**\$** 925-377-0977

# **MOFD** Increases Fire **Season Staffing**

#### **By Nick Marnell**

nous start and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District has bulked up to confront it.

The board of directors unanimously approved fire chief Stephen Healy's recent request for an increase extra fire season staffing will cost in minimum daily staffing from 17 to 19 firefighters through the end of November, which will allow the station alized from the new labor contract, ing the wildfire season.

"This gives us increased operational capacity," said Healy. Since crew at station 44 will no longer be primarily used on ambulance calls. during the fire season.

stress from three years of drought," employees," said MOFD union repsaid Healy, who noted that Northern resentative Mark DeWeese.

he fire season is off to an omi- California has experienced 11 significant fires this season as opposed to three in Southern California. The chief added that historically, the worst fires occur in October and November.

The district estimates that the \$250,000. But thanks to increased property tax revenue and savings re-45 ambulance to be fully staffed dur- the district projected a general fund surplus of more than \$400,000 before the additional personnel expense.

The firefighters union supported Medic 45 will be staffed full time, the the action, but it admonished the district to take the time to evaluate its financial situation before making any As a result, the station 44 engine will long term decisions on staffing numbe available 99 percent of the time bers, including the hiring of singleparamedics instead role of Already this summer two fires firefighters. "Before permanently damaged homes in Lamorinda, and in restoring staffing back to 19 we feel July the district suppressed four veg- it is equally important to look at etation fires. "Everything is under restoring salary and benefits to our

## **Two MOFD Seats** Uncontested

Moraga Division 1 race will appear rarely do. on the November ballot: Nate Bell Famulener.

Because the two races are uncontested, the Board of Supervisors has the option to appoint qualified candidates Brad Barber to the Orinda Division 4 seat and Steve Anderson to the seat in Division 3, which includes parts of both Moraga and Orinda. The supervisors

hree Moraga-Orinda Fire Dis- could require that the uncontested trict board seats are up for elec- races be placed on the ballot, but tion this November. The races for according to Contra Costa County two of the seats - Division 3 and Di- elections chief Joe Canciamilla, in vision 4 - are uncontested. Only the the interest of saving money they

What if voters wish to challenge will challenge incumbent Kathleen the presumed board appointee with a write-in candidate? "They can circulate a petition and request a special election," said Canciamilla. "But it is a very expensive process."

> Supervisor Candace Andersen said that the appointments would be announced at one of the regular Board of Supervisors meetings. N. Marnell





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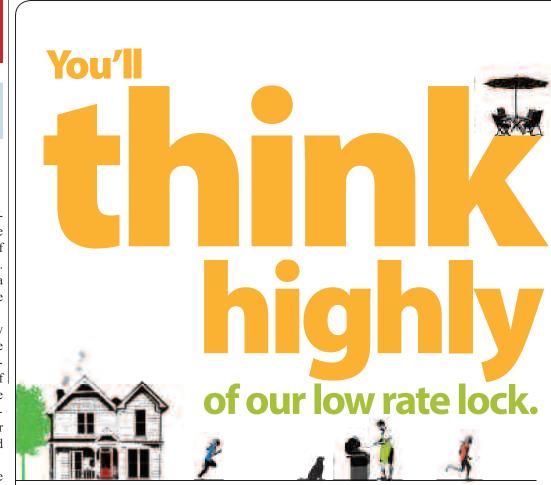
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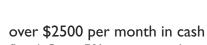
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### Civic News Lamorinda

# **On the Bus**

### **By Sophie Braccini**

he Lamorinda School Bus Program transports approximately 1,400 students daily to the area's elementary, intermediate and high schools – that's about 25 percent of the student population. This fall, the Lamorinda School Bus Program will also fulfill the Acalanes Union High for students enrolled in its English Language Learners program.

superintendent, said that the district's 12 ELL students have very different native languages, with a majority being Chinese and Spanish speakers. The English Language Learners curriculum is only offered at Las Lomas High School but is available to any student in the district whose first language is not English and who needs support entering high school - the district provides the transportation.

"We evaluated our transportation costs and it was prohibitively more expensive to transport the ELL students ourselves rather than contracting out," said Learned. The ELL bus route has only eight stops, so most students are picked up at central locations.

The Lamorinda School Bus Program contracts with First Student for Lamorinda. Orinda has the most – OIS alone has 10 different routes.

buses vanished years ago, but Contra www.lamorindaschoolbus.org.

Costa County voters passed a halfcent transportation sales tax (Measure J) that funds about half of the cost of school bus service in Lamorinda. Parents pay the rest; the price of a round trip annual pass is \$468 for the 2014-15 school year.

The bus program is governed by School District's transportation needs a Joint Powers Authority called the Lamorinda School Bus Transportation Agency, which is comprised of Chris Learned, AUHSD associate elected officials from each of the cities and school districts and is currently chaired by Lafayette mayor Don Tatzin and staffed by Hansen and administrative aide Sue Graves.

> "As the school year starts, we would like to remind our students and the whole population of a few important safety tips," said Hansen. Riders should always arrive five minutes early to the bus stop; stay within 10 feet of the bus; wait for permission from the driver before boarding or departing the bus; follow the driver's instructions about crossing the street and always cross in front of the bus, never behind it.

Hansen has a reminder for drivers, too. "All vehicles must stop on both sides when the bus displays flashing red warning lights and extends the stop signal arm. Vehicles bus service. With its 21 buses, First may not pass until the flashing red Student is able to service 37 routes in lights and signals are turned off," she said

There are still seats available on Program manager Juliet Hansen most of the school bus routes - for explains that state funding for school more information or to sign up, go to



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