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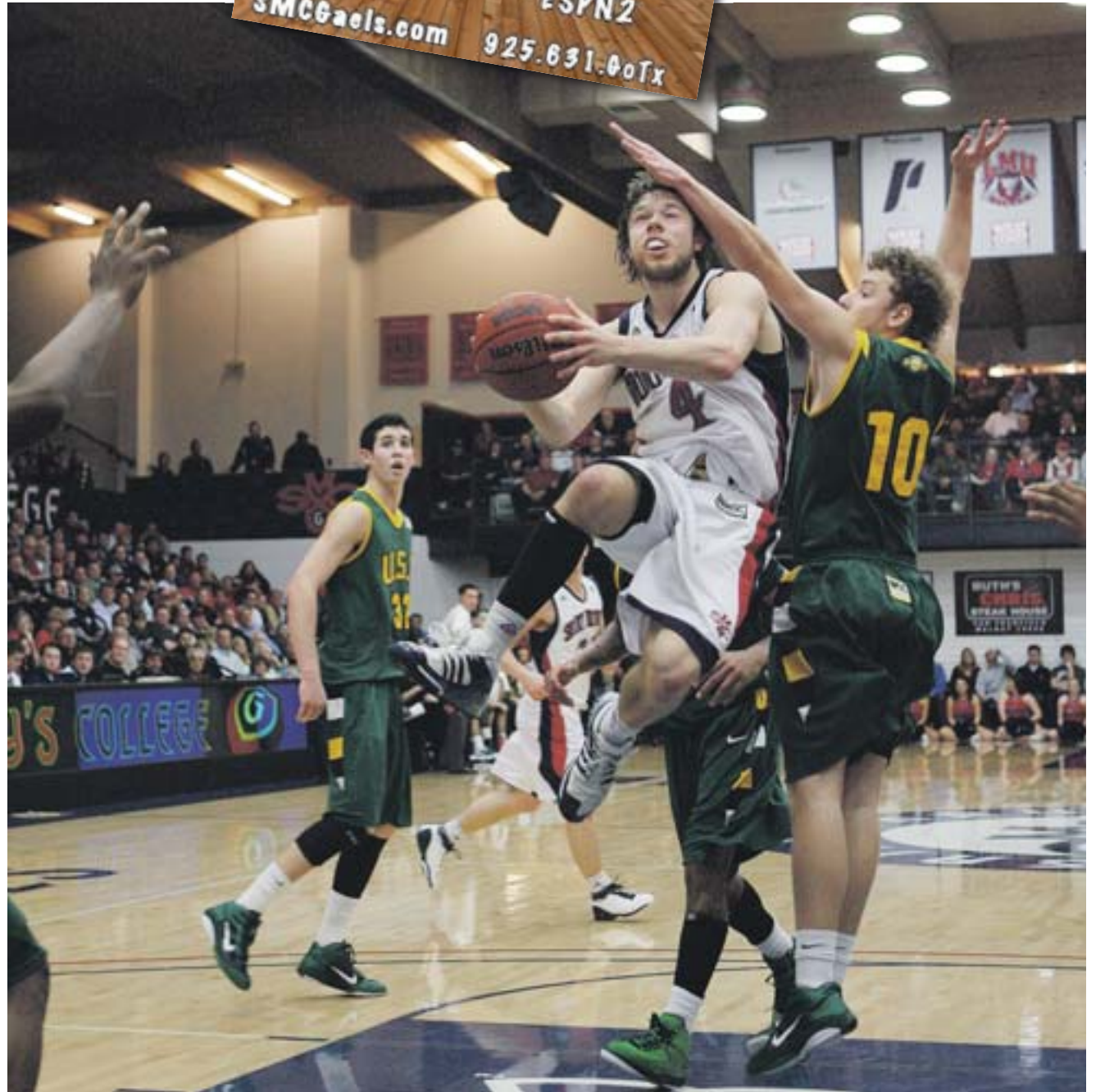
Volume 04 Issue 23

read it online: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com)

Wednesday, January 19, 2011



Rob Jones (22) had 15 points and nine rebounds over Santa Clara.



Matthew Dellavedova (4) drives to the hoop over USF's Marko Petrovic. Dellavedova had 13 points in the win. Photos Tod Fierner

## Saint Mary's Wins Two at Home Gaels Break Top 25

By Bryant West

**Quote of the Week:**

*"You, Mr. and Ms. Commission Member, are the multiplier effect that you thought was just something you read or heard about in a Ben Bernanke speech."*

Read Letters to the Editor, page A8

The Saint Mary's men's basketball team stormed into West Coast Conference play and broke into the Top 25. The Gaels played four regular season games the last two weeks and in those four games only trailed four times. The team was recognized for their excellent play and ranked #22 in the AP poll and #21 in ESPN/USA Today Coaches poll.

Saint Mary's expanded their win streak to ten games, the third longest winning streak in school history. The Gaels have opened 4-0 to improve to 16-2. The team returned home after two road games last week to take on USF and Santa Clara. The Gaels bested USF on Thursday in a hard-fought 71-57 victory, followed

by an 84-59 smashing of Santa Clara on Saturday.

Even after Saturday's rout, head coach Randy Bennett maintained the team could play better. "We can, we can play better," he said. "We still have to get better defensively. We're getting there."

It wasn't all fun and games for Saint Mary's, with an injury scare at halftime during the Santa Clara game. Sophomore guard Matthew Dellavedova was injured late in the first half and needed help getting to the locker room but did return in the second half. Saint Mary's is already playing without sophomore guard Jordan Page, who is out the remainder of the season with a knee injury. ... continued on page S2

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## Slides on Slopes

By Sophie Braccini

With the rainy season seriously upon us and dramatic news coming from countries where rain is causing severe problems, we asked the three Lamorinda Public Works Departments to talk about the effect of rain on our own hills. All three are on guard and will intervene any time a road is impacted. On private properties, it is the sole responsibility of the homeowners to organize slide prevention and cleanup.

"Since Moraga is built in the hills, we have a number of areas that are affected by slides," says Jill Mercurio, Moraga Public Work Director and Town Engineer. "During the huge storms we had five years ago, many of our hillsides slipped. The ones that tend to cause us the most ongoing maintenance are Bollinger Canyon Road, Camino Pablo, and Rheem Boulevard." Mercurio reports that so far this year Bollinger Canyon has had four slides that have each resulted in 50-100 cubic yards of rock at the base of the cliff and/or into the road. On site, the crews have installed the "sacrificial fence," an inexpensive intermediary solution that is there to retain the rocks, but will ultimately fail and need replacement.

Orinda's Director of Public Works and Engineering Services, Charles Swanson, reports that there have been no serious slides in Orinda in the last two years. "There are many areas throughout the city with homes and roads that have been constructed on very steep slopes that we pay a little more attention to when it rains," acknowledges Swanson. Past slide sites include Zander Drive, Canon Drive and La Espiral.

According to Lafayette Public Works Services Manager Ron Lefler, there haven't been slides in Lafayette since the storms of December, 1995 and January, 1996. "There were two significant slides within City rights-of-way during those storms; neither slide damaged private or public property," he says. "Pleasant Hill Road was temporarily blocked in the south bound direction for a short period of time. After the initial cleanup, temporary measures were taken to control and prevent additional sliding. The slide areas were monitored during the remainder of the rainy season. The slide areas were repaired the following summer."

... continued on page L2

## Wednesday delivery for Lamorinda Weekly!

In an effort to get the paper to you in a timely manner, we are converting our delivery method from the U.S. mail to a local home delivery service that will place the paper on your driveway every other Wednesday.

If you live in Lafayette, this issue should have been delivered to you on Wednesday, January 19.

Home delivery to Orinda and Moraga will begin in February. Please call (925) 377-0977 or email [homedelivery@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:homedelivery@lamorindaweekly.com) if you have any questions.

## California Independent Film Festival—What's in it for You?



By Andrea A. Firth

If you have never gone to an independent film festival, here's your chance. The 13th Annual California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF) will be held at the New Rheem Theatre in Moraga from January 28th through February 3rd. ... read on page L1

## Orinda Hosts Contra Costa Mayors Conference



By Lucy Amaral

The City of Orinda hosted mayors, council members and representatives from the Board of Supervisors from Contra Costa County as they gathered January 6 for their monthly Mayors Conference. The group meets regularly to discuss city issues and, this time, to make a number of committee appointments.

... read on page L5

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# Civic News



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# Lafayette

## Public Meetings

**City Council** Monday, January 24, 7:00 pm  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

**Planning Commission** Monday, January 31, 7:00 pm  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

**Design Review** Monday, January 24, 7:00 pm  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center in the Arts & Science Discovery Center at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements  
City of Lafayette: [www.ci.lafayette.ca.us](http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us)  
Chamber of Commerce: [www.lafayettechamber.org](http://www.lafayettechamber.org)

## Police Report



"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night..." 01/01/11 But blowing up the mailbox can keep postal couriers from their appointed rounds. One poor Lafayette resident filed a vandalism complaint after his mailbox was vandalized for the fourth time in 6 months. Apparently unsatisfied with simply knocking down the box, the perp(s) keep raising the stakes in this frightening game of "return to sender."

Money, money, money, 01/06/11 That's all one customer wanted from Lafayette's West America Bank. Unfortunately, the accused (who was found to be in possession of a

bad check, fake government ID, and a forged driver's license) was charged with forgery and fraud. "Loan" application denied!

I can't see clearly now, 01/02/11 Drunk and arguing, a man broke a car windshield. The police awarded him with a trip to jail. The damaged auto's owner declined to press charges or to cooperate in the investigation. Driving that car until it's repaired should be a breeze.

The Artful Dodger, 01/07/11 Someone broke the rear passenger window of a 10-year-old Lexus parked on Fiora Place and stole an art bag and supplies valued at over \$700 dollars. Repair estimates put the damages at \$250. That's a fair amount of Monet, and we hope police Cezanne the thief very soon.

## Stone Wall and U-Turn Get Green Light

By Cathy Tyson

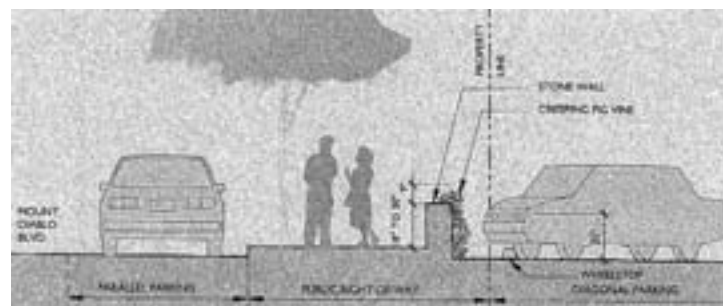


Illustration from City of Lafayette Staff Report

"It wasn't ten minutes after the cones went up that customers started complaining," said Connie Collier of Diablo Foods. "Our customers are very angry." She's referring to cones temporarily installed at the intersection of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Happy Valley Road. Their purpose was to test-drive the effect of loss of U-turn capability in order to accommodate a proposed "bulb-out" for pedestrians at the corner.

A bulb-out is an extension of the sidewalk designed to expand the space available for pedestrians and raise driver awareness of crosswalks. While it provides more room for pedestrians, apparently losing the ability to make a u-turn wasn't ultimately worth it.

The cones are part of a project to improve the sidewalk and streetscape along Mt. Diablo Blvd. from Oak Hill Road to Dolores Drive, funded mainly by a \$1.2 million grant. The finished appearance should look similar to the streetscape in front of the Lafayette Mercantile building. Two key contentious issues remained after general approval to proceed last month – the U-turn dilemma and design of the low stone wall that would front the Happy Valley Shopping Center.

The Council members agreed that they don't want to negatively impact any of the business in the immediate area – so the U-turn will stay.

After much discussion about the pros, cons, expense and maintenance costs of four wall design options, Option 1 was decided upon. This choice had a growing consensus of shop owners along with city

staff. It includes a low stone wall with a creeping fig vine on the shopping center side that allows the most room for parking. The current layout of the busy parking lot at the Happy Valley Shopping Center, home to Trader Joe's and Diablo Foods, encroaches onto city property, up to a foot and a half in places.

The balancing act Council members and the designer hope to achieve is to upgrade the sidewalk and improve access for pedestrians, while weighing the need for adequate space for parking, and still keep the apparently beloved U-turn. Designer Sudhish Mohindroo explained, "We are looking for the least amount of negative impact and still achieve a reasonable solution."

"The intent is to have a sufficient number and width of planting zones to accommodate a thriving landscape element to screen the stone wall on the parking lot side and to complement its appearance along the street side. The greenery also serves to soften the view of the wall on the parking lot side and further addresses the concern about limited parking," said Engineering Services Manager Tony Coe in a staff report.

Property owner Bill Eames expressed his reservations at a recent City Council meeting, "How can we make this pedestrian-friendly and still respect businesses?" Noting the number of accidents that regularly occur in the lot, Collier urged the Council to maximize available parking area, stating, "Our parking lot is a nightmare as it is."

**Addendum, issue date 01/05/11, New Name Wanted for Senior Services:** The Grand Prize for the Lafayette Senior Services' Give Us a Name contest is an overnight stay at the Lafayette Park Hotel and dinner for two at Yankee Pier restaurant. Submissions welcome until February 22 by phone (925) 284-5050, e-mail at [Seniors@lovelafayette.org](mailto:Seniors@lovelafayette.org) or by mail at Lafayette Senior Services, 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette, CA 94549.

## Please submit

### Letters and Opinions:

[letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com)

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## Neighborhood Works Together to Curb Speeders

By Cathy Tyson

It all started because residents were sick and tired of drivers taking a short cut through their newly-paved residential neighborhood to shave a couple of minutes off their commutes. The hilly, narrow Reliez Station Road has blind turns punctuated by driveways, leaving "a very little strip of roadway to walk safely on," said Christy Joe who spearheaded the traffic calming project, adding that there have been a number of close calls over the years. Neighbors speculated that students heading to Acalanes, along with moms dropping off and picking up kids, were the main culprits.

After many meetings and phone calls, her concern has borne fruit – or rather three sets of speed humps, striping and fourteen signs telling drivers to slow down. Over \$5,000 was raised in necessary matching funds to get the Reliez Station Traffic Calming Project off the ground. One generous fellow even offered to kick in extra if the minimum matching amount wasn't met.

The process started in 2006 with a petition; then in 2008 Joe walked the neighborhood with another petition. Ultimately, of the 91 homes in the area, 69% were in favor of traffic calming, and 51 homeowners donated \$100 each to make it happen.

Many neighborhoods may wish for speed humps, but not many actually garner the necessary support and cash to make it happen. "Christy Joe was the main one who stayed with it all along," said Neighborhood Action Team colleague and neighbor Roy Powell.

A coalition came together on proposing a sidewalk when the

street was repaved, but they later learned it would be prohibitively expensive. However they did have a general consensus on speeders careening down their slender street.

"We just wanted something that would work. Because the neighborhood was so big, a contribution of roughly \$100 per household was enough to make the \$4,800 requirement," commented Powell. Actually \$5,100 was collected on the first attempt from supportive residents. This represents a 70/30 cost sharing of the estimated \$16,000 total project expense.

Back in September of 2002 the City Council adopted a traffic calming program that builds upon Lafayette's long tradition of citizen volunteerism and community participation. Available online is the free Traffic Calming Guidebook, which spells out exact steps to take for Level 1, 2 or 3 projects. In order to acquire Level 3 traffic calming, like the Reliez Station neighborhood is getting, two-thirds approval from all property owners immediately abutting the physical feature is required. The next step is Circulation Commission and City Council approval. The guide can be found on the city website, go to [www.lovelafayette.org](http://www.lovelafayette.org) and type in Traffic Calming in the Search box.

"The City was very helpful," said Powell, adding, "Everyone (in the neighborhood) benefits – but some will benefit more."

"Yes, it was worth it," said Joe, who would recommend it to other neighborhoods although she cautions that the City only takes on one of these projects a year. This spring Reliez Station residents will finally get the stripes, humps and signs they collectively want.

## The X5 is in!

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## Green Cow Program Launched

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Doug Kohen

What is white and green and wears roller skates? Leola Moola, of course – the fiberglass cow that represents the first Green Cow Certified business in Lafayette. She was the center of attention at the recent launch party celebrating environmentally friendly Urban Suburban, though clearly her fame hadn't gone to her large head. Look for her to make appearances at other Green Cow Certified businesses as the program gains momentum.

She spends most of her time at Urban Suburban, a car repair company on Mt. Diablo Boulevard, and doesn't seem to mind her role as the poster girl of the program that identifies green businesses that give back to the community. Residents may have seen her, along with her wrangler Rene Aguirre, decked out in a pink tutu at the Reservoir Run or the Farmers' Market. Plans are in the works to post her out front of

the "charity of the month" and at local hotspots.

"Green Cow Certified is a rating system designed to inform the local community you care about the community you are in," said Krysten Laine. Qualifications include giving back through donations, participating in community events or fundraising, adopting green practices at work, and being located in Lafayette. Both Laine and husband Aguirre, President and Owner of Urban Suburban, believe in supporting the local economy and taking steps to live a less environmentally impactful lifestyle.

The Chamber of Commerce Green Committee, in partnership with Sustainable Lafayette, seeks to make residents aware of environmentally friendly businesses, products and services in Lafayette with their Green Shopping Guide. The Urban Suburban team wanted to take it one step further – adopting

green practices and giving back to the community.

Residents may have also seen a distant cousin of Leola, a large SUV with a similar two-tone paint job, green wheels and horns on the hood used to pick up and drop off customers. When asked how the heifer got her unique name, Aguirre replied, "She was named after my Grandma Leola, who grew up on a farm – pioneer stock. She would just laugh (at her namesake); she had a great sense of humor."



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## Downtown Bus Route Changes

By Cathy Tyson

Originally intended to connect riders coming or going from the Lafayette or Walnut Creek BART stations, County Connection bus route 25 changed its path recently to attract more riders.

This route has not been a huge success from the beginning, with the lowest number of riders in the entire County Connection system. Average weekday ridership was only 40 passengers – the equivalent of 3.6 passengers per hour – there was clearly room for improvement.

With a BART station on both


ends, Route 25 still travels up and down the Mt. Diablo corridor but it's been slightly changed to avoid the freeway. The new route follows Mt. Diablo to Pleasant Hill Road to Olympic – and now makes stops at Saranap and Rossmoor transfer stations, ending at Walnut Creek BART.

With fares of \$2.00 for adults and only \$1.00 for seniors, the newly adjusted route could be just the ticket for non-drivers. The first bus of the day leaves Lafayette BART at 7:30 in the morning and runs until 6:30 p.m.


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Mathew Brady & Co, Grant at his headquarters, Cold Harbor, Virginia, June 1864; Library of Congress

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# Civic News Moraga



Public Meetings	
<b>Town Council</b>	Wednesday, January 26, 7:30 pm Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, 1010 Camino Pablo
<b>Planning Commission</b>	Tuesday, February 7, 7:30 pm Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd
<b>Design Review</b>	Monday, January 24, 7:00 pm Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd
<b>Liaison</b>	Friday, February 11, 8:00 am Fire Station, 1280 Moraga Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements  
 Town of Moraga online: [www.moraga.ca.us](http://www.moraga.ca.us)  
 Chamber of Commerce: [www.moragachamber.org](http://www.moragachamber.org)  
 Moraga Citizens' Network: [www.moragacitizensnetwork.org](http://www.moragacitizensnetwork.org)

### • Police Report •



**Speeding with pot, 1/07/11** An 18-year-old male driver was pulled over for speeding on Saint Mary's Road near Carter Drive. When the window of the Cadillac Seville was opened the officers on duty could smell burnt marijuana, they surmised it was not some kind of wacky cologne. Just shy of 12 grams – less than one ounce of pot was found. The driver was cited for both the speeding and possession. The marijuana was booked into evidence – goodbye pot, hello tickets.

**Residential burglary, 1/08/11** A Woodford drive resident reported a burglary, apparently an unknown person had entered his garage via an unlocked side door. A coin pouch from not one, but both Mercedes Benz' were taken from the vehicles. A suspicious unoccupied parked car was seen nearby with stolen property on the seat – including the pilfered pouches.

**Buckingham Drive burglary, 1/08/11** A homeowner stated someone entered his residence during the night and stole undisclosed items. The suspect(s) may have come in through an unlocked garage door. Estimated loss \$1,050.

**Attempted burglary thwarted by pooch, 1/08/11** A Camelford Court resident reported that she found the garage door to the house open at approximately 4:45 in the morning. She checked the house and garage – but nothing appeared to be taken or disturbed. Homeowner suspects that her two large dogs helped deter the would-be burglar(s).

## The Bad Guys have Found Moraga

By Sophie Braccini

Nothing frustrates Moraga Police Chief Bob Priebe more than a crime that could have been prevented. Unfortunately, in the past month his department has investigated a record number of such crimes.

"We had six residential burglaries in the past month, five of which were preventable; at the same time last year we had had only one," says Priebe. A suspect entered garages through unlocked

back doors and burglarized the cars in these garages, and in one instance, entered a home through an interior garage door that was not locked.

"If you have a lock, use it; if you have an alarm, activate it; and you may want to upgrade your outside lighting system," said the Chief, "the bad guys know where we are now; we need to take minimum precautions."



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## Honoring the Campolindo Ladies

By Sophie Braccini



Campolindo's varsity volleyball team, with coaches and council members Photos provided by Liz Faoro



Campolindo's varsity cross country team and friends



Campolindo's varsity water polo team (et al)

From the grid iron to green to summer swim team, taking pride in our young athletes is a staple of the Lamorinda community, its parents, its educators and its administrators.

At the last Moraga Town Council meeting, the auditorium at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School was brimming with boisterous joy as several Campolindo women's teams prepared to be honored by the Council.

2010 was a very successful year for the Lady Cougars. The varsity volleyball and cross-country teams won the California Interscholastic Federation Division III State Championships; the water polo team, considered one of the best women's teams in Campolindo High School history, took top honors by winning the Division II Championship.

Playing varsity volleyball at Campolindo means to have trained on private teams for years. Cross Country has the most participants; it is co-ed and open to all. Water polo is a smaller group that's rising in popularity.

Mayor Karen Mendonca was clearly delighted to read the proclamations honoring the teams, handing each player her own copy. The Mayor, her fellow Council Members, and the Campolindo coaches and administrators seemed to enjoy posing for pictures with the girls.

The evening ended with a special proclamation for cross-country athlete Carrie Verdon. The Campolindo junior won the 2010 North Coast Section Division III Championship, setting the Campolindo High School and NCS Division III course record; the 2010 California Interscholastic Federation Division III Championship race, finishing the five-kilometer Woodward Park course in 17:15 (the tenth fastest time in California history); took 5th place at the Western Regional Championships, and 19th place at the National Championships. Verdon was selected to the Foot Locker "All-Western United States" and "All-United States" cross country teams.

Standing on the Council platform, the unassuming young woman chuckled when Mendonca proclaimed January 12, 2011 to be "Carrie Verdon Day in Moraga."

## A Link that needs to go Viral

By Sophie Braccini

What do Moragans want from their retail? What are they getting from it now? What stores would they want to have here? What should be done to improve the town? Those are some of the questions that the town's Economic Development Group is asking online in a survey.

All residents who are interested in offering input about the future of Moraga may go to the Town website, [www.moraga.ca.us](http://www.moraga.ca.us), and

click on the survey link. This reporter took the survey; it takes 10-20 minutes depending on how long you want to ponder your answers. Read the questions carefully – some are about Moraga, others about Lamorinda. The link can be emailed to friends and relatives who live in town.

Moraga's retail problem will not be solved by the survey, or by the team behind this project – Mary Coe, Richard Larsen and Renée

Zeimer; our Economic Development volunteers do not make the law and cannot make a Trader Joe's magically appear. But the survey will give weight to their arguments when they contact commercial brokers, developers, property owners and Town staff.

Whether it's 2000 people saying that they want and will patronize a sports bar, or a toy store; or if half the town's residents say that they sometimes need a hotel to

house a visitor; or 30% of the population claims to patronize the organic stand at the Farmers Market, this information will give the team solid ground to sell Moraga.

As an added bonus, if you send your completed survey by Friday, January 21, 2011 and provide your email address, you will be eligible to win two tickets to the California Independent Film Festival to be held January 28th-February 3rd at the New Rheem Theatre.

## New Housing Proposed for Rheem

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Planning Commission is taking a look at a proposal by Mike and Jim Knuppe to build a residential subdivision along Moraga Road, across from the Rheem Shopping Center and near their business, 5A Rent-A-Space. The two-acre property, on which some may fondly remember a bowling alley once stood, is located in an area defined in Moraga Municipal Code as a limited commercial district. The owners would need a conditional use per-

mit in order to build a residence. The Commission held its first study session on January 18.

The project, presented by architect Galen Grant, would include 36-40 apartments and townhouses. The owners envision that the new development would provide housing for the local workforce and Saint Mary's students/staff.

In its staff report, the Planning Department highlights that if the housing units were generally

available to all residents, it might not meet the conditions that have been placed on development in this district. One serious consideration would be the traffic impact during peak hours. A project that was exclusively for the Saint Mary's community or a senior housing development would be more compatible with the district's purpose.

"The project would include a central area with a pool, a spa and a garden," said 5A Marketing

Director Jenny Boyd, "it would be surrounded by housing on all sides." According to the owners' application, different development options were studied over the past years for that space, including a full service hotel, a recreation facility, apartment buildings, and self storage. "After thorough review of the market and the projected financial feasibility of each idea, it appears that a housing development is the best use," they wrote.



# Library Lease and Service Agreement Not a Done Deal

By Sophie Braccini

David Kruegel was angry. The President of the Friends of the Moraga Library, who finds in unacceptable that decisions involving a public service be made without public input, came to the January 12 Town Council meeting to oppose the approval of a new contract that would redefine the relationship between the Town and the Contra Costa County Library system. Kruegel believes that the contract suffers from several shortcomings. The Council, despite

staff's favorable recommendation, opted to table the issue. The agreement, in a nutshell, would assign all of the costs associated with library facilities to the municipalities, while the County Library will provide 35 open hours of library services. The new contract would unify the legal relationship between the Library and the serviced communities. It was crafted by a joint body of library staff and city managers, including Lafayette City Manager Steven Falk.

"It's take it or leave it," said Jill Keimach, Moraga's Town Manager. She explained that the agreement would improve a situation where all the communities operate under different contracts and that it would make library costs more predictable for the town. "Right now we supplement the cost of the service (to offer more open hours to the public) and that cost has been rising sharply," she said, "we will be more in control if we are responsible only for the capital and maintenance

costs of the building." Her conviction could have won the Council's approval, but Kruegel's opinion carries a lot of weight in Moraga when it comes to the library system. The dedication of the Friends of the Moraga Library, their ongoing involvement, and the contributions they make to the programs run by the library, make them partners whose position cannot be overlooked. After Kruegel voiced his disagreement, it was clear that the

Council was not going to sign the contract that night. "The Town owns the building, pays for its maintenance, and the library uses it to provide its services," said Kruegel. "The county does not pay rent to the town, but instead provides services; the problem is that what these services consist of is not described clearly in the contract." Kruegel added that the expenses of the first year were not defined, and that no procedure was identified to resolve disputes. Moraga was the second com-

munity, out of 25, to discuss approval of the contract; the City of Martinez has already signed on. "Other cities may have different views. I don't see an upside to signing this tonight," said Council Member Dave Trotter. The Council asked representatives of the County Library, Real Estate Manager Dick Awenius and Gail McPartland, Deputy County Librarian, to get a consensus from the remaining communities and then come back to Moraga.

## Setting Goals

Or, So much to do, so little time

By Sophie Braccini

About 20 residents joined the 12 town officials who convened at 8 a.m. on a Saturday at the Hacienda de las Flores to start setting the goals for the Town of Moraga. Finance Director Emily Boyd confirmed that frugality is keeping the Town's operating budget balanced, but that deferred infrastructure maintenance requires that new sources of income be found. As residents and community groups began to elucidate their ideas, it became clear that four hours would not be enough to prioritize all of the items; the goal-setting meeting will

reconvene on February 9 at 7 p.m. The phrase of the day was Bill Gross's 'New Normal' (recently used by President Barack Obama in a 60 Minutes interview). "The new normal is Moraga," stated Town Manager Jill Keimach, "Moraga has a very stable financial situation, we have always been a minimal government, and we need to continue to appeal to the many volunteers that have kept us lean." Nonetheless, Keimach believes that meager resources should not stop the community from having high expectations. "That's what moti-

vates us," she stated in her opening remarks, "and we will succeed." After Town staff and Mayor Karen Mendoca listed their goals, residents added some new elements. A partial list includes: Claire Roth, speaking on behalf of the Hacienda Foundation, asked that the Town consider tearing down the Casita and rebuilding it as a community meeting room. Dick Olsen, an MOFD board member who spoke as a Moraga resident, asked that the Town work on establishing an emergency response plan. Former mayor Lynda Descham-

bault asked the Town to resume work on the ridgeline and hillside ordinance that was tabled when Measure K was proposed for the November 2008 ballot. Ellen Beans, of the Moraga Citizens Network, wondered why the implementation of the Moraga Specific Plan was not listed. Hollie Lucas-Alcalay asked that an interim plan or retail ordinance be defined for the Rheem Center. For a complete list of goals presented at the January 8th workshop, go to the Town website, www.moraga.ca.us.

## Catalonian Sheepdog from Moraga Wins Dog Show



Ranger with owner Dianne Wilson. Photo courtesy Wilson family

It's been a few months now that Ranger has been hanging out at Moraga Royale with his owner, Executive Director Dianne Wilson. She recently entered him in the International All Breed Canine Association (IABCA) show in Santa Rosa. Ranger, to his owner's surprise, took home six 1st place metals, one 2nd place and one 3rd place. He also won "Best in Show Puppy" and "Best in Show Rare Breed." Ranger is a Catalonian Sheepdog from the Catalonian region of Spain. "We were on a long wait list for about a year prior to his birth," says Wilson, "My son flew to Muskegon, Michigan and picked him up when he was 13 weeks old." The Wilsons say that they knew from day one that Ranger was special. He has been a member of their family for a little over five months. "I like watching Dog Shows," says Wilson, "however, Ranger and I had never participated in one prior to that weekend. Winning was a big surprise to me; I don't think Ranger was surprised." S.Braccini



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# Civic News

# Orinda

- Public Meetings**
- City Council** Tuesday, February 1, 7:00 pm  
Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way
- City Council Special Meeting** Thursday, January 29, 7:00 pm  
Sarge Littlehale Community Room, Orinda City Hall, 22 Orinda Way
- Planning Commission** Tuesday, January 25, 7:00 pm  
Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way
- Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC)** Monday, January 24, 7:00 pm  
Community Room, City Hall, 22 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements  
City of Orinda: [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org)  
Chamber of Commerce: [www.orindachamber.org](http://www.orindachamber.org)

**• Police Report •**



**speed, guy was arrested for probation violation. Go figure.**

**Drunk in Public, 1/5/11** A sixty-something year old from Moraga was barely able to walk on Camino Pablo – and was intermittently stumbling into the roadway. An officer stopped to offer assistance and could smell the overwhelming odor of alcohol. When breathalyzed – he had a massive .32 reading – that’s four times the legal limit. He was deemed too drunk to care for himself and was a danger to motorists. He was taken to the Martinez Detention Facility.

**Door attack, 1/10/11** A suspect broke a window out of the front door of a Vianne Court home, in what is presumed an attempt to gain entry into the house. Suspect was no match for the door – 1 inch pry marks and what looked like kick marks were apparent, and the alarm system that scared off the would-be burglar. Estimated damage to door, \$2,000.

**Speeding with guy on probation, 1/6/11** A 30-year-old woman was caught going 44 m.p.h. in a 30 m.p.h. zone, she also had a 28-year-old male passenger in the car with her. Turns out the fellow was on probation and had a restraining order against him – from the driver. Gal got ticketed for

**Forgery, 12/27/11** A suspect was stopped after leaving Peet’s on Moraga Way after passing a fake \$20 bill. The fellow must love his coffee – since he also passed a fake \$20 at the nearby Starbucks. He was arrested and had two more forged \$20 bills on him. No more latte’s for you.

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## Quiet Orinda Calls on Council to Address the Noise

**By Andrea A. Firth**

**“Y**es, I’m back,” said Peter Kendall, leader of the citizen activist group Quiet Orinda, as he addressed the Orinda City Council at its first meeting of 2011. Kendall called on the Council to provide another opportunity for the community to debate and discuss the banning of gas-powered leaf blowers in the city. More than 150 residents turned up last November when the potential for limiting the use of leaf blowers was before the Council. At the conclusion of that meeting, the Council voted unanimously against an outright ban.

Kendall stated that he felt what transpired when the issue was presented and discussed in November was a “travesty.” “We spent a year researching the issue and submitted a 21 page report... It deserves a proper hearing. That was not what happened in November, and it has to happen soon,” said Kendall. “We’re going to place it back in your hands. The status quo will not continue. I promise you that,” he added.

Barbara Strass, another Quiet Orinda member, seconded Kendall’s plea for the Council to

revisit the issue and to propose something that would be workable.

A third Quiet Orinda member, Maya McBride, used the words disappointment and shock to describe how she felt about the outcome of the November leaf blower discussion. “I was disappointed by the inaction and that the Council did not find some middle ground, or form a citizen’s committee, or find ways to listen to those that are bothered,” said McBride. “I was shocked by the lack of suggestions.” McBride then played several minutes of a tape

recording she made of the leaf-blower noise that she hears in her backyard on Saturday mornings. “I will come back again and again on this issue,” stated McBride emphatically as she concluded.

These comments were made during the general public forum segment of the City Council which is reserved for residents’ comments on issues not on the meeting agenda. Brown Act guidelines prohibit the Council from responding directly to or engaging in discussion of items not on the agenda and publicly noticed.

## Left on Southwaite No Longer

**By Andrea A. Firth**



Residents will no longer be able to make a left-turn or U-turn going southbound on Moraga Way at Southwaite Court. The turning restriction is confined to weekdays between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. during the school year. Left-turns and U-turns are also prohibited southbound during that timeframe on Moraga Way at Ivy Drive.

Expanding the left turn moratorium on commuters heading south on Moraga Way in the morning was recommended by the City’s Traffic Safety Advisory Committee to stop drivers from using Southwaite Court as a pivot point to turn and head north to make a right on Ivy Drive.

Southbound Moraga Way is congested with traffic on weekdays as parents and students make their way to Del Rey Elementary and Miramonte High Schools. Many high-school bound commuters use Ivy Drive to bypass the backlog near Del Rey as an alternate route to the entrance of Miramonte High School. With the southbound left-turn at Ivy Drive already prohibited, drivers have used Southwaite to turn the illegal left into a legal right.

Sun Yoon, a soft spoken, even tempered man who lives at the corner of Southwaite

Court and Moraga Way, has been driven to distraction by the many high-school bound drivers that use his driveway for a three-point turn on school mornings. He’s counted up to 150 cars entering the court between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and implored the Council to vote yes on no left. Marilyn Raia was also among the several Southwaite residents who requested the City Council approve the no-left turn signage. The previous day, Raia had been rear-ended in front of Mr. Yoon’s house by a teen driver who was late for school.

The City Council unanimously approved the new signage with a vote of 4-0; Council Member Steve Glazer was not present. The Orinda Police Department will be monitoring the intersection and issuing tickets starting January 24th. The effectiveness of the signage will be evaluated for a one-year period.

“It’s really timely to do a study of the overall traffic patterns on Moraga Way,” said City Manager Janet Keeter. Council Member Sue Severson requested that staff investigate the viability of a traffic light at Ivy Drive and revisit the idea of staggering the school start times with the Orinda Union School District and Miramonte High School.

Photo Ohlen Alexander

## Orinda International Film Showcase

**By Sophie Braccini**



January 28 will be the beginning of something unique in the Bay Area – the International Film Showcase at the Orinda Theater. Once a month and for an entire week, Efi Lubliner and Jo Alice Canterbury will bring to the theater a foreign movie that has appeared in film festivals, has often won awards, that both Lubliner and Canterbury find exceptional, but that has not found a distribution network in this country. “Those are films that you cannot see anywhere else and that are not available on DVD or Netflix,” explains Lubliner, “and every month, Lamorinda residents will have about 20 showings scheduled at the theater to enjoy these gems.” The first movie is Max Manus, which won Norway’s 2009 best film Award and was an Oscar submission.

When he is not managing his computer company, EDC System, on Golden Gate Way in Lafayette, Lubliner can usually be found in theaters or at festivals. The Israeli-born business man originally came to the U.S. to make movies. Though that dream did not materialize, he continues to have a passion and high expectations for the sev-

enth art.

Lubliner’s partner in crime, Jo Alice Canterbury, is no less knowledgeable about movies. A former flight attendant who traveled the world, she was the Program Director of the Orinda Film Festival between 2002 and 2005. She was also captivated by Max Manus, a movie that recounts the true story of Norway’s Nazi-fighting war hero. “Efi (Lubliner) and I have very intense discussions about movie choices,” she says, “but we had a consensus when we saw Max Manus.” They are both volunteers and manage the project as a non-profit, “it’s all a work of love,” says Lubliner.

Each month, one of the three screens of the Orinda Theater will be made available to the Showcase by the theater’s managers, Jim Sheehan and Tom Peterson. “They are the ones who decide which will be our week,” says Lubliner, “and we want to thank them for their support of our project.”

For more information and tickets go to the web site [www.lfep.org](http://www.lfep.org) or to the International Film Showcase page on Facebook.

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## Sleepy Hollow/MOFD Host Firewise Workshop

By Lucy Amaral



From left: MOFD Fire Chief Randy Bradley; Firewise Communities Manager Michele Steinberg; California State Fire Marshal (and former MOFD Fire Marshal) Tonya Hoover; and MOFD Board President John Wyro.  
 Photo Lucy Amaral

“We are going to have fires. It’s not if, but when, therefore we must prepare,” said Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Chief Randy Bradley during his introductory remarks at a Firewise Community Workshop held for the Sleepy Hollow Homeowners Association on January 12.

Bradley said that although it has been 20 years since the Oakland Hills Fire, the threat of that type of conflagration is always there, especially in the Lamorinda area. “Orinda has the same type of construction, fuel models and weather conditions (as Oakland),” he said. On the plus side, however, he also said that Orinda homes are spread farther apart, and the community does have an aggressive fire district. With neighborhood action to create protective areas around their property, he said the chance of homes being destroyed by fire lessens.

More than 60 homeowners attended the workshop to learn what they could do to begin the process of becoming a Firewise Community. Firewise, a program managed by the National Fire Protection Association, focuses on encouraging communities to adopt a long-term, proactive approach to protect their homes before a fire starts. Firewise offers workshops and information to help neighborhoods like Sleepy Hollow develop and implement their own fire mitigation program.

Michele Steinberg, the Firewise Communities Manager, Wildland Fire Operations Division, presented information about the nature of fire, what fires have taught them and what individual homeowners should do to protect themselves.

She emphasized that no fire suppression system can be relied upon to completely stop losses from large-scale fires. However, homeowners are the best, first line of defense and can start protecting their homes well before a fire occurs. She said a number of actions could help reduce losses, such as proper roofing materials, creating a fuel free area around one’s home, removing dead trees and brush, and using fire resistant plants and building materials.

A goal of this workshop was to form a Firewise Committee from members of the Association to spearhead the process of developing their own fire safety plan. Bradley said that while the committee completed its efforts, MOFD would be working on an official evacuation and warning system for Sleepy Hollow and hoped to have that ready in the next six to eight months.

Wayne Hill, co-president of the Sleepy Hollow Homeowners Association, said the event was organized to help get information out about fire safety.

“Our goal was community awareness of how important it is for us to be the first line of defense — especially Sleepy

Hollow, because first responders might not be able to get to us (right away),” said Hill. The Firewise program is a great way to get the rest of the community aware of how we can be the first line of defense in stopping a firestorm.”

Hill said a committee was formed that night and the next step will be for the group to be trained by Chief Bradley on how to assess homes for fire safety. “We want to be able to offer neighbors advice on how they can make the perimeter of the house fuel free and less of a fire threat,” he said. Hill added that he hopes by meeting with the neighbors one on one, they, too, will want to join the committee and carry on the Firewise work.

Bradley said the Sleepy Hollow community is the testing ground for the Firewise program. If results are as successful as he believes they will be, he would like to take this program to the other neighborhoods in the District.

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## Solid Waste Rates Likely to Rise

By Andrea A. Firth

The Contra Costa County Solid Waste Authority plans to increase Orinda’s average customer rate by 9.3% due in large part to the fact that residents are producing less solid waste. The Authority’s Executive Director, Paul Morsen, told Orinda’s City Council that residents have heard the recycle message and responded to the financial incentive to move to the smaller blue can contributing to a decrease in revenue for the Authority. Both homes and businesses have been reducing waste and downsizing their bins. A decline in home construction and remodeling over the past 18 months has also contributed to a decrease in commercial service revenue.

Orinda pays among the highest rates of the jurisdictions in the County serviced by the Solid Waste Authority, only El Cerrito and Kensington pay more (see table). It seems that


the hills that are so dear to Orinda’s residents are a large part of the reason the waste rates are on the high side. Morsen explained that with Orinda’s hilly topography, the trucks pull fewer cans per route. In addition Orinda has more hard to serve areas that require a special, small truck. There are five of these small trucks needed to service Orinda versus just two needed for the rest of the District.

Residential 32-Gallon Rate Comparison	
Jurisdiction Monthly Cost (\$)	
Orinda	30.75
Martinez	27.45
Lafayette	24.98
Moraga	23.60
Concord	23.00
Danville	19.81
Walnut Creek	17.80

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email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: **Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570**

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**Editor:**  
The roads around my area have deteriorated so bad over the last few years that I can barely drive to the store without scraping the bottom of my car due to potholes, poor patch jobs and uneven surfaces. I'm not talking about speeding around like a race car driver and exceeding the limits of the road, I'm talking about having to drive way under the speed limit and snaking around like I'm in a minefield in several areas to avoid leaving my exhaust behind. Bad roads cause alignment issues, tire damage and unnecessary strain on engines and transmission. Between our two cars, I'll probably spend \$500 this year in tire alignments to correct the damage done by our roads. What can we do to convince the city that this issue needs to be addressed?

Sincerely,  
Mark Pitchford  
Orinda

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**Editor:**  
The members of FAIR are in complete agreement with Orinda Mayor Victoria Smith's comment regarding our emergency services when she said, "the reasons that Orinda joined Moraga several years ago to form MOFD are still valid." Those reasons were that we wanted better service and, as then-Mayor Sarge Littlehale stated, "We must never again let the Supervisors spend \$2.8 million of Orinda's money elsewhere in the County, ignoring Orinda's needs." Unfortunately, best intentions have not quite worked out as planned. Right off the bat, Orinda taxpayers were subsidizing Moraga emergency services by \$700,000. Since then it has gotten worse. Orinda taxpayers are still subsidizing Moraga with \$1,100,000 annually; \$170 per household (about the same amount that Measures Q and E were going to cost to fix our roads). In 14 years since MOFD was formed, Orinda taxpayers have subsidized Moraga's emergency services by \$12 million (net of money used to bring Orinda's equipment up to standards) and in the next 10 years it is projected that the subsidy to Moraga will continue to increase. By 2022 it will be close to \$3 million annually and an additional \$20 million will have been spent "elsewhere in the County, ignoring Orinda's needs." Is this what Orinda voters agreed to in 1997? When is the subsidy so much that we need to take action? We certainly have better service than we did in 1996 with a paramedic on every truck and our own dedicated ambulance however there are still service deficiencies. In Sleepy Hollow and Orinda Downs, where 10% of our residents live, emergency response times, the crux of good service, are over 50% in excess of acceptable standards. 30% of the fire hydrants in Orinda are still sub-standard just as they were when MOFD was formed. MOFD has nothing in its long-range financial plan or strategic plan to address these issues. In conclusion, while MOFD provides good service to Orinda, much better than we had before MOFD was formed, the taxpayers are paying more for the service and it is still substandard. MOFD has proven that it has no intention of acting on this as FAIR has been rebuffed for two years and both MOFD and Moraga have told Orinda Council Members, in a public meeting, that Orinda taxpayers' subsidy to Moraga "is Orinda's problem." FAIR calls on the City Council to form its own Citizens Safety Advisory Task Force to investigate these issues and report back to the City Council on its findings.

Diana Stephens  
Orinda

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**Editor:**  
Municipalities across the country are facing severe budgetary crises. Few are worse than those right here in California. House prices continue to fall around the country and will likely continue their slide lower -- yes, even here in beautiful Lafayette where at times homes can be in limited supply in part because of wise zoning requirements put in place many years ago to ensure that so many of our homes enjoy vistas of pristine ridgelines or forested creeks. Nonetheless, economists will tell you that deflationary spirals like that we are facing in housing are extremely hard to get out of. . . yes, even here in Lafayette. And as goes the local housing market, so goes the local fiscal balance. So when I read of the Lafayette Planning Commission's rejection of the Polichio's proposed addition of a second story on my neighboring Lucas Drive (Dec 22, 2010 issue) I thought it showed a lack of consideration of the big picture of which we are a part here in our little Burton Valley. Dr. Joel Libove of Orinda pointed out (Jan 5, 2011 issue) how their decision hurts home values and that protesting neighbors may actually be hurting their own property values by preventing tasteful home improvements in the neighborhood. I'd add that eventually -- even in the face of CA's horrendous Prop 13 -- higher nominal property values would help our state and local fiscal situation. But the issue is deeper than that. It's about what economists call the "multiplier effect" of spending on projects like the Polichio's renovation. It's the boom for the guy that gets picked up to work part-time on that job instead of filing an unemployment claim, a boost for our beloved Ace Hardware on Mt. Diablo when the workers run over there to pick up a few extra supplies that ran short on the job-site. And it's a boost for everyone from the owners of the gas station to the 7-eleven in town. That is economics in a capitalist system. And that is why overly strenuous zoning and planning requirements make little sense at a time when our national, state and local economies have virtually no "multiplier" in them. Recognizing that I have limited knowledge of municipal planning and the host of issues that the Commission faces in its difficult decisions to keep our community and the semi-rural Lafayette environment safe, natural, and generally a wonderful place to live, I only wish to suggest that we might reconsider the economic realities of the day. You, Mr. and Ms. Commission Member, are the multiplier effect that you thought was just something you read or heard about in a Ben Bernanke speech. And now is the time for you to bend a little more than you might have five years ago for the good of the Lamorinda economy.

Regards,  
T.J. Connelly  
Lafayette

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**Editor:**  
Moraga's ridgelines are more at risk than ever. Opponents of the 2008 Ballot Initiative (Measure K, which would have protected ridgelines) argued that ridgelines were already sufficiently protected. Special interest groups heavily outspent local efforts—and Measure K failed. Although the General Plan clearly states its intent to "protect ridgelines from development", Moraga has not adopted clear policies to ensure our remaining

ridgelines are left intact. The town's attorney clearly explains that without Measure K, the discretion to protect our ridgelines remains in the hands of our elected officials. The Town Council has full legal authority to decide and interpret. We are fortunate to have our new Mayor Karen Mendonca and other councilmembers who ran on a clear platform to protect open space and ridgelines. Councilmember Dave Trotter has led a successful effort to relocate proposed houses off of the Rancho Laguna ridgeline. So far, Mendonca has agreed to relocate half of the proposed ridgeline homes to lower elevations where another 20 homes are already approved to be built. We are hopeful that these leaders will use their discretion and agree that "protect" means to relocate (or remove) the remaining six homes that are still proposed on the ridgeline. If constructed, the homes would require massive removal of as much as 24 feet of top soil—or the equivalent of lopping off dirt as deep as a two story home! Surely this is not how our councilmembers will use their discretion to interpret "protect ridgelines"? If the council were to decide to approve ANY ridgeline homes to be built, the town's ridgeline policies would be rendered utterly meaningless and ineffective. It would set a precedent that leaves all of Moraga's ridgelines vulnerable to development. Please let your elected officials know we are counting on them to represent us on this important issue. Let us take this opportunity to protect all remaining ridgelines for future generations to enjoy! Please note that this is not about stopping all development. The Rancho Laguna developer will still retain its rights to build the other 20 or so approved homes. And more than 1100 other homes have been recently approved and/or are underway to be built in Moraga. Attend the Jan 26th meeting (7:30 at JM auditorium) and/or write to your elected officials.

Lynda Deschambault  
Moraga

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**Editor:**  
Hello all. My name is Tony Knox. I am a Boy Scout from Troop 246 in Moraga and I recently completed my Eagle Project, the Veteran's Memorial located at the Moraga Commons. This Memorial will be part of Lamorinda for years to come and I am so glad that I had the opportunity to be able to give something valuable to the community. However, I did not complete this project alone. There were many others that helped me along the way. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped me with my project. The project was very challenging, but I was able to complete it with the support of the community and my fellow Scouts. For everyone who gave their time, guidance and financial contributions to help me with my project, I can't thank you enough. I especially want to thank the members of the Moraga Parks and Recreation Foundation and the Military Officers Association, who worked with me from start to finish. The Veteran's Memorial was made possible thanks to so many individuals and organizations and I appreciate the support so much. Thank you again.

Sincerely,  
Tony Knox

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# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Lady Cougars Take Lead in Rivalry Games

By Conrad Bassett



Alyssa Johanson (14) takes a jumpshot

Photo Jordan Fong



Laura Hickey (32) lays it in while Sophie Taylor (20) defends

Photo Doug Kohen



Kiara Harewood (1) shoots over Ruthie Shapiro (22) and Annie Ward (23)

Photo Doug Kohen

The 2010-2011 Diablo Foothill Athletic League girls' basketball season is in full swing.

### Miramonte at Acalanes

Miramonte opened the season by traveling to take on Acalanes. The Matadors jumped off to an early 15-4 lead before the Dons settled down and went on an 18-3 run behind shooting from senior Kiara Harewood and junior Sophie Taylor. The Dons held the lady Mats scoreless for four minutes in the second quarter.

Not to be undone, Miramonte fought back. Junior Taylor Kizziee and senior Alyssa Johanson led a run to take a 38-24 lead heading

into the locker room at the half.

The Lady Dons made an early run in the third quarter. Harrison hit two layups and Taylor a follow shot to close the gap 38-30 less than a minute into the period. That run was as close as Acalanes got to catching up. Junior Janine Loutzenhiser hit several of her five three-pointers to give Miramonte a 61-44 lead going into the final period. Miramonte won 84-57.

Johanson led all scorers with 21, while Loutzenhiser added 17 and freshman Breanna Alford scored 16. Taylor led the Dons with 14 points and 11 rebounds while Harewood scored 13 to go with her 11 rebounds.

### Acalanes at Campolindo

The Lady Dons hit the road the next Friday traveling to Campolindo to take on the Cougars. After losing their season opener to Dougherty Valley, Campolindo won its first league game 61-44 over the Dons. Harewood scored the first bucket of the game on a layup, but Campo controlled it from that point on, taking 17-9 lead to end the quarter.

The Lady Cougars added to the lead in the second. Senior Amanda Forshay, junior Annelise Ito, and sophomore Laura Hickey provided both a solid scoring punch and a pressing defense. Campolindo had a 33-20 lead at halftime.

Campo scored the first eight points of the third period and never looked back, advancing their lead to 17 after three periods. With little left in the game, Forshay stole a pass and made a layup to put an exclamation point on the 61-44 Cougar win.

Harrison had another solid game for the Dons with her second double-double in a row—this time finishing with 15 points and 11 rebounds while Taylor added 12 points and 12 rebounds. Campolindo had a balanced attack led by senior Annie Ward, with 13 points, and Hickey with 11. Freshman Ashley Ewing added 10 points and six rebounds.

### Campolindo at Miramonte

Last Friday night, Campolindo traveled to Orinda for their first match-up of the season and it came down to the final seconds of the game. Both teams came into the game with 2-1 records with their only losses to first place Dougherty Valley.

Kizziee opened scoring with a baseline three point jumper and the teams battled back and forth with the Lady Mats leading 13-11 after one.

Loutzenhiser started the second with another three for Miramonte and they opened up an 18-11 lead, which they maintained throughout the period leading 29-22 at the break.

Campo made some adjustments at halftime and came out roaring. Forshay hit four quick field goals and Campo had its first lead of the game—a lead they would never give up. Ito hit a rainbow three; Ward a steal and layup, and Hickey a follow-up shot. Campo outscored the Mats 20-6 in the third period.

In the final period, Ito rebounded a shot, scored and then drained another three to give Campo a 51-40 lead. Ito fouled out with four minutes to go.

Miramonte made a final push. They forced some Cougar turnovers to reduce the 11 point deficit to one point. Ward hit the front end of a one-and-one to end the Miramonte run and give Campo a 55-53 lead. Miramonte called a time out with 4.5 seconds left in the game. They ran a play but did not score and Campo prevailed by the 55-53 score.

Ito finished with 10 points and 10 rebounds while teammate Forshay led the team with 12 points. Johanson led all scorers with 16 and eight rebounds.

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# SPORTS LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS

## Saint Mary's Wins Two at Home

... continued from page A1



Mickey McConnell (32) had 19 points against USC Photo Tod Fierner

Senior guard Mickey McConnell has emerged as not only the team's leader but as a serious contender for WCC Player of the Year. He won back to back WCC Player of the Week awards, winning the January 3rd and January 10th awards and was named the National Player of the Week by TheHoopsRe-

port.com for the week of January 3rd.

Saint Mary's started the conference schedule with easy road wins over Loyola Marymount and Pepperdine, winning 98-75 on January 6th against the Lions and posting an 85-60 victory over the Waves on January 8th. McConnell led Saint Mary's

with 21 points and eight assists against the Lions, while junior forward Rob Jones had 20 and nine.

Against the Waves two nights later, McConnell had 11 points and 15 assists and sophomore forward Mitchell Young had 16 and nine boards. The Waves played without the conference's leading scorer Keion Bell, who had been averaging 20.9 points before going down with an injured ankle.

The first home match of conference play - against San Francisco - was a lot tougher game than expected out of a team picked to finish sixth in the conference. The Gaels led by just six at the half, but a strong second half effort fueled by a 7-0 run to start the half shattered the Don's resistance.

McConnell finished with 19 points and four assists, while Jones added 11 points and 10 boards. Dellavedova added 13 points and four assists of his own.

Back to back threes from Dellavedova, capped off with a way-past-the-arc bomb with 7:10 left, propelled the Gaels to their first double digit lead of the night at 30-18.

San Francisco edged back at 33-29 with 2:25 to go in the half, but Saint Mary's staved off the Don attack for the rest of the half and led 35-29 at intermission.

The Gaels exploded out to start the second half on a 7-0 run that took the fire out of the Dons. Dellavedova found junior forward Clint Steindl who slammed home a vicious dunk with 18:48 to play that put Saint Mary's up 42-29. It never got closer than 10 after that.

"I was hoping he was going to the basket, I thought he

was gonna settle for a three," Dellavedova chuckled afterwards.

The Broncos had been picked to finish fourth in the conference, but put up little challenge as the Gaels won 84-59.

Six Gaels scored in double figures, and McConnell led the way again, scoring 18 points and a game-high 13 assists. Jones added 15 and nine boards. Dellavedova had 10 points and six assists.

The two teams fought it out in the early minutes, but a three from McConnell with 16:20 left in the half gave the Gaels a 9-5 advantage. A minute later, McConnell fired another three - this one from about 28 feet - that gave the Gaels a 14-5 lead with 15:25 to go.

With 50 seconds to go in the half, Dellavedova crumpled to the floor after colliding in the paint on defense. But he started the second half and finished the game wearing a knee brace.

"He's a really tough kid, so I was concerned," Bennett said afterwards. "I was surprised he came sprinting back out there to start the second half... It reminded me of Willis Reed," he said with a laugh.

The Broncos couldn't muster a comeback in the second half as the Gaels continued their offensive barrage.

Saint Mary's will play one more home game - a matchup with San Diego on Wednesday at 7:30 - before embarking on a three game road trip. The Gaels will travel to Vanderbilt next Saturday to take on the Commodores, before heading north for games against Gonzaga and Portland.



Clint Steindl (11) hit four threes against SCU Photo Tod Fierner

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**Sat, Feb 5** MBB LOYOLA MARYMOUNT McKeon Pavilion 5:00PM  
**Wed, Feb 9** MTEN San Francisco Timothy Korth Tennis Complex 3:00PM  
**Thu, Feb 10** WBB Santa Clara McKeon Pavilion 7:00PM

**Schedule is subject to change. Confirm at www.SMCGaels.com**

## Local Cheerleader Performs in London

Submitted by Karen Martin-Chang



Madeline Martin (front center) with her Campolindo Cheer team Photo provided

Campolindo High School junior cheerleader Madeline

Martin traveled from Moraga to London to cheer in London's New

Year's Day Parade. Martin was one of 350 cheerleaders from the US who performed.

Martin and other individuals invited to perform in the parade qualified for the trip after being selected as an All American at one of the summer camps hosted by Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA). This is the 24th year that cheerleaders from UCA have gone to London.

Upon her return, Martin said, "I loved London, and the trip and parade were an incredible, unforgettable experience. As I marched in the parade I felt so proud and honored to be representing my country."

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# SPORTS LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS

## Lamorinda Boys' Basketball Splits Rivalry Games

By Conrad Bassett



James Griffin (22) rebounds the ball over Carl King (11)

Photo Doug Kohen



Miramonte's Anthony Pignagnelli (1) wins the opening tip-off

Photo Jordan Fong



Carl King (11) shoots over Acalanes defender Noah Orlik (11)

Photo Doug Kohen

The three Lamorinda boys' high school basketball teams returned a combined three starters from a year ago and the teams looked to be balanced. The early games of Diablo Foothill Athletic League play showed just that. Miramonte, Acalanes and Campolindo challenged each other the last two weeks and each team split the rivalry series with one win and one loss.

### Miramonte at Acalanes

After playing much of their pre-season schedule without several of their top players due to post-season football, the Matadors traveled with a full squad to Acalanes to open the league season on January 4.

The game proved to be a

close match. Senior Anthony Pignagnelli hit a basket early to get the Mats on the board first. Dons junior James Griffin came back at the other end to tie it early. Each team led in the period before junior Ross Anderson hit a follow-up shot to put Miramonte up, 17-14.

The second period was nearly a repeat of the first; they exchanged leads early on. The Dons trailed by four before a nine point run started with a Griffin three. Miramonte came back with a 7-0 run behind Pignagnelli and sophomore Kiran Shastri. Dons senior Michael Jackson recorded a traditional three point play with 11 seconds left to give Acalanes a 35-34 lead at intermission.

The third period was just as competitive. Griffin opened the

scoring with a three to give the Dons a four-point lead, but the Mats fought back. Senior Kazz Tamura led another 7-0 run to give Miramonte a 49-43 lead to end the period.

Miramonte looked like they were ready to pull away with a 10-point lead with less than seven minutes to go in the fourth quarter. The Dons stormed back to cut the lead to 57-55.

The Mats clung to a four point lead when Anderson hit two free throws with 1:46 to go. With 21 seconds left in the game, Griffin hit a three to cut the lead to 61-60. The Dons fouled Shastri after the inbounds pass and he calmly hit the front end of a one-for-one for a 62-60 Mat lead. He missed the second, but the Dons were unable to score and Miramonte headed back to Orinda with a two point win, 62-60.

Pignagnelli led all scorers with 20 points and seven steals. Anderson added 12 points and 12 rebounds. Shastri finished with 10 points. For the Dons, Griffin and senior Stephen Collins each had 16.

### Acalanes at Campolindo

Three days later the Dons headed to Campolindo to take on the Cougars.

Campo scored early and often as they jumped off to a 15-5 lead after the first period.

The Dons slowly came back in the second quarter. Griffin and Jackson each hit threes before sophomore Griffin Piatt hit a layup for Campo's first points with 4:26 to go in the second period.

Collins scored the next five Dons points and by halftime, the Dons had clawed all the way back. Collins hit a three near the end and the Dons led 24-20.

The third period saw another back and forth duel as Campo senior Carl King scored 11 of his 17 points. At the end of three it was knotted up at 36.

Griffin started out the last quarter stealing an errant Campo pass and making a layup. Piatt came right back with a three and Dons junior Kevin Huber answered with his own three. Again, the teams traded baskets to again tie at 47 all.

Senior Alan Hickey made a shot for Campo to give them a 49-47 lead and Collins answered with a three for a Dons to give them the lead. Collins added another three and two free throws with 26 seconds left to seal the deal; Acalanes recorded a 57-51 victory. Collins had a game-high 20 and Griffin chipped in 14.

### Campolindo at Miramonte

Campolindo traveled to Miramonte last Friday—looking to avenge their season ending loss to the Matadors in last year's NCS playoffs; and avenge they did, winning 50 to 38.

Campolindo held Miramonte from scoring a field goal for almost seven and a half minutes to take a 17-5 lead after one period.

The teams went back and forth in the second period and Campo led 24-11.

In the third period, Campo opened up the lead behind layups from sophomore John Schmitz and junior Robbie Wirth and with five minutes to go, the Cougars had a 31-13 lead.

Pignagnelli made a steal and finished with a layup and led an 11-2 run to get the Mats within nine, but then Piatt hit a lay-up and was fouled and the Mats never got closer. Sophomore Jack Evans ended the period with a half court three at the buzzer. Campo led 42-28.

The lead grew to 20 before the coaches freely substituted and Campo notched a 13-point win. King led Campolindo with 13 while Pignagnelli had 11 for Miramonte.

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## Lamorinda Schools

### OIS Art Teacher Trains Winning Artists

By Sophie Braccini



Marina Box's winning poster Photo courtesy www.orindaschools.org

Bob Murtagh, President of the Moraga Lions Club, believes that Orinda Intermediate School teacher Susan Weiss has a special talent. For two years in a row, the art teacher's class has produced the winning entry in the Lions' Peace Poster contest for Alameda/Contra Costa County. Weiss herself praises the creativity of her students and acknowledges that the concept of the contest, that makes student think creatively about peace, has inspired her. The 2010 County winner was Marina Box, and the 2009 winner was Natalie Vigo.

"The Lions runs a peace poster contest every year in which some 500,000 kids compete all over the world," says Murtagh, "and for the past two years a student

from Mrs. Weiss class won in our district – Contra Costa/Alameda. She just seems to be able to motivate her students at a higher level." The whole idea of the competition is to get students to think about peace, its meaning and its symbols. Each year the theme is slightly different, this year it was "vision of peace."

"When the Lions contacted me four years ago I looked at the information they sent," remembers Weiss, "it was something different than what I had done before, and a great opportunity that got the kids excited."

"The beginning of the school year starts with a drawing unit that's 3-4 weeks long. Then I use the contest as the focal point for a long

process that builds to it, teaching the use of six different mediums," explains Weiss, "I have them do peace-related things, then they put the poster together. They do sketches, a rough draft, and choose mixed mediums according to the contest's restrictions." This year, she got 60 entries out of a class of 80 7th and 8th graders.

Weiss has a project-oriented approach to teaching art. She has been teaching at Orinda Intermediate (OIS) for 20 years and praises the talent and focus of her students. She believes that the Peace Poster competition stimulates her young students and she plans to continue having her classes participate. The winner of the District level wins \$100 for his/her school and gets a gift certificate.

Both Stanley Middle School and Orinda Intermediate participated in the competition. Stanley's posters can be seen at the Moraga library (the Lafayette library was not available) and the Orinda library displays the OIS posters. The OIS entries can also be seen on Susan Weiss' web page on the school web site, www.orindaschools.org/ois.

For an international perspective on the competition, go to lionsclubs.org and check the peace posters finalists. Children from all over the world will amaze you with their creativity.

Advertising

## How Six Figure Income Families Get Thousands of Dollars in Free Money For College

*Local man teaches free workshops to help parents save thousands in process*

**Moraga**—East Bay parents that are planning on sending a child to college in the next few years, but aren't quite sure how to pay for it can now rest a little easier. Gerna Benz of Bay Area College Planners has been educating families in the community for over 15 years.

"It's really sad, but most parents that we talk to have done real well financially, but never found the time to save for college, and now they're facing a bill of \$18,000-\$45,000 a year, and they don't know who to turn to," he says. "Further, most of the time, all they hear is to not even bother applying for any aid because they make too much money. However, most of the time, that is simply not true even if they make a six-figure income."

Gerna would know, because his group has worked with over 1400 families in the last 10 years ranging from single moms to corporate CEO's, and they say they can help anyone get through the process and save a bundle... no matter how good of a student they have or how much money they make.

"I got started in this because I was a very good student, but no one told us anything about how to access money for college, or even how to pick a career...so I didn't go right away. But, I vowed that I would learn the process and devote my time to helping families not fall into the same trap that we did. 'Simply put, we show parents the truth that they aren't hearing anywhere else about how the college process really works and save thousands of dollars in the process.'" Lamorinda parents will have an opportunity

to hear Gerna speak. He is teaching his class 'How to Give Your Kid a 4-Year College Education Without Going Broke!' on Thursday February 3rd at the Moraga Library located at 1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga, CA 94556 from 6:30pm-8pm.

"We'll discuss everything from the greatest myths about the college process, to how to send your student to a fancy private school for less than the cost of a junior college...it'll be like learning how to get a brand new Lexus for the price of a used pick up truck," he grins.

Topics will also include why private scholarships and 529 plans are a waste of time, how to double or even triple the amount of free money you receive from each school, and how to avoid the one mistake that will kill your chances of getting any money at all that almost every other parent will make and much, much more.

"They will learn a ton, and I do my best to make the class fun," he says. "It's like I'm giving them a super bright flash light to navigate a pitch black cave, while all the other parents continue to stumble around blindly! 'Don't forget: the class is totally free, but seats are limited. Also, we are not sure when we will be teaching these classes in the East Bay again since my February and March calendars are already filling up, so come on out and see me.' You can reserve a seat online at [www.baycollegeplanners.com](http://www.baycollegeplanners.com) or by calling our 24 hour reservation line at **(877) 924-3726**.

Send sports stories and ideas to: [sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com)




Acalanes High School • Bentley School • Burton Valley • Camino Pablo • Campolindo • Contra Costa Jewish Day School • Del Rey • Donald L. Rheem • Glorietta • Happy Valley • Joaquin Moraga

# Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy • Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow • Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

You're invited to see  
**RACE TO NOWHERE**  
 at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church  
 January 26, 7pm  
 January 27, 9:30am  
 No cost, but please register your attendance on our website: [mvpctoday.org](http://mvpctoday.org).  
 10 Moraga Valley Ln., Moraga, CA • 925.376.4800



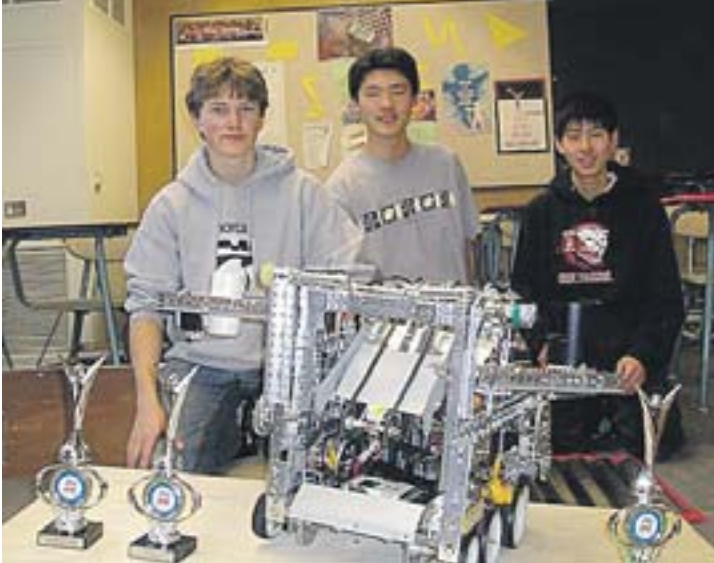
Submit stories  
 to **schooldesk**  
**@lamorinda**  
**weekly.com**

SCHOOL CALENDAR	
<b>Acalanes Union</b> High School District Board Room AUHSD Office 1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette Wednesday, February 2, 7:30pm	<b>Lafayette School District</b> LAFSD Office 3477 School Street, Lafayette Wednesday, February 9, 7pm
<b>Orinda Union School District</b> OUSD Office 8 Altarinda Road, Orinda Monday, February 14, 4pm	<b>Moraga School District</b> Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium 1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga Tuesday, February 8, at 7:30pm

Registration for Lafayette students entering Kindergarten for the 2011-2012 school year will take place January 25-26; Orinda's registration will be February 7-10; and in Moraga, registration will be March 3-4.

## Robotics Team puts Heart and Soul into Work

By Cathy Dausman



Tsvetkov, Wang and Chiao behind "Sputnik" and trophies Photo Cathy Dausman

It's twice the size of a toaster oven, has eight wheels, more than 20 gears and weighs about 30 pounds. It can climb a ramp, balance on a see saw, pick up and sort plastic piping and turn on a dime. It's powered by a 12-volt Lego motor and laptop computer, but the real power behind this mechanical wonder is the team of Campolindo High School juniors Austin Chiao, Maks Tsvetkov and Sammie Wang. The trio comprises the upper class Robotics team they named Tsvetkov e Droozie (Russian for "Tsvetkov and friends"). They named the robot Sputnik.

The students, along with sponsor math and physics teacher Nita Madra, are members of the Campolindo High School Robotics club. They compete in FIRST Robotics competitions, a nationwide science and math program developed in 1989 by Segueway inventor Dean Kamen. According to its website <http://www.usfirst.org/> more than 51,000 high school stu-

dents on 2,070 teams across the U.S. are involved. The robots and their student-creators compete against other FIRST robots to complete timed tasks within a 12 by 12 foot arena.

Campolindo is currently the only school within the Acalanes Union High School District to have a Robotics club. Campolindo also has a second team, comprised of sophomores Laura Gustafson, Ryan Morelli, and Matthew Stickle. Now in its fifth year, the club was formed when Madra attended a summer FIRST workshop hosted by the NASA Ames Research Center.

On a recent Friday afternoon, as the school empties for the weekend, Chiao, Tsvetkov and Wang gather in room D-9 to refine their robot's skills. Atop interlocking sponge rubber mats on the floor they place a ramp, a see-saw, a PVC pipe dispenser and receptacle. They boot up a laptop programmed in C++ language and grab a video game controller. Sputnik wheels,

whirrs and comes to life.

After building their robot in the fall, the team attended area competitions. Paired with another robot, the robot alliance earned points for successfully completing tasks in the best two of three rounds. The club has earned several awards, including the Winning Alliance and the PTC Design Award. Most recently they won the Rockwell Collins Innovate Award (the club's second), the second most prestigious award. They strive to earn the top Inspire Award. On December 19th, they won the Northern California Championship Tournament, making them lottery-eligible for a slot at the FIRST Robotics Championship in St. Louis, MO in April.

Madra says these students are "the most organized and focused" group she's seen come out of the club. So focused, she says, that she sometimes has to remind them to eat.

"It's addicting. It's fun," says Wang, but just try to pin them down on their time investment. Cautions Tsvetkov: "don't ask." Biomedical Engineering or Biology seem likely college tracks.

Chiao, Tsvetkov and Wang hope to mentor a similar middle school program later this year. They've come so far, Tsvetkov stresses, only "because of the Parent's Club [which provides funding], Ms. Kitchens, Ms. Madra and Campolindo High School. Principal Carol Kitchens returns the compliment: "Max, Sammie and Austin possess three qualities that have made their team successful: intelligence, a strong work ethic and the ability to follow through." This robot team has plenty of heart.

**Lafayette – January 25-26 at the following schools and times:**

**Burton Valley Elementary**  
9-11am and 1-3pm  
561 Merriewood Drive, 927-3550

**Happy Valley Elementary**  
8:30-11:30am and 1-3pm  
3855 Happy Valley Road, 927-3560

**Lafayette Elementary**  
9am-noon  
950 Moraga Road, 927-3570

**Springhill Elementary**  
9-11am  
3301 Springhill Road, 927-3580

Information regarding registration requirements and attendance areas is available at [www.lafsd.k12.ca.us](http://www.lafsd.k12.ca.us).

**Orinda – February 7-10 from 9am-1pm at these schools:**

**Del Rey Elementary**  
25 El Camino Moraga, 258-3099

**Glorietta Elementary**  
15 Martha Road, 254-8770

**Sleepy Hollow Elementary**  
20 Washington Lane, 254-8711

**Wagner Ranch Elementary**  
350 Camino Pablo, 258-0016

Information regarding Orinda registration requirements is available at [www.orindaschools.org](http://www.orindaschools.org).

**Moraga – March 3-4 at these schools and times:**

**Camino Pablo Elementary**  
9-11:45am, and 1:15-3:00pm  
1111 Camino Pablo, 376-4435

**Los Perales Elementary**  
9am-2pm  
22 Wakefield Drive, 631-0105

**Rheem Elementary**  
9am-2pm  
90 Laird Drive, 376-4441

Information regarding Moraga registration requirements is available at [www.moraga.k12.ca.us](http://www.moraga.k12.ca.us).

### Family Focus

## One More New Year's Resolution

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

You may be busy following through with your New Year's resolutions right now (or postponing them like some of us). When we make a New Year's resolution we often think of trying to accomplish something concrete such as losing weight, exercising regularly, or saving more money. I'd like to urge you to consider a different goal, for your own sake as well as your family's, and that is to consider how well you treat yourself emotionally. I see individuals who consistently give of their time and energy to others, who are devoted parents, spouses, children to aging parents, and overall good people, but who fail to give themselves adequate emotional support.

Many people in our community have high expectations for themselves. While it is important to aim high, it is also important to reconcile what is possible and what is not. Some individuals struggle with feelings of inadequacy or inferiority simply because they don't give themselves enough credit or because their expectations for themselves are too high. They may be quick to find fault with themselves, but very slow to embrace the idea of "good job," or "good for me," or "I really admire these qualities in myself." Sometimes they learned as children that it was being conceited or boastful to think highly of themselves. But quietly thinking we are good people in many ways is not at all the same as bragging to others or showing off.

One former client was a successful professional in her field. She had a loving husband, a bright well-behaved child, good health and financial security. "Ellen" had a binge-eating problem and constantly weighed fifteen pounds more than her goal weight. The root

of her problem, however, wasn't her inability to control her eating or her obsession with her weight. Rather, she had a head full of negative thoughts about herself. She grew up in a family where her mother had been very demanding and quick to criticize. Ellen admired her mother, an attractive woman and an accomplished musician. Early on, she internalized her mother's messages that she wasn't pretty enough, smart enough, popular enough, and so on. Ellen grew up feeling that she was a huge disappointment to her mother, and she continued to find fault with herself long after her mother's death.

Ellen's challenge in therapy was to change the focus from her fixation on her weight and overeating to her underlying feelings about her mother and herself. She needed to recognize the hurt and anger she experienced as a child, and how her earlier perceptions and experiences continued to affect her self-concept. Eventually, as Ellen gained insight and increased feelings of worth, she was able to consciously practice treating herself well emotionally.

Frequently, personal dissatisfaction also extends to others, especially to members of one's family. A person who has negative feelings about himself (or herself) often tends to project these feelings onto those around him. He may be more short-tempered and critical of his spouse and children. He may try to take too much control of family members and situations in ways that provoke resentment and alienation. His attitudes and behavior not only make his life less satisfying but they create rifts in his closest relationships. And, as we saw in Ellen's case, a parent's attitudes and actions often have a profound effect on his children's self-esteem.

If you aren't treating yourself well enough emotionally, it is essential to recognize the consequences this can have on your children and family. Children model themselves after their parents, both positively and negatively. When I work with a highly self-critical teen or young adult, often one or both parents in the family are also very demanding of themselves. It is important to turn around self-disparaging messages so that you can acknowledge all the positive efforts you make and the admirable qualities you possess. An old book that is still popular, *How to Be Your Own Best Friend* by Mildred Newman and Bernard Berkowitz, is a wonderful guide for treating yourself with the same kindness and care you extend to others. If you don't feel quite "good enough," make it a priority for the New Year to give yourself the emotional support you deserve.



**Margie Ryerson, MFT,** is a marriage and family therapist in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or [margierye@yahoo.com](mailto:margierye@yahoo.com). She is also available for parenting consultation.

## www.Lamorindaweekly.com

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- Road Repair a Top Priority for New Mayor
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## Lamorinda Weekly

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## Youth Ink 2011

### A middle-school writing contest to support literary arts

Submitted by Lisa Rodriguez

The Orinda Junior Women's Club (Orinda Juniors) is pleased to announce details for Youth Ink 2011, the annual creative writing contest open to all sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students who live or attend school in Orinda. The Youth Ink 2011 theme, But if You Really Knew Me, was chosen because it encourages highly personal writing and lends well to open style choice.

Organizers say the first rule is - you can write about anything you like: Real or imaginary. Ask yourself: "What am I like when I am just me? How am I different from who my friends and peers think I am? Do I have a dark side? Am I afraid of it? Or, am I really sweet underneath and don't want others to find out? Am I really who they think I am? Hey, what is everyone else hiding?" There is no

limit to your imagination, just remember to have fun, whatever you write about, and we will enjoy reading it too.

"We can't wait to see how Orinda's talented youth writers will approach this year's intriguing theme," said Molly Griffin-Wilson, president of Orinda Juniors.

Generous co-sponsors of Youth Ink 2011, including The Orinda Association and The Orinda Community Foundation, have made it possible to provide impressive prizes:

- \$250 for 1st place, \$125 for

2nd place, \$75 for 3rd place

- 10 honorable mention gift

certificates worth \$25 at

Orinda Books

A panel of four local professional writers, including reporters and best-selling novelists, will evaluate submissions and choose win-

ners. The judges' names will be shared when the winners are announced at an awards ceremony at the Orinda Public Library on Thursday, April 28, 2011, at 6:00 p.m.

Youth Ink 2011 submissions will be accepted on an ongoing basis but must be hand-delivered to a designated school representative or postmarked by Feb. 18, 2011 and mailed to Orinda Junior Women's Club, Post Office Box 40, Orinda, CA 94563 in order to be considered for an award. Youth Ink 2011 submission forms are available through the administrative offices and English departments at Orinda Intermediate School, the Orinda Public Library, St. Perpetua School, Orinda Academy, Bentley School, Saklan Valley School, Athenian School and Julia Morgan School for Girls or online at [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).



# Life in LAMORINDA

## California Independent Film Festival—What's in it for You?

By Andrea A. Firth

If you have never gone to an independent film festival, here's your chance. The 13th Annual California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF) will be held at the New Rheem Theatre in Moraga from January 28th through February 3rd.

"The first thing to do is to take

### CAIFF Supports the Local Film Connection

When Derek Zemrak launched the California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF) 13 years ago, there was only one other independent film festival in the East Bay. As an independent filmmaker, Zemrak knew how difficult it was to make an independent film and how important it is for the film to be seen. He started the CAIFF to provide an outlet for indie films and created the Bay Area Showcase to support the work of local filmmakers. The East Bay film production industry is very active, notes Zemrak. The CAIFF received about 80 local film submissions from which the selection committee identified twenty to be screened in the five Bay Area Showcases on the Festival schedule. *A. Firth*

a look at the Festival Lineup [available at [www.caiff.org](http://www.caiff.org)]," says Derek Zemrak, the President and founder of the CAIFF. "The lineup is your roadmap. You can pick and choose what you are interested to see. It's a la carte." Attendees can purchase a pass for the entire Festival, but most buy tickets to individual features or showcases, like buying a ticket to a movie.

Attending the CAIFF is like seeing a movie "with benefits." The filmmakers and members of the cast and crew of several of the features and shorts will attend the Festival and question and answer sessions will be conducted following some of the screenings.

"One of the greatest things about the Festival is having the opportunity to ask the director or producer questions directly about his or her work," says Zemrak.

There is something to peak the interest of everyone among the 80 films to be screened. Not sure where to start? Here are some ideas from Derek Zemrak:

#### Star Gazers

For \$25, you can attend the

Friday night opening reception on January 28th and see the feature film *The 5th Quarter*. Mix and mingle with the stars including Ryan Merriman (lead actor in *The 5th Quarter*), Rick Bieber (director of *The 5th Quarter*), Donny Most (remember Ralph from *Happy Days?*), and Lou Diamond Phillips (star of *La Bamba* and other films), and many others. Prefer the sidelines to the direct approach? Get to the theater by 5:00 p.m. on Friday with your camera or pen and paper for autographs, and watch the stars walk the red carpet into the reception. Catch the stars again at the Gala Slate Awards on Sunday, January 30th and Lea Thompson at the closing night reception and screening of her movie *Mayor Cupcake* on Thursday, February 3rd.

#### Getting in the Biz

"We have two very good seminars for people interested in filmmaking," says Zemrak. "Jana Sue Memel will talk about what makes a great short film. She's won three Academy Awards for her work and has been nominated a total of 13 times. There is no one who has received more nominations."

"And for musicians and anyone interested in producing music, Ken Parks from MTV and Matt Kierscht, who has done just about everything in the music and film industry, will talk about how to get music in film and television. These

are great opportunities to learn from and ask question of experts in the business."

*Saturday, January 29th, 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.*

#### Keep it Short

"Every filmmaker starts with short films. George Lucas started with short films," says Zemrak. "It's less expensive but more difficult too," he adds, comparing the process to the writer's challenge of economizing words when crafting a short story. "In a short film, you have to tell the story, beginning, middle, and end, succinctly. There's no room for fluff. The CAIFF always has a great selection of short films to watch. We have had an Oscar-nominated short in the lineup for each of the last five years."

*Shorts Programs, Saturday, January 29th at 10:0 a.m. and 1:45 p.m., and Sunday, January 30th at 10:00 a.m.*

#### For the Younger Set

"We always have a Children's Showcase. It's important for children to learn about film. It exposes them to different cultures and ideas," says Zemrak. The hour-long Children's Program includes eight shorts films from three to 13 minutes in length.

*Saturday, January 29th at 12:15 p.m.*

#### Pick a Winner

"All of the films shown at the CAIFF are quality films," says Zemrak. But there is a lot to choose from;

so let the festival judges help to narrow your selection. Check out the CAIFF website to see which films the judges have nominated for "Best

of" in variety of categories including Picture, Short, Animation, Documentary, Director, Actress, Actor, and more.

### The 5th Quarter Opening Night Feature Film



Photo provided

The last time Joel McDonell was inside the Rheem Theatre he was probably grooving to the techno tunes of the group Techronic and the hip hop hits of artists MC Hammer and Vanilla Ice. That was in 1991, when the East Bay native attended his senior ball, which was held on the stage in the main theater. McDonell will be returning to the main theater on the opening night of the upcoming California Independent Film Festival, but instead of dancing with his high school pals, he will be there to watch the evening's feature film *The 5th Quarter*. McDonell is the Associate Producer of the film. The film's producer, director, and writer Rick Bieber and lead actor Ryan Merriman will also attend the opening reception and screening.

"It's a classic, inspirational football story," says McDonell. The 5th Quarter is based on the story of Jon Abbatte, who dedicated his Wake Forest football season to the memory of his younger brother Luke who was tragically killed in a car accident. It's a very accurate portrayal of the real life events, says McDonell. And there is a chance there will not be a dry eye in the theater at the end of this movie about faith, family, life, and love. *A. Firth*

### Adult Beginner Ballet

#### A Documentary by Michelle Ortega



"Come out. Don't be afraid. I'm not going to bite," says Kathy Mata cajoling her adult ballet students to take their places on the dance floor. The documentary *Adult Beginner Ballet*, will be shown during the Documentary Showcase at the CAIFF on Saturday, January 29th. Photo provided

"I did not have very much interest in ballet when we started the project," admits Jason LaBatt, "But by the time we finished filming I gained a real appreciation for the hard work and perseverance that ballet requires." LaBatt did most of the filming and all of the editing on the documentary *Adult Beginner Ballet*, which will be shown at the California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF). LaBatt's wife, Michelle Ortega, is the producer and director of the film, and together they own and operate North Beach Digital, a video production company based in San Francisco.

LaBatt will be returning to his roots when he attends the CAIFF screening of the documentary. He grew up in Orinda, attended Glorietta Elementary and Orinda Intermediate School (OIS), and graduated from Miramonte High School (class of 1988). He credits a film production class with Mrs. Boomgarten at OIS for his first exposure to the world of movie making. "We were probably using VHS cameras back then," LaBatt adds with laugh.

*Adult Beginner Ballet* is Ortega's first independent documentary and the subject is close to her heart. Ortega has taken adult ballet classes for the past four years, and the film follows her teacher Kathy Mata at work with Ortega's classmates at the Alonzo King Lines Dance Center in San Francisco. Ortega wanted to make the documentary to further explore her own unique experience of tackling ballet—a discipline typically confined to the young and supple—in midlife. "There are all levels of ability in class," says Ortega, and the students range in age from twenty-somethings to Medicare recipients. "It's amazing to see the improvement adults make, watching them master a skill like a pirouette." Ortega hopes the film will motivate others to believe that they, too, can dance. *A. Firth*

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## Slides on Slopes

... continued from page A1

The financial impact of sliding varies depending on the number of incidents. Mercurio indicates that each slide costs her department between \$3,000 and \$5,000, and that the average yearly cost is \$25,000. The responsibility for the slide falls on whoever owns the land. "If a slide damages a public road the city will respond and take appropriate action to either get the road open or close the road until a plan can be formulated," says Swanson. "Generally a slide will impact the road and the properties above it and below it. Responsibility will usually be determined after a geotechnical analysis has been performed."

Knowing the geological conditions of a terrain is key to evaluating the risk of slide. For example, the recurrent erosion in Bollinger Canyon happens because the cliff has alternating layers of sandstone and shale. The shale weathers at a different rate than the harder sandstone layers. While the sandstone retains its structure, a layer of shale behind it may weather away and undermine

the sandstone, causing that portion to slip off. This type of slope failure typically results in moderately small areas of break-off at a time. "Since my crews are aware of this, we do monitor this roadway for debris on a regular basis, as do the police, and the residents are very helpful in calling the Town if they notice it first," says Mercurio.

Warning signs: Watch for rocks and other debris coming down off a hillside. Look for cracks in a road surface that form a semi-circle.

In the event of a slide, contact: Lafayette: Public Works hotline, 299-3259, during business hours. After hours or in emergencies call police dispatch at 284-5010.

Moraga: 888-7026 during business hours; after hours call police dispatch, 284-2479.

Orinda: Call 253-4231 during business hours; after hours contact the Sheriff's Department at 646-2441.

## Valet Parking - Coming Soon to Theater Square?

By Sophie Braccini



The parking spaces in front of Theater Square could become a drop-off zone for valet parking Photo Rob Lucacher

As he developed a business plan with partner Michael Karp, Table 24's Victor Ivry envisioned valet parking at the bottom of the stairs that lead to the new restaurant at Orinda's Theater Square. But the city did not have an existing policy that defined this type of amenity and a procedure had to be drafted. This text, supported by the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, opens the door for other businesses wanting to offer the same service.

The only place that provides valet parking in Orinda is Casa

Orinda, using its own parking lot. What Table 24 proposed is different. Karp and Ivry approached the town with a request to use public parking spaces for drop-off and pick-up outside Theater Square. "The city didn't have a policy to regulate the use of on-street parking for valet services," explains Monica Pacheco, Assistant to the City Manager/ Public Information Officer, "the Council directed staff to draft a valet parking policy that should not impact the traffic flow in the downtown area and should not impose hardships on surrounding businesses."

The policy, drafted by staff and approved by the City Council on December 21st, allows applicants to apply for an encroachment permit to designate on-street parking to be used as loading zones for valet services. Attendants then move the vehicles to a predetermined location with a surplus of off-street parking. The service may be used by anyone who wishes to do so, whether they patronize the sponsoring business or not. The City has the right to revoke the permit should the service interfere with the flow of traffic.

One possible negative aspect of the encroachment is that it will reduce the amount of available parking in the downtown area. Chamber of Commerce President Sue Breedlove addressed that issue. "Rather than having a negative effect, we think it's a very positive move," said Breedlove, "You see it all the time in areas that have limited parking - which is exactly the case in downtown Orinda. Putting cars in the garage will increase available parking, not reduce it." The Chamber enthusiastically supported the project; Breedlove cited other benefits

such as making it easier for people to patronize local businesses.

"We are now working on our application," says Ivry, "it will be an amenity to anybody going to Theater Square. Douglas Parking will charge the drivers and Table 24 will offer validation." Ivry hopes to offer the same kind of service that can be found at comparable restaurants in Walnut Creek. He also believes that some patrons are a bit apprehensive about night-parking in a large structure, and the valet service will alleviate those fears.

When contacted, Chris McGougan, manager of the Orinda parking structure for Douglas Parking, said that the project was being discussed. "We already operate valet parking in other areas," said McGougan, "the flat cost can vary from \$4-\$8 depending on the situation. We've got staff that know how to operate this and will move someone into Orinda when it is finalized."

Ivry says his application will be ready by the end of the month; he plans to offer valet service in the evening, Thursday through Saturday.

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**business briefs**

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com) or call the office 925-377-0977

**Design & Interiors**  
3590 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette



Karen Callahan (left) and Design & Interiors' Rita Brown look for a table. Photo Sophie Braccini

Design & Interiors has moved from Plaza Escuela in Walnut Creek to the spot formerly occupied by Hollywood Video on Mt. Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette. The high-end home furnishings and interior design business has three locations in the Bay area. Founder/owner Marcy Puccetti now works in partnership with her daughter. "I started in Mountain View thirty years ago," remembers Puccetti, "at the time the demand for contemporary design was null. I have seen my clients' preference evolve from the more traditional taste, to the casual period, and now we have reach a transitional age. People want a décor that's not as stark as contemporary, but with cleaner lines and delicate finishes." The new Lafayette store feels much larger than the video store ever seemed. The space is separated by a few metal grates and the visitor can

move easily from one atmosphere to the next, ranging from contemporary style to furniture that is evocative of an affluent countryside or Tuscan-inspired estate. Everything on the floor, from the lamps to the beds, tables and sofas are for sale, but there is more to the new Lafayette store. "All of our employees are professional designers," said Puccetti. When we visited the store, Designer Rita Brown was looking for a table in one of her many catalogues with Lafayette resident Karen Callahan. The client knew Design & Interiors from their Walnut Creek store and was thrilled about the move. "Our Walnut Creek landlord wanted to transform Plaza Escuela into a food court," said Puccetti, "we were disappointed at first, but it's proven to be a good move for us; the Lafayette community has been so warm and accepting." Puccetti believes that she operates in a unique business where you become a part of a family for the time you are creating a design for and with them. "You have to understand your clients' lifestyle and create with them something they will love for many years." Design & Interiors will celebrate its grand opening on February 10th with the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce.

### Free Tax Planning Webinar

Wednesday, January 26th at noon, Ballou Plum will be hosting, at no cost to attendees, a Tax Planning Webinar featuring Lafayette based tax expert Linda LaHonta, CPA. For information about how to participate, please email [plan@ballouplum.com](mailto:plan@ballouplum.com). There will be space for about 100 live attendees. You can also view the webinar at [www.ballouplum.com](http://www.ballouplum.com) a day or two after the event if you are unable to attend.

### News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

- Entrepreneur's Club on Thursday, January 20, 8:30am in the Chamber Conference Room
- Green Committee Meeting on Tuesday, January 25 at noon in the Chamber Office
- Business Issues Meeting on Friday, January 28, 8am in the Chamber Office
- First mixer of 2011 on February 9, 5:30-7pm at Wells Fargo Bank.

### Moraga

Chamber General Meeting on January 28, 7:30-9am. The first General Meeting of the year will be held at the Hacienda, 2100 Donald Drive. Roos's muffins and delicious coffee will be served.

### Orinda

Orinda Chamber Luncheon on Friday, January 28, 2011, noon-1:30pm at the Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda. RSVP: Highly Recommended - To purchase tickets online go to the Chamber web site at [www.orindachamber.org](http://www.orindachamber.org). The cost is \$30.00 per person. The guest speaker is Tom Franier, co-owner of Semifreddi's Bakery. He will be talking about "Slow Capitalism." When he started Semifreddi's with his sister and brother in law in 1984, Franier learned quickly that baking great bread and pastries requires both patience and know-how. "Lesson #1 was that you have to let the dough rise slowly and consistently," he says. "The same lesson applies to running a successful company. Since 1984, Semifreddi's has grown slowly and consistently to become one of the San Francisco Bay Area's premier artisan bakeries."

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2011 Gala Slate Awards

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2011 Maverick Award  
Lou Diamond Phillips

In 1988, Phillips co-starred with Edward James Olmos in the inner-city high school drama, Stand and Deliver, in a role for which he was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for "Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture". He plays Angel Guzman, a wannabe cholo gangster who is inspired by his math teacher, Jaime Escalante, to excel at calculus. Working to master the subject, he develops a friendship with his teacher. Stand and Deliver was filmed before La Bamba, but it was released a year later. In 1988 and 1990, Phillips co-starred with Emilio Estevez and Kiefer Sutherland in the cowboy movies Young Guns and Young Guns II, in which he plays Jose Chavez y Chavez, a historical Old West outlaw. On stage Phillips received a Tony Award nomination for his role in The King and I.

2011 Diamond Award  
Lea Thompson

Thompson's first significant film roles were in 1983, with Jaws 3-D and also All the Right Moves as the latter opposite Tom Cruise. Her most famous role was that of Lorraine Baines McFly in the Back to the Future trilogy, the first of the three films being released in 1985. Thompson's character is the mother of Marty McFly, played by Michael J. Fox. Thompson found moderate critical and popular success as the star of the NBC sitcom Caroline in the City, from 1995-1999. In 1996, Thompson received a People's Choice Award for "Favorite Female Performer in a New TV Series."



Friday, January 28th

- Opening Night Reception and screening of *The 5th Quarter* with Director Rick Bieber & Actor Ryan Merriman

Saturday, January 29th

- Film Screenings
- Iron Filmmaker Contest
- Shorts Programs and Showcases
- Seminars
- Lou Diamond Phillips and screening of his film *Takedown*

Sunday January 30th

- Gala Slate Awards
- Tribute to Lou Diamond Phillips and Filmmakers
- Shorts Programs
- Bay Area Showcase

Monday, January 31st - Wednesday, February 2nd

- Film Screenings
- Documentaries

Thursday, February 3rd

- Closing Night Reception with Lea Thompson and screening of her film *Mayor Cupcake*

2011 CAIFF Featured Film Lineup

 <b>Cast Me If You Can</b> Director: Atsushi Ogata • Tokyo, Japan • 2010 • Comedy • 1hr 37m	 <b>Mayor Cupcake</b> WEST COAST PREMIERE Director: Alex Pires • Dewey Beach, Delaware • 2010 • Family Comedy • 1hr 26m	 <b>Takedown</b> Director: Raul Inglis • Thriller • 1h 30min
 <b>Fanny, Annie &amp; Danny</b> Director: Chris Brown • San Francisco, CA • 2010 • Drama, Mature/Adult • 1hr 22m	 <b>The Frost</b> WEST COAST PREMIERE Director: Ferran Audi • Barcelona, Spain • 2009 • Drama • 1hr 43m	 <b>Risen</b> WORLD PREMIERE Director: Neil Jones • United Kingdom • 2hrs
 <b>Language of a Broken Heart</b> WORLD PREMIERE Director: Rocky Powell • Dallas, TX • Romantic Comedy • 1hr 38m	 <b>The 5th Quarter</b> WEST COAST PREMIERE Director: Rick Bieber • Los Angeles, CA • 2010 • Drama • 1h 33m	 <b>The Yankles</b> Director: David R. Brooks • Los Angeles, CA • 2010 • Comedy • 1hr 55m

For tickets, schedules, and events, visit  
[www.CAIFF.org](http://www.CAIFF.org)





# In Memory

## Cary Dwight Chiappone



Cary Chiappone died peacefully at home on October 13 surrounded by family and friends after a year-long battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 38 years old.

Cary was born in Berkeley on April 28, 1972 to Susan and Robert Chiappone. Growing up in Lafayette, he attended

Acalanes High School where he excelled in academics and was a three- sport letterman in water polo, swimming and basketball.

Cary graduated from UC Berkeley in 1994 with a degree in history. While there he lettered in water polo and was a member of the Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity.

After college, Cary was hired by Charles Schwab as a securities trader, which eventually took him to New York. He returned to the Bay Area in 1999 as an equities trader with Nationsbank Montgomery Securities, later Bank of America Securities. He finished his career with Merriman Curhan & Ford in San Francisco as Senior VP of Trading.

In 2004 Cary married Dana Wentworth, with whom he had two beautiful children, Bianca and Max. They adored his funny, playful manner and his love of laughter.

Cary was a scratch golfer and played as much as his wife would let him. Lucky for him, that was quite often and it paid off in 2008 when he won the championship at Moraga Country Club.

Cary is survived by his wife Dana Wentworth Chiappone and children Bianca and Max; his mother Sue Chiappone Miller and her husband Bob; his siblings Tracy Chiappone, Chris Chiappone and his wife Ann, Craig Chiappone and his wife Nana and a large, loving extended family. He is preceded in death by his father Dr. Robert Chiappone and his grandparents Carlo and Clotilda Chiappone and Paul and Marianne Crowder.

Cary was a wonderful son, brother, husband, father and friend who is missed by all who knew him.

The family would like to send a heartfelt thank you to Dr. Margaret Tempero, Dr. B.J. Miller and their teams at UCSF, as well as Elizabeth Dito, RN, and the Infusion Center Nurses. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations be made to the Cary Chiappone Memorial Fund, UCSF Foundation, P.O. Box 45339 San Francisco CA 94145-0339.

A celebration of his life will take place on Friday, January 28th between the hours of 2 & 6pm at Orinda Country Club.

## Lynn's Top Five

# I WILL get my Financial House in Order!

By Lynn Ballou, Certified Financial Planner®

Hey, I know --- I'm late to the table! You've already made your resolutions for the New Year. But wait, there's always room for one or two more --- and even though this is Lynn's Top FIVE, don't be put off --- it's really just one broken into five easy steps. Let this be the year you get your financial house in order. Here's how:

**1) BALANCE YOUR BUDGET!** Guess what --- if you live beyond your means, or right up TO your means, you won't have money to sock away for the future. Assess your situation ---honestly. If you need to cut back, do it! If you need to earn more money, think about ways to retool your education and skill set to qualify for better paying work. Invest in yourself!

**2) BUY ONLY WHAT YOU NEED - INVEST THE REST FOR YOUR FUTURE!** Did you hear the joke about the millionaire who put 200,000 miles on each of his cars before buying a new one? No? That's because it's not a joke --- for many who have worked hard to grow their net worth, this mind set is how they did it!

**3) SHOP AROUND FOR THE BEST PRICES!** There

are many apps out there that provide opportunities for you to find the very best prices on everything from clothing to appliances, couches to cars. Use them!

**4) FIND INEXPENSIVE WAYS TO PLAY!** Wine tasting in Livermore Valley? A bike ride and picnic with friends? A book club with a different dinner host each month? Pot luck Super Bowl parties? Affordable, memorable, very fun. Make a plan to have more fun like this!

**5) MAKE A PLAN!** You have dreams and aspirations, and best of all, vision about what you hope to accomplish financially. Write your dreams and visions down and then do something to make them a reality. Hire a Certified Financial Planner® to help you, acquire and use financial planning software, or take a class. Here's what we know: those who act on their visions are typically those who succeed.

Wishing you a successful financial journey this year as you put your financial house in order! And don't be shy about reaching out to a pro if you need help --- it's a great way to bring clarity to your life vision and achieve results!

Lynn Ballou is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) and co-owner of Ballou Plum Wealth Advisors, LLC, and a Registered Investment Advisory (RIA) firm in Lafayette. Lynn is also a Registered Principal and Branch Manager with LPL Financial (LPL). As such, she is required by securities regulations to add the following information to this column: The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendation for any individual. Securities offered through LPL Financial, member FINRA/SIPC.



# Community Service

We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions can be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

## What You Need to Know About Disaster Preparedness

Submitted by Rebecca Kunzman

- 1.** In a major earthquake (a M6.9+ on the Hayward fault) Fremont, Hayward, Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond and other cities along the fault will get the most damage and injuries. These cities have much greater populations than the Lamorinda cities and they also have many hazardous facilities (refineries, chemical plants) and critical industries and facilities (airport, Port of Oakland, Silicon Valley, Bay Bridge) that will get first priority. Most of the federal, state and local mutual aid will be directed there. Very little help will come to Lamorinda for 3-7 days or longer.
- 2.** Lamorinda will be on its own during this time. If the earthquake hits at night, we have as few as 6 police officers, 34 fire fighters and 2 local ambulances
- 3.** The Cities and Fire Districts will be severely understaffed and citizens will need to take care of themselves during the first 3-7 days. Many of the first

responders who are not on duty live out of the Lamorinda area and will have difficulty getting to our area.

- 4.** We need to be ready to put out small fires, conduct light search and rescue, perform medical triage and first aid and provide food, water and shelter, for ourselves and our neighbors. To do this, we all need Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. CERT is the Department of Homeland Security/FEMA funded program designed to prepare ordinary citizens for this precise job.
- 5.** Why train? Studies show that survival rates for trapped victims decline rapidly with time: 99.3% survive if rescued in 1 hour, 81% in 1 day, 37% in 2 days, 34% in 3 days, 19% in 4 days and 7% in 5 days. We can-

not wait for 3-7 days to get help.

In the last six years, more than 500 citizens of Lamorinda have taken CERT training and many have enhanced their skills by taking additional training in Ham radio communication, Red Cross shelter operations and advance medical training. Join these volunteers and prepare now!

The 2011 schedule of CERT classes in Lamorinda is available at [lamorindacert.org](http://lamorindacert.org). The course consists of 6 classes including training at the Contra Costa Fire Training Center in Concord where you will practice search and rescue, fire abatement techniques and triage/medical skills. New sessions begin in February. During this year, classes will be available at St. Mary's College and at several local venues. Go to [www.lamorindacert.org](http://www.lamorindacert.org).

## Moraga Lions Club Funds Orchestra Travels

Submitted By Diane Moe



From left: Bob Murtagh, President Moraga Lions Club; Lynn Hsu, Lisa Herzig, teacher at Campo and Leo Club advisor; Carol Kitchens, Campolindo Principal and John Baits, Moraga Lions Club. Photo Carola Ziermann

Campolindo High School students Lynn Hsu and Annie Guo were presented with a \$500 donation from the Moraga Lions

Club last week in an informal Leo Club session in Lisa Herzig's classroom. Bob Murtagh, club president, explained that the donation will help fund the school orchestra's upcoming trip to China.

Lynn Hsu, a senior and a flute player in Campo's Symphonic Band, is going with the orchestra on the trip to Beijing. When the Lions were searching for a cause to donate to, she suggested they make a donation to the orchestra's trip fund. Murtagh said the Lions were particularly interested in supporting the orchestra after Annie Guo played piano for the annual Lions Club dinner at the Saint Mary's Soda Aquatic Center. "She is a very talented pianist," he said. Guo, a sophomore in Campo's Symphonic

Band, is also going on the trip.

Campolindo Music Booster President Carola Ziermann attended the ceremony and thanked the Lions Club for its generous contribution. "I know the Lions Club is working worldwide on improving communities. This trip to China will be the experience of a lifetime for our students and it is Music Booster's goal that no student be turned away due to a financial burden. This donation will help ensure that all students will be able to participate. The Lions Club's support is very much appreciated," she said.

To learn more about the Campolindo Orchestra China trip visit <http://campomusic.org/china-trip-info/>.

## Girl Scouts Honor Outstanding Volunteers from Lafayette

Submitted by Chrissa Ventrelle



Linda Bailey (left) and Colleen McCarty Photo provided

On November 7, 2010, three outstanding volunteers from the Lafayette Service Unit were honored at the Girl Scouts of Northern California Volunteer Recognition Afternoon Tea held at The Villages in San Jose. Recipient Briana Taylor was awarded the Maud Whalen Continued Exceptional Service Award which is presented to a volunteer who has made a significant impact in two or more areas of the Council operations or policy. Recipients Linda Bailey and Colleen McCarty each were awarded the Appreciation Pin. This is a GSUSA award that is in recognition of significant con-

tribution to council goals and exceptional service beyond the expectation of a volunteer position.

For the 2009-2010 Girl Scout year, GSNorCal is honoring 70 amazing volunteers and partners through Northern California. These outstanding adults, nominated by their peers, are a testament to the leadership and selfless contributions of the volunteers honored this year. Volunteers are the heart of Girl Scouting and we truly are grateful for what they do on behalf of girls. They help build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.

## Recycling of "Sharps" Now Available Locally

By Sophie Braccini



Battalion Chief Darrell Lee in front of the recycling bin at MOFD Station 41 Photo Sophie Braccini

The term "Home Generated Sharps" (HGS) is used to describe needles, syringes with needles, and disposable lancets used to either collect a sample or inject medication into a human or animal. They are all considered medical waste. The Central Contra Costa

Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA) and Allied Waste Services have devised convenient ways for Lamorinda residents to comply with the law that now prohibits putting sharps in the trash or recycle bins.

"Use of home generated sharps is predicted to increase rap-

idly in the coming years, due to the rise in the incidence of diabetes and other maintenance-requiring diseases. Additionally, more people are using sharps to deliver medications to their pets," says CCCWA Program Manager Lois Courchaine, "Until now, Clayton, Walnut Creek and San Ramon were the only alternatives for proper disposal." Her services noted that too many sharps were trashed or improperly recycled. "The Pacific Rim Recycling facility in Benicia experiences both containerized and loose sharps crossing their sorting line regularly, exposing their line workers to potential health hazards," she says.

The solution is two-fold. The first option is to place the sharps in an authorized sharps container (available at CVS) and place them in the collection receptacle installed at the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) station 41 in Moraga, or the Lafayette Fire station on Mt Diablo Boulevard, or the Orinda Police Department.

The second option consists of disposing of sharps from indi-

vidual homes by mailing special containers to WM's MedWaste Tracker™. The number to call to purchase the container is (925) 935-8900. Once they receive the container, residents fill it with sharps and drop it off at the post office or call the U.S. Postal Service for pick-up. The cost of the containers varies depending on size and starts around \$25.

"The Home-Generated Medical Sharps Disposal Program was designed to provide a convenient and safe disposal opportunity for individuals in our community," said CCCSWA vice-chair and Moraga Mayor Karen Mendonca, "We are delighted to have the full cooperation and support of the fire and police departments in making this option available to Lamorinda citizens."

**Recycling Locations:**  
Lafayette Fire Station - 3338 Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Moraga Fire Station 41 - 1280 Moraga Way  
Orinda Police Department - 22 Orinda Way





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# Orinda Hosts Contra Costa Mayors Conference -- Lafayette's Tatzin named to LAFCO; Trotter named 2011 Conference Chair

By Lucy Amaral



California State Senator Mark DeSaulnier and Orinda Mayor Victoria Smith at the Contra Costa County Mayors Conference, held in Orinda. The Senator presented a legislative update to conference attendees.

Photo Lucy Amaral

The City of Orinda hosted mayors, council members and representatives from the Board of Supervisors from Contra Costa County as they gathered January 6 for their monthly Mayors Conference. The group meets regularly to discuss city issues and, this time, to make a number of committee appointments.

Newly elected council mem-

bers and mayors were introduced including Council Member Dean Orr of Orinda, Mayor Carl Anduri of Lafayette, Mayor Karen Mendonca of Moraga and the City of Orinda's new mayor, Victoria Smith.

For this meeting, California State Senator Mark DeSaulnier was invited to present an overview of the upcoming state budget. After

offering a brief background on how the budget is divided and where California falls with regards to the rest of the country, DeSaulnier pulled no punches about the next few fiscal years. He outline a tough financial future with the possibility of education being hit hard and a 'realignment' of some service responsibilities put back to the city and county level.

"There is not a lot of good news," said DeSaulnier. "But the good news is that we are at a point where we have to confront our problems. We have the opportunity (to create) good fiscal policies and to monitor the outcome."

The gathering also included appointments to several key committees including the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and the next chairperson for the 2011 Mayors Conference.

Hercules Mayor Ed Balico, citing family responsibilities and city challenges, withdrew his nomination to serve again on the CCTA. Balico has come under fire recently for financial and managerial issues regarding the running of the city of

Hercules. The council accepted the withdrawal and moved the selection process to the next meeting allowing for other nominees to come forward. Balico would go on to resign as Mayor of Hercules at the January 11 Hercules City Council meeting.

LAFCO is a regulatory agency charged by the state to oversee (among other items) the boundaries of cities, town and Special Districts (such as the Moraga Orinda Fire District), as well as water and sewer districts to ensure orderly growth. Four mayors were nominated to fill a vacant seat, but during the meeting two withdrew their requests. During the required roll call of attending mayors, Lafayette Council member Don Tatzin received the most votes, defeating Oakley Mayor Jim Frazier.

Moraga Council Member and current Vice Chair of the Mayors Conference, Dave Trotter, was selected to serve as the 2011 Mayors Conference Chairperson.

The next Mayors Conference will be held February 3 in Richmond. Lafayette will host this conference in June of this year, and Moraga is scheduled to host in July.

# Gold Coast Celebrates Black History

By Lou Fancher



Photo provided by Pamela Freund-Striplin

The Gold Coast Chamber Players are using their first performances of 2011 to prove they've got both talent and a desire to celebrate Black History Month.

The ensemble's performances, held in the Community Hall at the Lafayette Library, will feature Lawrence Beamen, a top finalist from television's America's Got Talent, and works by Antonin Dvorak and William Grant Still.

Pamela Freund-Striplin, the Gold Coast Chamber Players' (GCCP) artistic director, described the evolution of this year's special event.

"My son went through the school system here and I noticed they always did activities around Black History month. I saw he was participating through the schools, but there were no public events to celebrate the month."

She began to form a plan for a concert, and heard some surprising responses:

"Someone asked me recently, 'Why are you doing this: you're not black!' It never occurred to me that it didn't have something to do with all of us. And then, after it started developing, I thought how cool it would be to have related events. I thought it would enrich the whole concert to have a variety of things around Black History month."

Her idea had a snowball effect on library staff. Kathy Merchant,

Executive Director of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation, reported that the Consortium Partners are gearing up for related activities, and Mayor Carl Anduri is brushing up a proclamation for the City Council's consideration.

"Our children's librarian, Donna Lenhardt, is pulling together a program with a woman who appears as Harriet Tubman, asking the children to follow her much like Harriet did for escaping slaves. The Chabot Space and Science Discovery Center is doing a program for ages 3-8 on the great African American inventor Washington Carver. The children will play a game that matches the name of the invention to a picture of the invention, will plant a peanut seedling, and will make their own peanut butter, then have it as a snack," she said.

Freund-Striplin, pleased with the expansion, was also thrilled with the contributions Beamen made to the project.

"My original idea was to pair Dvorak's American String Quartet and some spirituals. But once Lawrence became involved, it became a larger project. He has a lot of ideas about Black History Month. I think that's what drew him to say yes. The ideas behind it were more than just hiring him to do some singing," she said.

Not that the singing wouldn't be enough. Beamen knew he

wanted to be a singer from his early days growing up in Mississippi. Hear him sing just one line of Old of Man River and there's little doubt he was born to deliver rich, vibrant renditions of the historically significant American songs.

"A good voice is a given in my world, but what I look at is how can they show me a new universe with what they sing," Freund-Striplin said. "The spirituals require an understanding of the text. I wanted a singer that could communicate the optimism and suffering that I hear in the African American spirituals."

Freund-Striplin said she has heard some of the best voices in the world through her work with the San Francisco Opera, but Beamen's deep, resonant sound told a story beyond the meaning of the lyrics.

"The songs are from Africa, there are folk songs, and songs from Israel. It's useful that he is African American in understanding where this music comes from: he grew up in Mississippi, he learned these songs from his grandfather, there's a history there that brings a richer experience than someone who learned it as an adult," she explained.

The ensemble's concerts often feature a slide show with information about the music and the composers. This time, Beamen will give contextual information about the spirituals and their connection to

Dvorak's work. Dvorak came to America in 1892 to identify the "American musical voice." History shows that he so loved the actual voice of young Harry Burleigh, a singer he discovered, that he asked the boy to sing to him almost daily. The composer came to believe African American spirituals were at the heart of American music.

William Grant Still, whose Panamanian Dances Freund-Striplin described as "lively, with percussive things we do on the instruments," was the first African American to conduct a major American symphony orchestra.

Freund-Striplin hopes the concerts are not a one-time event. The performances will be broadcast on KQED four times in February and the group has an education program that takes them to the schools throughout the year.

"We play all over the Bay area," Freund-Striplin said, "but I always want to have a community base for the Gold Coast Concert Players. We're hopeful that we will do this—or something similar—every year for Black History month."

The Gold Coast Chamber Players  
*Harmony and Melody*  
Sat., January 29 at 7:30pm  
Sun., January 30 at 2pm  
Tickets \$30  
(925) 283-3728

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9:40 a.m. Education for all ages  
10:45 a.m. Celebrations Worship Service  
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**Not to be missed**

**ART**

**150 Years after the Civil War** an NEH-sponsored exhibition, *Lee and Grant*, will be on view from Sunday, Jan. 30 through Sunday, Mar. 20 at The Hearst Art Gallery at Saint Mary's College in Moraga. The museum is open to the public Wednesdays through Sundays, 11am to 4:30pm. Adult admission is \$4; admission is free for K-12th grade students and Hearst members. A lecture by Dr. Guarneri, "Only a Question of Time and Patience": *An Inside View of Grant's Campaign against Lee*, will highlight opening day programs on Sunday, January 30, which will include displays by members of the National Civil War Association [NCWA] in period costume. A battlefield re-enactment, featuring nearly one hundred NCWA volunteers, is planned for Saturday, March 19, on the Saint Mary's College campus. Information: (925) 631-4379.

**The Lafayette Gallery is presenting the Heart Throb Exhibit.** There will be a "meet the artists" reception from 6:30-8:30pm on Friday, February 4. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 11am-5pm. Located at 50 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. Admission is free. For more information please call (925) 284-2788 or go to www.lafayette-gallery.net.

**The Moraga Art Gallery's new show**, 2 plus 2 = 1, shorthand for "Two Artists, Two Visions: A Singular Experience," The exhibit brings together paintings in various media by Orinda's Beryl Glen-Reiland and watercolors by Moraga's George Ehrenhaft. The gallery is located at the Rheem Shopping Center, 570 Center Street, Moraga. For more information call (925) 376-5407.

**MUSIC**

**The Performing Arts Society's morning concert** for January will feature 20th century composers. Friday, January 28 10:30am, located at the Grace Presbyterian Church, 2100 Tice Valley Blvd. For more information please contact www.ccpas.org.

**Pianist Gary Neuman will appear at Petar's pub** on Lafayette Circle for an open mic event from 8-10pm on Wednesday, January 26 for a piano bar sing-along. This is a revival of an old Petar's tradition and is a great way to meet new friends or connect with old friends.

**The Gold Coast Chamber Players present:** Harmony and Melody a celebration of Black History Month. Saturday January 29 at 7:30pm and Sunday January 30 at 2pm. General admission is 30\$. For more information please call, (925) 283-3728. See story page L5

**Campolindo Jazz Dinner Dance** featuring the Campolindo High Jazz Band, is coming up on Saturday, February 26 at Temple Isaiah in Lafayette. Miles Lindheimer, Mat Fukano and Matt Reshke will be leading our two combos - the Impro-Visors and the Jazz-Manian Devils - who will make you want to dance the night away! Good food and great company, too! Tickets are \$55 (\$60 after February 7) and on sale now. Visit www.campomusic.org or contact Diane Haley, 631-1439.

**Campolindo Orchestra Winter Concert** on Thursday, February 24 at 7:30 in the CPAC. This will be a benefit concert with the proceeds to assist the Campolindo Orchestra's trip to Beijing. Featuring violinist Jeremy Cohen, a three-time Grammy nominee, and Barry Green with his Green Man Bass Group as guest artists. An evening of great music not to be missed! Tickets are \$10 only and on sale now. Call 270-8083 to reserve your ticket. More information on website www.campomusic.org.

**2010 Grammy award winning Pacific Boychoir** Academy and the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation present "A Magical, Musical Afternoon" on Sunday, January 23rd at 4:30pm at

the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**THEATER**

**Company C Contemporary Ballet** opens its 2010-2011 Season in Walnut Creek on Saturday, January 22, at 8pm, at the Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. Company C opens its season with two world premieres and two company premieres full of athleticism and theatrical intensity. Cost is \$18-\$40. For more info see http://www.companycballet.org or call (925) 708-0752.

**The Saint Mary's January Term's Children's Theater** presents: A staged adaptation of the classic Grimm Brothers story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Performances on Wednesday, January 26 at 7pm. and Thursday, January 27 at 4pm. Where: LeFevre Theater, Saint Mary's College of California, 1928 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga. Tickets: Only \$8.00, available by calling (925) 631-4670 or e-mailing Sharon Cahill at scahill@stmarys-ca.edu.

**California Independent Film Festival 2011** will open Friday, January 28 and will run through Thursday, February 3 at The New Rheem Theatre in Moraga. For the complete CAIFF 2011 line up go to www.caiff.org. Tickets for all of the films and showcases are available online at the CAIFF website or at the theater. Advance purchase is advised for the opening night screening of The 5th Quarter, the Slate Awards, and closing night film, Mayor Cupcake. See article page L1.

**The new International Film Showcase** is coming to the Orinda Theatre. For seven days each month we will screen a feature film that has never been released commercially in the Bay Area. Gala premier opening of "Max Manus," Norway's 2009 best film award and Oscar submission, starts on January 28. For more information call (925) 283-1700.

**LECTURE & LITERATURE**

**Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center** welcome Maxine Hong Kingston, Thursday, January 20, 7:30pm Community Hall. Maxine Hong Kingston, acclaimed author of *The Woman Warrior*, *China Men*, *Tripmaster Monkey*, and *The Fifth Book of Peace* is honoring us with the launch of her new book, *I Love A Broad Margin To My Life*, to be released Jan 18th.

**"Reform or Bust? The True Cost of Public Pensions":** The Commonwealth Club's panel of experts will share their views on whether pension reform is needed in California and how it should be done. Location: Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Date: January 25. Time: 5:45pm check-in, 6:30pm program. Cost: \$12 members, \$22 non-members, \$7 students. For tickets go to commonwealth-club.org or call (415) 597-6705.

**Real Stories presents Real Stories:** 'Out On a Limb'. True stories about risk & chance, Wednesday, Jan 26, from 7:30pm to 9:15pm, at 1515 Restaurant Lounge, 1515 N Main St, Walnut Creek. \$15 at the door, \$10 in adv. online. For more info see http://www.KayDeMartini.com or call (925) 683-9800.

**SMC Jan Term Speaker Series:** Tuesday, January 25 at 7 pm Robert B. Reich, the Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley and former U.S. Secretary of Labor, will explain why it's so difficult for us to get out of the gravitational pull of the Great Recession and why American politics is becoming angrier and more polarized. In his view, the two are related. Professor Reich's most recent book is the bestseller "Aftershock: The Next Economy and America's Future." He blogs at www.robertreich.org. Soda Activity Center, Saint Mary's College of California, 1928 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga.

**Not to be missed**

**A book sale will be held from 10am-1pm, Feb 3**, in the Friends Sorting Room located downstairs from the Orinda Library. This monthly sale offers quality books for all interests and all ages. Orinda Library, 24 Orinda Way, Orinda (925)254-1358.

**KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS**

**The Contra Costa Jewish Day School** invites prospective families to an Open House for Kindergarten - 8th grade on Sunday, January 23, 3-5pm, at the school, 3836 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette (next to Temple Isaiah). Childcare will be provided. The Open House provides an opportunity to learn more about the school, meet the faculty, visit the classrooms and speak to current families. For further information and to RSVP please contact Amy Wittenberg, Admissions Director at (925)284-8288 or amyw@ccjds.org or visit www.ccjds.org.

**Ever wish you could have at your fingertips** the wisdom of experienced moms to help you navigate the middle school years with your daughter? Here's the next best thing: "How to Raise a Strong, Independent Daughter and Survive"-True Confessions of Mothers of Daughters", a Q&A with a panel of local moms who did. They will share their strategies, dilemmas and successes raising their own daughters in the Walnut Creek/Lamorinda Community. January 26, from 7-8:30pm at Walnut Creek Intermediate School.

**St. Perpetua School is celebrating 47 years** of service and education to the Lamorinda community. Grades K-8 open house tours are Sunday January 30, and Monday January 31. They are also currently accepting applications for the 2011-2012 school year. Call 284-1640 or visit www.stperpetua.org for more information.

**OTHER**

**On Saturday, February 5 at 3:00 pm, two storytellers** will spin Asian tales at the Orinda Library to welcome in the Year of the Rabbit. Clara Yen has been telling stories to the families of the Bay Area for more than twenty years. The stories are ones she remembered hearing while growing up in a Chinese family, and other folk and fairy tales that she has discovered over the years. Megumi also has a vast repertoire of Japanese folk tales. This event is free and appropriate for families. It takes place in the auditorium of the Orinda Library, which is at 26 Orinda Way.

**The Contra Costa/Alameda County Widowed Persons Support Group** is offering grief support meetings for the recently widowed. These sessions are run by widowed people. The meetings will be Saturday's from January 15-February 19 from 10:00am to noon. They are held at St. Stevens Church, 66 St. Stevens Dr., Orinda. You need not attend all sessions. Just come when you can. No reservation needed. For questions, please contact Penny Robb at (510) 654-0974.

**The Lamorinda Republican Women**, Federation club, is holding a luncheon meeting, Thursday January 20, at the Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante. The special guest speaker is Jason Clemens of the Pacific Research Institute, Director of Research and Strategic Planning and Budgeting. The topic will be "The 10 Keys to Returning California to Prosperity." \$25 luncheon or \$15 program only (no meal).

**On February 12th and 13th, "Wine & Chocolate Weekend"** takes place throughout Lodi Wine Country at over 40 participating wineries from 11am to 4pm each day. Event attendees will have the opportunity to travel from winery to winery while taking in each of the winery's hosted activities such as wine and chocolate pairings,

live music, barrel tasting and cellar tours. Ticket prices are \$45 in advance or \$55 during the event and are available at www.lodi-wineandchocolate.com or by calling the Lodi Wine & Visitor Center at (209) 365-0621.

**CLUBS**

**Montelindo Club general meeting** and speakers are every third Friday of the month, September through May. Meetings take place at the Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda. Refreshments and plant and garden accessory sale at 9am, meeting at 9:30, and speaker at 10:30. The meeting is free and welcomes guests and new members. www.montelindogarden.com.

**Moraga Garden Club meets** at 9:30am every third Thursdays monthly through May. On January 20, join us for a presentation by botanical artist and Filoli instructor Catherine Watters. Watters paints in watercolor on paper and vellum in a style that is filled with breath-taking grace. Her illustrations appear in five books. She will speak about the history of botanical art. Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Membership: Linda (925) 376-2809.

**Sons in Retirement Lamorinda Branch 171** meets the first Wednesday monthly at Holy Trinity Culture Center, 1700 School St. Moraga. Social hour 11am, lunch 12 pm. On Feb 2, the after lunch speaker will be Jay Gaskill, former Alameda County Public Defender, whose talk will be entitled Thugoloh 101. He will share insights from three decades of experience working with the criminal population especially those considered thugs. He will be taking a wide range of questions pertaining to criminal activity and what we might do about it. For membership information, call Larry at (925) 631-9528.

**CRAB FEEDS**

**Lafayette Partners in Education (formerly LASF)** is hosting a Crab Feed on Friday, January 28, from 6:30 - 9:30pm at Veterans Memorial Building in Lafayette to celebrate our schools, our community, our children. Evening includes Cocktail Hour, Host Bar, Dinner, Dessert Silent Auction and Raffles. \$55 per person includes dinner and hosted bar. Join us and enjoy a great time with friends and neighbors

**Knights of Columbus Council #7683** 16th will be held January 29, in Saint Monica's Peace Room in Moraga. Appetizers and no-host cocktails will be served starting at 6pm. Dinner will be served at 7:30. Our raffle with many exciting gifts follows dinner. Tickets are \$50 and must be bought or reserved in advance. For more information call (925)283-3679.

**Crab Feed & Dance, Saturday, February 5, 6-11pm**, Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga. Music provided by popular DJ. Dinner & Dance \$37.50; Dance only \$10. For non-crab lovers: Chicken available by special advance order request. Dinner tickets MUST be purchased in advance. For info & reservations call (925) 672-6799.

**Soroptimist International of 24-680's** annual Crab Feed & silent auction, Saturday February 12, 5:30 pm, Lower Court Oakwood Athletic Club, Lafayette, \$40 per person. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Soroptimist International's mission is to improve the lives of women and girls in local communities and throughout the world. For tickets & information: (925) 285-7797 or si24-680@soroptimist.net.

**Please submit:**  
calendar@lamorinda weekly.com



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# Chili and Wings – Game On!

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

Last year, when my kids came home from college and beyond, we started a fun, new tradition of having a great big potluck party so all of the old high school friends, parents and coaches could have the chance to catch up with one another.

As we all know, the time during the holidays really flies by, and it can be tough to make time for everyone on the list. This gathering is a great way for the kids to see their class-

mates, the parents to see the kids, the players to see the coaches, and these young adults to see their best friend's pesky younger siblings in an entirely different light! You get the idea. It's even fun to include a few grandparents on the guest list. You remember those favorite grandparents that attended every music, sport and theater event. They sort of became communal grandparents to the entire group over the years.

Last year our theme was a

"soup kitchen" where we literally cooked up five different kinds of soup. Guests brought appetizers, salads, side dishes, bread and dessert. What a kick. One dad in the crowd came back and tried every single kind of soup! My son's French onion was the biggest hit, but we served up cauliflower cheddar, Hungarian mushroom, butter-nut squash and homemade chicken noodle.

When it came time to plan this year's party, I asked my

kids if they had any ideas for this year's theme. My oldest son chimed up right away. "Chili and wings," he said without hesitation.

Okay, I love wings, too, but what about the couches, the furniture, the floors ...

The worry was for naught, because we bought a stack of 50 inexpensive, white wash clothes at K-Mart, soaked them in hot water and put them on the tables for quick and easy clean up!

My contribution to the chili side of the menu was white bean chicken chili. This recipe of my mom's is a takeoff on the Neiman Marcus Chili Blanco and it is delicious! For wings, we had three different types. A friend brought his Hoisin-glazed wings, and I made my hot 'n spicy wings (published previously in the Lamorinda Weekly), and the traditional Buffalo-style hot wings. I had never made them before, and they are so good! We always bake our wings, which seems to be easier ... and healthier than frying!

If you're planning a Super Bowl party this year, these dishes would be fun to serve. But, don't forget the wash-cloths!

## White Bean Chicken Chili

(Serves 10)

\*Note-I recommend making this at least one or two days ahead, as the flavor gets better and better each day!

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds dried white navy beans
  - 3-4 quarts chicken stock (keep an extra quart on hand in case you need more)
  - 2 large onions, chopped
  - 3 cloves garlic, pressed
  - 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
  - 4 7-oz. cans Ortega chilies, chopped
  - 2-3 tablespoons Masa Harina (corn flour for thickening chili)
  - 1½ teaspoons sea salt
  - 4 teaspoons ground cumin
  - 4 teaspoons dried oregano
  - 4 teaspoons ground coriander (or 1-2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro)
  - 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
  - ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
  - 8 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cooked and diced
- Garnishes**
- 1 ½ cups grated Monterey or mixed Mexican cheese
  - 1 cup plain low-fat yogurt
  - ½ cup salsa
  - ½ cup snipped fresh cilantro

### DIRECTIONS

In a large soup pot, combine beans, stock and half the onion and garlic. Bring to a boil, uncovered. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for about 1½ hours, or until beans are just cooked through, adding more stock as needed. (I like them cooked just to al dente, because they continue to cook every time you heat the soup.) Set aside with remaining broth.

In a separate large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons oil and add remaining onions, garlic and chilies. Cook until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add remaining tablespoon oil along with Masa Harina, herbs, spices and salt to onions and continue to cook until herbs begin to brown. This releases the flavors and also prevents the flour from becoming pasty in the soup.

Add pre-cooked, diced chicken and onion-herb mixture to the cooked beans in the pot, and stir well. Heat through and add more broth as needed or desired. I suggest refrigerating this soup for at least a day before serving.

When ready to serve, reheat and pour hot soup into cups or bowls, sprinkle with grated cheese, a dollop of yogurt, a spoonful of salsa and a touch of cilantro.

## Baked Buffalo-Style Hot Wings

(Makes 3 dozen)

### INGREDIENTS

36 chicken wings (both parts)

### Sauce

- 8 tablespoons (1 cube) butter, melted
- 12 tablespoons Louisiana hot sauce
- 8 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Cayenne pepper

### Garnish

- Celery and carrot sticks
- Blue Cheese dressing

### DIRECTIONS

Mix all ingredients for sauce. Place chicken wings in a plastic container with a tight-fitting lid. Pour half the sauce over the wings and shake well. Marinate for at least two hours. Bake at 375° for approximately 1 to 1.5 hours, or until wings begin to get crunchy on the outside.

When ready to serve, heat remaining sauce and pour over wings. Serve with blue cheese dressing and veggie sticks.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net.

Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com.

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<b>LAMORINDA's Restaurants</b>			
... updated January 5, 2011 ...			
<b>American</b>	Bistro, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7108	Petar's Restaurant, 32 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 284-7117	Mucho wraps, 1375-B Moraga Way, Mor, 377-1203
	Chow Restaurant, 53 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 962-2469	Roya's Garlic Garden, 3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-3007	Baja Fresh Mexican Grill, 3596 Mt. Diabolo Blvd, Laf, 283-8740
	Ranch House, 1012 School St, Mor, 376-5127	Vino Restaurant, 3531 Plaza Way, Laf, 284-1330	Mountain Mike's Pizza, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 377-6453
	Terzetto Cuisine, 1419 Moraga Way, Mor, 376-3832	<b>French</b>	El Balazo, 3518D Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-8700
	The Cheese Steak Shop, 3455 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-1234	Chevalier Restaurant, 960 Moraga Road, Laf, 385-0793	Maya Mexican Grill, 74 Moraga Way, Ori, 258-9049
	<b>BBQ</b>	Fuz, 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-9930	Número Uno Taqueria, 3616 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-1333
	Bo's Barbecue, 3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7133	<b>Hawaiian Grill</b>	<b>Pizza</b>
	<b>Burger Joint</b>	Lava Pit Hawaiian Grill, 2 Theatre Sq., St. 142, Ori, 253-1338	Lamorinda Pizza, 382 Park St, Mor, 376-4040
	Flippers, 960 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-1567	Lava Pit Fire Grill, 3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 385-0658	Mountain Mike's Pizza, 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-6363
	Nation's Giant Hamburgers, 400 Park, Mor, 376-8888	<b>Indian</b>	Mountain Mike's Pizza, 504 Center St, Mor, 377-6453
	Nation's Giant Hamburgers, 76 Moraga Way, Ori, 254-8888	Swad Indian Cuisine, 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-9575	Pennini's, 1375 Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-1515
	<b>Café</b>	<b>Italian</b>	Round Table Pizza, 361 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-1411
	Ferrari- Lucca Delicatessens, 23 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 299-8040	Giardino, 3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-3869	Round Table Pizza, 3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 378-0404
	Geppetto's cafe, 87 Orinda Way, Ori, 253-9894	La Finestra Ristorante, 100 Lafayette Cir, #101, Laf, 284-5282	Village Pizza, 19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori, 254-1200
	La Boulange, 3597 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-1001	La Piazza, 15 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-9191	Zamboni's Pizza, 1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori, 254-2800
	Rising Loafer, 3643 Mt. Diablo Blvd Ste B, Laf, 284-8816	Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria, 975 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-3081	<b>Sandwiches/Deli</b>
	Susan Foord Catering & Cafe, 965 Mt. View Dr., Laf, 299-2469	Michael's, 1375 Moraga Way, Mor, 376-4300	Lanaca's Deli, 1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor, 376-4400
	<b>California Cuisine</b>	Pizza Antica, 3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-0500	Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub, 64 Moraga Way, Ori, 254-7202
	Artisan Bistro, 1005 Brown St., Laf, 962-0882	Trattoria Lupetti, 65 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-7662	Kasper's Hot Dogs, 103 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-0766
	Metro Lafayette, 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-4422	Postino, 3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-8700	Noah's Bagels, 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-0716
	Shelby's, 2 Theatre Sq, Ori, 254-9687	Ristorante Amoroma, 360 Park St, Mor, 377-7662	Orinda Deli, 19 F Orinda Way, Ori, 254-1990
	Table 24, Theatre Sq, Ori, 254-0124	<b>Japanese</b>	Subway, 396 Park St., Mor, 376-2959
	<b>Chinese</b>	Asia Palace Sushi Bar, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-0809	Subway, 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, 284-2627
	Asia Palace Restaurant, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-0809	Blue Ginko, 3518-A Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-9020	Subway, Theatre Square, Ori, 258-0470
	Chef Chao Restaurant, 343 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-1740	Fuz, 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-9930	<b>Seafood</b>
	China Moon Restaurant, 380 Park St, Mor, 376-1828	Kane Sushi, 3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-9709	Yankee Pier, 3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-4100
	The Great Wall Rest., 3500 Golden Gate Way, 284-3500	Kirin Sushi, 356 Park Street, Mor, 376-2872	<b>Steak</b>
	Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine, 1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori, 253-9852	Niwa Restaurant, 1 Camino Sobrante # 6, Ori, 254-1606	Casa Orinda, 20 Bryant Way, Ori, 254-2981
	Lily's House, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf, 284-7569	Oyama Sushi, 3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-6888	<b>Tea</b>
	Mandarin Flower, 581 Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-7839	Serika Restaurant, 2 Theatre Sq # 118, Ori, 254-7088	Patisserie Lafayette, 71 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 283-2226
	Panda Express, 3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-0288	Yu Sushi, 19 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-8399	Tea Party by Appointment, 107 Orinda Way, Ori, 254-2206
	Szechwan Chinese Restaurant, 79 Orinda Way, Ori, 254-2020	<b>Mediterranean</b>	<b>Thai</b>
	Uncle Yu's Szechuan, 999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf, 283-1688	Petra Café, 2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori, 254-5290	Amarin Thai Cuisine, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, 283-8883
	Yan's Restaurant, 3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-2228	Oasis Café, 3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-8822	Baan Thai, 99 Orinda Way, Ori, 253-0989
	<b>Coffee Shop</b>	Turquoise Mediterranean Grill, 70 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-2004	Royal Siam, 512 Center Street, Mor, 377-0420
	Millie's Kitchen, 1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf, 283-2397	<b>Mexican</b>	Siam Orchid, 23 Orinda Way # F, Ori, 253-1975
	Squirrel's Coffee Shop, 998 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-7830	360 Gourmet Burrito, 3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-1270	<b>Vietnamese</b>
	Village Inn Café, 204 Village Square, Ori, 254-6080	Casa Gourmet Burrito, 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-4415	Little Hearty Noodle, Pho & Pasta, 578 Center St., Mor, 376-7600
	<b>Continental</b>	El Charro Mexican Dining, 3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-2345	
	Duck Club Restaurant, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7108	El Jaro Mexican Cafe, 3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-6639	
		La Cocina Mexicana, 23 Orinda Way, Ori, 258-9987	

The Lamorinda Weekly (LW) Restaurant Guide is not paid advertising; our intent is to provide a useful reference guide. We hope that we have included all Lamorinda restaurants on this page, except those that told us they did not wish to be listed. LW is not liable for errors or omissions. In the event that we have inadvertently printed misinformation or excluded a restaurant please let us know (info@lamorindaweekly.com) so that we may correct our list for the next issue.





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# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 04 Issue 23 Wednesday, January 19, 2011

**2010  
IN REVIEW**  
*The Real Estate Year in Review ...read on page OH7*

## Modern and Connected

### *Orinda's Award Winning Homes*

By Andrea A. Firth

Contemporary or modern architecture makes up a small percentage of the residential building projects in Orinda according to the City's Planning Director, Emmanuel Ursu. The angles, massing, and large amounts of glass found in modern designs can present challenges, says Ursu, but he notes that Orinda's sizeable lots and plentiful vegetation can accommodate bigger setbacks and enable privacy to facilitate a contemporary design. Interestingly, modern architectural design was employed in two of the residential building projects that received the Mayor's

Award for Architectural Excellence in 2010: the Gasparinis' home remodel, known as the Hundred Foot House, and the Remicks' new home which was recognized for Environmental Sustainability. In both projects the homeowners chose a modern design to enhance the connection between the home and the outdoor environs.

#### **Hundred Foot House**

After 15 years of apartment dwelling in San Francisco, Jon and Michele Gasparini were eager to find a safe and quiet community in which to raise their family. The great schools,

beautiful topography, and close proximity to the city made Orinda an ideal choice to relocate their family that includes three children, ages eight, five, and three years, and a hound called Greta.

After purchasing a run-down rancher on a heavily wooded lot, the Gasparinis found that their plan for a modest remodeling project was to be a labor of both love and patience. They uncovered structural issues that imposed significant additional requirements, resources, and time. "We purchased our home in 2003 but did

not move in until 2009," says Jon who, with help of his father, chipped away at the project working alongside his contractors to build the majority of the home over a four-year span.

Perched 20 feet above the street just below the canopy of the oak and redwood trees that surround the house, the Gasparinis' home feels like a tree house—very private yet simultaneously open and bright. "We were drawn to the heavily wooded surroundings and wanted to appreciate the outdoors from every room in the house," says Jon.

The original 1,500 square foot L-shaped home was expanded to 2,400 square feet by adding small amounts of new space at the tips. The modified T-shaped structure has four bedrooms and three full baths. Unlike the flat roofs found on many modern structures, the roof of each segment of the house extends upward from the center like the wings of a butterfly. The entranceway, kitchen, and family room are situated in the original 16-foot wide footprint surrounded by walls of glass. The adjacent, perpendicular segment that houses the bedrooms and bathrooms is more solid and private with smaller, two-foot wide windows that punctuate the walls at even intervals. By excavating part of the hillside, the retaining wall that the original house was built alongside was pushed back to yield a 16-foot wide, flat courtyard that runs the length of the public living space. Three extra-wide, double doors line the back wall of the home and open freely into the courtyard creating an indoor/outdoor living room in the warmer months.



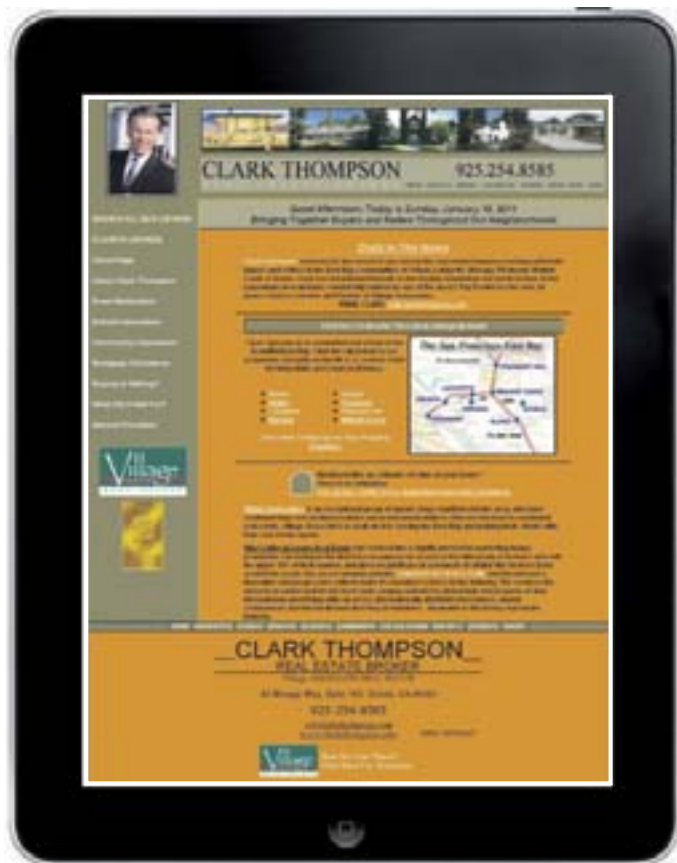
The "butterfly-shaped" roof on the Gasparinis home.

Photo Tim Griffith x

...continued on page OH4



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<b>LAFAYETTE</b>	Last reported: 10
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$450,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,200,000
<b>MORAGA</b>	Last reported: 5
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$165,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,030,000
<b>ORINDA</b>	Last reported: 9
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$599,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,620,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

### LAFAYETTE

- 3103 Del Oceano Drive, \$530,000, 4 Bdrms, 1757 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-20-10;  
Previous Sale: \$820,000, 02-10-06
- 3224 Elvia Street, \$768,000, 3 Bdrms, 1716 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-15-10;  
Previous Sale: \$535,000, 05-03-10
- 956 Happy Valley Court, \$795,000, 4 Bdrms, 2478 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 12-15-10
- 612 Huntleigh Drive, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1914 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-14-10
- 3351 Kincheloe Court, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2278 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-17-10
- 3494 Moraga Boulevard, \$820,000, 2 Bdrms, 1430 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 12-16-10;  
Previous Sale: \$906,000, 05-06-05
- 1071 Oak Hill Road, \$775,000, 4 Bdrms, 2723 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 12-22-10;  
Previous Sale: \$756,000, 10-01-02
- 3170 Plymouth Road, \$817,000, 3 Bdrms, 1537 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-17-10;  
Previous Sale: \$915,000, 03-29-05
- 1480 Shulgin Road, \$1,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 5229 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 12-17-10;  
Previous Sale: \$1,700,000, 09-20-02
- 1689 Springbrook Road, \$450,000, 3 Bdrms, 1124 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 12-20-10;  
Previous Sale: \$675,000, 08-03-07

### MORAGA

- 106 Alta Mesa Court, \$515,000, 3 Bdrms, 2486 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 12-15-10;  
Previous Sale: \$865,000, 05-19-06
- 2079 Ascot Drive #139, \$165,000, 1 Bdrms, 713 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-22-10;  
Previous Sale: \$108,500, 07-29-99
- 794 Augusta Drive, \$1,030,000, 4 Bdrms, 2680 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-13-10;  
Previous Sale: \$590,000, 02-26-99
- 117 Miramonte Drive, \$429,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-17-10;  
Previous Sale: \$467,500, 10-24-03
- 24 La Salle Drive, \$860,000, 4 Bdrms, 2119 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-15-10;  
Previous Sale: \$575,000, 06-15-01

### ORINDA

- 22 Bel Air Drive, \$1,115,000, 4 Bdrms, 2170 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-22-10;  
Previous Sale: \$785,000, 11-09-00
- 14 Berkeley Avenue, \$599,000, 2 Bdrms, 1360 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-21-10;  
Previous Sale: \$579,000, 05-14-09
- 650 Kite Hill Road, \$1,177,500, 4 Bdrms, 2854 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-16-10;  
Previous Sale: \$600,000, 03-10-92
- 53 Knickerbocker Lane, \$1,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 3340 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 12-14-10;  
Previous Sale: \$1,565,000, 11-01-05
- 9 Las Vegas Road, \$1,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 2257 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 12-16-10;  
Previous Sale: \$1,015,000, 04-08-04
- 24 Marston Road, \$730,000, 2 Bdrms, 1520 SqFt, 1943 YrBlt, 12-15-10;  
Previous Sale: \$969,000, 09-01-05
- 105 Meadow Lane, \$1,370,000, 4 Bdrms, 2741 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-14-10;  
Previous Sale: \$1,500,000, 08-13-04
- 35 Parklane Drive, \$720,000, 2 Bdrms, 1526 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 12-17-10;  
Previous Sale: \$475,000, 04-15-99
- 4 Patrick Lane, \$1,620,000, 5 Bdrms, 3604 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 12-16-10;  
Previous Sale: \$1,925,000, 06-18-08

## Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

No listings



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A Few Doors Down from the Rheem Theater.





# Modern and Connected

## *Orinda's Award Winning Homes*

*...continued from OH1*

Both Jon and Michele have design degrees, and they were integrally involved in the design and planning of their home. "We wouldn't consider ourselves staunch modernists," says Jon regarding their choice of architectural style. "It was important that we build a home that feels honest and consistent with the era and location we live in. The combination of steel, glass, and wood is elegant and graceful without the need for unnecessary decorative embellishments."

The Gasparinis worked with architects Luke Ogrydziak and Zoë Prillinger whose San-Francisco-based studio focuses on progressive design. The architects named the project the Hundred Foot House in large part because the house is about 100 feet in length but also to emphasize the idea of measure which is prevalent throughout the design. "Our architecture tends to be abstract," says Ogrydziak. An abstract four-foot module repeats throughout the open floor plan, which leads to consistency and repetition in the design, explains Ogrydziak. "Luke and Zoë really honed in on our aesthetic from the beginning," says Jon. "They were able to expand on ideas and concepts in ways we would have never thought of."

One of the great features of the home is the location, says Jon. "It feels as though we're living alone in the woods, but it's really only a short walk to downtown Orinda. As a family we often walk into town for ice cream or a movie. Where else does this lifestyle exist anymore?"



*Remick's living room opens to the outdoors.*

*Photo Mariko Reed*



*View from the backyard of Remick's sustainable home.*

*Photo Mariko Reed*

### **Sustainable Indoor/Outdoor Living**

"We wanted the house to have a really compact footprint, so we could take best advantage of the flat outdoor spaces," says Joe Remick as he looks out at the adjacent deck and outdoor living space complete with a refrigerator, sink, and grill. Sun pours in through a wall of large, accordion glass doors and transom windows, which makes the interior dining room comfortably warm even though the temperature outside is well below 40°F. "We open the doors up whenever we can. We really enjoy the connection between the indoor and outdoor living spaces," says Joe.

Joe and his wife Cathy are both architects. Joe manages his own architectural firm; project North, doing mainly residential projects and specializing in sustainable architecture. Cathy also does residential architecture along with freelance graphic design. Together they designed their new home and created the master plan for landscaping the ¾ acre lot that is half flat and half hillside.

*...continued on page OH6*





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**HAPPY VALLEY!**  
**3819 Palo Alto Drive, Lafayette**

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## Modern and Connected Orinda's Award Winning Homes

...continued from OHI

From their professional training and by nature, the Remicks are great economizers of space and time. Following the footprint of the original home, they built a 2,800 square foot, two-story, modern-style home that includes four bedrooms, four bathrooms and a detached 220 square foot guest cottage/office to meet all the space needs of their home-based businesses, their school-age daughter, and their two rescued black and tan coonhounds. Remarkably the house was completed in seven months. "We were able to build the house in seven months by fabricating portions of the house offsite while the foundation was being constructed," explains Joe.

Many of the sustainable elements in the home are reflected in the materials employed. The exterior walls of the house are covered in a combination of cedar siding and a lime-based plaster. All of the wood used in the interior and on the exterior of the house was sourced from Forest Stewardship Council-certified outlets to ensure the wood products came from responsibly harvested and verified sources. The lime-based plaster on the exterior walls does not require a high-energy manufacturing process like the more commonly used cement. In addition, the Remicks used 0% VOC paint, which contains no volatile organic compounds.

"A lot of the sustainability is tied to the systems in the house," says Joe. The pipe runs are short and close together to minimize wasted energy. Lighting is controlled by a home automation system, and all of the lights

are dimmable and preset to a maximum 90% of the total light capacity. "The difference between 90% and 100% of the light capacity is indiscernible to the eye," says Joe, "and the 10% reduction saves energy and greatly extends the life of the light bulbs." There are two solar panels on the roof, which meet about ¾ of their hot water needs, and 16 solar photovoltaic panels, a 3.2 kilowatt system, that provide the energy for about half of the home's electrical needs. The flat roof of the guest cottage has succulents and small grasses growing on it that provide insulation and absorb excess rainwater.

And when the weather warms again, the Remicks have plenty of fun things to keep them busy outside. The backyard has a hot tub, an in-ground trampoline, and a bocce ball court. Along with several raised vegetable boxes, the Remicks have also planted one hundred Sangiovese grapevines, about enough to make a barrel estimates Joe, who shares wine-making equipment with a neighbor. The concept for the Remick's new home is really about the connection to the site and the land.

Ogrydziak/Prillinger Architects  
[www.oparch.net](http://www.oparch.net)  
(415) 474-6724

project NORTH  
Owner, Joseph Remick  
[www.projectNORTH.com](http://www.projectNORTH.com)  
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### Clarification, issue date 01/05/11

Village Associates Celebrates Ten Years in Lamorinda: According to Village Associates founder Ignacio Vega: "Village Associates Real Estate enjoys a 23% share of the Lamorinda market and has the highest dollar volume in the county for a standalone single office based on statistics compiled by Brokermetrics."



# The Real Estate Year in Review

By Conrad Bassett

2010 was quite a year for residential real estate in Lamorinda, just as it continued to be throughout the country. However, where most other areas saw a more limited amount of sales, Lamorinda's volume was up significantly, especially in Lafayette and Moraga.

Homes stayed on the market for a little less time than a year ago and prices remained relatively stable as supply remained reasonably low throughout the year.

Also, the Lamorinda communities continued to see a few more short sales and REOs (bank owned properties.) These properties continue to negatively influence other nearby communities on a much grander scale.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported for closings January 1 through December 31, 2010, 250 single-family homes closed in Lafayette versus 198 in 2009. There were four sales where the sales prices were not reported to the MLS. For the 246 reported closings, sales prices ranged from \$400,000 to \$3,000,000 and the average time on market was 53 days, down from 63 in 2009. The average sale price was \$1,097,749 versus \$1,045,217 a year ago. The average sales price was 94.8% of the final list price.

In Moraga there were 102 single-family closings, up significantly from the 59 in 2009. Prices ranged from \$525,000 to \$2,465,000. The average sale price was \$927,948, down slightly from 2009's 961,872. The number of days on market in 2010 was 44 and the average home sold for 96.8% of its last list price.

In Orinda the number of single-family closings was 179 versus 162 in 2009. There were four properties where sale prices were not reported to the MLS. The reported sales ranged in price of \$410,000 to \$2,950,000 and an average price of \$1,060,798. A year ago it was \$1,029,915. The average market time was 62 days, down a fraction from a year ago when it was 68 days. The average sales price was 95.6% of the final list price.

On an average price per square foot basis in 2010, Lafayette homes sold for \$432 per square foot; Moraga homes for \$385 per square foot and in Orinda it was \$408. In 2009, Lafayette homes sold at \$434 per square foot, Moraga homes sold for \$408 and Orinda was at \$426.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had nine closings, up from six closings in 2009. They ranged in 2010 from \$302,500 to \$427,000; Moraga had 65 (up from 50 a year ago) ranging from \$147,000 to \$740,000 and Orinda had three just as in 2009. They sold from \$241,900 to \$692,000.

It should be noted that there are also a few direct sales that do not go through the MLS and they are not reported here. These include some foreclosures that were sold at the courthouse as well as some sales between private individuals.

As of December 31, there were 57 homes under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined, with asking prices of \$147,000 to \$4,200,000. It should be pointed out that there 12 "Potential Short Sales" that are currently pending. In each case, the anticipated closing date is several months into the future as the sellers await approval of their particular lender or lenders.

A comparison of year-end inventory versus a year ago shows an increase from the 110 that were available on January 1 of 2010 to the 133 currently available. There are currently 19 short sale homes available and also 19 listed bank REOs. Typically the biggest inventory is in the spring and early summer. There are 55 properties on the market in Lafayette with asking prices of \$425,000 to \$10,750,000. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of 39 homes and condos listed between \$149,900 and \$1,995,000. In Orinda there are 40 on the market priced from a condominium at \$298,000 to a single family home at \$4,250,000.

As has been the recent story, the most active price range is in the more "affordable" price range. However, the high end did improve significantly as 42 sold above \$2,000,000 during the year compared with 23 that closed in Lamorinda in 2009, 30 in 2008 and 50 in 2007.

Prices are not as high as they were at the peak a few years ago, but in 2010, there were several situations in the three communities where the seller received multiple offers and homes sold for above the list price. This points to both a strengthening of the market and a willingness by sellers to be realistic in their pricing.

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—Moraga Sellers/Clayton Buyers

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**484 Dalewood Drive**

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**Offered at \$1,850,000**

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**179 Crestview Drive**

Incredible estate hm on 20 ac pvt knoll. Beaut flt custom w/Fu Tung Chen designed gourmet kit, pvt master suite, fab in-law apt. 360 degree views, ideal for vineyard.

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**1365B Camino Peral**

Comfortable 2bd/2ba, 1281 sf w/fireplace, washer/dryer, deck & 2 dedicated parking spaces. Near shopping, park, library and trails. Best schools!

**Offered at \$299,000**

MORAGA



New Listing

**2092-2094 Donald Drive**

Charming ranch-style duplex each with 2bd/1ba & 1-car garage. All dual panes, hdwd in LR, DR & kitchen, pvt backyard in wooded setting. Top schools.

**Offered at \$699,000**

MORAGA



**98 Brookfield Drive**

Lovely 5bd/3ba on level desirable Moraga cul de sac. Updated kitchen & baths, hdwd floors, lawn patio & pool. Very close to award-winning K-8 schools.

**Offered at \$999,000**

MORAGA



New Price

**160 Valley Hill Drive**

Fabulously remodeled 4bd/4ba ranch home on over 5 acres just minutes from town. 3-stall barn, pastures and pool. Shown by appointment only...call today!

**Offered at \$1,295,000**

MORAGA



**471 Millfield Place**

Big, beautiful traditional home. Updated & expanded w/many decorator & custom features. Andersen windows & doors, den, island kitchen, lavish mstr retreat, level yard.

**Offered at \$1,575,000**

LAFAYETTE



**1176 Glen Road**

Happy Valley Glen. Charming 4bd home w/two office spaces. Many new updates, beaut hdwd floors, French doors to yard & pool. Close to town, Bart, great Lafayette schools.

**Offered at \$1,195,000**

LAFAYETTE



**3919 So. Peardale Drive**

Fabulous sgl lvl updated hm. Tons of natural light, hdwd floors, vaulted ceilings, LR w/custom fireplace & sep alcove. Marvelous great rm, kit w/wine bar, sep pantry.

**Offered at \$1,335,000**

LAFAYETTE



**3819 Palo Alto Drive**

Wonderful Happy Valley 4bd/4ba home. Beautifully maintained & appointed. Newer kitchen w/lg eating area & fam rm. Ideal in-law set up. Walk to school.

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**20 Monticello Court**

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**90 Monte Cresta**

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WALNUT CREEK



**314 Warwick Drive**

Charming 4bd hm in Scottsdale w/sidewalks nr Heather Farms. Northgate HS, recreation areas & trails. Lots of updates, hdwd floors, great yard, large bedrooms.

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