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Moraga Road, Closed Again in Lafayette

The four step process starts with patch paving and crack sealing. Next a chip seal would follow – not a Dorito-eating marine mammal – but actually a mat of molten asphalt and recycled tires covered with rock chips blankets the entire surface. This overlay is very user-friendly and can be driven on after just a few minutes. A slurry seal comes next, usually about a week after the chip seal; taking four to five hours to dry completely.

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“No streets will be closed to traffic during the patch paving, crack filing, or the chip seal process, but traffic delays are to be expected due to lane closures and traffic control,” said Luttrupp. Only Moraga Road will be closed during daytime hours for the very last phase of the project, because it’s so narrow.

Chip sealing is scheduled for Friday August 7 for all three roads, slurry sealing will occur on Wednesday August 19 and Thursday, August 20.

Life in LAMORINDA

Acalanes Alumni Signs Books at Storyteller

By Sophie Braccini



Elise Broach (right, sitting) signs books for Susan Karr (center) and her two children Samantha and Kevin Wall
Photo Sophie Braccini

Elise Broach is a successful children literature author who lives in Connecticut. But her busy life doesn’t keep her from coming back every year to Lafayette to visit her parents, some old friends and

sign books at the children’s book store, “The Story Teller.”

On July 21, she sat quietly in the bookstore, waiting with a smile for readers to come by and ask for an autograph. Some were already there waiting for her.

Samantha Wall, an Acalanes student, had her copy of “Shake-

peare’s Secret” ready for signature. Her mother, Susan Kaar who teaches drama at Pleasant Hill Middle School, is a great fan of Broach. “Those are terrific books,” she said, “they are wonderful read aloud for younger children and great fun for teenagers.” Kaar particularly likes the fact that the author gives credit to her readers for having intelligence, “her use of words is wonderful,” she added, “and the plots are clever and enriching.”

Broach holds a Ph.D. in American history and uses her knowledge in her stories. “When you study history, the plots and characters are provided for you... you just have to find your own angle on the events you’re describing,” she says.

Broach describes writing as a very early calling. “I loved to write from the time I was very young,” she said, “I made my first picture book when I was in 1st grade. My teachers and school librarians were

a huge influence on me because they were always so supportive of my work.”

Broach lived in England before moving to Lafayette where she went to Acalanes. “At Acalanes, I was very involved on the Aklan Yearbook staff, and made friends with other budding writers who went on to do it professionally,” remembers Broach, “my friend Ann Christie is a published poet and teaches college writing classes. I’m still in touch with one of my English teachers from Acalanes, Carolyn Meek, who was a wonderfully encouraging and insightful critic of my work. She left teaching to run the Lafayette Book Store for many years, and has been a lovely advocate of my books.”

Books by Elise Broach include “Shakespeare’s Secret,” “Masterpiece,” “When Dinosaurs Came with Everything” and “Wet Dog!”

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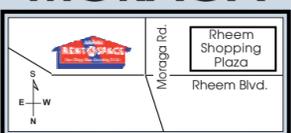
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Dogs Will Play...For Now

Some warned of the potential dangers associated with dogs roaming freely where kids play. “I know from experience the tragedy that can come from dogs out of control,” said Moraga resident and dog owner Bob Reynolds.

Dog advocates responded swiftly. “I am a physician and have seen dog bite injuries,” said Moraga’s Tyler Smith, “but this mostly happens in homes, caused by family pets that are not exercised enough; incidents in dog parks are unlikely.” The Moraga-born father of two young children added that if the safety concern was overwhelming, a solution could be to fence the playgrounds at Rancho Laguna.

Other residents expressed concerns at having the park “confiscated” by dog owners. Moraga resident Virginia Faulkner had hip replacement surgery; she would like to use the paved area around the park for rehabilitative walking.

“When I came to the park after work hours I decided not to get out of my car,” she said, “I was afraid of the off leash dogs and how they could compromise my balance.” Dog owner Mike Weinberger argued, “The park is deserted when the dog people are not there... when it rains only the dog owners and their friends are there.”

The Council wanted to strike a balance to address the needs of all its citizens. For the Council, the risk of litigation involving the Town if an accident happens is unacceptable. “You have to plan for an unfortunate event even if the probability is very remote,” said Council Member Howard Harpham, “because if it happens it is a catastrophe, and the town, and the dog owner, will lose everything.”

Because there is no physical barrier at this time, the Council’s short term solution was to clearly

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define the hours for off-leash activities. From April 1 to September 30, dogs are permitted without leash from park opening to 9:00 a.m. and from 6 p.m. to park closing, and from October 1 to March 31 at the same hours in the morning and in the afternoon from 4:00 p.m. to park closing.

“In most communities there are fenced dog parks,” said Council Member Mike Metcalf, and that’s where we are heading.” Metcalf believes that the funds the town will receive from Measure WW -- for parks and recreation facilities -- could be used for a dog park.

Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram urged the Council to pursue a long-term plan for the park. The Parks and Recreation Commission will conduct community outreach activities to assess the needs of all potential park users and find a fenced solution for the dogs.

Microchip – Invisible, Yet Effective Identification

By Mona Miller, DVM

The most recent publication of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association contains an article, one of the first of its kind, that describes the effectiveness of microchips in returning lost animals to their guardians. A microchip is a rice-sized identification device that is implanted (injected) into the connective tissue under the skin, usually between the shoulder blades of a dog, cat or rabbit (in a bird it is injected into the pectoral musculature). It contains a bar-coded number that is read with a scanner, based on radio frequency technology. At the time of implantation (done by a veterinarian, shelter, animal rescue

organization or breeder), the owner must register his/her personal information (name, address, contact phone numbers) with the microchip company. The idea is that if the pet were lost and scanned by a shelter, vet or rescue group, the owner can be traced via the phone numbers provided.

Injection can be performed without anesthesia (although I prefer to do this at the time of spay or neuter when possible, since the needle is big). The biggest “complication” I have seen, in over 20 years of veterinary experience, is that the microchip can migrate. This is important because the scanner should be held not only over the shoulders and back, but also on the sides and bottom of the chest when looking for a microchip. Experienced scanners are aware of this, and scan the animal in multiple spots.

In the study mentioned above, 53 shelters in 23 states participated during an 8-month time period, providing a total of 7,704 microchipped animals (this number includes 3,225 owner-relinquished animals, 4,083 strays and 396 “others”). The results of this study show that owners could be found for 74.1% of microchipped dogs and 63.5% of microchipped cats. The ability to find owners was higher for purebreds vs. mixed breeds, and for animals who were spayed/neutered vs. intact. Interestingly, animal shelters had a higher chance of finding an owner when the owner information was in the shelter’s own database, and a significantly lower chance of finding an owner when it was left up to the

owner to register with the microchip company. This underscores the importance of the crucial step of owner responsibility to register and keep current information with the microchip registry. In this study, the main reasons an owner of a microchipped animal could not be found were incorrect/disconnected telephone number, no response to telephone calls/letter sent by the shelter, or that the animal was registered to another group (such as shelter/veterinarian/rescue group who performed the implantation). In Canada and most countries in Europe, the services of microchipping and registering are bundled together. However in the United States these are treated as separate processes.

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Dr. Mona S. Miller lives in Lafayette with her 4 year old son, yellow Labrador Retriever and grey cat. She has worked at Four Seasons Animal Hospital in Lafayette since moving here in 2001. She attended Cal as an undergrad, and received her DVM from U.C. Davis. She can be reached at Four Seasons, 938-7700, or by email to MonaSDVM@aol.com.