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MOFD's July 10 prescribed fire at Mulholland Ridge in Moraga Photo courtesy MOFD

Wildfire inspections and other preparations heat up in Lamorinda

By Vera Kochan

For the past few months, Moraga and Orinda residents whose property did not comply with fire codes were sent pre-citation notification mailings emblazoned with the words “Notice of Violation Open Immediately” in red on the envelope. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District took the guesswork out of the infractions by providing photos of the violations that needed correcting. The missives stated, “Failure to correct the violations listed below within 30 days

from the date of this letter will result in the issuance of an administrative citation and \$100 fine. Continued failure to comply with the fire code may result in the issuance of additional citations and increasing fines.” The initial inspections were done in various neighborhoods. For the month of June, MOFD counted 1,266 code enforcement violations in one neighborhood. A different neighborhood inspection

in July saw the figure jump to 1,332. Out of 29 possible violations the top five involved “hazardous vegetation, 6-foot roof clearance, tree 6-foot clearance, 15-foot clearance, and non-combustible zone ground cover.” Others on the list included juniper or bamboo removal, clearing roof and gutters, and chimney clearance.

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Advertising

Lamorinda Weekly

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Candidates and Measures for November election finalized

By Sora O’Doherty

With the closure of filing for the November General Election, the candidates and measures that will be on the ballot are coming into focus. The races specific to Lamorinda include city and town councils, school boards, and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, which not only has an election but also is seeking to fill a vacancy arising from the resignation of Director John Jex. In Lamorinda, there will be elections for four school districts, Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette and the Acalanes Union High School District, which also has a fundraising measure on the ballot. Lafayette will not be having an election for its City Council, since there were an equal number of nominees and vacancies (see story on Page A2). Orinda will have four candidates running for three slots, including the three incumbents. Incumbents outgoing Mayor Brandyn Iverson, Vice Mayor Latika Malkani, and Council Member Janet Riley are running for reelection. Juana Rudate, who identifies

herself has a physicist and mother, is also running. Candidate statements are now available on the city’s website at https://www.cityoforinda.gov/383/Election-Information. Moraga will have four candidates running for two slots, including two incumbents, Mayor Kerry Hillis and Council Member Steve Woehleke, who are being challenged by Moraga Planning Commission member Alexis Mapel and former Moraga Park Commissioner Bill Carman. Moraga’s candidate statements are not available on the town’s website, but will appear in election materials sent out by Contra Costa County Elections. Orinda Union School District has four candidates running for three places on the governing board; incumbents Edda Collins Coleman and Board President Katie Shogan, and challengers John Chabalko and Chloe Aftel. Incumbent board member Eve Phillips is not running for reelection. The Moraga School Board appears to currently

have two candidates running for three available seats: incumbent board president Larry Jacobs and incumbent board vice-president Martha White. Incumbent Kristin Kraetsch is not running for reelection, and no other candidates have filed. Information about current board members can be located at https://www.moraga.k12.ca.us/About-Us/Board/Governing-Board/index.html. Lafayette School District has two candidates running for three positions on the board. Incumbent board president Katy Foreman and incumbent board member Rob Strum are running for reelection. Incumbent Dave Smith is not running for reelection. Information about current board members can be found at https://www.lafsd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=3822516&tDpe=d&pREC_ID=2470872

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See public meetings schedule on these pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
City of Lafayette:
www.lovelafayette.org
Phone: (925) 284-1968
Chamber of Commerce:
www.lafayettechamber.org

Lafayette Public Meetings
City Council: Regular Meeting: Monday, Sept. 14, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall
Planning Commission: Monday, Sept. 21, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall
Design Review: Monday, Sept. 14, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Arts & Science Discovery Room

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Keeping the lights on at Town Hall Theatre

By Sharon K. Sobotta

With rising costs of groceries, rent, gas and just about everything, it's harder for patrons to plan an evening out and for spaces like theatres to provide the opportunities while staying afloat. The Town Hall Theatre is making some adjustments to try to meet the moment, while aiming to keep theatre accessible and stay in business.

"Town Hall Theatre is in an exciting period of growth and evolution. We're expanding what audiences can experience here, not only through our Main Stage productions, but also through education programs, community partnerships, and special events," Executive Director Morgan Daley said. "Our goal is for Town Hall to be a gathering place where everyone can find a way to engage with live theatre. All main stage performances are now priced at \$25. Instead of offering pay-what-you-can options for all productions, the THT is now offering a \$10 preview performance and two pay-what-you-can options. All student-led-educational productions are \$15. This replaces a model that previously offered pay-what-you-can options at each show as well as \$5 options for local students."

Daley said that keeping nonprofit community theatre alive at this particular moment is both challenging and meaningful.

"Nonprofit theatres everywhere are navigating rising production costs, changing audience habits, and increased financial pressures," Daley said. "At the same time, I think people are craving connection more than ever. Live theatre gives us the opportunity to sit together, laugh together, ask difficult questions, and experience stories that remind us of our shared humanity."

The theatre has also implemented other changes including the sunset of longtime house manager Tricia Kelley's position, as well as that of the artistic director Richard Perez. These changes followed the departure of Dennis Markham, who served as the theatre's managing director, the predecessor of Daley. Daley says that while change is often not easy, it is often necessary.

"Every organization has to evaluate how best to serve its community, and we're continually looking for ways to remove barriers while ensuring Town Hall Theatre can continue to thrive for years to come," Daley said. "Our goal is to create a theatre that's not only affordable, but also welcoming, engaging, and deeply connected to the community we serve."

Daley hopes that the theatre can continue to be an educational space, as well as a connective arts space that is accessible to people from all ages and stages of life. Above all, she said she hopes people in the



Photo J. Wake

Lamorinda community feel a sense of ownership over the theatre.

"Whether you've been attending productions for years or have never walked through our doors, there's a place for you here," Daley said. "We want people to think of Town Hall not just as somewhere to see a show, but as a home for creativity, conversation, and connection."

Daley recently directed "Tiny Beautiful Things," which was based on Cheryl Strayed's book. Even though Perez is no longer serving as the artistic director, patrons can still see his work as he'll be directing "Steel Magnolias" Sept. 12 - Oct. 8. The play takes place over a three-year span of time in the gossip center of a beauty salon. There is a happy hour from 6 to 6:30 p.m. preceding the 7 p.m. show, that comes with discounted drinks and featured Bay Area musicians.

There are also an assortment of classes and camps year-round including youth productions in collaboration with local schools, improv camps for youth in the summer and monthly improv classes for adults year-round. There are also comedy shows, concerts and other pop-up events.

At this particular socio-political moment, in which there is a great deal of divisiveness in the world, Daley believes theatre may be more important than ever.

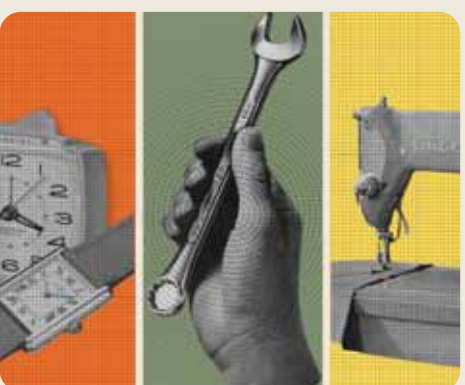
"Gathering in a room to experience a story together is a powerful act of community," Daley said. "That's what motivates our work every day, and we're grateful to everyone – our patrons, donors, volunteers, artists, and staff—who make that work possible."

To learn more about the Town Hall Theatre's offerings, visit townhalltheatre.com

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City Council appoints two incumbents, one new member in lieu of election

By Sharon K. Sobotta

The Lafayette City Council decided how to fill their three open seats, two seats for four-year terms and one seat for a two-year term, during a special meeting on Aug. 20. The council opted to appoint the nominated candidates in lieu of holding an election, returning incumbents Jim Cervantes and Stella Wotherspoon to the council, and bringing newcomer Mario DiPrisco into office.

DiPrisco has been a Lafayette resident since 2008 and has 26 years of experience in investment management. He served as commissioner of the Lafayette Transportation and Circulation Commission, as an alternate trustee of the Contra Costa County Employees' Retirement Association (CCERA), was appointed this year by the Contra

Costa County Board of Supervisors to help safeguard a \$14 billion pension fund, recently served on the Advisory Fire Commission for the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, is an alumni co-chair of Lafayette Partners in Education, is a board member for the Community Foundation for Lafayette, and is a member of the Lafayette Rotary Club, according to his website (diprisco.org).

Typically, candidates run for office and are elected by voters during the Nov. 3 General Municipal Election. The deadline for candidates to file nomination papers to run in the election was Aug. 12, and only three individuals were nominated and qualified. Since the number of candidates did not exceed the number of open

positions, the council had the option to adopt Resolution 2026-50, which proposed appointing the nominated candidates directly to council.

The resolution ensures that appointed candidates will qualify, take office, and serve exactly as if they had been voted for office in a standard municipal election. This option to appoint council in lieu of an election is authorized under California Elections Code Section 10229. The City of Lafayette has historically utilized this procedure during uncontested elections with no tax measures on the ballot, including the 1993, 2014, and 2022 elections.

...continued on Page A3

Bridging Literary Eras Reasonable Books & former Lafayette Book Store unite over ‘The Speed of Light’

By Sharon K. Sobotta

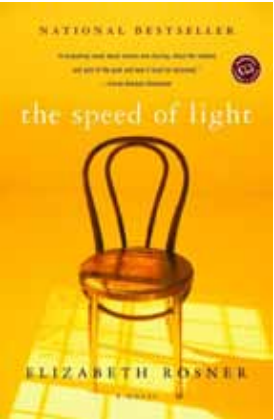


Image provided

Dave Simpson, the owner of the former Lafayette Book Store, was so confident his patrons would love Elizabeth Rosner’s “The Speed of Light” as much as he did that he offered a 100% money-back guarantee on hard-back copies. Simpson read the book en route to the national book convention and believed in his heart that it would be a hit for some of his store’s book clubs.

“I thought the poetic writing and compelling themes made the book very discussable,” Simpson recalls. “What stayed with me all these years is the emotional clarity and honesty of (the characters) Julian, Paula and Sola as they cope with inherited memory and generational trauma.”

Apparently, Simpson’s readers agreed, because of the 400 copies sold at Lafayette Book Store, only one single

customer asked for a refund. As the book reaches its 25-year anniversary, in a new chapter of life and the literary landscape of Lafayette, Simpson along with Reasonable Books owners Rudy and Betty Winnacker are collaborating on a celebratory event for fans of the book, lovers of reading and those who can simply resonate with the life experience.

Organizers say the event, which is slated for 7 p.m. on Sept. 22 at the Town Hall Theatre in Lafayette, will give former patrons and book club members of Lafayette Book Store an opportunity to come together with those of Reasonable Books, while engaging in dialogue with Elizabeth Rosner, the author of “The Speed of Light.”

While Lafayette Book Store closed its doors in 2010, Linda Grana, the former manager at the Lafayette Book Store is a current employee of Reasonable Books. “Linda is the connective glue that brought us all together,” Simpson says. “She kept in touch with Liz Rosner, who reached out about doing a 25th anniversary event ... and a natural synergy birthed an event to celebrate the book, promote Reasonable Books and

bring together former Lafayette Book Store customers.”

Rudy Winnacker is in the midst of reading “The Speed of Light” and says he’s thrilled to have a chance to come together with Lafayette’s original bookstore.

“Even before meeting Dave I had heard enough to know that he’s an ‘outside of the box’ entrepreneur who did many things with the bookstore that people remember to this day,” Winnacker says. “One of our goals was always to participate in the community and I couldn’t think of a better way to do so than to celebrate ‘The Speed of Light’ together with the Lafayette Book Store.”

“(I hope this) will move people to read Elizabeth’s books and take away from them what I’ve heard so much about them,” Winnacker says. “(And that it will) be a nostalgic reunion for the staff and customers of the Lafayette Book Store, and that Reasonable Books can continue its tradition as Lafayette’s own home town Indie Bookstore.”

Tickets for the event are available at Reasonable Books at 3645 Mount Diablo Blvd., near Trader Joe’s in downtown Lafayette.

Lafayette Art & Wine Festival returns, Sept. 19-20



Arts and crafts, as well as food and drink booths line Mt. Diablo Boulevard during last year’s Festival.

Photo Dennis Finn

One of the largest annual festivals in Contra Costa County – The Lafayette Art & Wine Festival – will return to downtown Lafayette on Saturday, Sept. 19 (10 a.m. to 7 p.m.) and Sunday, Sept. 20 (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.). The Festival will include its signature arts and crafts booths, wonderful food offerings from local restaurants and food trucks, as well as wines and microbrews, the famous Kid Zones, and

free live music situated throughout the downtown area.

While admission and BART parking are free, the Kid Zones require purchasing tickets for the rides and activities, and wine/beer glasses and drink tickets will be sold throughout the festival. Only the current year’s glasses and tickets will be accepted and you must be 21 years of age to purchase glasses, drink tick-

ets and be served.

Last year’s festival, which is sponsored by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, welcomed over 65,000 people to the event.

The Visitor’s Guide, the music schedule, and more information about Family Fun, can be found on the Lafayette Chamber website: <https://lafayettefestival.com/>. – J. Wake

City council appointments

..continued from Page A2

By canceling the uncontested election, the city will save at least \$48,000 in election expenses. This decision does not impact the ability for Lafayette voters to participate in the upcoming General Election on Tuesday, Nov. 3,

which includes other important federal, state, regional and local issues.

Voter registration and voting for the election are coordinated with Contra Costa County, and more information is available at www.contracostavote.gov.

At the meeting, the City Council adopted the resolution with three in

favor and one abstention. Cervantes and Wotherspoon were appointed to four-year terms ending in 2030, while DiPrisco was appointed to a two-year term beginning in December and ending in 2028.

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See public meetings schedule on these pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

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

Chamber of Commerce:
www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:
www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

Town Council Meeting ,
Wednesday Sept. 9, 5:30 p.m.

Park & Rec Commission
Monday, Sept. 14, 6:30 p.m.

Planning Commission Meeting ,
Tuesday, Sept. 15, 6:30 p.m.



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Zenbrosbreaks opens trading card shop in Moraga

By Vera Kochan

A unique store has opened in Moraga's Rheem Valley Shopping Center. Brothers Ben and Matt Scheve have seen their childhood dreams become a reality with Zenbrosbreaks, a new trading card store located at 354 Park St. next to the Rheem Theatre.

The Moraga residents are co-owners in the business and are proud of the fact that their venture is fully self-funded. Ben is a Certified Public Accountant, while Matt is working on his psychology degree at the University of Oregon. Their roots are Moraga-deep in that their father grew up in town.

"We both had trading cards as a hobby since we were about 10 years old," explained Ben Scheve. "We saw this spot [the store's location] open for years and decided it was perfect. We're happy to do this for the kids in the community."

"Moraga doesn't have anything like it, and if you want to trade you have to go far, like to Danville," added Matt Scheve.

Zenbrosbreaks sells sports cards and trading card games (TCG), a type of strategy game where players build custom decks using unique collectable cards such as Pokemon, Magic: The Gathering, or One Piece. The cards can be bought, sold, or traded.

Having opened just last month, the brothers are pleased with the community's response. "It's been a pretty good, steady flow every day. The after-school rush gets a little crazy at times, and we do get the



Zenbrosbreaks owners, from left: Ben and Matt Scheve

Photo Vera Kochan

theatre crowd."

"We have distribution channels where we get our product," Ben explained. The object behind the store's concept is for traders to buy a pack or box of cards (prices vary) in the category you're interested in "and hope what you want is in it. A big chunk of our business is the online breaking." Online breaking is when a box of cards is opened to reveal what cards were in the purchased lot, a type of grab-bag for the buyer. Zenbrosbreaks will notify those who have signed up for scheduled "breaks" that

appear on Whatnot (a digital marketplace and live-stream shopping platform where users can buy and sell items in online video auctions). Buyers must be 18 years or older.

When asked what age group has shown an interest in their business, they replied, "From 0 to 100 years old. The kids like either the TCG or sports cards, and older ages like sports cards or Magic: The Gathering."

Ben and Matt plan on hosting "trade nights" at various locations around town where kids can come with their par-

ents. They also intend to sell birthday party gift bags filled with whatever themed cards and accessories the client specifies. Other possibilities include a workshop for kids to teach them safe negotiation practices; and a live break night. "This is for Moraga," stated Matt. "For kids and families to hang out all day. We want to keep building on it."

For more information visit: zenbrosbreaks.com or call (925) 628-9922.

Wildfire preparations

...continued from Page A1

According to MOFD Fire Chief Jeff Isaacs, a good resource for property owners can be found by visiting: <https://www.mofd.org/our-district/fuels-mitigation-fire-prevention/hazardous-wildfire-fuels-reduction-program>, and checking out the "Be Ember Aware" publication checklist.

In addition to the citations, MOFD has performed four prescribed burn operations within its jurisdiction since May: Segora Te' Land Trust (near Canyon), Orinda Oaks Park (Orinda), Mulholland Ridge Open Space (near Rheem Valley), and Carroll Ridge (above Rheem Valley near Moraga).

Prescribed burns are intended to reduce wildfire risk through low-intensity burns in order to treat combustible fuels in strategic areas. In doing so, the practice supports the establishment of natural fire cycles that contribute to a balanced ecosystem. It also helps to limit wildfire spread, restores native vegetation, and suppresses invasive species. These burns typically take

place in the morning and conclude in the early afternoon. MOFD coordinates closely with the municipalities involved and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to ensure that the projects are conducted safely and with minimal impacts to surrounding communities.

"As always, prescribed fire operations are dependent on weather, fuel conditions, air quality, available resources, and other operational conditions, so specific burn dates can change," Isaacs stated.

While MOFD occasionally conducts burn projects in the fall, there were none scheduled at the time of this printing.

Most residents have heard of the term Zone 0, which involves defensible space regulations pertaining to the first five feet around homes and structures. The state's fire districts have been waiting nearly two years while the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection conducted extensive outreach before coming to a final decision on whether to implement the mandate. The board is responsible for developing and overseeing forest policy and wildfire

regulations in California, with a mission to protect the state's forests, watersheds, and communities.

The board relied on research, public comment reviews, and nearly a combined 20 public workshops, community site visits, walking tours, on-the-ground homeowner engagement, fire professionals' input, as well as input from environmental groups, and local governments.

In an Aug. 19 press release, the Board of Forestry noted that professional experience and research indicate that homes are most vulnerable to ignition from embers within the first 5 feet outside of a home with particular attention to trees and other living vegetation. "The approved policy includes a phased-in implementation approach that prioritizes education and outreach over a 5-year period," the press release noted. "While Zone 0 requirements will apply to new construction upon adoption of the regulation, existing homes and structures can implement actions in phases over time within different areas of Zone 0."

...continued on Page A5

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Moraga Historical Society sponsors Antiques Roadshow-type event with Michaan’s Auctions

By Vera Kochan



Michaan's personnel appraise community's heirlooms. Photo Vera Kochan

The Moraga Historical Society encouraged the public to clean out their closets, attics, and garages in order to “find out if a family heirloom has monetary value in addition to sentimental value.” The appraisal event, held at Hacienda de las Flores on Aug. 30, was an MHS fundraiser with the help of renowned Michaan’s Auctions. Eight specialized appraisers were on hand to help make the event run smoothly.

Michaan’s was established in 2002, and is considered one of the leading, full-service auction houses on the West Coast. Based in Alameda, they specialize in the appraisal and sale of antiques and fine art. Items of interest to the auction house included: paintings, prints, sculpture, furniture, decorative arts, stamps, coins, Asian works of art, jewelry, timepieces, and sports memorabilia.

The public was allowed to bring up to three items to receive a verbal evaluation of the current auction value of their property, which is based on the comparable works, recent auction results and trends in the marketplace, among other factors. The offered estimates reflect what items might reasonably sell for at a major public auction, which are different from and in many cases lower than full retail prices. Any

items offered for sale at a Michaan’s auction must meet various criteria and be valued all together above a minimum price of \$2,000 in order to start a contract.

The highest “hammer price” (sold price) ever attained by Michaan’s was of an exceedingly rare, 1750s, Asian soapstone figural carving for \$2.235 million.

Members of the public were either pleasantly surprised by the value of their items or disappointed at a low appraisal, given what the market demanded at this point in time. One attendee, Holly, (last name not included for privacy reasons), brought two watches and a painting. “I was shocked that one of my gold retro watches was worth less than I expected,” she said. The painting she brought was not of any known artist even though her mother once told her, “Never get rid of this.” The initials were difficult to determine, but the appraiser suggested that the artist may be foreign-born and the initials could reflect that.

“I think my mother got this in the 1940s or 1950s from the Baltimore area, so I’m going to contact the Maryland Institute College of Art, the Walters Art Museum, and the Baltimore Museum of Art,” she said. She was thrilled that Michaan’s gave her the

curiosity to keep digging into the mystery artist’s identity.

Another individual, Sam, had some commemorative gold coins from 2011 appraised for his sister. “I had no expectations whatsoever. The appraiser told me that the value was based on the current price of gold.” He also brought in a silver and turquoise Southwestern-style men’s watch and was told that the turquoise was valuable. Lastly, a 1938 men’s leather jacket with fringe was identified as being made from buffalo skin. “I enjoyed the experience a lot,” Sam said. “The personnel are seasoned professionals, and it was nice to have so much information.”

Michaan’s was pleasantly surprised with the outcome for the day, having gotten five signed contracts to place items up for auction. “This was a great experience for us,” stated Chambless. “We’d love to come back to Moraga again.”

MHS President Susan Sperry received overwhelmingly positive responses from attendees leaving for home with their treasures; many of whom had asked for another such event in the near future, stated Assistant Vice President of Trusts and Estates Tamie Chambless.

Moraga Candidates Night on Oct. 6

Moraga Citizens Network, a nonprofit organization in Moraga dedicated to encouraging civic, recreational, and community engagements, will be hosting a Moraga Candidates Night on Tuesday, Oct. 6 from 6:30 to 9:15 p.m. The event will be held at Saint Mary’s College in the Soda Center, Moraga Room.

The agenda includes

Moraga Town Council candidates at 7 p.m., Moraga-Orinda Fire District 3 candidates at 8:15 p.m., and candidates for the Moraga School District and the Acalanes Union High School District governing boards (uncontested races) at 8:45 p.m.

Light refreshments will be served. If you have a question for the candidates or cannot at-

tend in person and need to watch via Zoom, go to the website www.MCNMoraga.org. Information of more races that will affect Lamorinda will be forthcoming from The League of Women Voters, who publish election information online at <https://www.vote411.org>.

– S. O’Doherty

Wildfire preparations

..continued from Page A4

Phase 1 (implemented within the first 3 years) will require the removal of combustible items such as firewood, dead leaves, branches, mulch, and wood chips within 5 feet of a structure. Also required will be keeping gutters clean, removal of dead or dying plants, trimming trees according to regulations, and adjusting for allowable vegetation.

Phase 2 (implemented within 5 years) will have local jurisdictions assign a timeline, within 5 years of the effective date of the regulations, for the “creation of an under-eave safety

zone, replacing combustible gates, and making any necessary adjustments to sheds and fencing.”

The policy applies to homes only in the State Responsibility Area and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in Local Responsibility Areas.

Board Chair Terry O’Brien explained, “This isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach. We’ve built in flexibility so that local experts can tailor solutions unique to their individual communities while maintaining meaningful fire safety standards.”

Before becoming law, the adopted regulation package will be sub-

mitted to the Office of Administrative Law for review before official approval by the California Secretary of State.

“With respect to Zone 0, the regulations are new, and I am still evaluating how they will affect the Fire District and our existing requirements,” Isaacs stated. “I will be presenting this issue to the MOFD board so that the board and the public can better understand the requirements and potential impacts. Until that review is complete, I do not want to speculate exactly how or when the new regulations will affect Moraga and Orinda residents.”



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Tuesday, Sept. 22, 7 p.m.
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COMPASS

Orinda bids goodbye to Sheri Smith, welcomes new City Clerk

By Sora O'Doherty



New Orinda City Clerk Joelle Fockler

Photo Sora O'Doherty
Sheri Smith, who came to Orinda as Sheri Spedacci in September 2016, is retiring after 10 years of service as City Clerk. City Manager Linda Smith has announced the appointment of Joelle Fockler as Orinda's next City Clerk. A public reception will be held at the Sept. 15 Orinda City Council meeting to honor and acknowledge Sheri Smith's service.

"Sheri has dedicated her career to public service and has been an invaluable part of the City of Orinda," according to the city manager. "Her professionalism, institutional knowledge, and commitment to transparency have helped ensure that some of the city's most important democratic and legislative processes are carried out

with care and integrity. We are grateful for her many years of service to Orinda and wish her all the best in her retirement."

Smith, who married during her tenure, has overseen municipal elections; supported City Council meetings and legislative processes; served as custodian of official city records; and ensured compliance with federal, state, and local requirements governing municipal operations, playing an important role the city's democratic and legislative processes.

The outgoing city clerk said of her time in Orinda, "I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served the City of Orinda and its residents over the past 10 years. While the role of City Clerk involves complex laws, regulations, and deadlines, the most rewarding part of my career has always been serving the public."

"It has been a privilege to help people feel welcomed, respected, and better informed about their local government, and knowing I made a positive difference in their experience has been the most meaningful part of my service."

Incoming City Clerk Joelle Fockler brings more than 30 years of municipal government experience to the role, including over 12 years with the City of Concord, where she has served as City Clerk since 2014. Prior to becoming City Clerk, she served as Concord's Deputy City Clerk and Administrative Assistant. She also previously served as Deputy City Clerk for the City of Walnut Creek.

She holds a Bachelor of Applied Science in Public Administration from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, which she obtained at the age of 50, after many years of on-the-job learning. Fockler has also served in leadership with the City Clerks Association of California, including as second vice president from 2021 to 2022.

Part of her training included a Nuts & Bolts seminar – an entry-level training program offered four times a year by the California Municipal Clerks Association (CMCA) for new and aspiring municipal clerks. Fockler is now one of the trainers who presents the seminar.

In an interview with Lamorinda Weekly,

Fockler noted that during her 12 years as Concord City Clerk she has experienced the city districting and then re-districting, worked to implement a homeless strategic plan and rent stabilization. She worked with three master developers (two of whom were fired), and was working for Concord during the redevelopment of the Concord Naval Weapons Station, which is planned to be a sustainable mixed-use community on the 2,275-acre site with some 30,000 residents.

City Manager Smith said that Fockler "brings extensive experience and a strong understanding of the responsibilities of the City Clerk's office. Her background in municipal government and her years of service as a City Clerk in a neighboring community will provide valuable continuity and expertise as she steps into this important role." Fockler began her employment with the city on Aug. 31 and will overlap for the outgoing city clerk for a period of time.

Presentation on presidential power at SMC, Sept. 17

Submitted by Gail Murray

On Constitution Day, Sept. 17, two eminent U.S. Constitutional scholars will discuss the challenges of maintaining effective presidential leadership while preventing abuse of power. Their conversation will be held from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at St. Mary's College in Moraga in the Claey's Room of the Soda Center and will be available simultaneously on Zoom.

Speakers will be: Vikram Amar, the Daniel J. Dykstra Distinguished Professor of Law at UC

Davis Law School who is one of the most eminent and frequently cited authorities in constitutional law; and Dan Farber, the Sho Sato Professor of Law and Co-Director of the Edley Center on Law & Democracy at UC Berkeley Law School, who is the author of "Contested Ground: How to Understand the Limits on Presidential Power."

Recent public debates have renewed longstanding constitutional questions about

the proper scope of executive power. The speakers will engage in a discussion about perennial questions, such as:

How should we balance the need for effective leadership with the need to prevent abuse of power? Have we achieved that balance? And, What would the founders think about the powers of the modern presidency?

Professor Barbara McGraw, Director of the Center for Engaged Religious Pluralism and pro-

fessor of Social Ethics, Law, and Public Life at Saint Mary's College will moderate the discussion. Sponsors of the event are Saint Mary's College, The Disney Forum, the League of Women Voters Diablo Valley, the League of Women Voters West Contra Costa County, the Contra Costa County Library and CCTV.

Register on Zoom here: <https://ccclib.bibliocommons.com/v2/events/6a848feabe14820029882727>

November election

..continued from Page A1

The election for trustees of the Acalanes Union High School District, which includes Miramonte High School in Orinda, Campolindo High School in Moraga and Acalanes High School in Lafayette, is a little more complicated this year, as on Oct. 15, 2025 the Governing Board adopted a trustee area plan with trustees being in the future elected by the established areas. The November election will include areas 1, 3 and 5.

For area 1, incumbent Stacey Schweppe is being challenged by Nithin Iyengar. Incumbent Jennifer Chen, area 3, and Nancy Kendzier-

ski, area 5, are running unopposed.

AUHSd also has a parcel tax measure on the ballot, Measure W, which proposes to levy a parcel tax of \$168 for eight years in order to address the districts instructional needs. In order to pass, the measure requires a two-thirds majority, or 66.67%, of voter approval.

Information on Measure W can be found at <https://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/Dbout-auhsd/measure-w>.

AUHSd tried in 2024 to pass a parcel tax, putting it on the ballot for a special election as Measure T. Although the measure received strong community support with 63.63% "yes" votes, it did

not reach the two-thirds (66.67%) threshold required for the passage of a parcel tax.

Three of the districts that make up the Moraga-Orinda Fire District are also on the November ballot. MOFD District 1 incumbent Greg Hasler is running unopposed. In MOFD District 3, incumbent Steve Danziger has stepped out of the race, throwing his support to John Donnelly, who is running against Steve Cohn. In district 4 incumbent Mike Roemer is being challenged by Linda Stevens.

In addition, MOFD has announced that John Jex, district 2 director whose term expires on Dec. 1, 2028, has re-

signed. The board will fill the vacancy under the procedures of Government Code section 1780 by appointing an individual to the office. Applications were accepted until Sept. 5, with interviews scheduled for Oct. 14, 21, and 27. Applicants were required to be U.S. citizens and registered voters in District 2, and must not have been convicted of a felony involving accepting or giving, or offering to give, any bribe, the embezzlement of public money, extortion or theft of public money, perjury, or conspiracy to commit any of those crimes.

Orinda recognizes wildfire threat, takes steps to mitigate

By Sora O’Doherty

Recently Orinda has continued its efforts to try to improve wildfire safety in the city by renewing its contract with Ladriss – a disaster evacuation modeling platform for planners, first responders, and residents – and introducing an Orinda Ready website. The two-year extension of the Ladriss contract will cost the city \$252,700.

The Orinda Ready website offers four main categories, the first of which is access to the Ladriss platform. In addition, Orinda Ready provides suggestions for making an emergency plan, preparing your home and getting emergency alerts. Also, the city’s Emergency Operations plan has undergone a major revision, taking it from 75 pages to 450 pages.

Moreover, the city conducted a tabletop exercise in June where city staff sat down with all of Orinda’s (Public Safety and School) partners. There was a scenario for the exercise, with some participants calling in “injects” – pieces of information introduced during a drill to prompt participants to react and test their response skills.

In 2020, two years after the deadliest fire in California history, the Camp Fire, which killed 85 people and injured 17 and during which residents of Paradise were unable to evacuate on the single road leading in and out of town, the residents of Orinda adopted Measure R, a half-cent sales tax increase, bringing Orinda’s sales tax to 1%. Orinda had been long aware of fire danger, having come close to the 1991 Oakland Hills disaster that was just across from Orinda’s western border.

The money raised by Measure R is intended to be devoted to wildfire safety provisions and re-

pair and maintenance of roads and storm drains. Measure R will last for 20 years and also covers storm drain maintenance, which is related to evacuation safety as was demonstrated by a serious sinkhole on Miner Road, a major artery and evacuation route, in January 2017 which led to onerous detours for about six months.

The passage of Measure R led to the establishment of the Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission (SSTOC), which replaced the former Citizens’ Infrastructure Oversight Committee. Orinda started taking a hard look at wildfire threats, including evacuation routes and fuel reduction efforts. Using the funds raised by Measure R, Orinda has invested in wildfire safety measures, such as giving grants to citizens for fuel reduction, and purchasing the city’s own chipping vehicle.

In the meantime, the City of Orinda was trying to deal with the issue of housing. The State of California has been increasing pressure on local governments to provide for more housing, and the city had to submit plans for the 6th Housing Element to cover the 8-year period from 2023 to 2031.

On Jan. 31, 2023, the Orinda City Council adopted Plan Orinda — a strategic planning effort to shape the future of Orinda. The community-wide planning process identified Orinda’s best option for meeting state housing mandates, acknowledged the risk of wildfire and identified key strategies for protecting the community.

Plan Orinda included several key components: a Housing Element update that was certified by the Califor-

nia Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), a Safety Element update, the Downtown Precise Plan (DPP), and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The EIR, required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), analyzes potential impacts of Plan Orinda and identifies possible methods to minimize those impacts.

On March 3, 2023, Orindans for Safe Emergency Evacuation (OSEE) filed a CEQA lawsuit against the city. The plaintiffs sought a writ of mandate against the city, and the court issued a writ addressing some of the plaintiff’s concerns. To satisfy the court order, the city entered into an agreement with the plaintiff that required the city to set aside its approval of the Downtown Precise Plan until the completion of a revised Environmental Impact Report. On March 18, 2025, the City Council passed Resolution 14-25, which directed staff to consider potential revisions prior to any re-adoption of the DPP.

In addition, the city agreed to enter into a contract with Ladriss. The original contract ran from August 2025 to August 2026, and the city council authorized renewing the contract for an additional two-year period on July 21.

Despite the actions taken to resolve the OSEE lawsuit, Orinda residents remain very wary that new residential developments may have a deleterious effect on evacuation, and OSEE has threatened to bring a new suit against the city.

The city has introduced a new local activity development map that allows visitors to the city’s website to see a visual representation of the developments and to obtain further informa-

tion, such as details on Senate Bill 9, Senate Bill 1123, multi-family, mixed-use and other key development projects across the city with their interactive map.

SB 9, which became effective in January, 2022, allows property owners to divide one single-family parcel into two equal-sized lots, bypassing traditional minimum lot size rules. SB 1123, which took effect on July 1, 2025, requires cities to give ministerial approval to qualifying projects and allows developers to split lots to build up to 10 new housing units. Accessory dwelling units built on the property do not count toward the 10-unit limit.

However, SB 1123 does not apply to high or very high fire hazard severity zones, flood hazard areas, earthquake fault zones or protected natural habitats for endangered species.

According to Cole Haselip, Orinda Assistant City Manager, almost all city staff have received training on Ladriss, and it is used by Linda Smith, City Manager and Director of Emergency Services, as well as by planning department and public works employees. The city works with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District on developing the scenarios for Ladriss to work with to predict evacuation outcomes.

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Letters to the Editor

Vote Yes on Measure W

We write in support of Measure W, the AUHSD parcel tax proposal on November’s ballot.

The undersigned signatories have had the opportunity to meet with Superintendent John Nickerson, and staff members, to go over budget developments and the factors driving costs. We have also had a chance to review the cuts that have been made over the past two years, and our roundtable group asked numerous questions regarding District matters/issues, some that have been controversial these past several years.

We had a very constructive exchange, and because of our time spent, can state conclusively that the failure of this modest tax will result in a less robust education for the high school youth of our community. It is a concrete fact that Sacramento purposely funds the students in our District to a lesser extent than is the case in a great many districts throughout California. It is also a fact that families continue to move to our towns, believing that their children will experience a very strong public education, through 12th grade.

Please give thoughtful consideration to a YES vote on Measure W.

Bill Fraser, Lafayette
Jean Follmer, Lafayette
Adam Gilberd, Lafayette
Dan McCormick, Lafayette
Mario DiPrisco, Lafayette
Nick Waranoff, Orinda

A student’s perspective of Measure W

I am a junior at Miramonte High School, and I support the proposed Measure W Parcel Tax for the Acalanes Union High School District. As someone who is experiencing the effects of our school's budget deficit, I write this with the hope that our community will come through for us.

Throughout the budget cuts of the past two years, we have heard the voices of teachers and parents, but we have yet to hear how the \$4.2 million loss has directly affected students. As my sophomore year was wrapping up last May, suddenly there were rumors that we wouldn't be able to take a 7th period class, that we wouldn't have a librarian, that my counselor would have to leave: and that deeply concerned me.

But sadly, none of those were rumors. Unfortunately, AUHSD has had to cut our individual librarians, meaning that when I have to study early in the morning for a test, I can't. When I want to use my study period in the library, I can't. The students, including myself, who are no longer allowed in the library funnel into the Wellness Center, threatening to reduce its effectiveness to the students who depend on it. Even a small shift in our high schools' balance affects every student on campus. The loss of even one school counselor has transferred an incredible workload on to the others; yet Lamorinda students are still expected to graduate and attend elite universities, to test high, succeed in our ambitions. And now we must do all of this with less support, making it even more challenging.

Most of us sitting in our classrooms cannot yet vote, but we will be the ones forced to live with the consequences if Measure W does not pass. Measure W, \$168 per parcel, is part of the price to protect the opportunities and resources that our students need to succeed. Without the passage of Measure W, our district will be forced to cut millions more, threatening more than just our libraries.

Vote YES on Measure W on November 3.

Lorelei Keenan
Miramonte Class of 2028

Vote Yes on Measure W to help Orinda thrive

We moved to Orinda in 2018, and in that time this community has shown me, over and over, how deeply we care about our schools. My family has three kids moving through them right now— a seventh-grader at Orinda Intermediate and an 11th and ninth-grader at Miramonte.

As so many have experienced over the years, Miramonte isn't just a school. It's a touchstone and gathering point for this whole town—Friday night football games, theater productions, speech and debate competitions, spirit weeks, a tradition of teaching excellence, and community events that bring families and neighbors together. It's also helped so many students go on to incredible next chapters of their lives, and it continues to be a draw for families across the state, even the

country. Simply put, when Miramonte thrives, Orinda thrives.

But so much of what's great about the school is now at risk, as funding shortfalls threaten cherished programs, staffing, even how many periods the school can offer each day. We aren't in this situation because the district is spending carelessly. We have a revenue problem. Like our sister schools across the district, Miramonte has already absorbed real cuts as the district tightened its budget—fewer counselors, limited library coverage, and reduced course offerings. If we don't take action now, more cuts are coming.

In Measure W, we have an opportunity to help Miramonte, and by extension, Orinda, continue to thrive.

This is the moment for all of us—parents, grandparents, and neighbors without kids in our schools—to make ourselves heard. Talk to your neighbors and share what Measure W is: a single \$168 annual payment, funds that will stay local and be independently audited on a regular basis, with a full exemption available for seniors. Then talk to them about what Measure W will mean for our students, our community, and our future.

Our schools don't run on goodwill alone. They run on funding, and that funding is now up to us.

Please join me in spreading the word between now and November 3, and in voting Yes on Measure W, for the benefit of us all.

Vinita Anantavat
Orinda City Lead, Yes on Measure W
Orinda

K-8 parents: Measure W affects your kids too

As a mom of three kids at Happy Valley Elementary and former president of the Happy Valley Parents Club, I know the value our schools add to our community. And as a Measure H volunteer, I was inspired by how our community came together to support the local funding that makes our schools so exceptional. During that campaign, I learned a lot about our schools' funding needs, and that those needs don't stop at elementary school.

That's why I'm asking fellow elementary parents not to sit this one out, even though Measure W provides funding to our high schools. It's tempting to think it doesn't apply to us yet, but it does.

The cuts already underway at our high schools have come fast — elective classes have disappeared, and school librarians have been lost. Those losses are real, and they can't be made up through community fundraising alone. That's exactly why a new parcel tax is necessary, both to reverse some of what's already been cut and to prevent deeper cuts still to come.

Here's the part that matters most for families like mine: Measure W runs for eight years. That's a span long enough that nearly every one of our current K-8 students will walk through the doors of high school before it expires. This isn't someone else's problem to solve. It's ours.

And if Measure W doesn't pass, the damage won't just be temporary — teachers will leave for districts that can pay competitively, courses will be eliminated, and programs will be cut. Rebuilding takes far longer than cutting does. That means by the time today's Happy Valley students reach ninth grade, they could be inheriting a high school system that's been hollowed out for years, with no quick fix in sight.

We showed up for Measure H. Let's show up for Measure W too.

Please join me in voting Yes on Measure W.

Jesse Abhyankar
Former President, Happy Valley Parents Club
Lafayette

Our schools are the foundation of a thriving community — Vote Yes on Measure W

We are a mother- and daughter-in-law and between us we represent more than 50 years living and working in this community. As real estate agents we see firsthand that the No. 1 reason families move to Lamorinda is our schools. Our high schools rank in the top 5% nationally, and that reputation is a huge draw among home buyers. "How are the schools?" is always one of the first questions we get from prospective buyers.

So we know that maintaining exceptional schools is key to keeping our community thriving.

As parents, we've also seen just how important our schools are to our community. Karen saw firsthand how key our schools were to her own chil-

dren's success, and she put in years giving back: two terms as president of the Orinda Union School Board, a seat on the board of the Educational Foundation of Orinda, co-president of the Del Rey and Miramonte Parents' Clubs, and a seat on the Miramonte Boosters Club board.

With a sophomore at Miramonte and a sixth grader at Orinda Intermediate, Hillary sees every day what well-funded schools provide to students: Enriching electives, small classes, librarians, guidance counselors, the list goes on.

Measure W is not the result of a spending problem, it's a revenue problem. The Acalanes Union High School District is one of the lowest-funded districts in California per student. On top of that, the district has cut more than \$4.2 million from its budget over the last two years, proof of real fiscal responsibility. Consider this: the last parcel tax that benefited the district passed 16 years ago, with no built-in adjustment for inflation, so it has since lost about 36% of its purchasing power.

Measure W is a modest safeguard to protect all that: \$168 a year, all funds staying local, mandatory audits, and a full exemption for seniors.

Please join us in voting Yes on Measure W for our students and our community and to preserve the school excellence we all are proud of.

Karen Murphy
Orinda Union School Board
[1986-1994]
Education Foundation of Orinda
[1984-1995]
Hillary Murphy
Orinda resident of 16 years, mother of two Orinda students

Help our school libraries and more with Measure W

Many of my fondest memories were at the Campolindo High School's library. Debate meetings were hosted there, with resources stacked all around us. I would find books I've never seen before, discovering new stories that I never would've found otherwise.

What I wish is for the future generations to be able to experience that too. Our library, now without adequate funding, has hope with Measure W. The AUHSD schools offer many opportunities and resources such as the library, but due to funding shortages, these programs are at risk. As a senior at Campolindo, the counselors are spearheading my process in getting into the college I want, a right that every generation of high schoolers should have.

By voting YES on Measure W, we can ensure everyone has the same opportunities that I had. Protecting programs, library resources, and counseling keeps our schools' capability in supporting students.

Measure W will generate millions of dollars annually that are reserved solely for the schools, protecting our libraries, counseling, and more. By voting YES, you can actively participate in the process of creating the best future for the next generation. I hope everyone can have the access that I have had to the full potential and joy that our high schools have to offer.

Mailena Yang
Campolindo High School Senior

Pamela West for CCC Board of Education

As 40-year residents of the Lamorinda community, we are writing to strongly endorse Pamela West for the Contra Costa County Board of Education.

Our schools face real challenges, including persistent learning gaps, underfunded budgets and programs, insufficient support for teachers and the mandate to prepare students for a rapidly changing world. We have known and worked with Pam for decades and have witnessed how she instilled in her own children a drive for a better life through education. She will bring the right mix of personal experience as a parent and practical business judgment to address the issues faced by our county's school districts.

Pam's advocacy for excellence in education was on display during her tenure on the Orinda School Board. Her shameless advocacy, a strong work ethic and her tireless pursuit for more education funding, make her well suited for the County Board. We

are confident Pam will be a steady, reasonable voice for excellence and accountability in serving the youth, administrators and taxpayers of our community.

Nathan & Melanie Bell
Moraga

Campolindo Needs Our Support — Vote Yes on Measure W

As president of the Campolindo Parents Club, I see every day what our school means to this community, and I also see, up close, what happens when funding doesn't keep pace with what our students need.

Let me be clear about something: this is not a spending problem. It's a revenue problem. The Acalanes Union High School District has already tightened its budget significantly, cutting \$4.2 million over the past two years. At Campolindo, that has meant reduced course offerings, a librarian now shared across all four district campuses instead of dedicated to our students, and thinner academic counseling at exactly the time our students need more guidance, not less. Even after absorbing those cuts, the district remains one of the lowest-funded in California per student. Our schools haven't been careless with money. They've been squeezed by a funding structure that simply doesn't provide enough to begin with.

At \$168 a year, Measure W is a modest price to pay for keeping our schools exceptional. All funds stay local, seniors can receive a full exemption, and independent audits are required.

Our school has given so much to our families. Now it's our turn to give back.

Please join me in voting Yes on Measure W.

Ann de Villiers
President, Campolindo Parents Club
Moraga

Steve Cohn for MOFD District 3

Steve has been an Orinda resident for 40+ years. His 50-year career in finance and project management, and graduate experience in wildfire and transportation planning, make him an ideal candidate for this important position.

He has spent many years in steadfast pursuit of investment of MOFD reserves into proactively applying wildfire mitigation practices strongly backed by extensive research and application. The expected outcome of these practices will be more fire safe communities across all MOFD districts, and better informed and accurate insurance risk modeling, reducing the number of households losing fire coverage.

I believe Steve will be a strong and committed presence on the MOFD board, and bring a needed level of fiscal expertise and technical acumen to this governing body. Please cast your vote on Nov. 3 for Steve Cohn, MOFD District 3.

Susan Lindell Radke
Orinda

Elect Pam West for County Board of Education

We are proud to support Pam West for the County Board of Education to bring experienced, thoughtful leadership and a fresh voice to the important decisions impacting our schools and communities. We've known Pam for many years and know she is the best person to serve. Pam has previous experience serving on the school board of her town. Pam has been the excellent leader of a large organization specifically for high school aged young people from her church. We also know Pam to be a terrific mother of four children of her own all of whom have excelled in education and professional lives. Backed by teachers, parents, and community leaders alike, Pam is dedicated to ensuring every student thrives.

Shelley and Bob Packer
Lafayette

Election Season SPECIAL POLICY: Letters related to a candidate running for office should be a maximum of 200 words so we can publish as many as possible. Letters regarding ballot measures remain up to 350 words. Deadline is NOON on Thursday prior to the issue date. Full policy at www.lamorindaweekly.com under the Submit button.

Local artist’s work featured at Orinda Books

Submitted by Anne Schier



Photo provided

Aileen Schier’s artwork will be featured at Orinda Books through the month of September.

Schier was born in Oakland and went to Skyline High School before living in Los Angeles and then Orinda. She’s been making art of some sort all her life (she’s an architect and has done a lot of house and garden design), but has never had an art show. So, she’s holding her debut art show at age 69! Her preferred medium is oil painting, and according to her daughter, she “only started doing this in any seriousness in the last handful of years.” You can view her work at: aileenschierartist.com

Orinda Car Show turns focus on Porsche through the decades

By Sora O’Doherty



Lafayette resident Neal Brockmeier and his vintage Porsche 911.

Photo Sora O’Doherty

The 22nd annual Orinda Classic Car Show will be held on Sept. 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. outside the Orinda Classic Car Center at 61 Orinda Way in Orinda Village. Admission is free for all spectators. A special exhibit on Porsche Through the Decades will trace the legacy from the iconic 356 Roadster in 1948 through the RAD era (’70s-’80s 911s, 930s, 928s, 944s) to modern-day performance. The car show promises to feature over 150 vintage and modern exotic vehicles, along with food, music and more. Some proceeds of the show will benefit the Orinda Association’s programs including the Seniors Around Town free seniors ride program.

One of the exhibitors who will be showing his vintage Porsche is Neal Brockmeier. A Lafayette resident for 21 years,

Brockmeier grew up in Orange County working on cars with his father. His passion is affordable nostalgia.

Brockmeier’s Porsche was used for 180,000 miles as a commuter vehicle for a doctor who lived in Fort Bragg but worked in the Bay Area. He loved his car and did all the work on it. The 1997 vehicle is the last generation of air-cooled 911s. It doesn’t have a radiator but does feature the flat-4 boxer engine.

Brockmeier will also be exhibiting one or two other vehicles in the car show. He loves his 1972 Mercedes 220, which he purchased from a military woman in Moraga who bought the car in Germany and drove it around Europe before

bringing it home to Lamorinda. Brockmeier acquired the car with all the original paperwork. The gas-powered vehicle has only 53,000 miles on it, and the original blue paint and cream vinyl interior are pristine.

His other vehicle is a 1982 GMC Jimmy, a square body truck he acquired from a friend’s father in Orange County. Its former owner was an immigrant from China in the 1950s, and he loved the American Dream. Brockmeier drove the truck to the celebration of life when the former owner passed away.

Troop 219 welcomes new Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Colby Powell



Photo provided

Pictured, from left: (back row) Charlie Peatross, Sebastian Strittmatter, Andrew Upp, Landon Deily, Rhett Hollyfield, Corbin Gallegos, Marco Giorgianni, Luca Vezzali; (front row) Shep Bellias, Jasper Brock-Utne, Leo Deignan, and Logan Meranda.

Troop 219 in Lafayette recently honored 12 young men who achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in Scouting Amer-

ica. This is the second largest class of Eagle Scouts attending one ceremony in the history of the Troop. Each young man gave back to their

community in many ways over their Scouting journey, culminating with their Eagle Service Projects.

Lamorinda CERT’s Duncan Seibert is honored, new personnel announced

By Sora O’Doherty

Lamorinda CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) announced at its June meeting that longtime Program Manager Duncan Seibert, who has served in that position for 16 years, has moved to Program Manager Emeritus. The Emeritus position removes the administrative duties but retains some of the research, program development, water program, and other duties while allowing him to semi-retire.

On Aug. 19 the Moraga-Orinda Fire District recognized Seibert’s service with a proclamation in his honor. The proclamation noted that Seibert became the Lamorinda CERT Program Manager in 2011 and has guided the program through years of remarkable growth and innovation. Under his leadership, Lamorinda CERT has become a model of excellence recognized throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, with neighboring CERT programs looking to Lamorinda as the standard for effective training, volunteer engagement, and community preparedness.

In addition, the proclamation noted that during his tenure, Lamorinda CERT achieved extraordinary milestones, including conducting 38 Basic Training class series, graduating over 1,000 CERT volunteers, fulfilling almost 5,000 emergency water drum orders, hosting 146 monthly preparedness presentations, and participating in 15 Lafayette Art & Wine



MOFD board of directors, CERT instructors, and Fire Chief Jeff Isaacs honor Duncan Seibert on Aug. 19

Photo courtesy MOFD

Festivals, while also supporting countless community events, emergency preparedness fairs, disaster exercises, drills, neighborhood presentations, traffic control assignments, Stop the Bleed classes, MOFD Open Houses, and outreach opportunities that strengthened the resilience of the Lamorinda communities.

Seibert generously shared his expertise beyond Lamorinda by reviewing, updating, and improving CERT training materials used by programs throughout the Bay Area, ensuring that emergency preparedness education remains current, practical, and effective for thousands of volunteers.

MOFD concluded that Seibert’s influence is measured not only by statistics but by the confidence he instilled in volunteers, the instructors he mentored, the leaders he developed,

and the countless lives made safer through a stronger, more capable CERT program.

Additional personnel changes at CERT include Todd Combellick who was upgrading from Deputy Program Manager to become the new Program Manager, taking over the administrative duties and more from Seibert. Combellick is an EMT currently working for a local ambulance company. According to Lamorinda CERT, though a recent CERT graduate, Combellick has already been a great asset to the team and has been a very active Assistant Instructor. He is finishing his Instructor Train-the-Trainer course and recently finished his Program Manager course. CERT welcomed Combellick to the team, to the Steering Committee, and to the Lamorinda CERT Foundation board of directors.

In addition, Daniel Lin has moved into the Deputy Program Manager position. Lin is an Occupational Therapist at Regional Center of the East Bay. Seibert, Combellick and Lin will all continue to teach CERT classes.

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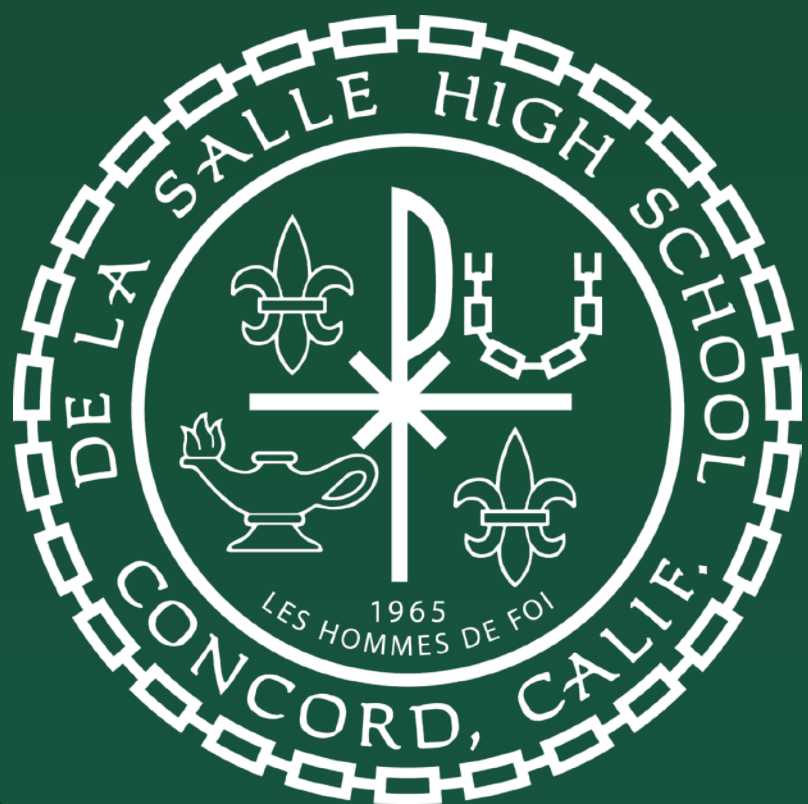
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~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Acalanes seniors create nonprofit to bring smiles to young faces through 3D printing

By David Scholz

Much of the learning during an average school day takes place between the opening bell and final dismissal. But Acalanes High School seniors Luca Fazio and Connor McAndrew have taken learning to the next level.

The Lafayette duo is the brain trust behind Eleprint Studio, a local nonprofit that partners with local schools and special education programs to turn children's drawings into custom 3D-printed creations. According to their website, their "team of designers saw how 3D printing could do more than make objects – it could build confidence, spark joy, and turn imagination into something you can hold."

Fazio and McAndrew's venture took root in the summer of 2024 when McAndrew went to the Open Sauce Fair in San Francisco and came upon software that assisted in turning a drawing into a 3D print. After brainstorming, he pitched the idea to Fazio and the concept of Eleprint Studio was born.

In the period since, they have forged relationships with the special education staff of Acalanes High School and Burton Valley and Springhill elementary schools as well as organizations like Well-spring's Camp We-Go, SEED Lafayette at the Lindsay Wildlife Mu-

seum, and Khala Center in Mexico where various 3D projects have been developed. They will be continuing to work with them in the coming school year.

Kian Kavar, an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher at Burton Valley, embraced their offer this past spring to turn an idea for a Mother's Day keychain gift into reality.

"Connor and Luca had templates for our students to color. We have a variety of disabilities in our classroom and with this template, everyone colored their own art piece by themselves," said Kavar, whose students ages 3 to 6 years old attend the special day class. "It was simple yet inclusive. Each one beautifully made."

She recalled one student looking at her keychain and saying, "I made that," with a proud look on her face. Another student, when asked "Do you know who colored that heart?" tapped his chest with pride.

"That experience was very enjoyable and taught me that small actions have big outcomes," McAndrew said.

In middle school, McAndrew chose to take peer tutoring, a class where students with special needs were given one-on-one support. "Throughout the year, I learned that different students expressed

themselves in unique ways," said McAndrew, noting how some students would create images to portray their interests and ideas through artwork.

Fazio's connection to these specific learners is more personal: his cousin with Down syndrome loves craftwork, especially nail art. But ultimately, his biggest link to children with disabilities is through his mother, who works at Burton Valley Elementary as a paraeducator.

"Coming home, she always described the value of working with children with disabilities, and it resonated with me," Fazio said.

When McAndrew came to Fazio with the initial idea of a 3D printing business, he remembered discussing several potential audiences that they could serve. "Children with disabilities were the perfect fit for both of our previous experiences, and I felt that through our shared love of technology, we could bring joy to them," Fazio said, noting how art is a key form of communication and expression, especially for children with disabilities.

The two seniors bring a wealth of technology experience in digital design that they have leveraged to support endeavors to grow Eleprint Studio in a short span of time.

McAndrew has used Adobe Photoshop and Il-



Acalanes seniors Connor McAndrew and Luca Fazio

Photo David Scholz

lustrator to make many posters for Eleprint Studio as well as posters used in the Acalanes Art Show. "My experience with related technology has helped me to work on multiple aspects of the nonprofit beyond turning the drawings into 3D prints," he said.

Initial knowledge using 3D-modeling software such as Blender, Fusion 360, HueForge, Bambu Studio, and Tinkercad, over time has enabled more efficient techniques for converting images to 3D models.

Fazio also attended a summer camp where students designed and created several types of 3D models and he worked with numerous programs, some of

which are currently used in Eleprint's process. Experience with a more advanced 3D printer in high school allowed for more detailed prints. Then, when Fazio and McAndrew began brainstorming potential designs, Fazio's previous knowledge of 3D printing allowed them to develop an efficient process for turning drawings into several types of 3D models.

The nonprofit has also exposed them to a lot of back-end organization work that comes along with working for a business, including website management, Google Workspace, social media, and legal organizational filings.

"These skills will re-

main valuable and essential in our desired career paths but also in everyday life activities such as school or other interests," the seniors said. "We hope to see our nonprofit grow to be able to reach as many students as possible through future collaborations and fundraising."

For more information, visit eleprintstudio.org.

Orinda church members fill and donate 400 backpacks for children in need

Submitted by Mike Gee



Photo provided

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Orinda donated 400 backpacks to children served by a crisis center, up from 300 backpacks last year. The project provides students with practical school supplies while also offering a visible sign of encouragement

and care at a difficult moment in their lives. According to Mike Gee, "St. Stephen's is an Orinda congregation with a long-running outreach tradition, and its Backpack Project has been a highlight of parish service for years. The church's outreach

work also builds on its ongoing support for vulnerable children and families in the greater Lamorinda/East Bay community."



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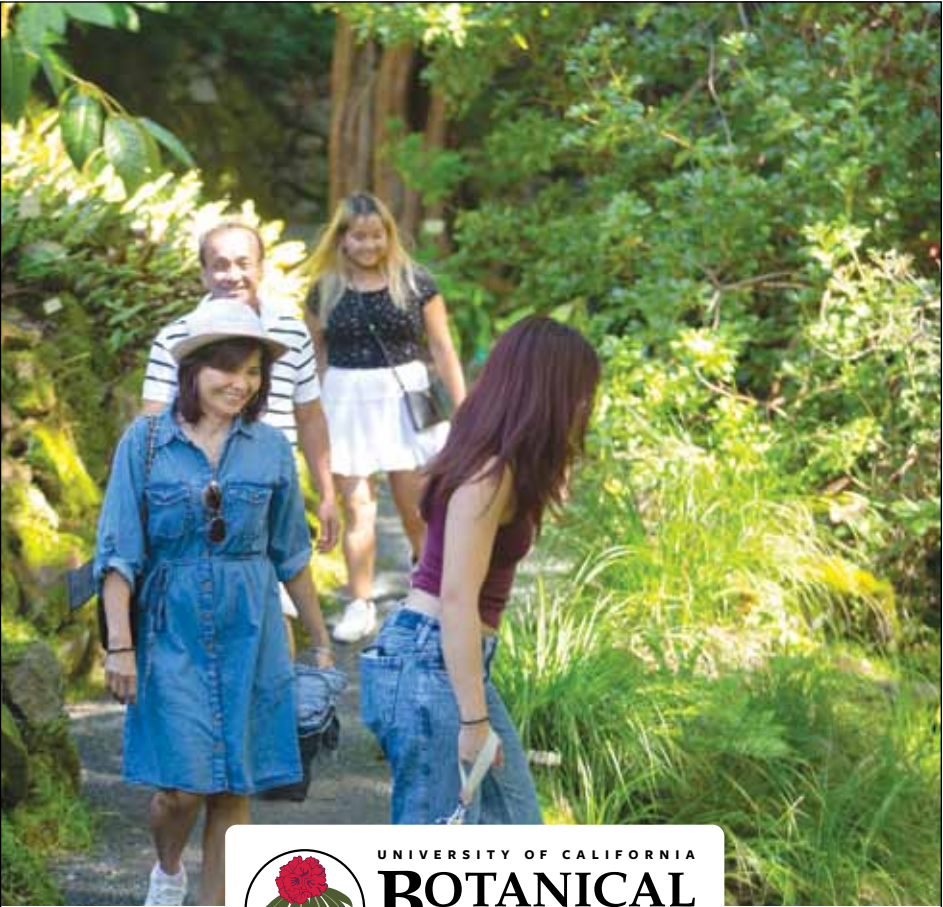
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Not to be missed

Art

Orinda Library Art Gallery - Good Medicine - an exhibition expressing gratitude to those who practice medicine, compassion, and healing on view through Oct. 3 at the Orinda Library Art Gallery, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. Good Medicine brings together works by artists from Magnolia Editions and friends, reflecting on the many forms that care can take. 925-253-4200, cclib.org.

The Moraga Art Gallery, located at 432 Center Street in the Moraga Shopping Center, announces the Aug. 19 opening of a new exhibit entitled "Cadence," Free public reception on Saturday, Sept. 26 from 5 to 7 p.m., with live music. www.moragaartgallery.com, 925-376-5407.

Lamorinda Arts Council announces a "Call for Writers" to present spoken word readings and a "Call for Artists" to display original artwork, all with a Halloween theme. Held in the Lafayette Community Center - Jennifer Russell Building, the free program runs from 2 to 3:30 p.m. on Oct. 31. We ask all presenters and guests to appear as their most inspired literary or artistic character for our Cosplay Contest. Contact elanao@mac.com, visit https://LamorindaArts.org/art-embraces-words or call 925-359-9940. Deadline Oct. 19.

Theater

Town Hall Theatre co-opens its 2026-27 Main Stage Season with "Steel Magnolias" by Robert Harling, a beloved American classic celebrating resilience, friendship, and the strength found in com-

munity. Previews Sept. 10 and 11 at 7 p.m. Performing Sept. 12 through Oct. 3 Fridays and Saturdays 7 p.m., Sundays 2 p.m. Special Senior matinee Oct. 1 at 11 a.m. \$25. Previews "Pay-What-You-Can" starting at \$2. Special Senior Matinee Oct 1: \$10. Opening Night pre-show reception \$25. townhalltheatre.com/steel-magnolias or contact: boxoffice@townhalltheatre.com

Old Barn Theatre at Tao House. Opening the Festival production calendar on Sept. 12 to 13 will be best-selling author Sheila Forsey's play, "Teddy." The play follows Rose, who has returned to Ireland to reclaim the child she left behind. While home, she faces resistance as old family secrets, resentments, and battlelines surface. The production features the original Irish cast, with Bay Area actor Sarah Liller in the lead role. https://eugeneoneill.org/event/teddy-by-sheila-forsey/

Literature

Art Embraces Words Sept. 13, 2 to 4 p.m. at the main Stage at the Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School St. in Lafayette. Original Art features juried artwork from local artists which was forwarded to local poets. Each poet then chooses and interprets one 2D artwork and speaks about it through poetic language. Questions? Contact elanao@mac.com, visit https://LamorindaArts.org/art-embraces-poetry or call 925-359-9940.

Sweet Thursday Author Series will discuss Leigh Steinberg's new book, "The Comeback: A Playbook for Turning Life's Setbacks into Vic-

tories," on Thursday, Sept. 17 at 7 p.m. at the Lafayette Library. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. for guests to enjoy coffee and sweets. Books will be available for purchase. Free, but registration is required by logging into www.tinyurl.com/sweet-Sept2026.

Book Club events at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, Orinda. Pat's Book Club discussing "Lion Women of Tehran" by Marjan Kamali, Thursday, Oct. 1, 11 a.m. No RSVP required. Murder Over Easy Book Club discussing "Art of a Lie" by Laura Shepherd-Robinson Thursday, Oct. 23 at 10:30 a.m. No RSVP required. Author Event with Dwight Holing, discussing his latest mystery novel "Yellow Hair Saturday," Oct. 3, 2:30 p.m. Free but RSVP required. https://orindabooks.com/events/calendar

Music

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Orinda will welcome neighbors, families, and animal companions to its long-standing Blessing of the Animals ceremony on Sunday, Oct. 11, from 4 to 5 p.m. The service will take place in the church's outdoor chapel beside the sanctuary at 66 St. Stephen's Drive, Orinda.

Pacific Chamber Orchestra opens its season with Songs of the Heart, featuring Barber's beloved "Adagio for Strings" and Gabriela Lena Frank's joyous "An Andrea Walkabout." Bask in our dazzling string with pieces by Britten, Elgar, and Dag Wirén. Featuring outstanding Bay Area soloists. Sept. 19, 3 p.m., Del Valle Theatre, Wal-

nut Creek. Tickets: \$25 (Student), \$40-\$65 (General) at PacificChamberOrchestra.org.

Other

Fabulous Courses for Curious Minds. OLLI offers lectures, short courses, and field experiences covering topics in the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, history, literature, and current events taught by distinguished educators. OLLI courses are designed purely for the enjoyment of learning. An annual membership costs \$60 and includes one free lecture each month. Classes are held at the Cal State East Bay Concord Center on Ygnacio Valley Road, with many additional courses available via Zoom. Visit www.campusce.net/csueastbay, email olli@csueastbay.edu, or call 925-602-6776.

The Contra Costa Athletic Assingnors are looking for referees for boys and girls flag football. CCAA is also looking for officials in basketball, baseball and soccer. If you're interested in contributing to the youth of America, getting some exercise, performing in front of large crowds – and earning a fair amount of money – then contact Dave Cutaia (ccaa.officials@gmail.com).

AARP Tax-Aide is looking for volunteers to become members of a team providing free tax preparation service in Contra Costa County. While prior tax preparation experience is beneficial, it is not a requirement. To learn more and apply online, visit www.aarpfoundation.org/taxaidevolunteer or call (925) 726-3199 for additional

information.

Come join a group of knitters who have participated in community service projects in past years and are doing so again this year. Knitting and crocheting hats and scarves for children and adults in need that will be distributed in November by a nonprofit serving those in need in local communities. You may drop off completed new hand knit and crocheted items in a member's house in Orinda, Moraga or Rossmoor by the end of October. Please email kathydown@comcast.net or call or text her at (925) 997-0734 for addresses and details.

Apply for a Grant from the Orinda Community Foundation by Oct.15 for the next year fiscal year. Application forms available at www.orinda foundation.org/get-involved.

Grief Support Group for adults who have experienced the loss of a spouse or partner. Led by psychologist Dr. Poorni. The group will offer a welcoming and supportive space to connect with others who have experienced a similar loss, share experiences, and navigate grief together. The group will meet every other Friday from 9 to 10 a.m. over Zoom, beginning Sept.18 and continuing through Dec. 11. Free and open to all members of our community. Call/Text: 925-744-7600; info@eastbayhealthcare.org.

2026 Elections - A Changing Landscape presented by The League of Women Voters, Diablo Valley, will be held on Monday, Sept. 14 at 6:30 p.m. at Pleasant Hill Library, 2 Monticello Ave., Pleasant Hill. Public is invited, free admission. So much in the news about the good and bad of new and proposed legislation, come and hear the discussion.

"2026 November Ballot - Pros & Cons" by League of Women Voters, Diablo Valley. This is an educational presentation, and the LWVDV will present both sides of the proposed measures, what funding supports and opposes, to help voters clarify in their own minds how to vote. No charge, and no registration. Tuesday, Sept. 22, 7 p.m. at Church of the Resurrection, 399 Gregory Ln. (off Kahrs Ave), Pleasant Hill. Sunday, Sept. 27, 11:30 a.m. Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Lane, Orinda. Car-pooling is encouraged. Tuesday, Oct. 6, 6 p.m., Moraga Library, 1500 St Mary's Road, Moraga.

Understanding the November Propositions — Free & Open to the community. AAUW-OML (American Association of University Women, Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette) hosts Janet Hoy of the League of Women Voters Diablo Valley for their nonpartisan Pros & Cons presentation. OML members will also brief attendees on area school board and city/town council races. Tuesday, Oct. 13. Doors open 9:30 a.m., program 10 to 11:30 a.m. Orinda Community Church, Fellowship Hall, 10 Irwin Way.

Learn how to recognize, avoid, and report common scams targeting older adults. Join a free presentation on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 10 a.m. at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. There will be a live Q&A session and presenters will include the California Contractor's State License Board, the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation, the Department of Insurance, and more.

Garden

The Montelindo Garden Club will meet on Friday, Sept. 18, at the Lafayette Library Auditorium, 3491 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. Free. Social time: 9 to 9:30 a.m., Business meeting: 9:30 to 10 a.m., Speaker 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. The speaker will be botanical illustrator and member Lee McCaffree, describing her time as Botanical Artist in Residence at the famous Oak Spring Garden, See www.montelindogarden.com/2026-meetings.html

The Walnut Creek Garden Club will hold its free monthly meeting on Monday, Sept. 14 at The Elks Lodge in Walnut Creek. Registration begins at 9:15 a.m. The public is welcome to visit the meeting.

Community Events

The Lafayette Art & Wine Festival will be held Saturday, Sept. 19, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 20, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Downtown Lafayette. Featuring 4 stages with 20+ bands, 200+ artist / craft booths, 4 kid zones, wide selection of California varietals and craft beers, local dining and shopping. Free Admission. Free Festival parking is available in the BART Lafayette Station parking lots with an easy walk or free shuttle ride to the Festival. Complimentary bike valet is located at 81 Lafayette Circle. View music schedule and learn more at https://lafayette festival.com

Lamorinda Weekly

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Lamorinda Idols rock the Orinda Theatre at final awards ceremony

By Sora O’Doherty



2026 Lamorinda Idol Finals 6-8 Grade Group winner, Cadence – Mackenzie Paige Preisler, Dafne Evans, Quinn Pennington and Miranda Klein.

Photo Dan Klein

The 2026 Lamorinda Idols final competition was held on Aug. 16 at the Orinda Theatre. Winners were announced in solo and group performances. The performers had spent months in the competition, participating in many different types of events leading up to the August Finals. From registration in April, there were in-person auditions in May, followed by a summer social in June, as well as numerous performances at Lamorinda events. After marching in the Fourth of July parade in Orinda, the finalists performed in Orinda Community Park and Moraga Commons. Then came the Finals rehearsal and at last, the much-anticipated Finals on Aug. 16. Between June and August, finalists were offered one-on-one

Zoom workshops to work on their song performance, as well as up to four in-person workshops. Idol winners will be performing at the Orinda Classic Car Show on Sept. 12 and finalists will perform at the Lafayette Art & Wine Festival on Sept. 20. Established in 2006, Lamorinda Idol is a singing program open to Kindergarten through 12th grade students who either attend a school or reside in Lamorinda, the area including the towns of Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda. Singers may enter as soloists or in groups. Students outside Lamorinda can participate in the group categories, provided that at least one group member meets the residential requirements. Winners of the 2026 Solo Performance are: K-

2nd Grade: Savanna Lewis; 3rd-5th Grade: Ellie Smith; 6th-8th Grade: Mariana Miranda; and 9th-12th Grade: Palig Horoupian. Group winners are K-5th Grade: Elemental (Emma Jilizian, Erin Koh, Ellie Smith, Luca Varela); 6th-8th Grade: Cadence (Dafne Evans, Miranda Klein, Quinn Pennington, Mackenzie Paige Preisler); and 9th-12th Grade: Incinco (Lila Graham, Avery Mains, Violet Ross, Ainsley Branstetter, Schuyler Rafferty.) The Audience Award went to Vedica Rajaraman for her rendition of “Listen.” Winners’ performance videos will be added to the Lamorinda Arts Council website and will be viewable at <https://lamorindaarts.org/idol-past-winners/>.

Bea Arthur documentary screens at Orinda Theatre in October

By Sora O’Doherty

The Orinda Theatre will be presenting two screenings of the new documentary on the life of actress Bea Arthur next month. The documentary film, entitled, “Bea Arthur—I’ve Done Everything but Porn,” explores the life, career and private character of one of America’s most distinctive performers. The documentary is built around a previously unseen interview conducted by Dan Watt, an independent producer and director. Seated at her kitchen table, Arthur reflects on the performances that brought her international recognition as the icon characters of Maude Findlay (“Maude”) and Dorothy Zbornak (“The Golden Girls”). The film explores Arthur’s development from her studies at The New School in Manhattan from 1947 to 1949 through her involvement in the evolving off-

Broadway theatre scene as well as other early roles. In this film, Arthur reflects on her enduring friendships with actor Angela Lansbury and television producer Norman Lear. “Maude,” produced by Lear, was a comedy that brought difficult social and political subjects into American living rooms during the 1970s. Arthurs’s stage career was equally significant. Opposite her longtime friend Lansbury, Arthur originated the role of Vera Charles in “Mame” and received a Tony Award for her performance before appearing with Lucille Ball in the film adaptation. Arthur also used her public position to support causes she valued, including the LGBTQ+ community at a time when relatively few prominent entertainers spoke openly on its behalf. From her early years in Maryland to experimental New York

theatre, Broadway, Hollywood and cabaret, the documentary presents a fuller account of the woman behind the familiar voice and famously deadpan delivery. Interviews with colleagues and close friends provide additional context. After a world premiere in Palm Springs in early October, the Bea Arthur documentary will be screened at the Orinda Theatre on Saturday, Oct. 10 at 6:30 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 11 at 1:15 p.m. Independent Producer and Director Dan Watt will be doing a Q&A after both screenings. The film was produced by DancinDan Productions and Daryl Roth Productions. For more details about the screenings, go to <https://www.orindamovies.com/movies/1000051080-bea-arthur-the-documentary-ive-done-everything-except-porn/>.

Author discusses how the Declaration of Independence became ‘news’

Submitted by Vanessa Crews

More than 100 guests gathered at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center on Aug. 6 for a presentation by historian Emily Sneff, author of “When the Declaration of Independence Was News.” The sold-out program explored a side of the Declaration of Independence that many Americans have probably never considered: once Congress adopted it, how did the news actually reach the public? The program was presented by the Acalanes Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, in partnership with the Lafayette Historical Society and the Commonwealth Club of California, as part of the chapter’s commemoration of the 250th anniversary of American independence.

Drawing from the research in her book, Sneff described how Philadelphia printer John Dunlap produced the first printed copies of the Declaration and how those broadsides began spreading the news of independence. The first printing was produced during the night of July 4, with copies delivered to Congress on July 5 and then distributed to state assemblies, conventions, committees of safety and



Pictured, from left: Susan Yancey, vice-regent, Acalanes Chapter, NSDAR, Mary McCosker, president, Lafayette Historical Society, Vanessa Crews, Acalanes Chapter, NSDAR, Emily Sneff.

Photo Allison Cook

military commanders. For audience member Ramona Davis, the mechanics of spreading the news were among the evening’s most fascinating revelations. “I had never really thought about how they got the Declaration out to the public—there was no internet, radio or television,” Davis said. “It was amazing how quickly the news spread despite that. I was also fascinated by the many translations and how the Declaration was used as a model by others, giving its words even greater reach and strength.” One story particularly intrigued audience member Mary Jane Hofmeister. Sneff told of Jonas Phillips, a German-born Jewish merchant and Patriot living in Philadelphia,

who wrote a letter in Yiddish to a relative in Amsterdam on July 28, 1776, enclosing one of the original Dunlap printings of the Declaration. Phillips’ letter also captured the uncertainty facing those who were actually living through the events of 1776. After describing the enclosed Declaration, he wrote, “How it will end, the blessed God knows.” Sneff’s presentation offered a reminder that the document now carefully preserved under glass at the National Archives was once something very different: breaking news – new, uncertain and consequential – as people across America and beyond tried to understand what independence might mean.

Michael Montagnon

Jan. 27, 1947 – Feb. 27, 2026

Michael “Mike” Montagnon was born in France and raised in Montreal and the East Coast before moving to Lafayette. He served as a U.S. Air Force jet mechanic during the Vietnam War and later worked 25 years as a maintenance splicer for AT&T. Michael loved motorcycles and bicycles and enjoyed building speakers. He was also a great enthusiast of model trains and enjoyed tinkering with his collection of train cars. He was curious, hardworking, and always eager to understand how things worked. Above all he had a way of interjecting humor into all aspects of his life. He loved the outdoors and when he met his future wife, Juliet, they backpacked the length of the John Muir Trail in the Sierra Nevada. Among his favorite adventures was hiking to the top of Mt. Whitney, an experience he remembered fondly throughout his life. In December 2025, Michael was diagnosed with advanced glioblastoma and passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by his family, on Feb. 27, 2026. Michael is survived by his beloved wife, Juliet (Eldred) Montagnon, and his two children, Carmen and Michael. He is deeply missed and lovingly remembered.

In Memory



Robert Russell Roloff

Aug. 8, 1933 – July 26, 2026

Robert Russell Roloff, known by friends and family as “Russ,” was born in Wausau, Wis., on Aug. 8, 1933. He was the fourth child of Daniel Charles and Martha Brandt Roloff. He was baptized and confirmed at First English Lutheran Church and graduated from Wausau Senior High. In 1956, he graduated from Montana State University in Bozeman, Mont., with a degree in Engineering. He served his country commanding a surface-to-air Nike guided missile site in Germany during the “Cold War” era. After discharge from the Army, he returned to work with General Electric and in 1960 was transferred to San Francisco where he met Ardith Ann Wood. They were married July 29, 1961 at St. Marks Lutheran Church in San Francisco. They had three children: Christine Ann, Curt James and Catherine Paula Roloff. Russ’s favorite pastimes were spending time with his family, hiking the local hills & high Sierra, fly fishing and attending the San Francisco Ballet. Later, an even more enjoyable pastime emerged – spending time with his two grandsons. In 1975, after being urged by his son to start a soccer program, Russ led in founding the Orinda Youth Association, an all-volunteer organization whose purpose is to provide team sports for Orinda’s grade school age youth. Since its successful beginning in the fall of 1975, the OYA continues to do a splendid job with Orinda’s youth. Russ served two terms on the church council of St. Timothy’s Lutheran in El Sobrante and two terms on the council of Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church (formally Shepherd of the Valley) in Orinda. Russ passed away at the age of 92. He is survived by his eldest daughter, Christine Ann Roloff, his son-in-law, Bart Lawrence Mehlhop, his two grandsons, Carter Russell and Chase William Mehlhop and his great-grandson, Callahan Kennedy Mehlhop. Russ’s family finds peace knowing he is resting in eternal peace, joined once again with his beloved wife, Ardith, and two of his children, Curt and Catherine, in heaven.

In Memory



Robert Davidson

1945-2026



Dr. Robert Davidson passed away peacefully at home on Aug. 8, 2026, surrounded by his family. He is survived by his wife, Valri, and daughter, Sara, and her husband and their two children, and son, Matthew and his wife. Rob was born and raised in Philadelphia, where he grew up in a close-knit family – with his parents, brother, and sister. His father co-owned a grocery store where he also worked as a teenager. As a young adult, he loved to play golf and tennis. He went to medical school and served in the military, before meeting his wife. He loved being a doctor and medicine was his true passion. His dream was to educate his patients to be their own advocates in such a complex health care system, and he always said that the most important part of medicine was getting the right diagnosis (like real estate - location, location, location). He also loved the adage “trust but verify.” He was a very kind soul and a true mensch (a common yiddish term for a good person). He lived in Lafayette since 1992 – enjoying all the beautiful oak trees, the Lafayette Reservoir, and Marion pancakes at Tutu’s. There will be a memorial service on Friday, Nov. 20 at the Lafayette Veterans Center in Lafayette, Calif. To RSVP, please email memorialdoctor-davidson@gmail.com with your name, relationship (colleague, patient, friend), and number of attendees. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial donations be made to Doctors Without Borders in memory of Dr. Robert Davidson.

Hold the Mayo! A creative twist on this summertime staple

By Susie Iventosch

Just like deviled eggs, potato salad has long been a staple of picnics, potlucks, barbecues, and family gatherings. It's dependable, comforting and almost always welcome at the table. But some people, (like my husband and kids), just don't get along with mayonnaise. So, I've tried many potato salad variations over the years, using different vinaigrettes in place of mayo. They are really tasty, but not quite that traditional potato salad texture.

Recently though, a friend sent me a potato salad recipe from the New York Times which uses tahini as the thickening ingredient in the dressing and pepperoncini brine for the tang. I love pepperoncini so this really appealed to me. You can also use banana peppers in place of pepperoncini if you prefer those. The recipe needed more tanginess, so I added a lot more lemon juice and some white wine vinegar, and the result is a creamy dressing that is simultaneously nutty, tart, savory and just a little bit zippy. It clings beautifully to the cooked potatoes and settles into all of their nooks and crannies of the olives and celery, too.

Baby Yukon Gold potatoes are especially well suited to this salad. Their natural buttery flavor works beautifully with the tahini, while their thin skins mean there is no need for peeling. Simply cook them until they are tender enough to pierce with a knife but still firm enough to hold their shape.

One of the secrets to a flavorful potato salad is to

add the dressing while the potatoes are still slightly warm. Toss them gently so they stay intact, before adding the remaining ingredients.

I added Castelvetrano olives which bring a mild, buttery flavor and a beautiful pop of green. Unlike sharper, saltier olives, Castelvetranos are smooth and almost sweet, making them a wonderful partner for the pepperoncini. Sliced pepperoncini add extra tang and just enough heat to keep every bite interesting.

I also added hard-boiled eggs for that familiar richness we expect from a good potato salad. Some of the yolk may even break into the dressing as everything is tossed together, making it a little creamier and more luxurious. Finally, turkey bacon crumbles contribute a smoky, salty finish and a bit of welcome texture. Sprinkle some into the salad and save a little extra for the top so everyone gets a taste of that savory crunch.

The salad can be prepared several hours ahead, which gives the potatoes time to absorb even more flavor. Before serving, let it sit at room temperature for a few minutes and give it a gentle toss. Garnish the finished salad with bacon bits and minced parsley.

INGREDIENTS

Tahini Dressing

- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/2 cup tahini, well stirred
- 2 tbsp. pepperoncini brine (can also use banana peppers for this recipe)
- 1 tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. lemon pepper
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Salad Fixings

- 2 lbs. baby Yukon gold potatoes
- 4 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- 1 cup Castelvetrano olives, pitted and halved
- 1 cup sliced pepperoncini
- 4 hard boiled eggs, coarsely chopped
- 4 strips turkey bacon, cooked to a crisp and crumbled
- 1/4 cup minced fresh parsley
- Salt & Pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Dressing

Place lemon juice and garlic in the bowl of your food processor. Blend for about 30 seconds. Add tahini and water, and blend until the mixture is super smooth and thick, almost like a hollandaise texture. Add pepperoncini brine, olive oil, lemon pepper, and vinegar. Continue to blend until well integrated and still thick, but pourable. Set aside. This can be done a day or two ahead of time.

Clean and halve the baby Yukon gold potatoes. Place them in a large pasta pot and cover them with cold water. Sprinkle 1 tsp. salt into the pot. Bring to a boil and continue to boil until the potatoes are cooked through, but not mushy. You almost want them to be ever so slightly al dente. Test them with a knife and the knife should go through easily. Drain water and cool to a warm but not hot temperature.

Place the cooled potatoes in a large salad bowl. Add celery, pepperoncini slices, hard boiled eggs, and olives. Gently toss. Drizzle dressing over everything and toss again. Garnish with bacon bits and parsley. This salad can be stored in the refrigerator, but warm to room temperature before serving. The flavors are so much more prevalent when served at room temp.



Photos Susie Iventosch



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

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Flag football continues to grow in Lamorinda

By Jon Kingdon

ACALANES

After a 17-3 record and making it to the NCS championship game last season, and with a large number of productive players returning, there is a lot of optimism at Acalanes, with a 4-1 record, three shutouts and their only loss 2-0 to Granada. “We have a lot of talent and we were successful last year but that doesn’t guarantee success this year. You got to still show up and do it,” said co-head coach Mike Ivankovich.

Unlike their first year of flag football with a total roster of 17, where the game was essentially new to all of the players, there are only two girls on a roster of 21, freshmen Catherine Hattersley and Eloise Kemp, whose experience is somewhat limited. “Catherine, a lacrosse player, is a tenacious athlete and Eloise is a multi-time MOL MVP in flag football and they’re both learning,” Ivankovich said. “Next year will be the first year we will have had four-year starters in Isabelle Agnost and June Natal.”

With 19 returning players, the team brings a lot of experience which is essential to the team’s success, according to Ivankovich. “That gives us a huge advantage. Even with all of our experience, this is the first year we’ve had a returning starting quarterback. Having varsity returners who played is a huge advantage so we’ve been able to change our whole offense, being able to run and pass the ball.”

Quarterback Ines Coyne is coming off a top season, being named to the All-Metro team. “Ines is such an incredible, relentless competitor. She has worked hard on her mechanics and reading defenses, is a devastating runner and is a great leader along with being a dominant defensive player.” Coyne is backed up by Stella Beuchotte and Ashby Raher, both who also play defense.

Complimenting Coyne in the backfield is fellow All-Metro team player, running back Isabelle Agnost, who brings top track speed to the game. “It’s rare to have a player that has all the physical attributes, mental toughness, and high-level competitiveness and yet with all of these attributes, she is so unselfish,” Ivankovich said

Coyne has a solid core of receivers in Avery DeMent, June Natal, Santata Tamayo and Beuchotte. Natal set the tone in the first game win over Piedmont with four touchdown receptions along with an interception.

“Our defense is going to make us competitive with anyone,” Ivankovich said. “We feel like we’ve been the best defensive program in the Bay Area. We have great players who are athletes

and we have sound schemes and coach them really hard. They understand leverage and spacing and being in the right place. We’ve been double rushing and we’ve had games with double digit sacks.”

The linebacker position has three all-league players in Dement, Beuchotte and Coyne. “Avery does a great job in tracking the ball and rarely misses pulling the flag and Malory DeCredico has been a force as a pass rusher on the line with Stella rushing from the linebacker spot.”

The captains on the team are seniors Coyne, DeMent, Beuchotte and Tamayo. “I’m really proud of the way that our seniors have been taking the younger players under their wing and mentoring and looking out of for them.”

Still Ivankovich is taking nothing for granted. “There’s no more blowing people out week after week. All the teams know how to play and they’re getting better athletes. When you combine those things, it’s going to be highly competitive.”

CAMPOLINDO

It’s been a slow start for Campolindo through no fault of their own since their opening game opponent canceled and they were limited to having an intersquad scrimmage.

This is a veteran team with 23 seniors and juniors along with 10 sophomores and freshmen, with four returning players that were all-league last year: Isabelle Maher, Paige Williams, Isabella Verganszky and Lane Massa.

Head coach Paki Gordo, in his second year at Campolindo, sees a difference in the girls from last year’s 8-9-1 team. “The girls have a different focus. They understood the things they needed to work on in the off season so they came in with a different mindset and more dedication to what they’re doing. With their prior experience, they’ve learned the game a lot more with their approach to practice and game preparation. We’re a stronger and faster team that has the knowledge of being in the right places and holding each other accountable.”

Gordo sees a solid core of leaders among the upper classmen. “There is a large core of our upperclassmen along with some of our quiet leaders and it’s been amazing to see that as well.”

Maher, who was a dominant figure on offense last season accounting for 93% of the team’s offense, passing for 2139 yards and rushing for 979 yards, is returning at quarterback. “Isabelle has a great arm and is obviously a dual threat as a runner along



Acalanes quarterback Ines Coyne, #8, extends the ball for a first down versus Monte Vista. Photo Jim Clark

with being a very tenacious competitor,” Gordo said. “Isabelle saw the opportunities and ran with it but our goal is to keep it more balanced this year with some of our younger players like Sadie Ginestro, MacKinsey Lee, Greta Welcome and Yana Yera-Paez Vare.”

The team has a solid core of receivers led by Williams (91 receptions), Jeevan Dahliwal (40) and Hernandez (32). Sophomore Maddie Poritzky also made some big receptions last year as well.

Gordo is also positive about the potential of the underclassmen. “Messina Marchetti and Lizzie Gilbert have shown potential and I’m looking to see what they and the other underclassmen play at a faster level and then figure out a way to get them in the game.”

The defense was led by Massa (81 tackles), Verbanszky (28), Ella Heerin (51) and Mia Durden (21). “Lane is a tackle master and knows how to read the game,” Gordo said. “She is very disciplined, making the right calls and taking the right angles. Mia was very good at cornerback and Ella was good in flag pulling and coverage. Addie Moran, a quiet force on defense is currently out with an injury but is expected back soon.”

The key for the team’s ultimate success to Gordo is simple: “We have to stay healthy and hungry. We need to make sure that we start fast and continue to keep the ball rolling as we go. We also want to limit our physical and mental mistakes and we’re making sure that we tighten up there.”

MIRAMONTE

With a team that went 3-10 last year, new head coach Robert Kennedy is bringing the same attitude he brought to the Miramonte track team last spring as their head coach, creating an

environment where the kids feel safe, having fun and gain confidence as they compete with their opponents. “These girls need to be confident in their skills and ability. I got the announcement that I was going to be the Flag coach two weeks before school started so we missed the whole summer to practice and we’ve had a lot of catching up to do, but I’ve seen the girls change in leaps and bounds.”

This is a young team with only one senior but nine juniors, eight sophomores and four freshmen. Junior Ava Noga was the only player named to the all-conference teams.

Kennedy’s philosophy is to have the players make the decisions on the field. “I want to trust our players to make the right decisions because they are eyes and ears on the field where they can develop their confidence to do that. We want our quarterbacks to know what is available and when a play breaks down, knowing what is her check down, and if it’s not there, to start running.”

The team began the season with a 26-0 win over San Lorenzo. “That showed us is that we have the skills and the ability to play and now we just need a little bit more time to refine our technique, home in on our positions and really dedicate specific plays to key individuals so that they can shine,” said Kennedy. “We’ve got a really fast team and they’re eager to play. It’s my job to give them a North Star so they know exactly where they’re going, and take my hands off the steering wheel, allowing them to drive. They listen, and when we give them the reason why, it clicks, and so then they’re able to pick up on it.”

Whitney Mapaye, who played wide receiver last season, is the team’s starting quarterback, backed up by Lizzi

Rudd and Sammy Hardy. “Whitney has a good, accurate arm, Lizzi is a returner from last year and Sammy is a softball player that is new to the game but has a very strong arm that even needs to hold back a little,” Kennedy said. “My quarterbacks have to make the critical decisions for us, understanding our plays and schemes and making the decision based on what they’re seeing out there.”

Kennedy has a number of his track athletes on the team’s roster led by Jada Lu, Amaya Kennedy and Olivia Troy: “Jada is a track hurdler with good hands that is getting more confident, Amaya is a running back and wide receiver and free safety and Olivia is a newcomer that is broadening her skills. I want the girls to create space so they have to run sharp routes which will give our quarterback time to make a play.”

The defense is led by Melissa Harris, Riyana Harabarakada and Anaia Sighn. “All three are very good flag pullers. Melissa is a wrestler and is very aggressive with the ability to snag the flags as are Riyana and Anaia. The key is to have the girls keep their offensive opponent square in front of them to be able to get to their flag. I want them to be aggressive and feel that the ball is as much theirs as it is the wide receivers.”

The team’s record is now 1-2 after losing to

Dougherty Valley and Hayward but Kennedy is taking the long-term perspective for the team: “As the year develops, I really want our players to understand the basic concepts of the game and have a basic understanding of where they are in space. We’re still kind of tiptoeing, going east-west, and I want them to go north-south. As long as they’re moving forward we’re getting closer and closer to a first down and then a touchdown.”

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SMC Rugby player dies following medical emergency

Saint Mary’s College Rugby player Dominic Peterson, 19, a sophomore from Los Altos Hills, passed away Friday, Sept. 4 after experiencing a medical emer-

gency during a training run with his rugby teammates in Moraga, according to a Gael Rugby social media post, which added, “This is heartbreaking for our

community and our deepest sympathies are with his family and loved ones. Dominic’s Smile was contagious and one that would brighten a room when

he entered. He always gave 100% effort and encouraged those around him to do the same. Dominic will be in our hearts forever.” -- J. Kingdon

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Lamorinda football teams looking to repeat last year’s successes

By Jon Kingdon

MIRAMONTE

Miramonte has carried on the success of last year's season with two victories over Oakland Tech, 32-12, and Granada High School, 17-7.

Last season, things really came together as the season developed for Miramonte, winning the NCS championship and making it to the CIF state championship bowl game. The unfortunate broken collarbone suffered by Carson Blair (now a walk-on at TCU) proved to be a real break for starting junior quarterback Lane Dalton who accepted the challenge and ran with it.

With Dalton playing with a broken finger, Miramonte lost a close game to Campolindo and then won three straight games making it to the CIF championship, but Dalton suffered an injury early in the bowl game and Miramonte lost to the ultimate state champion Calaveras High School.

“Lane never rattled or wavered as he took command of the offense right away,” head coach Nick Safir said. “He has been very dedicated in the weight room and is one of our hardest workers and has spent a lot of time with our offensive coordinator Marcus Hires. We’re very confident that this is going to be Lane’s team the next two years.”

Dalton was 14 for 19 for 147 yards with three touchdown passes against Oakland Tech. Dalton’s backup is line-backer Tres Buster and the team is also very high on JV quarterback, Gus Millstone who also came in for Dalton in the championship game.

Prior to the start of the season, senior Jonah Imberg was expected to be the team’s starting running back after a productive junior season but he suffered a pre-season injury. He is making good progress in his recovery and is anticipated to return at some point.

Safir then called upon senior wide receiver Michael Fagundes to move to the backfield from the receiver position and in the two victories he has led the team in rushing with 205 yards on 32 carries. “Michael really bought

into being the guy and he ran the ball hard,” Safir said. “When Jonah comes back, having both of them is going to be super dynamic.”

Against Oakland Tech, eight different receivers caught passes with Luca Tarantino, Chase Short and Parker Bjornson each catching three passes and Henry Hunt (a starting DB), Tarantino and Tre Murphy each catching a touchdown pass.

Tarantino starting in the slot for the first time caught a TD pass and showed a great connection with Dalton. George Gilbert the top returning receiver had one reception for 18 yards. “We can go 8 and 9 deep and not see a drop off in our receivers,” Safir said.

The offensive line is a veteran group that played extremely well. “LT Jack White and Center Brooks Butler are team captains and LG Joe Smith, RG Mason Kawar, and RT Jackson Thompson, Joe Smith’s the left guard. “Joe is great pulling out and leading the back, Mason really worked hard in the weight room and is playing great and Jackson give us rare size. They all blocked really well and are way ahead of where we were on the O-line last year.”

Though the defense came on after a poor opening drive, Safir is still looking for improved play. “We have to work on our tackling. We’ve been in the right spot so we just have to finish the play. There’s a lot of improvement to go on the defensive side. Still, we got the stops when we needed them.”

Leading the defense is linebacker and co-captain Tres Buster, linebacker Ryan Jones, defensive ends Wyatt Strand and Ben Romweber, and cornerback Henry Hunt. “Tres has turned into a real productive leader and Henry is our shutdown corner,” Safir said. “Wyatt at DE had two sacks and forced a big turnover in the game and Ben has been a real menace at the other end. Our D-line really did well as a whole, flying around and making plays.”

Miramonte has also increased its public image putting videos out on Facebook. “Our team

videographer, Dominic Russo has been creating videos which have been creating more visibility to what we are doing as a program, showing the fun and the hard work and the quality of his videos have been second to none, getting us more visibility in building our brand.”

Even though Miramonte moved down to the middle league with Northgate, College Park, Mount Diablo, and Los Lomas, they have a very difficult non-league schedule. “We will always have Campolindo and Acalanes on our schedule. As an NCS champion, a number of teams opted not to be on our schedule this year.”

Safir in his third year at Miramonte has seen a real growth in talent and numbers. “In my first year we had six players going both ways and we have 22 starters now. Maintaining that consistency is going to be big for us and we can’t get down if we fall behind. Our experience last year in the playoffs is going to really lean into that for us as our players get used to playing with each other.”

ACALANES

Acalanes had a very successful season last year with an 11-1 record and made it to the second round of the playoffs before losing to Cardinal Newman, and has carried that success over to this season with victories over Archbishop Mitty and Menlo-Atherton, outscoring them by a combined 76-27.

Despite losing nine all-league players to graduation, Acalanes will still have the league offensive Co-MVP, quarterback Tyler Winkles returning along with Finn Rivera who was all-league offense and defense, TE Sean Tandler and defensive lineman Daniel Dunne.

With Josh Elerts (Pomona) and Deonte Littlejohn (DVC), having graduated, they took with them 83.5% of the team's rushing yards gained on the ground last season. Winkles ran for 356 yards and there was only one other back that gained positive yards.

This season's leading rusher has been junior Joaquin Bordi with 93



Miramonte quarterback Lane Dalton takes the snap from Center Brooks Butler (56).

Photo Mark Bell

yards on 30 carries. The drop in yards rushing was compensated for by the increase in yards passing by Winkles. averaging 286.5 yards per game with 9 touchdown passes. Winkles has also averaged 40.3 on three punts.

Acalanes has had 10 different receivers led by senior TE A.J. Del Soto, who had no catches last season, with 16 receptions and 2 touchdowns, Fern Rivera with 15 receptions and 3 touchdowns (and one interception) and Jackson Boselli, utilizing his track speed with 4 receptions and averaging 40.8 yards per catch with 3 touchdowns.

The offensive line of seniors Cash Ricker, Oliver MacLeod and Matt Lee and juniors Graham Welton, Gino Rubio, and Grady Branagh only gave up one sack all evening against Mitty.

The defense has been led Dax Vail with 13 tackles and two TFLs, Luke Dafferner, 11 tackles, 1 TFL, and one sack, Daniel Dunne with 11 tackles, 1 TFL and 1 sack, and Kyle Sanftner with 9 tackles, 1 TFL.

CAMPOLINDO

When you graduate eight all league players and then lose players who transferred and others who got injured, it makes for a difficult beginning to your season and that is what Campolindo and head coach Kevin Macy are facing this year, starting the year with two close losses to Granada, 19-7, and Bellarmine, 17-16.

Against Granada, Campolindo did show the ability to move the ball behind quarterback Cayden Mulliken. However, with the offensive line still a work in progress, this led to Mulliken being under a lot of pressure which led to heavy pressure, sacks and three interceptions.

Time of possession also became a real factor in the game. Campolindo did not get to run an offensive play in the 3rd quarter and after a Granada touchdown, Ryan Erickson, the only all-league player for the Cougars who returned this season, had an electrifying kickoff return through the Granada kickoff team for Campolindo’s lone score. In the end, Granada ran 69 plays to Campolindo’s 39

plays.

“It was a strange game,” Macy said. “We did not get a chance to assess our offense. Our defense at this point is undersized but they played really hard and showed that they will fight.”

Defensive lineman Jonas Desyatnik and linebackers Owen Pickering and Blake Anderson and defensive back Rai Marchetti were strong factors on the Campolindo defense.

The running backs that will be getting most of the opportunities will be Colton Willis and Brayden Shin. Along with Erickson at wide receiver, Macy is looking for more production from Gabe Haroutunian and Marchetti.

As the defense continues to battle, the key for the rest of the year is going to be the overall development of the offensive line, giving more time for Mulliken to stand in the pocket. “We have to be able to give Cayden more time in the pocket to take advantage of his strong arm,” Macy said.

Orinda Country Club led the way at the 69th annual OMPA Championship Meet

By Jon Kingdon

The OMPA Championship meet took place from July 31 to Aug. 2 with the usual overwhelming numbers – 1,701 total swimmers and over 4,800 entries from the nine teams with a composite total of 21,376 points awarded.

Top Teams by Points

1. Orinda Country Club – 3,986.5 pts – 277 swimmers – Orinda Linos Perpetual Trophy
2. Meadow Swim and Tennis – 3,306 pts – 228 swimmers – Orinda Chamber of Commerce Perpetual Trophy
3. Moraga Country Club – 3,221 pts – 215 swimmers - Orinda Rotary Club Perpetual Trophy
4. Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis – 2,960 pts – 223 swimmers
5. Moraga Valley Pool – 2,365.5 pts – 235 swimmers
6. Orinda Park Pool – 2114.5 pts – 168 swimmers
7. Moraga Ranch Swim Club – 1,872.5 pts – 170

swimmers

8. Campolindo Cabana Club – 1,021 pts – 125 swimmers

9. Orinda Moraga Swim Club – 529 pts – 60 swimmers

High Point Winners (Top Individual Performers)

- 6&U Girls – Capri O Murchu (44 pts, 3rd FR, 1st FL - Moraga CC)
6&U Boys – Maxwell Cappucci (48 pts, 1st FR, 5th BK – Moraga CC)
7-8 Girls – Emma Germe (69 pts, 1st IM, 1st BK, 2nd FL - Meadow)
7-8 Boys – Thomas MacDonald (72 pts, 1st IM, 1ST BK, 1ST FL - Moraga CC)
9-10 Girls – Hadley Stevens (68 pts, 3rd IM, 1ST BR, 1ST BK – Orinda CC)
9-10 Boys – Harry O’Brien (68 pts, 1st IM, 1st BR, 3rd FL - Moraga CC)
11-12 Girls – Giuliana Fusch (69 pts, 1st IM, 1st FR, 2nd FL – Sleepy Hollow)
11-12 Boys – Cody De-

laney (69 pts, 1st IM, 1st BK, 2nd FL – Moraga VP)
13-14 Girls – Frances Cho (69 pts, 1st IM, 2nd BR, 1st FL – Sleepy Hollow)
13-14 Boys – Caleb Cavallero (69 pts, 2nd IM, 1st FR, 1st BR – Moraga Ranch)
15-18 Girls – Lily Holloway (67.5 pts, 1st IM, 1st BR, 2nd FL – Meadow)
15-18 boys – Gavin Cameto (72 pts, 1st IM, 1st FR (50Y), 1st FL – Moraga CC)
TEAM AWARDS
Most Improved Team: Orinda Moraga Swim Club (+192 pts from 2025)

Ellwood Douglas/Doc Webster Memorial Plaque
Most Improved Team (no relays): Orinda Park Pool (+0.165 in medal average)

Dan Siri/Mike Anjedani Honory Plate
Team Sportsmanship: Orinda Park Pool
Heidary Sportsmanship Trophy

OMPA CHAMPIONSHIP 2026 RECORDS SET - GIRLS

Evelyn Gaffney – OCC – 13-14 50Y Breast – 30.08 (0.23 less)

OMPA CHAMPIONSHIP 2026 RECORDS SET – BOYS

Gavin Cameto – MCC - 15-18 100Y IM – 50.56 (-0.77 less)
Gavin Cameto – MCC – 15-18 50Y Free – 20.46 (-0.21 less)
Gavin Cameto – MCC – 15-18 15-18 50Y Fly – 21.70 (-.23 less)
Ellis Culleton – MCC – 15-18 50Y Free – 20.67 (0)
Ellis Culleton – MCC – 15-18 100Y Free – 44.96 (-1.6 less)
Tristan Patroni – Meadow – 9-10 50Y Back – 30.86 (-0.2 less)
Joseph Goett – MCC – 15-18 50Y Back – 22.60 (-0.97 less)
Gavin Cameto – MCC – 15-18 50 Fly – 21.70 (-0.23 less)
Culleton, Goett, Cameto, Bliss – MCC – 15-18 200Y MR – 1:32.53 (-1.59 less)

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2026 Contra Costa County Swim Championship: Local teams shine

Submitted by Stu Wong

The 65th Contra Costa County Swim Championship brought together 42 teams and the region's fastest young swimmers for a week-end of record-setting performances and spirited competition. Founded in 1961 and hosted continuously by LMYA, the meet remains one of the largest and most prestigious summer league swim events in the nation.

Meet Director Jeff Miller noted "This year's championship featured standout swims across all age groups, multiple ties for highpoint titles, and five new County Meet records. It was a fast meet!" With packed bleachers, fast swims, and multi-generational families cheering from the stands, the 2026

Contra Costa County Championship reaffirmed why "County" remains the most anticipated meet of the summer.

2026 LMYA County Qualifiers High Point Champions

- 6 & Under: Ellie Oleary (Scottsdale), Ehsaan Eversley (LMYA), Maksim Ilchenko (Scottsdale)
- 7-8: Hailey Santo (Danville), Brady Mirkovich (Rancho San Miguel)
- 9-10: Charley Branch (Dana Hills), Lily Dorr (Del Amigo), Denver Robinson (Aquaknights)
- 11-12: Rylee Cox (Dana Hills), Ryan Moore (Del Amigo)
- 13-14: Carmel Golan (Rancho San Miguel), Valerie Vargas (Benicia), Luke Estrada (Sycamore)
- 15-18: Isabella Richards (Diablo Sharks), Gavin Wright (Dewing Park), Kyle Stilnovich (Rancho San Miguel)

Team Results by Division (Local Teams)

- Division I. Springbrook Swim Team won the division with impressive individual performances and a record-setting relay.
- Division II. Las Trampas finished second, powered by strong mid-age-group depth and multiple top five finishes. Rancho Colorados finished 17th.
- Division III. Sun Valley placed third, highlighted by several highpoint podium finishes and strong relay showings. LMYA finished fifth led by highpoint champion Ehsaan Eversley. Record Breaking Perfor-

mances

- Lily Dorr (Del Amigo) — Girls 9-10 50 Back (30.55)
- Carmel Golan (Rancho San Miguel) — Girls 13-14 50 Free (23.56) & 100 IM (58.59)
- Gavin Wright (Dewing Park) — Men 15-18 50 Free (20.61)
- Springbrook Women's 15-18 200 Medley Relay — 1:50.02

Photo provided



LMYA Girls 11-12 County Relay Team, from left: Ellie Wong, Giovanna Wat, Lily Fivey, and Penelope Munoz

9U Moraga All Stars take first at Caldecott Cup Tournament

Submitted by Moraga Baseball Association



The 9U Moraga All Stars, made up of third graders from Moraga, wrapped up their summer season with a first-place win in the Caldecott Cup Tournament. From left, top row: Corbin Shields, Bryan Sidensol, Scott DeWalt, Todd Henderson; middle row: Patrick Kelly, Lev Henderson, Alex Mesic, Cooper Polsky, Timmy Simpkins, Liam DeWalt; bottom row: Grey Shields, John Sidensol, Joaquin Munoz, Xander Cabiles, Dylan DeWalt (missing: Sam Jenkins)

Photo Elizabeth Munoz

12U Lamo Girls take quarter-final Junior Olympics win

Submitted by Dan Best

The 12U LAMO Girls Competition team was all smiles after the 2026 Junior Olympics quarter-final win against San Clemente. LAMO 12U Girls Competition team finished fourth overall, which was the best JO finish by a LAMO 12U Girls team in the Club's history. In addition, this same girls team finished second in the State Cup, fifth in the Future Competition and second in the US Club Championship all during this year's club season (head coach Jeremy Kish; assistant coaches: Josh Wellen, Todd Masson and Deb Simmons).



Team Members, from left (back row): Charlotte Ramsay-Leavitt, Sloan Michaels, Sophie Hagopian, Zadie Grigg, Emma Hallenberger, Skye O'Hare, Ella Bennett, Guilianna Fusch; (front row): Reese Cobo, Alexa Wellen, Penny Best.

Photo Carol Best



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THIS YEAR CAMPO FALLS.



Historical events should be photographed. Oct. 9th I'll be on the field shooting the Matadors defeating the Cougars after a 15 year "W" drought. If you'd like to hire me to capture your favorite team's biggest events, let's connect on Instagram:



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