

Published December 3rd, 2014

Local Government Goes Wild with Holiday Sweaters

By Cathy Tyson



Back Row: Associate Planner Michael Cass, Financial Services Manager Jennifer Wakeman, Administrative Assistant Dana Anderson, Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson, City Manager Steve Falk, Code Enforcement Officer Adam Foster. Front Row: Planning Technician Megan Canales, Accounting Assistant Cindy Lincoln, City Clerk Joanne Robbins, Assistant Planner Sarah Allen, Planning Director Niroop Srivatsa. Photo Ohlen Alexander

It was definitely not business as usual at the Lafayette city offices when municipal staffers and management got their holiday fashion groove on. It may have been the day before Thanksgiving, but these generous souls embraced the spirit of the season and unleashed their creative sides by donning festive, ingenious seasonal sweaters - just because we asked. Known for going all out on Halloween, planning staffers and administration, even the city manager and code enforcement officer, busted out an array of fantastic sweaters.

No more business casual for Tracy Robinson, administrative services director, who ordered a very cute cat Santa sweater from Amazon.com because she didn't have anything at home that fit the bill. Even the boss, holiday fashionista Steven Falk, was a good sport with his rockin' hand crafted sweater.

While it's clear the dedicated folks who keep Lafayette running love to express themselves, deep down, under the polyester and cotton, everyone is grateful for their co-workers and the supportive environment at the office throughout the year. City Manager Falk summed it up, "Given the planet's many daunting and intractable problems, it feels like a privilege to work every day with dozens of fun, smart, and committed people who are trying to improve at least one little corner of the world."

For offices looking to recreate the magic and mystique, there really is an official National Ugly Christmas Sweater Day on Dec. 12. No word yet if Lafayette staff will double down and duplicate the fun of their awesome outfits.

Diablo Valley Assistance League's Way Side Inn Thrift Shop, a gently-used-clothing store near Lafayette's Park Theater, has a Quirky Christmas Sweater event that kicked off on Nov. 25 for discriminating sweater shopping. Online vendors cater to all denominations at websites such as www.geltfiend.com, www.tipsyelves.com, and www.nflshop.com/ugly_sweaters. Opportunities abound in Lamorinda for those anxious to show off their holiday style - below are just a few!

Upcoming Community Events

- Moraga's annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony begins at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 4 at the Moraga Commons. Enjoy hot cocoa and cookies as you are entertained by the Rossmoor Community Chorus.

- It's a Wonderful Life! Celebrate the holidays with tree lighting, food, drinks, music and entertainment, children's activities, and Santa from 4 to 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 5 at Lafayette's Plaza Park.

- Don your favorite holiday garb and take a photo with Santa from noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6 at the Rheem Center in Moraga.

- Orinda Theatre Square becomes a Winter Wonderland on Saturday, Dec. 6. Build your own snowman, starting at noon, until the snow melts. There's a kids ornament workshop from 4 to 6 p.m.

- Hospice of the East Bay's Tree of Lights ceremonies offer members of the communities they serve a way to honor the lives of their friends and loved ones. Orinda Tree of Lights is at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6, in the Orinda Village parking lot by Bank of America. Moraga and Lafayette Tree of Lights is at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 14 at Moraga Country Club, 1600 St. Andrews Drive (www.hospiceeastbay.org).

- It will be a festive evening at Orinda Theatre Square starting at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13. Enjoy visits from Santa around the square, horse and carriage rides, holiday performances by Lamorinda Theatre Academy, free hot chocolate and gourmet coffee drinks, and a merry and bright close to the evening with a tree lighting at 7 p.m.

- Chabad of Contra Costa is sponsoring a menorah lighting at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 16 at Whole Foods in Lafayette. Their annual Grand Menorah Lighting in Walnut Creek will take place Sunday, Dec. 21 from 4 to 6 p.m. in Walnut Creek's Civic Park. The event will feature the largest menorah in the county, the Red Panda Chinese Acrobats, music, doughnuts, dreidels, face painting, latkes and more, and is open to all.

For more holiday events and activities, see page B8.



Santa Claus arrives at last year's It's a Wonderful Life event in Lafayette.

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