlement, the city has agreed to consider upzoning 130 acres of land and will pay \$120,080 in attorney's fees in order to resolve the pending litigation. "While we dispute HAC's contentions, this settlement agreement was made as part of a compromise in order to avoid time consuming and costly litigation," said Mayor Carl Anduri.

"Lafayette has been and continues to be committed to providing for more housing in our community, including much-needed affordable housing."

In addition to resolving the pending lawsuit, the settlement also allows the city to protect itself from future legal risks. Recent changes in housing law associated with new case law posed risks to the city and by addressing disputed issues now, the city can reduce future litigation risk, avoid future challenges to its Housing Element, and focus its resources on thoughtful planning.

"Planning for more homes near transit in a

high-resource community like Lafayette is exactly the kind of action the Bay Area needs to address the housing crisis and advance fair housing," said Ali Sapirman, Advocacy and Policy Manager at HAC.

"The City of Lafayette envisions a vibrant, connected downtown where new residential growth along Mt. Diablo Boulevard will create more opportunities for people to live close to restaurants, shops, the library, parks, and other gathering places," said City Manager Niroop K. Srivatsa. "Through this upzoning effort, the city will allow greater residential density within the commer-

cial core with convenient access to the BART station, Highway 24, and the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail. We are committed to partnering with housing developers to deliver housing that will strengthen the economic health and vibrancy of our downtown."

Additionally, if the proposed upzoning considerations are approved by the city, then the city will no longer rely on development of five specific "faith-based organization" parcels to meet the city's Regional Housing Needs Allocation ("RHNA") obligations. - submitted by Suzanne Iarla, City of Lafayette

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New Oak Hill condo development breaks ground



Lafayette mayor Carl Anduri speaks at the June 25 ground breaking of Oak Hill, an 85-residence luxury condominium community at 1001 Oak Hill Road.

Photo provided

City of Lafayette dignitaries joined Diamond Construction on June 25 to break ground on Oak Hill, an 85-residence luxury condominium community at 1001 Oak Hill Road in the heart of downtown Lafayette across from Safeway.

"Lafayette has been and continues to be committed to providing for more housing in our community," Lafayette Mayor Carl Anduri said at the ground breaking. "We welcome this new development in downtown Lafayette which will include both market-rate and much-needed affordable homes. We are grateful to Jeff Stone and Brian Griggs for bringing a development with this architectural

quality to our community."

The seven-story project includes 74 market-rate residences and 11 below-market-rate homes. Completion is targeted for summer 2028. Oak Hill offers one-, two-, and three-bedroom residences with premium finishes and a level of craftsmanship rare in condominium living. Amenities include a hospitality-inspired lobby, private library and conference room, golf simulator, indoor/outdoor fitness center, Zen-garden, an elevated outdoor lounge with Mt. Diablo views, a dog run, and ground-floor café space.

Founded in 1985, Diamond Construction is a

second-generation, vertically integrated Bay Area developer controlling every stage of delivery, from land acquisition and design through construction and sales. Led by CEO Jeff Stone, Diamond's portfolio includes Blue Oak and Lucas Ranch in Lafayette and The Nova in Danville. Oak Hill is represented by Enkasa Homes, Diamond Construction's in-house brokerage dedicated to guiding buyers through every step of the home-purchase journey. For more information, visit [ekasahomes.com].

- J. Wake



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Crossing Guard Controversy

By Sharon K. Sobotta



Funding for a crossing guard at First Street and Monroe near the back of Lafayette Elementary School was approved by the city council, as well as one at Springhill and Reliez. Photo J. Wake

When 11-year-old Kai walks to school from Second Street, which is densely populated with renters, she carefully crosses Mt. Diablo Boulevard on her own, before later crossing a few side streets and eventually crossing by Monroe and First Street, where she gets to see the one and only crossing guard on her way to Lafayette Elementary School.

"I always feel like I have to be really, really careful because a lot of drivers aren't paying attention," Kai says. "I kind of wish there were more crossing guards."

In the coming academic year, Kai's route will get longer as she will be a sixth-grader at Stanley Middle School.

Everett Redman, age 14, was in fifth grade the year that crossing guard Ashley Dias died while shielding students from a car. Redman made the daily journey to LES to meet his younger sister from Stanley Middle School for the past three years. "I find the crossing guards to be fairly helpful," Redman says. "Not a lot of people pay

attention. Kids are on their phones. Drivers aren't always paying attention. If there isn't someone there to stop and remind kids to pause, there could be another accident."

For the last several years, the Lafayette School District and the City of Lafayette have partnered and split the cost to ensure that students had a total of 11 crossing guards at some of the critical crossing points on their kids' journeys to school.

LAFSD Superintendent Brent Stephens said the district was forced to make tough choices to reduce its budget to \$1.8 million, bringing the three-year total of budget cuts to just shy of \$6 million. "This year, through a series of public deliberations, the governing board decided it needed to reduce its own expenditures on crossing guards to zero, along with a number of other cuts to LAFSD staff (including the PE Specialist, the Early Intervention administrator, library aide time and more)," Stephens said. This initially brought

the total of crossing guards down from 11 to 7.

At the June 22 Lafayette City Council meeting, the Council approved the reinstatement of two crossing guard positions – one at First Street and Monroe Street and another at Springhill Road and Reliez, bringing the total number of positions back up to 9 for one year with terms and conditions. The cost for those two positions is \$42,000.

Council Member Susan Candell agreed that they should add the two crossing guards back in and "continue to think thoughtfully about how to phase them out at some point, if we can, if there's other solutions that we can find, where we won't need all these crossing guards forever."

Vice Mayor John McCormick echoed the same sentiments. "I think we really [have] to look at keeping this thing as lean as we possibly can," McCormick said. "Prioritizing safety, but also I agree, ... we don't want to be funding a 30-year thing where it's just the same amount indexed for inflation for the next 30 years; it's not really solving the problem."

Jenny McCarthy-Redman, the parent of a rising middle schooler and high schooler in Lafayette and a frequent volunteer at LES, isn't quite sure that the city has its priorities right. "I remember when the city launched Vision Zero after Ashley Dias was tragically killed," McCarthy-Redman says. "It's terrible that we lost a human life that day, but we might've lost a student if there wasn't a crossing guard there."

To McCarthy-Redman the cuts are both shortsighted and perhaps a bit off-brand for a city that claims to love its schools and its walkability factor.

...continued on Page A8

Park Theater construction moves forward



Foundation work at the Park Theater in progress. Photo provided

The Park Theater renovation is in full swing and work continues on the foundation, including formwork for foundations installed, rebar, and concrete pour as well as demolition of the east wall siding, which was scheduled to occur prior to the Fourth of July celebration. Timelapse cameras are strategically situated on site, so photos and videos of the progress can be found on

the Park Theater Trust website (<https://parktheatertrust.org/construction-updates/construction-update-june-26-pictures/>). Cameras will shift in position as areas of work is completed, so folks can watch the construction as it unfolds.

According to the Park Theater Trust board of directors, visitors to the de-constructed the-

ater itself are not allowed. Safe access to the site is extremely limited due to debris and heavy moving equipment. The public's safety and the safety of the workers are a top priority and the board asks everyone to be respectful of the construction crew who is working so diligently to stay on schedule.

Since access to materials and equipment is extremely limited, beginning last week several parking spots in the small private parking lot on the east side of the Park have been reserved for construction activities. Thanks to the City of Lafayette, special arrangements have been made for patrons and employees of Pillar Cowork & Childcare, Orangetheory Fitness, and Third Reflection Salon at the nearby Oak Bridge parking lot.

Finally, the "Name a Seat, Build a Theater" fundraising campaign is ongoing: <https://parktheatertrust.org/name-my-seat>. Once all 204 seats are named, the program is over. – J. Wake

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MORAGA

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Chamber of Commerce:
www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:
www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

Town Council Meeting,
Wednesday, July 10, cancelled

Park & Rec Commission
Monday, July 13, 6:30 p.m.

Planning Commission Meeting,
Tuesday, July 21, 6:30 p.m.

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Parks and Rec updates Town Council on Open Space community engagement

By Vera Kochan

For the past year, Moraga's Parks and Recreation Department has held several community engagement pop-ups to determine what direction residents would like to see its parks take with regards to recreation facilities, programs, trails, open space resources, and long-term community priorities. The process is entitled Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan and has received a variety of responses and concerns through outreach surveys.

On June 25, 2025, the Town Council approved the selection of Wallace Roberts & Todd (WRT), a planning and design firm, to work with staff

to identify future development and funding opportunities. Besides targeting town-wide events such as the Pear and Wine Festival, Moraga Library Book Sale, and Moraga Farmers Market, a link to the survey has appeared in the Winter/Spring 2026 Activity Guide, and 3,000 randomly selected Moraga households were mailed survey packets to complete either by mail or online. About 320 participants provided more than 2,800 question responses online.

Additionally, on May 1, "Moraga Plays: Park Social," a community workshop, was held at Moraga Commons Park that included stations where opinions were expressed. WRT noted that approximately 328 people participated and more than 1,000 comments and responses were collected.

During the June 10 Town Council meeting, dozens of residents showed up specifically to voice their concerns about potential changes to Rancho Laguna Park as a result of comments collected through the various surveys.

On June 24 Parks and Recreation Director Mackenzie Brady presented a staff report to the Council, stating, "Town staff decided to conduct additional targeted outreach to the park's nearby residents" which were mailed to "households located within approximately 500 feet of Rancho Laguna Park to provide an additional opportunity for direct neighborhood input regarding the park and future planning considerations. These households include properties that are located within both the incorporated Town of Moraga and within the unincorporated area of Contra Costa County." Those responses were not available in time for the meeting.

WRT's Associate/Landscape Planner Madison Merrill updated the Town Council sum-

marizing the community's responses from the various pop-ups through, and including, the May 1 workshop. Key themes identified through the workshop and survey process include: trails, paths, and connectivity; sports and recreation opportunities; community and senior activities; nature and ecology; arts and culture; accessibility and infrastructure; water features; and youth and family activities. The feedback incorporated all of the Town's parks, those being Moraga Commons Park, West Commons Park, Rancho Laguna Park, and the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail.

From a series of scenarios, residents were asked which potential opportunities they would support the Town exploring further. Top vote-getters for Moraga Commons Park were to add more shade over the all-access playground; improve walking loops; and host more community events. West Commons Park votes were to add seating and shade throughout the park; create a central lawn for picnic and play; and build a small pavilion to accommodate smaller events. Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail's top votes wanted more seating and shade; and to replace fitness stations. Rancho Laguna Park votes favored replacement of an aged restroom; flexible use of the central lawn; and add pickleball courts (mitigating any potential sound impacts to neighbors).

Brady's staff report made it clear that "the topics presented at this meeting are intended to summarize community input received to date and do not constitute recommendations, approved projects, or Town Council direction."

Public comment during the meeting was overwhelmingly directed towards objections with regards to perceived changes in Rancho La-



"Moraga Plays: Park Social" May 1 community input workshop at Commons Park.

Photo Madison Merrill

guna Park. Approximately 10 residents who live in the vicinity of the park spoke in opposition of a pickleball court or any type of sports field, additionally noting that it would change the park's dynamic.

The topic of a community/recreation center, with the pear orchard at the intersection of Canyon Road and Camino Pablo as a potential location, was discussed. The Palos Colordos land was also a possible site that council members considered. Even the Hacienda de las Flores was mentioned as a future joint community/event center. The local schools and Saint Mary's College expressed a desire to offer shared resources in order to help the Town provide its residents with more recreational amenities.

Survey-takers were asked to name programs of participation interest. The lengthy list included: fitness/yoga classes; programs for young children; organized senior walks; hiking groups; adult sports leagues; paint/craft nights; farmers market; art shows; environmental education; pickleball

lessons; and programs for teens.

The basic purpose of the presentation/update to the Town Council was for staff to take direction and go forward. Mayor Kerry Hillis suggested a thumbs up/thumbs down vote with regards to key objections for Rancho Laguna Park's future. Council gave a thumbs down for pickleball courts, any type of stadium, or stadium lighting. Shared-use agreements with local schools or some type of athletic field amenities received a thumbs up. The idea of putting a community center on the pear orchard grounds was tabled in that more information was needed.

Staff will take July and August to work on the Draft Recommendation development. On Sept. 9, there will be a joint Town Council/Parks and Recreation Commission meeting where the Draft Recommendation will be presented and staff will, once again, take more feedback from council members, commissioners and the public.

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Rheem Valley Shopping Center improvements

..continued from Page A1

Mitnick's report went on to state, "Initial discussions with the Kosmont team have taken place. Town staff have also participated in several constructive meetings with local property owners, local business owners, real estate/development experts, and potential developers/businesses. There are several exciting development projects that are either underway or will start to take place over the next few months to several years."

Notable changes coming to Rheem include a Chipotle restaurant replacing the Bank of America ATM machine, and the Saint Mary's College Rheem Campus is now on the market (Kosmont is in discussions with the college in regards to the site's redevelopment). SMC is also looking to add more on-campus housing and would like Moraga to look more vibrant in order for the school to attract more students.

There are multiple property owners at Rheem, with U.S. Realty

Partners being the largest, and Mitnick stated that the Town is working with all of them to get a mutually acceptable outcome. He did note that the Moraga Shopping Center is "heavily underdeveloped."

On hand during the council meeting was Kosmont Senior Advisor Dean Isaacs who praised U.S. Realty Partners for its willingness to make constructive changes to Rheem. While it does own several shopping centers state-wide, none of them offer attached housing units which

would make Moraga a test-case. The property owners are willing to consider attached housing, but construction costs have risen. Kosmont is working with property owners to come up with potential concepts that will make it worth their while. "There's not a tool box you can go to; there's a different tool box for each property. That's what we're spending our time trying to figure out now."

Remembering the first female Moraga mayor: Sue McNulty Rainey

By Vera Kochan



(2024) Former Mayors Sue McNulty Rainey and Barry Gross, Moraga's first council members

Photo Vera Kochan

In what became a milestone in Moraga, Sue McNulty Rainey was elected to the Town Council in 1974 – the same year that the Town was incorporated. Not only was she the lone woman on that initial council, she became Moraga's fourth mayor and the first female to hold the office.

During last month's June 24 Town Council meeting, Mayor Kerry Hillis made an announcement that Rainey had passed away. Her death, on June 17 at the age of 86 from mesothelioma, came as a surprise to many. Her husband, former State Senator, Assemblyman, and Contra Costa County Sheriff Richard Rainey passed away in July 2021.

Rainey's public service began in 1959-1961 when, as a registered nurse, she became a Second Lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps. According to a 2025 article in Contra Costa Herstory, that experience "gave her unique insights into

organizational leadership and community needs. She began attending community meetings and quickly recognized that effective local government required the participation of diverse voices, including women who brought different perspectives and priorities to public service."

Not only was Rainey Moraga's mayor during 1977-1978, she also served as Walnut Creek's mayor for three terms (2001-2002, 2006-2007, and 2009-2010). Former Moraga Mayor Barry Gross, who became the Town's fifth, had nothing but praise for his former colleague and friend. "Sue not only could tell a joke; she could take a joke. She was a great person to be around. When the votes were tallied, she barely made it onto the first council, but she was a smart leader, and she got along with everybody. Her loss is an immense loss to Walnut Creek and Moraga, as well as her family."

Besides her town council/mayoral duties, Rainey kept busy with several other public service endeavors through the years. She was president of Contra Costa Council (now East Bay Leadership Council); on the Board of Regents for Saint Mary's College; president of Moraga Junior Women's Club; president of Moraga Parent's Club; director of Moraga Community Association; founder and president of Contra Costa Sewer and Water Agency; board chair for Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO); board chair of Central Contra Costa Transit Authority – County Connection; and so many more.

Rainey once summed up her public service philosophy by saying, "Public service is not just about holding office or making decisions – it's about building the bridges that connect communities, fostering the collaboration that solves problems no one can solve alone, and never forgetting that every choice we make affects real people's lives. True leadership means listening more than talking, planning for the next generation rather than the next election, and remembering that the greatest achievements in public service often happen behind the scenes, in the patient work of building consensus and creating structures that enable others to succeed."



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Tuesday, July 21, 7 p.m.
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Tuesday, July 14, 7 p.m.
Orinda Library Auditorium

Lamorinda Tri City/Town Joint Council Meeting
Thursday, July 16, 6 p.m.
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Orinda to help businesses spruce up exteriors

By Sora O'Doherty



Potential façade improvement in Orinda.

Image courtesy City of Orinda

Last month the Orinda City Council voted to provide money to local businesses to help them update their façades. The program will provide up to \$10,000 for projects costing under \$10,000, and for more expensive projects, the city will provide the first \$10,000 and will then match an additional \$20,000 spent by the business. Businesses will be able to receive a total of \$30,000 grant funding.

The pilot program is scheduled to begin this month and run through June of next year. A total of \$75,000 has been allocated to the program. The pilot program has to pass through the Planning Commission, which next meets on July 14, and then return to the City Council for final adoption of the enabling ordinance.

The funds will be available for numerous permanent improvements to business façades, including paint or surface treatments, signage, awnings and canopies, permanent

outdoor seating, windows, doors, cornices and storefront replacement, exterior lighting, landscaping, planting or decorative fencing, and improvements under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Also included will be permit fees not waived by the city, including Contra Costa County building permit fees.

Either property owners or tenants may apply for funding, but tenants must show that they have authority from the property owner to effect improvements. The presentation to the City Council by Cole Haselip, Assistant to the City Manager, included a PowerPoint slide show.

Haselip reported that Orinda had been inspired by similar programs to encourage façade improvement in nearby cities, such as Alameda, which offered a 50% matching grant up to \$20,000 per project and Fairfield, which offered grants of up to \$10,000 to cover 75% of costs of minor projects or

up to \$25,000 to cover 50% of costs for major projects between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

Milpitas covered either 75% of project costs or \$25,000, whichever was less. And Oakland, with a population of over 400,000, offered \$25,000 with no match and additional funds requiring a 50% match up to \$30,000 total based on façade length. Pittsburg and Dublin in Contra Costa County both offered façade improvement grants.

The presentation included some before and after photos of façade improvements in other areas, which included a strip mall in Dublin and a Starbucks coffee shop in Monterey. Additionally, staff presented some "wish casting" images of several Orinda locations, showing their current state and what might be possible with a façade update.

City Council members noticed that the "after" images included different shops than are currently existing, and Haselip assured them that the city wants the program to benefit existing businesses. "Chat GPT is not that sophisticated," he explained.

Haselip answered questions from the council on issues such as

the use of discretion in selecting the properties for the grants, and how the city could encourage businesses to avail of the grants. In responding, Haselip said that proposed projects would be compared and that the city intended to use every avenue of communication to get word of the grants out to Orinda businesses.

City Manager Linda Smith talked about the evolution of the proposal. "Part of the reason why we had a no match to start at that first level is because some feedback we received from the business community about where their level of interest was and we wanted to make sure we could capture people that may be interested in some minor modifications like awnings." She added, "Then we get into the matching beyond that when we start getting more substantive changes that people would potentially make including maybe painting façades. It gets expensive but starting with the smaller pieces; maybe we could change out awnings or change out a window or railings, or things like that, that can improve the aesthetic of the building."



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Nomination period opens for local office elections

By Sora O'Doherty

This month residents will have the opportunity to put themselves forward for positions on local town and city councils, elementary school boards, the Acalanes Union High School District board and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. The general election will be held on Nov. 3.

The nomination period opens on July 13 and will close on Aug. 7, with the exception that if an incumbent whose term is expiring does not file for reelection, the filing period for non-incumbents will be extended to Aug. 12.

The following incumbents have terms expiring this year. In Orinda, Mayor Brandyn Iverson, and council members Latika Malkani and Janet Riley and on the Orinda Union School District board, President Katie Shogan and board members, Edda Collins Coleman and Eve Phillips.

In Lafayette, the terms of council members Susan Candell, Jim Cervantes and Stella Wotherspoon expire at the end of the year, and on the Lafayette School District board, President Katy Foreman and board members Rob Strum and

Dave Smith have terms expiring this year.

In Moraga, Mayor Kerry Hillis and Council Member Steve Woehleke have terms expiring at the end of the year, and on the Moraga School District board, President Larry Jacobs and board members Kristin Kraetsch and Martha White will end their current terms this year.

The Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) is transitioning to a "by-trustee area" election system for the November 2026 election. Instead of at-large voting, the district is divided into five areas, and

voters will only cast ballots for candidates residing in their specific trustee area.

Three of the five governing board seats will be on the November ballot, representing Trustee Areas 1, 3, and 5. Board members Jennifer Chen, Nancy Kendzierski, and Stacey Schweppe hold seats that are up for reelection. Trustee Areas 2 and 4 will shift to by-trustee voting in the November 2028 election.

...continued on Page A8

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Hours of talking, but no new action on senior housing development's preschool impact

By Sora O'Doherty

With work scheduled to begin this summer, The Orinda Pre-School (TOPS) has been raising concerns about the construction of the Vista Verde senior housing development.

While representatives of TOPS stress that they are in fact in favor of senior housing, they have serious concerns about what might be a two-year construction project just feet from the 88-year-old preschool, which is probably the oldest business in Orinda.

Administrators of TOPS as well as families of children who attend or have attended the preschool first appealed to the Planning Commission on May 12 during the public forum. The Commission placed the matter on its May 26 agenda for discussion only, not as an action item. After that, TOPS proponents brought the matter to the attention of the Orinda City Council on June 9 during its public forum.

Representatives of TOPS and parents of children enrolled in TOPS have told the planning commission and the city council that they have been alarmed by changes that were approved as "minor" after the approval of the housing project. Such changes include the removal of some trees around the property. TOPS has also expressed concern about the planned construction of a retaining wall cutting across a corner of the school's outdoor classroom on land that TOPS has asserted has been double leased by the Orinda Community Church (OCC) to both TOPS and to Vista Verde.

On each occasion there was time for multiple parties to speak in support of TOPS about the effects of the construction of the Vista Verde housing development on the school, its students and staff.

While Planning Commissioners expressed concerns about the issues raised by TOPS, they were informed by Planning Director Lashun Cross on May 26 that the matter had been approved and was beyond the scope of the city to effect any



The yellow rope indicates roughly where the retaining wall will be built for Vista Verde Senior Housing. This corner has been used as part of the outdoor classroom by The Orinda Preschool.

Photo Sora O'Doherty

changes at this late date. The City Council heard comments in its public forum, but no council member sought to have the matter placed on a future agenda.

In discussing the situation with Lamorinda Weekly, Victoria Smith, president of the Orinda Senior Housing Foundation (OSHF), noted that from 2021 through the present, the OSHF and the OCC has worked closely with The Orinda Preschool Director, Kristen Armanini, TOPS President Tawny Martinez, and the Parent's Board to plan the Vista Verde Senior Housing project and to mitigate the effects of the construction upon the preschool and the children.

"Many meetings and site visits were held," Smith said, referring to extensive outreach to TOPS leadership. She explained that "some communication was directly with TOPS, other communication was with OCC, which had appointed a liaison between TOPS and Vista Verde." Smith cited many emails that had been exchanged.

After the matter was raised to the planning commission in early May of this year, the commission asked the planning director to attend the next meeting and explain the history of the development, which was first submitted to the city in September 2021.

The path of the project was interrupted af-

ter approval, with a delay of some time. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic had started the previous year, and the preschool says that it was busy dealing with the effects of the pandemic.

Following the usual noticing, the project was approved by the planning commission on July 12, 2022, and then by the city council on Aug. 16, 2022. (Links to all relevant documents and meetings can be found on the Vista Verde page on the City of Orinda website.)

Local residents close to the site were notified, as were local schools. However, TOPS was not directly notified because it is a tenant of the Orinda Community Church.

Planning Director Cross, reviewing the notices that had been given, said that the project was correctly noticed at the time, and that the city was not required to give notice to tenants, but only to property owners, who could communicate with their tenants. The lack of notice in this case seemed to trouble some of the commissioners, who suggested that some additional forms of notice might be employed in the future to make sure that more people are aware of upcoming building projects.

Cross, who indicated that she had discussed the matter with legal counsel, suggested that some of the current issues, such as the alleged double leasing of land by

the church to both the preschool and the senior housing project, are civil issues among the parties and do not affect the city.

According to Smith, an agreement between TOPS, OCC and OSHF on construction mitigation measures was reached over two years ago. Under that agreement, the Church provided TOPS then, without any increase in rent, with an additional safe, flat outdoor space to replace the steep hillside corner that will be used for a retaining wall.

Smith disputed the claim that the land had been double leased, asserting that TOPS had been using an area that was not actually leased to them. However, Smith said that the Church had provided TOPS with the unfenced lawn area between the Sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall to compensate for the loss of the hillside corner. As part of the agreement, OSHF paid over \$6,000 to fence the property, so that TOPS could comply with the California State Preschool Licensing Agency requirements, and Ms. Martinez approved the arrangement.

Smith added that the Church has also been preparing more interior space for use by TOPS as well. Construction is currently scheduled to begin in mid-July with the demolition of the existing caretaker's cottage on the site.

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Orinda 4th of July Parade

..continued from Page A1

At 10 a.m. the annual Fourth of July parade began, featuring an array of local organizations, marching bands, and colorful performances, with parade participants carefully handing out candy to young spectators.

Starting at 10:30 a.m. parade goers could avail of the food trucks and beer booths near the Orinda Community Center. Food options in-

cluded Signature Burgers, King Gyro & Kabob, Crazy Empanadas, and FroGo dessert truck, serving frozen yogurt with toppings and sauces.

There were also two beer booths in the park, one run by the Orinda Tabor Sister City Foundation and the other by the Rotary Club of Orinda to raise funds for local community projects and beyond.

From 11:30 a.m. onward there was a carnival

in Orinda Community Park with live music.

Eliska Tumova, the visiting Czech student from two years ago, was back in Orinda visiting her host, Bobbie Landers. Tumova came for two weeks last year, and this year she is here for three weeks. She is just finished her first year of college in the Czech Republic. She rode on the horse-drawn wagon for the Joaquin Moraga Adobe Foundation.

Rancher Mel Silva

has driven his horse-drawn wagon since Orinda's second parade.

In order to ensure the safety of all, another person sits beside the driver to watch out for any danger to the horse. Silva only brings horses that are accustomed to being in crowds and are very calm.

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Letters to the Editor

Limit Spending on Elections

We've just witnessed the most expensive gubernatorial primary election in our state's history at \$315.8 million. When elections are dominated by unlimited spending and outside influence, trust in government erodes, and with it, the very foundation of our Republic. This is not a partisan issue. It is a question of whether our system still reflects the will of the people.

The good news is that Americans agree on the need for change. Across party lines, support is growing for a constitutional amendment that will restore the ability of Congress and the states to set reasonable limits on money in our elections. In fact, 25 states have called for such an amendment, including California.

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, we have a rare opportunity not only to celebrate our founding, but to reflect on whether we are truly living up to its promise. It's past time to set reasonable limits on

money in our elections. I urge my neighbors to learn more about this issue and to talk with our elected representatives about how to make this vital amendment a reality.

Regina McGrath
Lafayette

Be prepared

With summer starting and the weather getting hotter, wildfire season is a big worry for everyone in Lafayette. The City Council recently said that wildfire prevention is one of their biggest goals this year, and as a local Scout, I think it is super important for all of us and our families to be prepared as in Scouts, our motto is "Be Prepared."

If an emergency or an evacuation happens, you might only have a few minutes to leave your house. That is why I think every family in Lafayette or Lamorinda should put together an emergency box or "go-bag" right now before fire season gets worse. A good emergency box should have essentials

ready to go, like extra water, non-perishable food, flashlights, a first aid kit, some cash, and copies of important documents. Having these items packed in one place means you won't waste time looking for things when every second counts. Keeping Lafayette safe and ready isn't just up to the fire department, it is something every household has to work on. By taking a little time to build an emergency kit today, we can make sure our families are ready for anything.

Alexa Wo
Lafayette

A name change in remembrance

As we come upon the five year anniversary of the tragic accident that claimed the life of Stanley crossing guard Ashley Dias, I think it is time that the City of Lafayette commemorate his heroism by changing the name of School Street to Ashley Dias Street.

So often, we depend on the help of

strangers to help raise our children. Every year as our kids get older, teachers, coaches, school staff and others take on an ever-increasing role in their lives. We depend on these people to act in accordance with the rules of our society and the values of our community. Frankly, if there is a better example of the type of person with whom we could entrust the care of our children, I don't know it.

And that is why the City of Lafayette should act to change the name of School Street to honor Mr. Dias. May he be known by children in the years to come as an example of the type of selfless protection offered by the best among us. May he be remembered by parents for generations to come for the sacrifice he made so that our children can live and learn in safety.

David Lorie
Moraga

Joycelyn Marie McClellen

July 8, 1933 - June 12, 2026



Joycelyn "Joyce" McClellen, age 92, passed quietly on June 12, 2026. Joyce was preceded in death by her husband, John E. McClellen. She is survived by her three sons, Jerry (Lillian), John (Joanne), and Jeff (James), three grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Joyce was born in Honolulu on July 8, 1933, the daughter of Marie Sweet and Earl T. Jones. As a Navy "brat," she lived on both coasts before her family settled in Healdsburg, California. Later, she moved to Moraga to raise her own family, the same area her maternal grandparents farmed and ranched in the late 1800s.

Joyce met her future husband, John, while attending a semi-pro baseball game in Santa Rosa. She recalled watching from the bleachers as he caught a fly ball then smiled in her direction, commencing a love story that continued 64 years until John's death in 2019.

Joyce graduated with a degree in education from San Jose State, and earned a Master's of Education from St. Mary's College. Over a 30-year career, she taught both in the regular classroom and as a reading specialist, helping to establish Moraga School District's special education program.

Joyce was an accomplished gardener, specializing in formal rose cultivation. Her backyard became an oasis, a place to relax and enjoy her family. She served as an officer of Moraga Garden Club, organizing Garden Study, and arranging the group's monthly speakers. She loved animals too, adopting cats through ARF and volunteering at the Alexander Lindsey Wildlife Museum. To keep fit, she played tennis, walked and swam.

Joyce leaves us with memories of a life well-lived. She will be missed dearly.

Donations can be made to:
The Moraga Garden Club, P.O. Box 6062, Moraga, CA 94570-6062

In Memory

Ruth Harrington

Sept. 30, 1933 - May 29, 2026

Ruth Harrington, of Moraga, California, passed away peacefully at her home in Walnut Creek, California on May 29, 2026.

Ruth was born on Sept. 30, 1933 in Towanda, Pennsylvania. Ruth graduated from Towanda High School in 1951 and worked as a secretary in the County Commissioners Office in Towanda. Ruth married Thomas Harrington on July 17, 1954. Ruth and Tom lived in both Pennsylvania and California until settling in Moraga in 1969.

Ruth was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Tom Harrington, in 1996 and her son, Sean, in 2015. She is survived by her sons, Barry and Brian; her grandchildren, Dustin, Jason, Josh and Sara, and her great-grandchildren Christopher, Ashley, and Abby. Ruth also leaves behind numerous nieces and nephews who she always made a point of staying in touch with and remembering their birthdays.

Faith was the foundation of Ruth's life. As a devoted member of St. Stephen's Church, she dedicated countless hours to the widow's support group, the Altar Guild, and many other church ministries. Her dependability and servant's heart made her a valued member of the congregation and a friend to many.

A Celebration of Life will be held at St. Stephen's Church, 66 St. Stephen's Drive in Orinda on Saturday, July 18 at 1 p.m.

A live stream will be available by contacting Harrington93033@gmail.com

In Memory



Local election nominations

..continued from Page A6

For detailed maps of the new trustee areas or to check which area you reside in, refer to <https://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/about-auhsd/governing-board/transition-to-by-trustee-area-election-system> page or check your registration status via on the Contra Costa County Elections website, <https://www.contracostavote.gov>.

The terms of three of the five directors of the

Moraga-Orinda Fire District expire in November 2026. Greg Hasler, District 1, Mike Roemer District 4, and Vice President Steven Danziger, District 3 are the incumbents whose terms are expiring this year.

The Country Costa County Elections Division administers candidate filing for MOFD and other local agencies. Specific information on how to Run for Office and a comprehensive Candidates Guide provide details on filing re-

quirements, qualifications, deadlines, fees, and more. Candidates must complete a Candidate Application Packet during the candidate filing period. The filing period is only 25 days, starting 113 days before the election on July 13, and ending 88 days before the election on Aug. 7. This information can be found at <https://www.contracostavote.gov/elections/candidates-campaigns-measures/run-for-office/>.

Crossing guard controversy

..continued from Page A3

"We need more, not fewer guards. If I had a wand, I'd add one on Moraga Road and Moraga Way - where a pedestrian was killed a few years ago - along with other traffic calming measures. I'd also add one by Pleasant Hill Road for the high schoolers going to Acalanes," McCarthy-Redman says. "I think the reason people's property value is what it is, is largely due to the appeal of the schools. We need to have safe walkable, bikeable transit in our city."

Superintendent Stephens called the city a strong partner and commended them for designing and implementing traffic mitigation strategies such as flashing lights, upgraded walkways and pedestrian crosswalks, which have amounted to a \$2 million investment by the city.

McCarthy-Redman

thinks those types of "traffic calming strategies" are important, but not a replacement for human crossing guards who are invested in not only the children's physical safety, but also their well-being.

"For some kids, the interaction with a crossing guard, who knows their name, gives them a high five, is the best interaction they have all day," McCarthy-Redman says.

Sarah Phillips is a second-grade teacher at Happy Valley Elementary School and the mother of two students in the Lafayette School District. Phillips' daughters walk to school every day, which is something she's comfortable with because of Ron, her local crossing guard.

"I would rather have some potholes in the road, than have young people and their families able to feel safe and cross the streets on their

way to Lafayette Schools, so it seems like upside down priorities a little bit," Phillips says. "The crossing guards watch out for our children and our community. When young people have the chance to be known by an adult, who greets them by name as they cross the street, means everything."

Like McCarthy-Redman, Phillips is invested in finding a way to save the crossing guard program so that the community feels safe, walkable, bikeable and folks can enjoy a sense of belonging.

"The more people we have watching out for our children and our community, the better," Phillips says. "If budget cuts absolutely have to be made, then I would hope we could develop a parent and community model that could allow families to help each other with getting to and from school safely."

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Moraga Fourth of July celebration brings community together

By Jennifer Wake



Families and their pets gathered at Moraga Commons Park July 4, enjoying games, jumpy houses, and cheering on the famous dog parade.

Photo J. Wake

Moraga Commons Park was a blur of activity on the Fourth of July as residents – and their quaffed-out pets – gathered to celebrate the 250th anniversary of America’s independence.

Sponsored by the Town of Moraga, the Moraga Park Foundation, the Moraga Lions and Moraga Kiwanis, the

event kicked off the day at 11 a.m. with over 120 of the fur-covered set decked out for the popular Dog Parade, with owners winding the pooches around the park. Jumpy houses and lawn games thrilled the little ones, while live music could be heard from the bandshell and booths offered a plethora of information

as well as a wide variety of food, beer and wine for the older set.

After sunset, the Fireworks show at the Moraga Country Club was the perfect ending for the country’s milestone birthday celebration.

Looking Good in Lamorinda Summer Staples

By Moya Stone



Pair a white T-shirt with denim and colorful accessories for a sharp summer look.

Photo Moya Stone

I’ve been thinking about wardrobe staples for summer – those simple pieces that we return to again and again, such as a pair of jeans, a cotton dress, a classic pullover sweater and the ultimate summer staple: a white T-shirt. There’s something sharp about a pop of white paired with denim or white on white.

Whether boat-neck, crew neck, V-neck, boxy, or crop, the white T-shirt goes with everything and can be dressed up with the right accessories, such as a silk scarf or a strand of pearls. Vogue editors say that the white T-shirt “works overtime.”

But there’s no need to stop with white. Stripe tees are trending for summer and how about some color? Red, navy, yellow. Pack a stack for your summer travel adventures and enjoy an array of easy and stylish looks.

Another summer staple is, of course, a good book. For that long flight, or a picnic, or at home by the pool,

an absorbing story is a favorite summer pleasure and one of my suggestions is “Granny Takes A Trip: High Fashion and High Times at the Wildest Rock ‘n’ Roll Boutique” (White Rabbit), by British journalist Paul Gorman.

Once upon a time in 1966 London, there were three friends: John Pearse, Nigel Waymouth, and Sheila Cohen. Waymouth and Cohen were living together and Cohen’s extensive antique (Victorian to 1930s) clothing collection had gotten so out of hand – filling up their flat from floor to ceiling – they decided to open a shop on King’s Road in Chelsea. Pierce, who had a background in tailoring, joined them and the trio named their shop “Granny Takes a Trip,” referencing Cohen’s “granny clothing” and the fact that everyone was “tripping” on psychedelic drugs.

This compelling read is a journey back to 1960s-70s London; and

an introduction to the colorful characters that created stage looks for some of the top rockers of the era, including Mick Jagger and George Harrison. Reading this book is its own trip and one worth taking. But it’s a lengthy journey and I suggest thinking of it as quick getaways – in other words, dip in and out all summer long.

There are lots of local events happening this season and one of my favorites is the Renegade Craft Fair coming up Aug. 1 and 2 at the Fort Mason Center Festival Pavilion in San Francisco.

Going strong since 2003, Renegade is a juried show featuring over 200 indie artists from around the country selling their wares, including jewelry, clothing, accessories, art pieces, and home decor items. Many of the vendors are local to the Bay Area. This is a great opportunity to support small businesses and find something unique for yourself or think ahead to the holidays. It’s free, it’s fun, and it’s not to be missed. Visit the website for more information at www.renegadecraft.com.

The Shadelands Ranch Museum in Walnut Creek is hosting their End of Summer Market on Sunday, Aug. 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2660 Ygnacio Valley Road. This annual outside event features local vendors selling arts, crafts, antiques, vintage jewelry and clothing, baked goods, and more. There will be museum tours and food trucks. Free parking and admission. What an excellent way to wind down the season.

Don those summer staples and go forth in style.

Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at www.overdressedforlife.com.

Crisp and light Cucumber & Olive Salad, a perfect summer side

By Susie Iventosch

This cucumber salad is a simple way to use fresh garden cucumbers and herbs when they are at their best. It is crisp, bright, and easy to make, with just a few ingredients that work well together.

There is no heavy dressing – no mayonnaise, no sour cream, nothing that covers up the flavor of the vegetables. A quick dressing of lemon juice and olive oil keeps everything fresh and light. The lemon wakes everything up. The olive oil softens the edges. Together, they turn a bowl of simple ingredients into something that feels fresh and elegant with almost no effort.

Fresh dill and parsley add plenty of flavor without making the salad feel heavy. Castelvetrano olives bring a mild, buttery saltiness that pairs especially well with cucumbers.

The key is to use fresh, firm cucumbers



Photo Susie Iventosch

and let the salad sit for a few minutes before serving. This gives the lemon, olive oil, herbs, and olives time to flavor the cucumbers while they still stay crisp.

For the prettiest texture, use cucumbers that are firm and freshly picked. If the skins are tender, leave them on. If the seeds are large, scoop some out before slicing. This salad is fantastic served with grilled chicken, fish, lamb, or a platter of tomatoes and bread. It is also perfectly happy on its own, eaten

cold from the refrigerator with a fork while standing in the kitchen. In fact, it may be at its best that way. We also love to top this salad with a heaping spoon of labneh, (a thick, creamy strained yogurt popular in Middle Eastern cooking). The tangy flavor pairs so well with the lemon and herbs.

It’s best to serve this salad within an hour or so of when you make it, but leftovers are still delicious the next day, especially tucked into a pita.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cucumbers, large diced (homegrown if you have them)
- 1 ½ cups Castelvetrano olives, pitted and halved
- 1/3 cup parsley, chopped
- ¼ cup fresh dill weed, chopped
- 3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice (roughly the juice of two lemons)
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- ½ tsp. lemon pepper

DIRECTIONS

Place the sliced cucumbers in a large bowl. Add the Castelvetrano olives, dill, and parsley.

In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, olive oil, salt, pepper, and lemon zest, if using.

Pour the dressing over the cucumbers and toss gently until everything is well coated. Let the salad rest for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.



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. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



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Not to be missed

Art

The Moraga Art Gallery's exhibit "Connectivity" is on view through Aug. 16. The Gallery is located at 432 Center Street in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center and is open noon to 5 p.m., Wednesday to Sunday. For more information visit <http://www.moragaart-gallery.com> or call 925-376-5407.

Anthony's Custom Picture Framers is pleased to present "The Sounds of Art," a collaborative art show featuring local artist Peter Baron and special guest Ryan Price on bass and guitar on Sunday, July 12 from 2 – 5 p.m. at 1020 Brown Ave in Lafayette. Peter Baron's art has been featured in galleries, restaurants, festivals, and magazines such as Art in America and Art News. His paintings and drawings reflect an eclectic mix of styles and influences. Admission is free.

The Lamorinda Arts Council's current exhibit includes featured artists from the Oakland Art Association through July 31 at the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. The public is invited to a free Artist Reception on July 11 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. www.lamorindaarts.org

The Main Street Arts Gallery in downtown

Martinez is featuring a group exhibition by local metal artists during July and August. The show highlights a variety of pieces ranging from sculptural and functional works to imaginative creations that demonstrate the versatility of the medium. The metal artists include Nate Holbein, Brady Prisha, Luke Heimbigner and Steen Kjolrie. Main Street Arts is located at 613 Main Street, Martinez.

Theater

The Orinda Starlight Village Players presents "Present Laughter," July 24 to Aug. 15 in the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. Set in 1941, the play revolves around a famous theatre actor Garry Es-sendine as he prepares to go to Africa on a theatre tour. Full of rich characters, quick wit and theatrical antics, "Present Laughter" is a perfect midsummer comedy. Tickets available at www.orsvp.org/present-laughter

Literature

Free July book club events at Orinda Books. The Poetry Circle Meeting will discuss "I Could Walk Forever and Know So Little" by Krissy Kludt on Monday, July 13 at 10:30 a.m. A discussion of "The Murder of Mr. Wickham" by Claudia Gray will take place on Thursday, July

Not to be missed

23 at 10:30 a.m. Both events will be held at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, Orinda. No RSVP required.

Music

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale presents Handel's Tolomeo on Friday, July 24, from 7:30 to 9 p.m., at First Congregational Church of Berkeley, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. What happens when a king loses everything? Peter Whelan launches his first season with the semi-staged opera and an all-star cast in Handel's "Tolomeo." Cost: \$40-\$175, \$20 tickets available for Under 30s. For more info see <https://philharmonia.org/2026-27-season/handels-tolomeo/> or call 415-295-1900 or email info@philharmonia.org.

Other

Thursday Nights in Orinda. Turn your summer into a weekly celebration on Thursday nights through September at the Orinda Community Center Park located at 28 Orinda Way. With events rotating throughout the season, there's always something to enjoy. Upcoming events: Outdoor film – "Zootopia" July 16, Opera in the Park July 23, and Salvage Title musical performance on Aug. 6. Go to www.cityoforinda.gov/778/Thursday-Nights-in-Orinda for the full

schedule. **Middle and high school students** living or attending school in California's 10th Congressional District are invited to submit an original application written in any programming language, for any platform (desktop/PC, web, tablet, mobile, raspberry Pi, etc.) as part of the 2026 Congressional App Challenge. Submissions are open now through 9 a.m. PT on Monday, Oct. 26. For more information or help submitting an app, please call (925) 933-2660. To learn more about the CAC, register, and submit your app please visit <https://www.congressionalappchallenge.us/students/student-registration/>.

Free Summer Concerts Thursdays 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Moraga Commons Band Shell. Loard's ice cream will serve from the lawn at every concert; while the Moraga Lion's and Moraga Kiwanis clubs will serve beer and wine from the bandshell. Taste of the World Market and Ofie's Kitchen food trucks will be on hand to provide food options too. Upcoming concerts: Bell Brothers, Country, Rock, American, July 9; Dirty Cello, Cello-led Blues & Rock July 16. For the full schedule see <https://moragaparks.org/summer-concert-series/>

Not to be missed

Hacienda Nights brings the community together for live music, local food vendors, family activities, and relaxed outdoor fun under the trees at the Hacienda De Las Flores once a month on Tuesday evenings from June through August. Guests are invited to grab dinner from a rotating lineup of food trucks and vendors, enjoy drinks and desserts, connect with neighbors, and soak in the atmosphere of one of Moraga's most scenic gathering spaces. Bring a blanket and enjoy a picnic in the park on Tuesday, July 7 from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores Park great lawn, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga.


Moraga Historical Society in partnership with Michaan's Auctions presents an appraisal fundraiser event to benefit MHS. You will receive a verbal, fair market appraisal for up to 3 items of your paintings, sculpture, stamps, coins, jewelry, watches, furniture, Asian art, sports memorabilia, and more. There is a \$20 donation for MHS members and \$25 for guests. Here's a chance for you to find out if a family heirloom has monetary value in addition to sentimental value. Sunday, Aug. 30 (timed entry between 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.). Casita at Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Dr., Moraga. RSVP: ranch-susan@aol.com for further instructions.

Please submit sport stories/ pictures to: submit.lamorindaweekly@gmail.com

Lamorinda Weekly

Contact us: Letters to the editor (max 350 words): submit.lamorindaweekly@gmail.com
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Public Notice

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT NOTICE OF ELECTION

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of California Public Resources Code §5529 and California Elections Code §12112, that a general district election to be consolidated with the Statewide General Election will be held in the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, to choose a successor for four (4) offices of the Board of Directors to be elected in Wards 3, 5, 6, and 7 of the Park District each for a full term of four (4) years.

Generally, the wards include the following areas:

Ward 3, which comprises the election precincts of Castro Valley, Fairview, a portion of Fremont, a portion of Hayward, a portion of San Lorenzo, and Union City. This ward is within Alameda County.

Ward 5, which comprises the election precincts of Dublin, a portion of Fremont, Livermore, Newark, Pleasanton, and Sunol. This ward is within Alameda County.

Ward 6, which comprises the election precincts of Alamo, a portion of Alhambra Valley, Blackhawk, Byron, Camino Tassajara, Castle Hill, Clayton, Concord, Contra Costa Centre, Danville, Discovery Bay, Norris Canyon, North Gate, Pleasant Hill, San Miguel, San Ramon, Shell Ridge, and a portion of Walnut Creek. This ward is within Contra Costa County.

Ward 7, which comprises the election precincts of a portion of Alhambra Valley, Antioch, Bay Point, Bethel Island, Brentwood, Clyde, Crockett, Hercules, Knightsen, Martinez, Mountain View, Oakley, Pacheco, Pittsburg, Port Costa, Rodeo, and Vine Hill. This ward is within Contra Costa County.

The qualifications required for each office for which the candidates are nominated are:

Each director shall be a resident and a registered voter in the ward from which he or she is nominated. (PRC § 5522) **A nomination paper containing the name of the candidate to be nominated shall be signed by at least 50 voters residing within the ward.** (PRC § 5531)

Official nominating petitions for eligible candidates desiring to file for any of the elective offices shall be obtained from the Alameda County Registrar of Voters (1225 Fallon Street, Room G-1, Oakland, California 94612), or the Elections Officer of Contra Costa County (555 Escobar Street, Martinez, California 94553), on or after Monday, July 13, 2026, and must be filed not later than 5:00 pm, Friday, August 7, 2026.

If nomination papers are not filed by the incumbent by the Friday, August 7, 2026 deadline, any qualified person, other than the incumbent, will have until 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 12, 2026, to file nomination papers.

If no one or only one person is nominated for an elective office, appointment to the elective office may be made as prescribed by law.

Ballot drop-off locations open October 5, 2026. Polls will be open between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, November 3, 2026.

The Board of Supervisors of Alameda and Contra Costa counties are hereby authorized and requested to canvass the returns of the District and certify the results to the District.

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Campolindo girls swim team wins first state championship

By Jon Kingdon



State champion Campolindo girls swim team along with the boys team.

Photo provided

What can be closer than a one-point victory? How about when the difference of that one point is only 0.14 of a second. And what can make that sporting competition be more significant? When it comes in the last event of the California State swimming meet, which is exactly how the Campolindo girls swim team won the state meet for their first time edging out Archbishop Mitty 149 to 148.

Unlike most high school sports, there are no divisions in the state competitions. "The swimmers are very fast through California and it's very competitive so if you win, you're a true state champion," said Ronnie Heidary, Campolindo's head swim

coach.

Campolindo entered the tournament with confidence and momentum having finished first in both the Diablo Athletic League and North Coast Sectional Tournaments. "We have a great group of girls and we've had strong teams for the last four years, so we knew we were competitive," Heidary said. "They compete for each other whether it's a relay or an individual event, they know they're swimming for the team because they know that each race could decide the state championship so they swim with that kind of expectation to perform."

Coming into the meet, Campolindo was highly seeded but did

not show their best in the preliminary rounds. "Some of our kids did not swim well on Friday but then moved up, some quite a bit on Saturday and in the end, every point mattered," Heidary said. "That's what we talk about with the kids and that's why I love swimming; it's simultaneously an individual sport and a team sport so every race is critical and it came down to that."

Coming into the meet with a core of seven talented swimmers, strategy became a key factor in the team's ultimate success in the three relays. Campolindo would finish seventh in the 200-yard medley (28 pts.), fifth in the 200-yard freestyle (32 pts.)

and second in the 400-yard free style (38 pts.), accounting for 98 of the team's 149 points. Archbishop Mitty, who would finish second to Campolindo would have a first and seventh place in the relays and scored no points in their third relay, only totaling 68 points in the relays.

"There is a strategy," Heidary said. "You look at the whole meet and your roster and how you can maximize the kids' talents and strengths in all three relays and that's why we had that depth, that strength in numbers. In the end, you make the best decision and tell the kids that you've got to go fast."

Utilizing that depth, Heidary did not have anyone swim more than two of the relays – Stella Canoles and Charlotte Smith (200 and 400 free), Emma Sloan and Elise Gratton (200 medley and 400 free), Lucy Kao (200 free and medley). Chloe Cooper (200 medley) and Ruth Andrews (200 free).

So where did the 0.14 seconds become so crucial? It all came down to the last race of the meet, the 400 free relay. Campolindo was down by eight points to Archbishop Mitty, knowing that they had to finish no worse than second and Mitty could not finish any better than seventh. As required, Campolindo finished in second and

Mitty finished in seventh, missing sixth place by that 0.14 seconds.

"We were on the side of the pool, just screaming and watching this, all the teams come in from third through seventh, all within 0.2 seconds of each other and when we realized how the points ended up, everyone was jumping up and down. The girls were mentally tough, and they earned it."

Heidary shared how much this championship meant. "We've had a lot of great meets but this is probably the most important meet we've swam in my 32 years here. Winning the state championship is huge for the program, the community and for Northern California."

Heidary has always stressed character and leadership and on this team, it was no different, calling the seniors on the roster "impeccable lead-

ers."

At the team banquet, Heidary singled out Elise Gratton and Lucy Kao, the two seniors at the meet. "I awarded them the inspirational award for the women's team. We've seen this for 30 years when somebody lives the moral life and does everything right, it just carries over to the team and the younger kids see that and aspire to be like that."

The Campolindo boys team finished a very respectable seventh place with 99 points, though missing their top swimmer Ellis Culleton who was competing in a water polo match. With the relays accounting for 72 points and Gavin Cameto being on two of those relays, he also accounted for 23 points in individual events. "If we have everybody back, I think we have a shot to win with the guys next year," Heidary said.

Miramonte Gym renamed the Sabrina Ionescu Gymnasium

By Jon Kingdon



Sabrina Ionescu with kids from her skills clinic.

Photo Mark Bell

It was last March when it was officially announced by a unanimous vote from the Acalanes Union High School District governing board that the Miramonte High School gymnasium would be officially renamed the Sabrina Ionescu Gymnasium. However, it was not until June 26th when Miramonte, its Booster Club and Mats Nation hosted the "Celebrating a Champion" event for Ionescu, which followed a Youth Basketball Clinic put on by Ionescu and her former Miramonte Coach Kelly Sopak.

It was Sopak's daughter, Lauren, a former teammate at Miramonte, that initiated the drive to get the gym named after Ionescu.

By themselves, Ionescu's numbers speak volumes – a 119 and 9 won lost record at Miramonte, setting school records for most points, steals, assists and triple doubles, being named USA Today's girls basketball player of the year, Gatorade State Player of the Year and

named to the McDonald's and Jordan Brand All-American teams.

At the University of Oregon, she became the first player in NCAA history to have at least 2,000 points, 1,000 rebounds and 10 assists in a career along with being named AP, Naismith, and USBWA Player of the Year and winning the Wooden Award and Wade Trophy.

After being named the first pick in the WNBA by the New York Liberty, she has been a four-time WNBA all-star and All-WNBA selection and led the Liberty to their first WNBA championship in 2024 and then took home gold for the USA team at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Miramonte Principal Ben Campopiano set the tone for the afternoon: "What makes this so extra special, is that Sabrina really embodies that spirit, that community, and that bond, and it is so exciting to have her here today."

AUHS Superintendent John Nickerson

shared what was so unique about the naming of the gym. "The district has never named a facility after a former student. It's always been after a coach or after a staff member, but this is different. Sabrina is different, her impact is different and she made it clear as to what type of affair this should be when she said, 'I don't want a bunch of suits talking about me; I want to play with the kids, I want everybody to have fun.'"

Ever the academician, Nickerson saw the naming of the gym after Ionescu as more than just the recognition of a great athlete. "Sabrina's story reminds us of the importance of high school athletics, as it's one of the most powerful classrooms that we have in our high schools.

"Kids are learning things on the court, on the field and in the pool that they're not learning in a textbook. They're learning how to handle adversity, and how team is stronger than one, how to work with others, how to celebrate wins and how to handle the disappointment of a loss and grow stronger as an individual and as a team. From that, they're learning discipline, resilience and team play, and all things that are going to help them when they go to college. And then beyond college, in their career, as a family member, in life, and a lot of that develops through athletics. Only a small number of athletic gymnasiums or facilities in this country are named after a woman and it's long overdue in this dis-

trict, and it matters. Excellence is excellence. As a community, we recognize that."

...continued on Page A12

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Acalanes rising senior selected for 2026 USA Saddle Seat World Cup Team

Submitted by Shannon Tierney



Reese Tierney

Photo provided

Reese Tierney, a saddle seat equestrian from Lafayette was selected as one of only 12 athletes to represent the United States at the 2026 USA Saddle Seat World Cup Team, one of the most prestigious international competitions in the sport.

Tierney competed as a member of the Three-Gaited Team, consisting of six riders who represented the United States at the biennial competi-

tion June 29–July 2 in Shelbyville, Kentucky.

The Saddle Seat World Cup brings together top riders from around the world for a unique and highly technical competition where athletes ride unfamiliar horses provided by host farms. Riders have limited time to learn their equine partners prior to competing in rail work and pattern phases where they are assessed by an international

judging panel.

Tierney, age 17, began riding at Sherman Ranch as a 5-year-old, and started showing at Stachowski Farms in San Marcos, Calif., at age 7, trained under the instruction of Jonathan Ramsay for the past 10 years. Reese also trains under Austin Eversman at Stachowski Farms and Merin Maggi and Lila Tatar at Maggi Stables in Hollister, California. Over the course of her riding career, she has earned notable accolades in several Arabian horse events including 23 national championships.

"It's an incredible honor to be chosen for the 2026 USA Saddle Seat World Cup Team," said Tierney. "I am forever grateful for this experience and want to thank my trainers, family, and especially the horses who have taught me so much throughout the years."

Miramonte Gym

..continued from Page A11

The naming of the gym also allows the student body to identify with Ionescu. "That name is going to tell them something. It will say that a girl who played in this gym, ran on these floors, sat in these classrooms, competed as a Matador, became one of the best in the world and became a champion. It's the power of the role model. It's a real person with real roots in this community and in this high school."

Kelly Sopak, who coached every game Ionescu played in high school, brought up one last statistic about Ionescu's career at Miramonte. "Most importantly, this gym, formerly the Matadome, soon to be Sabrina Ionescu Gymnasium was where Sabrina and her teammates were undefeated. It's pretty amazing to never lose a game in your home gym, and she was able to accomplish

that with the help of her teammates."

Sopak shared something his father told him and how it related to Ionescu. "He said there are three types of people: people that make things happen, people that watch things happen, and people that wake up the next day and say, what the hell just happened. Well, Sabrina makes things happen, that's her whole life. It just didn't happen by accident. Everything she did, whether it was improving her jump shot, improving her ball handling, improving her defense, or learning how to somehow to be athletic enough to play in a league where people like her could not compete athletically and she managed to do that, and that's not an accident. So, with Sabrina making things happen, I'm glad that we all can make something happen for her."

Orinda Mayor Brandy Iverson made the official proclamation to

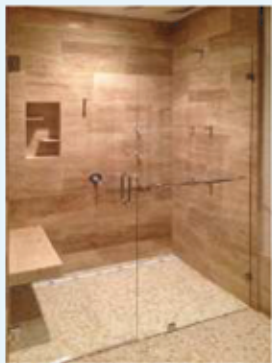
rename the gym before Ionescu than took the stage, speaking with great appreciation about the day and thanking everyone involved. "I couldn't have imagined when I was going to school here as a student athlete, that this would ever be an opportunity that I would have, knowing that I'm standing up here today now in front of so many young girls and young boys, hopefully just being that mentor and that role model that they can look up to and say I can do this one day as well, while also attending, in my opinion, one of the best high schools in the world, playing games professionally all around the world and there will always be someone up in the stands that will yell, 'Go Mats!' ... I'm excited for what's to come here and hopefully continue to make kids' dreams come true."

Special thanks to Mark Bell for his help with this story.

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