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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 Nirroop Srivatsa. Photo Ohlen Alexander

Local Government Goes Wild with Holiday Sweaters

Plenty of opportunities for holiday cheer in Lamorinda - pages A12 and B8

By Cathy Tyson

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.

... continued on page A12

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Safe, Affordable, Accepting – The Definition of 'Home'

By Laurie Snyder



"There's a growing need for more housing because the incidence of autism, for example, is escalating. Most of the severely affected autistics will never be independent," said Orinda resident Glen Petersen as he spoke before the Orinda City Council in July. His son, Aaron, was just two years old when diagnosed with autism. Photo Ohlen Alexander

"The reason I'm here is I'm very passionate about the problem of housing," said Orindan Glen Petersen as he began his allotted public forum minutes at a July Orinda City Council meeting. The council was in the midst of one of many discussions it has held regarding updates Orinda is making to the Housing Element of its General Plan. Petersen's presentation has so resonated with attendees that *Lamorinda Weekly* is revisiting the reason for his decision to speak in preparation for the City Council's Dec. 9 meeting when it will again discuss the Housing Element.

"There are a lot of parents with disabled kids who know their kids will never be independent. Eighty percent of those will live at home with their parents until they pass," said Petersen, a physician and 24-year Orinda resident with a 26-year-old autistic son. He and his fellow members of Sunflower Hill (www.sunflowerhill.org) have been working to improve the quality of life not just for their own kids, but because there is

a growing need for supportive housing with the escalation of autism diagnoses nationwide. "Most of the severely affected autistics will never be independent."

The children involved with Sunflower Hill range in age from 14 to 28. And one thing they all have in common, said Petersen, "is that they will fit the needs of the RHNA [Regional Housing Needs Allocation] requirements for individuals needing very low-income housing."

"Our kids grow up, turn 18, and then we find ourselves asking, 'Is there life after high school? Where will our children go?'" said Susan Houghton, Sunflower's executive director. Her own son receives just \$800 per month in Social Security, which will be cut if he earns any income. Young adults like her son "either have to live with their parents or the state pays for them to live in a group home, which can end up costing the government up to \$40,000 for one person to share one bedroom with another resident."

... continued on page A7

Life in Lamorinda B1-B10

Caldecott's history revealed in pictures - page B2.



Sports C1-C3

Gaels start the season strong - page C2.



Our Homes D1-D12

Feng shui fixes for the living room - page D6.





Lafayette Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Dec. 8, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 15, 7 p.m. canceled
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Dec. 8, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
Wednesday, Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m.
AUHSD Board Room
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
Stanley Library
3477 School St., Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
Phone: (925) 284-1968

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org



Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report, Nov. 9-15

Alarms	33
911 Calls	9
Battery	
3200 block Camino Diablo	
Burglary, Auto	
3200 block Mt Diablo	
Craigslist Snafu	
3600 block Cerrito Ct	
DUI	
Mt Diablo Bl/Moraga Rd	
Fireworks	
3400 block Lana Ln	
Sweet Dr/Walnut Ln	
Fire/EMS Response	
3200 block Mt Diablo Bl	
Found Adult	
Lafayette PD report	
Harassment	
3500 block Brook St	
Hit & Run	
Safeway	
Deer Hill Rd/Brown Av	
Petty Theft	
900 block Victoria Ct	
3400 block Golden Gate	
100 block Bacon Ct	
1300 block El Curtola	
Loud Party	
Shangri La/Silver Del Rd	
10 block Roxanne	
Promiscuous Shooting	
700 block Las Trampas	
S Pearldale Dr/Upper Happy Valley	
Dewing Av/Walnut St	
Reckless Driving	
Pleasant Hill Rd/Hwy 24	
Upper Happy Valley/El Nido Ranch Rd	
O'Connor Dr/Moraga Rd	
Moraga Rd/School St	
Suspicious	
Circumstances	8
Vehicle	15
Subject	4
Traffic Stops	65
Vandalism	
50 block Lafayette Cr	
Vehicle Theft	
3800 block Happy Valley Rd	

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School District Asks for Rent-to-Own Deal for Old Library

By Cathy Tyson

Starting on Jan. 1 the Lafayette School District will rent the old library building and adjacent parking area from the City of Lafayette, at a monthly rate of \$8,229, if its request is approved. The lease will be on a month to month basis for a maximum of 28 months, expiring on April 1, 2017. The district will have the option to purchase the facility at any time, for the then-appraised value; accrued rent would be deducted from

the purchase price. City Manager Steven Falk was directed by the City Council at its Nov. 24 meeting to negotiate with the school district superintendent. He made it clear that, "The district would lease/purchase the building as-is, and therefore be responsible for any demolition or renovation needed."

The Old Library Reuse Task Force sought the highest and best use for two properties owned by the city

– the old library property and the parcel across the street at 949 Moraga Road. Ultimately the task force recommended that the old library building be used for a public purpose – either as a new location for the city offices or by the Lafayette School District. The property was purchased in 2013 for \$1.97 million and is currently uninhabitable.

City staff recommends clarification of a number of steps in order to

move forward. First, review the modifications the district needs to make and determine whether they are acceptable to the City Council. Next, get approval from the county to sell the property to the district. Finally, due to government regulations, offer the property to other public agencies; if there's no interest, draft a Lease-Purchase Agreement for consideration by the City Council and the school district governing board.

Reducing Traffic Congestion Gets High Marks

By Cathy Tyson

At a recent meeting of the collaborative Traffic Safety Task Force, the principals of Happy Valley and Springhill elementary schools reported major improvements in the twice per day traffic mess associated with student drop off and pick up. "We are light years ahead," said Teresa Gerringer, school board president, "from where we were to where we are."

Both schools took a comprehensive look at the problem with input from parents, teachers, police, city council representatives and the city manager, to make concrete changes to improve congestion.

At Happy Valley Elementary a pilot program will soon morph into a more permanent solution with inner and outer pick up lanes, to hopefully alleviate what had been a quarter mile back up on Happy Valley Road weekdays around the school bell schedule. Neighbors weren't pleased with the situation, and parents were frustrated at the gridlock just to pick up a child from school.

Over Thanksgiving break at Happy Valley Elementary, lines were painted on the front turn around by the main office to clearly mark double lanes, which will accommodate twice the volume of vehicles – and more parking spaces were added, in an effort to get cars off of Happy Valley Road. Parents are also encouraged to slightly delay their pick up time to alleviate the peak crunch period after school: there's an 18-minute window from 2:42 to 3 p.m. when students are supervised. Principal Shayna Peeff asked that families avoid picking up kids on Franklin Lane, and consider carpooling or having kids walk or ride a bike.

"Franklin Lane is kind of chaotic," said officer Larry Seliga at the recent meeting, describing it as a social event for parents and kids hanging out on the center island. Police want kids to know that they cannot hang out on the center island, and kids were given coloring books and pencils as a reward for getting off the island.

"It's been pretty friendly so far, but we have met with some resistance from parents," said Seliga, who started with gentle

reminders, but plans in the near future to be issuing citations.

An older gentleman representing the neighborhood who lives on Franklin Lane calls the situation "unsatisfactory," stating the school site itself is the proper location for student pick up and drop off.

"Our priority is that the kids are safe," said Peeff, acknowledging that the congestion on Happy Valley Road is a problem. She explained that with the new double lanes and 12 new parking spaces, more cars can get onto school property so fewer cars will be on the side streets.

According to City Manager Steven Falk, the city has spent over a million dollars over the past 18 years to install comprehensive walkways on Happy Valley Road and Upper Happy Valley. "It's way better than it was," he said.

Both Happy Valley and Springhill

elementary schools had a coalition of interested parties who methodically looked at constructive ways to solve their schools' problems, starting with goals, forming strategies to meet those goals, considering resources, timeline, and an evaluation process, and establishing a system to manage the improvements.

The focus at Springhill Elementary was the front parking lot; getting more cars efficiently into the student pick up zones, having a consistent staff team to facilitate the pick-up process, adding a crossing guard at the crosswalk on San Reliez Court, and moving the buses to a different area on campus, according to interim principal Pat Gargiulo. While it used to take 15 to 16 minutes to clear the Springhill parking lot, it's now down to seven minutes, a measureable improvement.

Ultimately a wish list that in-

cludes speed tables, bollards (short vertical posts to control traffic), asphalt marking, flashing lights and a permanent mobile speed sign will be generated by the school district that will need to go through the Circulation Commission then to the City Council for approval and funding.

Next up for traffic improvement are Burton Valley and Lafayette elementary schools and Stanley Middle School. While the general plan is similar to Happy Valley and Springhill - do a complete assessment, develop a list of priorities and so on, Lafayette Elementary and Stanley will be much more difficult to find solutions for, due mainly to Moraga Road. "It's a gigantic complicated system," said Falk, adding that he's not optimistic that it will be easily or cheaply solved. "It's one of the many reasons the city is embarking on the downtown traffic study."

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Meet the Newest School Board Member

By Cathy Tyson



Suzy Pak Photo provided

One current board member, Art Kapoor, will step down when his term ends this month, thus opening up a seat. Two existing members – Teresa Gerring, the current board president who has served since 2000, and David Gerson, who is currently serving as clerk of the board and joined in 2010 – chose to continue on the board.

Pak's husband, Mark Gundacker, was very supportive of his wife throwing her hat in the ring for the seat, suggesting that since his wife attends so many school meetings, perhaps she ought to think about running for the board.

A product of California's public schools, Pak has a bachelor's degree in economics from UC Santa Cruz and an MBA from San Jose State University. ... continued on page A8

Quick Resolution to Downtown Armed Robbery

By Cathy Tyson

After ending his shift at a nearby store at 10:30 p.m. on Nov. 26, a man was approached while walking back to his car, which was parked in a lot near the corner of Deer Hill Road and First Street, by two men in their 20s wearing hoodies. One of the suspects raised his shirt and displayed a handgun tucked in his waistband, then demanded the would-be victim's wallet. The employee took off running and eventually climbed a fence onto Highway 24 to escape.

The suspects gave chase, but found more convenient victims as two other employees approached the parking lot. Upon seeing the robbers flashing their gun, the workers wisely proceeded to hand over their wallets and other personal property. Once the bad guys got the goods, they ran to a waiting orange Honda Element on First Street.

Despite the Thanksgiving holiday, the next day the search was on for the vehicle and the suspects. A neighborhood camera system in the area had images that matched a general description of the vehicle, complete with license plate number. Turns out the car had already been impounded following another robbery in Oakland, and one suspect had been arrested. Property found in the car matched what was lifted from the Lafayette victims.

"This incident is unique for the City of Lafayette,

but is indicative of the incidents that can occur in any downtown area at night," said Police Chief Eric Christensen in a recent Crime Bulletin. He suggested that it's best to walk in pairs and have a flashlight or a cell phone handy, and to surrender your property if confronted. "A watch, a phone or a wallet are not worth being injured over," he said.

Christensen also confirmed by phone that the suspects and their vehicle, after leaving Lafayette, found their way to Grizzly Peak Boulevard in Berkeley where, according to news reports, they allegedly robbed and kidnapped two people, who were sitting in their car enjoying the view, and forced them to drive to an ATM and withdraw money.

Lafayette police will be increasing their patrols downtown at night, and working with businesses to ensure their employees are safe. Cops are looking for additional information regarding the incident and the vehicle – please contact the department office at (925) 283-3680 or send an email via the tip line to 94549Tip@gmail.com.



Photo provided

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Peter Liu, Kirsten Buckley, Lilli Rath, Elena & Larry Hood

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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 15, 6 p.m.
Hacienda De las Flores, La Sala,
2100 Donald Dr.

Design Review

Monday, Dec. 8, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District
Tuesday, Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

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

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org
Moraga Citizens' Network:
www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



Moraga Police Department

Residential burglary, 11/19/14 Sometime between 1 and 10 a.m. a Benedita Place garage was entered through the partially open garage door. The suspect(s) entered a vehicle parked inside and rifled through its contents – several items including a spare car key and set of silverware were taken.

Truck stolen, 11/20/14 A fellow left the keys under the front seat of his 1993 Toyota pickup while he was doing lawn maintenance in the rear of a Tharp Drive home. A witness saw a male between 20 and 30 years old, wearing a white jacket, take off in the truck. Motive plus opportunity = bumper.

Residential burglary, 11/21/14 Jewelry and electronics valued at \$2,500 were taken from a Calle La Mesa home. No signs of forced entry; the incident is under investigation.

Hit and Run, 11/21/14 A car was parked overnight on Sanders Drive and was struck by an unknown vehicle. The person who reported the incident didn't see or hear anyone hit his car, but obviously noticed damage in the morning. Sadly, no note was left by the scofflaw. No suspects or leads at this time. 'Fess up, possible culprit – it's the holidays.

Bicyclist vs. Car, 11/23/14 Officers located a bicyclist on the ground at the intersection of St. Mary's Road and Bollinger Canyon Road. A witness saw the cyclist riding his bike at a faster speed than the vehicle in front of him. The biker hit the car and fell to the ground. The cyclist stated he was riding when a vehicle crowded him on the left side while attempting to pass him. As the car slowed down the biker rear ended the car in front of him. The car that he bumped kept going. The fire department arrived on the scene and took the cyclist to the hospital.

Car stolen, 11/23/14 A red 1994 Jeep Wrangler was taken from a carport sometime between Nov. 23 and Nov. 24 at an apartment complex on Moraga Road. No suspects or leads at this time.

Invisible concert tickets, 11/21/14 A Saint Mary's College student attempted to buy concert tickets, so sent \$300 to the alleged seller via a pre-

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Paradigm Shift for Hacienda de las Flores

By Sophie Braccini

The historic Hacienda de las Flores held the Moraga Town Council's attention on Nov. 18 when the financial report on the town's cost to maintain the beautiful buildings and grounds was on the agenda – along with a vision-altering plan presented by resident Joao Magalhaes to transform the charming property into a world class leisure public/private facility. It was not the first time the retired Bechtel executive has suggested that the town kick it up a notch when it projects itself into the future, but it was the first time that the council embraced the idea and decided to move forward.

The plan has enough bells and whistles to dazzle anyone. It focuses on expanding the utilization of the Hacienda and increasing revenues, while preserving the building's historical value. Magalhaes believes that harnessing the professionalism and capitalistic energy of world class architects and operators in a public/private

partnership could transform the Hacienda de las Flores into an attractive facility that would draw more people to Moraga while continuing to serve residents.

According to Magalhaes, the Hacienda of the future could include new classrooms, event venues and a multi-generational community center for the town; and space leased to a private partner could end up as a bed and breakfast/restaurant, a tea room/library, a swimming pool/spa at the Pavilion, and a wine cave/cellar for rehearsal dinners. His financial analysis leads him to believe that the facility would produce half a million dollars in revenue per year that would be split between the town and its partner.

For the Moraga resident who says that all he wants is to see our little town flourish, the most important thing at this time is the selection of a first class architecture firm that will have the vision and the connections to create something special in Moraga.

As Councilmember Mike Metcalf noted, the town has operated the Hacienda at a loss for several years and the structure is in need of major repairs. Although the Hacienda Foundation has done a lot to maintain and improve the facility, much work remains; so Metcalf welcomed Magalhaes' proposal to change the way things are done.

Councilmember Dave Trotter and vice mayor Roger Wykle both predicted that the interface between the private and public future use of the building would be the most challenging articulation to plan.

Members of the Hacienda Foundation who were present at the meeting all confirmed that they wholeheartedly support Magalhaes' approach and its objective to expand utilization and generate revenues. Town staff also recommended moving forward with the first phase, including issuing a Request for Qualifications for architectural firms

to prepare conceptual plans for the best use of the property. This phase will cost the town only staff time. Council members asked to see the RFQ before it is sent out, because they want to make sure that the terms are open enough to let creative juices flow. Staff expects to have a draft ready in February.

Even if everything runs smoothly, it is likely that the project will generate a lot of public debate when the preliminary concepts are designed, when the analysis to confirm the viability of the concept is considered, and when potential end-operators are selected. In the meantime, and to improve revenues now, staff proposed to extend the hours of operation for weddings to 10 p.m., since closing at 9 p.m. seems to be the reason many rental opportunities are lost; and to reconsider the rule that prohibits hard alcohol on the premises. These measures will be brought back at a future council meeting; neighbors will be duly notified.

Town Falling Behind on Asset Replacement

By Sophie Braccini

A subgroup of Moraga's Audit and Finance Committee recently presented the results of its study of the town's asset replacement plan. The two volunteers assessed the value of town-owned properties – leaving out roads, drains and building frames. They calculated the annual amount the town should set aside to replace these assets and how much should have been saved by now, and presented their stark findings to the Town Council. According to the two financiers, the town should be saving more than \$600,000 a year; since that hasn't happened, they estimate the current unfunded depreciation balance to be more than \$5 million.

"We used the same rules homeowner associations employ," explained Tom Kennedy, who formed the subcommittee along with Tim Freeman. "HOAs have the legal obligation to save for asset replacement, but cities do not."

The methodology was simple: they listed all the town's assets that will have to be replaced in the foreseeable future, excluding roads and drains that are part of the Measure K plan, and building frames because, if properly maintained, those can last for a very long time. Included are building components that will have to be replaced such as roofs, lighting, carpeting, windows, landscaping; park components such as irrigation, lighting, restrooms; parking lots; traffic signals; police and public works vehicles; and information technology equipment.

Freeman and Kennedy worked

paid credit card, as requested. The reporting person never received the tickets and the phone number for the "seller" is no longer working.

In addition, the following crimes were reported in Moraga Nov. 18-25:

Identity Theft

Ascot Dr

False Alarm

Country Club Dr

Alderbrook

School St

Tharp Dr

Violin and Flute Stolen

Camino Pablo

Petty Theft

Shuey Dr

Woodside Dr

Rimer Dr

with Moraga's Engineering Department to determine when the assets were purchased, when they should be replaced and how much that would cost. "We looked at data indicating what the useful life of an asset is supposed to be, and added a few years to it since we know Moraga's frugal practices," said Freeman.

Their calculations indicated a need to save \$627,000 per year to compensate for the depreciation of the town's assets. As of now, the asset replacement fund that was established in 1989 has a balance of \$114,000, while the unfunded accumulated depreciation is just over \$5.1 million according to Freeman and Kennedy. Their recommendations are to modify the town's reserve pol-

icy so when the General Fund balance exceeds 50 percent of the expenditures, the excess is placed in the asset replacement fund; to immediately transfer \$1 million of the Palos Colorados Development Fund to asset replacement; and to move forward with transferring 50 percent of future development fees coming from that project to asset replacement.

Councilmember Phil Arth agreed. "Depreciation is a silent killer, like high pressure for humans," he said.

Councilmember Mike Metcalf challenged the subcommittee to present the list of all of the assets and their valuation, and suggested that many of them were probably associated with the Hacienda de las Flores; if the plans changed for that property, he

noted, all figures would have to be re-evaluated. Councilmember Dave Trotter indicated that the Palos developer fees had been forecast for recreation use, and that he could not agree to diverting so much of the money to an asset replacement fund unless a comprehensive discussion about the spending priorities for those funds is conducted.

Mayor Ken Chew, whose term ends this month, insisted on prudent management of future revenue. "I don't know why people would have a problem with saving money," he said.

The council agreed to continue the discussion and consider questions related to finding the means for asset replacement and spending priorities for the Palos Colorados developer fees.

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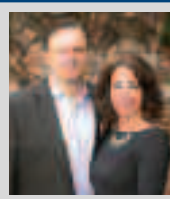
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Planning Commission Approves Controversial Development Project

By Sophie Braccini



Rendering of the Moraga Center development.

Image provided

The Moraga Planning Commission approved the conceptual plan for 36 attached units, townhomes and duplexes, located between Moraga Way and Country Club Drive, next to fire station 41. The commissioners found that the project was in compliance with the Moraga Center Specific Plan that was approved four years ago. The commission's decision was ap-

pealed by a trio of residents, Richard Olsen, Denise Coane, and Scott Bowhay, who are opposed to a project they believe is misplaced along the scenic corridor. The Town Council will review the project de novo at an upcoming meeting.

It was one of those nights when staff have to pull additional chairs into the library meeting room to accommodate a large crowd as numer-

ous residents came to the Nov. 17 Planning Commission meeting to express their opinions about the project proposed by City Ventures on the vacant 3-acre lot.

The meeting started with a staff presentation that highlighted recent modifications to a plan that began over two years ago with a 55-unit configuration.

... continued on page A8

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Safe, Affordable, Accepting – The Definition of ‘Home’

... continued from page A1

Plus, there is the humanity factor. “Our kids are in the middle – not high functioning like children with Asperger’s, but they don’t have behavioral issues. Many also have no physical disabilities so they can contribute to society. They just need supportive housing with a vocational track,” says Houghton. “We’re trying to work with cities to let them know that this type of housing helps fulfill California’s low-income requirement but without negative impacts because our kids don’t drive and have either aged out of school or have other education options.”

Right now, in Orinda alone, there are 100 individuals with developmental delays who need or will need affordable, supportive, safe housing. And that need is clearly a long-term one for Orinda because 42 percent of that 100 are age 14 and under. Plus, there are

275 others needing help in Lafayette with another 100 in Moraga.

“My wife and I have explored every adult living option possible since our son was 14,” wrote Orinda resident Tobin Travarthen, whose son recently aged out of school. “He desperately wants to be like everyone else. He wants to make his own way.” They have found ways to get him from a day program, but “the conflict of letting go and wondering if he will catch the right train or the right bus and get off at the right location gnaws at us. Will he be able to push the button to cross the street of a busy highway while navigating drivers and drivers who are not aware of his situation? The irony is this fear could happen to the parents of any teenager looking down at a phone instead of paying attention. But, for adults with special needs, a large dose of empathy and

compassion is also needed to get them to their destination.”

These are just a few of the reasons why Sunflower Hill leaders hope to create an intentional community that offers individuals with developmental disabilities “a community within a community” – safe, affordable housing provided in tandem with meaningful work opportunities and the freedom to join in community activities or not – in an atmosphere where the residents will feel supported and valued, and be inspired to develop true friendships.

While each Orindan has his or her own idea of what makes a house a home, common ground in the ongoing housing element debate appears to reside in the words of Maya Angelou: “The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.”

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<p>MORAGA \$1,395,000 4/3. Terrific Sanders Ranch home. Single level with nice backyard with patio, lawn and gardens. Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247</p>	<p>ORINDA \$1,950,900 4/4. New Construction, Lot 7! Visit OrindaOaks.com. Buyer may select finishes. Front landscaping and fencing included.</p>	<p>LAFAYETTE \$1,399,000 4/2.5. Updated, Mt. D vu's, pvt/gated, ofc & bonus rm, lrg mstr suite, 3-car gar, light, xtra pkg. Tom Stack CalBRE#01501769</p>	<p>LAFAYETTE \$1,395,000 3/2.5. Amazing space for indoor/outdoor entertaining w/sweeping views! Near town, Bart, & schools! Brooke Korkut CalBRE#01958174</p>
<p>ORINDA \$1,095,000 4/2.5. Nestled among the oaks in OCC. Vaulted ceilings, hdw floors, walls of windows. Views! Bo Sullivan CalBRE#00954395</p>	<p>MORAGA \$1,029,000 4/2.5. Gorgeous contemporary. Spacious rooms. Back yard oasis with pool. Valley view. Rick & Nancy Booth CalBRE#01388020/01341390</p>	<p>ORINDA \$995,000 4/2. Opportunity in Orinda! 2463 sqft on 1.43 acre lot, also included is adjacent 1.22 acre lot. Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247</p>	<p>MORAGA \$749,000 3/2.5. Charming townhome. Desirable floor plan w/high end European wndws, H/W flrs, updated kitchen, approx 2109 SF. Quinn Berg CalBRE#01872891</p>
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Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis.

email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

I like to see citizens recognized for making Moraga better, so here are my first three Walwark Prizes:

Dave Trotter, who was recently re-elected to the Moraga Town Council, took down his campaign signs on election day. That's right, even before the polls closed. I'm sure many Moragans would agree with me that the sooner the signs go away after each election, the better. Thanks Dave. Bill Snider, the competitive proprietor of Moraga Hardware, was unable to provide what one customer wanted recently. As the man was leaving the store, Bill called out to him to try OSH. I couldn't believe my ears, and when Bill saw the look on my face he explained that he wanted to keep the money in Moraga. Sales taxes on Moraga purchases are paying for the work on our streets, he emphasized. Nice going.

Tim Freeman, a past president of the Kiwanis Club, came up with the idea a few years ago to raise money by selling See's candy at Christmas time. He then made it happen so effectively that this activity has become the Club's largest source of money for its charitable donations, from the three Lamorinda education foundations to the Food Bank. All of the profit from sales at the store next to Starbucks in Rheem goes to these contributions. Tim is still actively involved in this project. Good man.

Dale Walwark

Moraga

deputy pull over 35+ bicyclist, because they had no regard to the traffic laws (Stop Sign) on St. Mary's Rd. As I witness drivers moving slowly past the sheriff's vehicle, each driver gave a thumb's up to the officer. I just realized, I was not the only one frustrated with the bicyclist not following basic traffic laws. Thanks again for the Lafayette Sheriff's Department leadership in this ongoing issue.

Daniel I Bernie
Lafayette

Editor:

I believe your paper should do a front page article in the next edition on the issues that Mr. Cohn brought up about the Moraga-Orinda fire district's major unfunded pension and health care liabilities. If I interpreted Mr. Cohn's math correctly the unfunded liability is \$80,000,000 which will continue to grow. As a Moraga resident I am concerned that this will continue to grow and that the Orinda/Moraga taxpayer will be stuck with the bill. I am sure a majority of Orinda/Moraga residents are unaware of how serious this problem is. I just want this issue to be transparent so that we as a community can decide what should be done. Thank you.

Best,
Tom Frainier
Moraga

(Editor's note: Please visit our archives to read our past coverage of the above issue --www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0714/Reality-Is-Setting-In-MOFD-acknowledges-painful-times-ahead.html; www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0720/Soaring-Pension-Debt-Confirmed.html; http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0717/Task-Force-Speaks-Out.html).

Editor:

Sheriff's Department Doing the Right Thing!
Noon time on Sunday, Nov. 23. I witnessed one single

Civic News Lafayette

Meet the Newest School Board Member

... continued from page A3

She's been an active community volunteer, serving on a number of boards, including the Springhill Elementary Parent Faculty Club, Lafayette for Education, and Educate our State; she also worked on the parcel tax campaigns of 2011 and 2014.

Clearly an adept multitasker, Pak, the mother of two girls, has been serving the community while working in asset management for more than two decades. She works for ClearBridge Investments in San Francisco as a client service manager.

Despite the busy schedule, Pak and Gundacker are passionate about the power of public education and have made it a family priority to give back to the community.

She's well aware of the relatively recent changes to school funding with the Local Control Funding Formula and cites the importance of the recently passed parcel tax as a "great testament of the value the community places on supporting public schools."

State mandated Common Core requirements, which establish clear, consistent standards for students focusing on critical thinking and analytical skills, is now in its first year of implementation and is the "new normal," says Pak. In her opinion the local roll out has been relatively smooth, due to a substantial amount of professional development for teachers along with a concerted outreach effort to parents.

Pak wants to encourage parents

and members of the community to attend the monthly school board meetings, to become even more aware and involved. Meetings are generally held at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the Stanley Middle School library, 3455 School Street. Pak will be officially sworn in at the Dec. 10 meeting. The public is welcome to attend the meeting, not only to welcome the newest board member but to also hear about items on the agenda ranging from a technology update to a draft of the 2015-16 calendar and the first interim budget report. For more information and a schedule of board meetings, go to www.lafsd.k12.ca.us.

Civic News Moraga

Planning Commission Approves Controversial Development Project

... continued from page A5

Ella Samonsky, associate planner, discussed the 35-foot landscaped buffer, 20 feet from the town's right of way; the increased setback of the third story from the street; and the 90 planned parking spaces. She stated that the project complies with the Moraga Center Specific Plan, which governs this lot.

Most of the residents who spoke during the public comment period were opposed to the project. "I can accurately attest to the fact that at no time has any developer tried to inflict on Moraga anything as ugly, massive, and high density. The very reason we incorporated Moraga 40 years ago was to make sure that no development such as the one proposed by City Ventures would ever be approved," said Dick Olsen. Others criticized a density not compatible with the scenic corridor, including resident Scott Bowhay who described it as a good

design in the wrong place. Many residents of Moraga Country Club expressed concerns over parking and traffic along Country Club Drive. Two residents said they support the project -- they view it as a well-conceived project that adds density and vibrancy to the town center.

Commissioners Stacia Levenfeld, Steve Woehleke and chair Christine Kuckuk noted that the extent of the commission's power was to decide whether or not the plan was compliant with the Moraga Center Specific Plan. "I can't find any reason to say no," said Woehleke. They noted that the project was true to the spirit of a plan that seeks to bring higher density downtown, and encourage bicycling to shops.

Commissioner Tom Marnane expressed his approval for the concept, and so did new commissioner Alexandra Babcock -- in terms quite fresh for

the commission. "Funny to see how all of you residents who came here 15 to 30 years ago to build a family, now are opposed to the kind of development that would allow your own children to build a family here," she said. Babcock also inquired if the developer would pay traffic impact fees that could be applied to a Lamorinda-to-BART shuttle.

Only commissioner Frank Comprelli opposed the adoption of the plan. His opposition stemmed from a proposed 10,000 square foot park that he found grossly inadequate and misplaced.

Commissioner Teresa Onoda, who was just elected to the Town Council, recused herself from the meeting so that her participation would not be challenged when the council makes a final decision regarding the Moraga Center Homes project.



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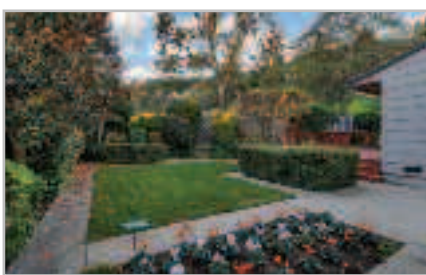
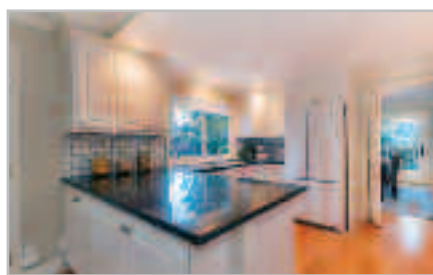
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Civic News Fire Districts

The Long and Winding Road

By Nick Marnell

Mergers and acquisitions are again the rage. In November, the company that produces Botox was absorbed by rival drug firm Actavis for \$66 billion. Oil service firm Halliburton recently paid \$35 billion to purchase competitor Baker Hughes. Both deals expect to close late next year. Not to be outdone, Lamorinda has its own quasi-merger in the works. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District announced a proposed consolidation of two fire stations in early 2013, with the resultant station 46 expected to save \$1 million in operating costs per year for each district.

"We are very close to an agreement that we can bring to our boards," said the MOFD fire chief. Except it wasn't current chief Stephen Healy who said that; those words were spoken by then-chief Randall Bradley in April, 2013.

The idea for a single fire station to replace MOFD station 43 in Orinda and ConFire station 16 in Lafayette was hatched by MOFD chief Jim Johnston in 1999. It went nowhere. But when the county closed ConFire station 16 because of a budget shortfall in 2012, and with MOFD station 43 requiring major renovations, ConFire chief Daryl Louder approached Bradley to reignite the station 46 concept. Bradley agreed and he took the consolidation idea to the MOFD board of directors, which gave him thumbs up to negotiate with ConFire.

But the county Board of Supervi-

sors, acting as the ConFire board of directors, nixed the deal. The money to even partially fund the reopening of a closed station just wasn't there. "It was the right idea at the wrong time," said supervisor Federal Glover in May, 2013.

Subscribing to the theory that the right idea at the wrong time is still the right idea, MOFD president John Wyro worked to keep station 46 alive despite the loss of its obvious partner. He led the district in the formation of a joint powers agreement with Lafayette to purchase a parcel for the station site. He preached the benefits of station 46 to county and Lafayette officials who, upset with ConFire's performance, had formed a task force to consider alternative delivery of fire service. "I was concerned that there were opportunities being lost and that I needed to develop more information," he said.

The turning point came in March, when new ConFire chief Jeff Carman forced the hand of the Lafayette Emergency Services Task Force, which had considered recommending secession from ConFire. Before he presented an updated station 46 proposal to his board, Carman insisted on an answer from Lafayette officials: was the city committed to the district?

After hearing a dramatic presentation by assistant chief Alan Hartford on the state of affairs at ConFire, the task force recommended station 46 to the Lafayette City Council, which concurred. In June, the ConFire directors, based on rosier financial pro-

jections and a more thorough presentation by the chief, authorized Carman to negotiate an agreement with MOFD.

"We're close," said Carman at the Nov. 18 task force meeting. Once the operational structure of the new station is worked out with the firefighters' union, and other details, including task force feedback, are finalized, Carman expects that an agreement will be presented to both boards early next year. "I believe that this time, the supervisors will do the right thing, and approve the deal," said Lafayette fire commissioner Bill Granados, who accurately predicted that they would reject the proposal in 2013.

After the official approval, station 46 faces public scrutiny. A north Orinda grass roots group, The Committee to Save Honey Hill Fire Station, started a petition drive in November to stop the station 46 project, citing an increase in response times for Orinda and Moraga once station 43 closes. Michael Yim, a resident of El Castillo Lane, adjacent to the station 46 site, delivered a thoughtful presentation to the MOFD board at its Nov. 19 meeting requesting transparency on the progress of the construction of the new station.

An idea that has held course despite 15 years of wrinkles, delays and detours may finally come to fruition with the 2015 groundbreaking of station 46 - possibly before patients begin injecting Botox supplied by its new parent company.

Night Closure for Fourth Bore Dec. 12



Photo Nick Marnell

The California Department of Transportation will conduct an emergency response drill in the Caldecott Tunnel between 10 p.m. on Dec. 12 and 4 a.m. on Dec. 13, weather permitting. During the drill, the Fourth Bore will close down.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District voluntarily participates in the drill, which will include fire simulation, a crash simulation and simulated smoke. Caltrans advises motorists to expect delays and to plan for extra travel time. -N. Marnell



Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors Meetings

Next meeting:

Wednesday, Dec. 17
check website for updates

(Go to www.mofd.org as the meeting date approaches for location and more information)



ConFire Board of Directors Meeting

Next meeting:

Tuesday, Dec. 9
check website for updates

Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St. Martinez (Agenda at <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>)

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

In Memory

Joan Donovan Zappettini

March 11, 1928 – November 17, 2014
Resided in Orinda



Joan Donovan Zappettini was graced by a peaceful passing on Monday, November 17, 2014, in her home, surrounded by her loving family after 86 years of a blessed life. Joan was born to Genevieve Morgan Donovan and Augustine Michael Donovan on March 11, 1928. She was raised in Oakland and graduated from Stanford University in 1950 with a Bachelors Degree in Art. She married Donald Merrill Zappettini in 1951 and they resided in Orinda, CA, for 59 years. Joan is remembered for being a devoted mother to her 4 daughters, Mary Anne Stilwill (Frank) of

McCall, ID, Carol Marie Zappettini (deceased), Isabella Donna Zappettini of Oceanside, CA, and Gail Elizabeth Pearson (Todd) of Lafayette, CA, and for being a loving grandmother to her grandson, Jeremy Zappettini Pearson (age 11).

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Monday, November 24, 2014 at St. Monica Catholic Church, Moraga. Graveside services for both Joan and Don were held the same day at Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Joan's name may be sent to Sutter Care At Home Gift Processing (hospice services), 2855 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 601, Berkeley, CA 94705, (800) 698-1273, the Association of Christian Therapists, 6728 Old Mclean Village Dr., Mclean, VA, 22301, San Francisco Opera, Development Department, 301 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 565-3212, and Second Chance Recovery Center, 107 Jackson St., Hayward, CA, 94544, (510) 886-8696.

Glennys Christie Dec. 4, 1933-Nov. 15, 2014



Glennys Christie, a former editor of the *Lafayette Squire*, has died of cancer at her home in Florida. Christie, 80, was a longtime resident of Lafayette and Walnut Creek who went from a one-room Canadian schoolhouse to the University of British Columbia and Stanford University, where she earned a Master's degree in journalism and worked briefly for the San Francisco News.

While raising five children in Lafayette, she became editor in 1971 of the weekly *Squire*, a free community newspaper that challenged the Leshner newspaper group, publisher of the Lafayette Sun. As editor she championed the extension of BART through the Caldecott Tunnel and helped forge the identity of newly-incorporated Lafayette. Her editorials and headlines were witty and direct: the family of former Lafayette mayor Don Black remembers fondly the election banner

"Lafayette Elects Black Mayor."

When the *Squire* folded in 1974, Christie became communications director for Orindawoods, one of the earliest planned communities in California. There she wrote the state's first Environmental Impact Report to comply with new environmental legislation. After founding a public relations consultancy, she worked closely with the Eugene O'Neill National Monument Foundation to get the playwright's former home, Tao House in Danville, designated as a National Historic Site. She also served as director of public information for the Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools during the tenure of Richard LaPointe.

In the 1980s Christie relocated to Point Roberts, Washington, a small peninsula attached to the Canadian mainland, where she co-founded a monthly newspaper, the *All Point Bulletin*. She became a naturalized American citizen in 1986 and retired to El Cerrito, then to Florida, where she campaigned actively for Democratic causes, tutored immigrants in English, and traveled widely.

Her son Andrew died as a result of schizophrenia in 1990. She is survived by four children: Joseph Christie III of Thousand Oaks, Calif.; Alix Christie of London, England; Ann Victoria Christie of Malvern, Penn.; and Stuart Christie of Hong Kong; and seven grandchildren. Memorial services in Point Roberts and Canada are planned. The family requests donations to The National Resources Defence Council, www.nrdc.org; and Tidewell Hospice of Sarasota, Florida, www.givetotidewell.org.

Holiday Shopping Spree in Lafayette

Olive oil, gentlemen's treat, home decor and doggie day care

By Sophie Braccini

Downtown Lafayette boasts the perfect setting for a shopping spree this season; the city that is already known for the variety of its restaurants is brimming with opportunities for high-end shopping. In addition to existing favorites, a few new businesses recently opened that add color to the experience.

Your first stop may be The Tail Haven Hotel and Day Lounge – that is unless your pooch prefers mingling with crowds of shoppers over frolicking with its peers. Local dog trainer Emily Ronnow, a third generation Lafayette entrepreneur, opened her doggie day care in Lafayette this autumn. The young professional, who lost her software sales job a few years ago, decided to develop her passion for dogs as a business and became a trainer. “My clients kept asking me if I knew of a place in Lamorinda where they could leave their dog during the day while at work, or when they go away,” she says, so she looked for a site and found it on Mt. Diablo Boulevard next to Wine Thieves. The space is inviting, clean and odor free. Dogs of all sizes run around and interact gently in the open space. Downstairs a garden area is also available. When this reporter visited, three small pooches were relaxing in dog baskets under the reception desk, undisturbed by their more boisterous mates who greeted us joyfully. There is a separate space for timid dogs. “I’m a dog trainer first,” adds Ronnow, “so if a dog comes here and we notice some behavior problems, we’ll recommend training actions to its parents.” In addition to the day lounge, Ronnow offers boarding, training and adoptions.

With your best friend happily occupied, head over to Fiesta Lane and visit Amphora Nueva, a new business



From left: Nate Bradley, Shana Gilman, and Mira Beyeler at Amphora Nueva.

that sells olive oils freshly pressed from all over the world. In the beautiful store set as an elegant tasting room, patrons can taste each of the oils available that day, in their natural form or as delicate blends often obtained by pressing the added ingredients – such as lemon, rosemary, garlic or cayenne – with the olives. “This is the only place where you can buy olive oil that was pressed 10 days ago year round, and where you can see the chemical analysis of the oil,” explains owner Nate Bradley. Why bother? Because it is those polyphenols (anti-oxidant substances found only in very good olive oils), and oleic acids (the good fat in olive oil) that are highly touted for their health benefits. “The higher the polyphenol content the more benefit,” says Bradley, a third generation olive oil dealer. The young man opened Amphora Nueva in Berkeley a few years ago – it was his grandfather who first brought his love for olive oil from Italy. The business expanded and now includes Veronica’s Food that distributes to 650 specialty stores, and an olive farm in Tunisia.

“We also sell vinegars,” says Bradley, pointing to a display of dark and white balsamic vinegars. Plan to spend some time here, challenge your taste buds and take the time to sample before you choose the size container you want and purchase it at a quite reasonable rate.

Men can be pampered at the 18/8 salon that also just opened on Fiesta Lane – get a facial, haircut with shoulder massage, a shave, manicure, or even a waxing. 18/8 refers to a grade

The Tail Haven
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www.thetailhaven.com

Amphora Nueva
7 Fiesta Lane, Lafayette
(925) 310-4681,
www.amphoranueva.com

18/8
15 Fiesta Lane, Lafayette
(925) 297-5127, www.eigh-
teeneight.com/locations/lafayette

Indigo & Poppy
1009 Oak Hill Road, Lafayette
(925) 962-9201,
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The Tail Haven's Emily Ronnow (right) and staff member Amber Plumley have fun with their clients.

of stainless steel, the idea being that the salon will turn ‘rough’ men into polished gentlemen. 18/8 is a franchise that originated in Southern California, and Kara Davidson and her husband Samer Alami decided to open the first one in Northern California. The young Lafayette mom hired a staff of competent beauticians and greets clients with a glass of wine or beer.

Finally, spruce up your home for the holiday entertaining season at Indigo & Poppy, where you’ll find unique furnishings, accents and gifts. More than just another retail store, they are interior specialists who will help you create a unique home atmosphere.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

business briefs



Photo A. Scheck

Learning Express Opens
3568 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
(925) 385-7135, www.learningexpress.com/store/lafayette

Learning Express is a nationwide franchisor of educational toy stores. The new Lafayette franchise had its grand opening in November. To date, there are more than 130 locations across the country. Learning Express sells toys from infants to tweens. Some of their favorite toys of 2014 include Snap Circuits, Boogie Boards, Plushcraft and Magformers. Store hours: Monday-Saturday 9:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

New Personal Training in Moraga
1605 School Street, Moraga, (510) 759-1281

Tommy Au and his cousin and partner Danny Ma have started a new personal training and nutrition studio in Moraga, at 1605 School Street (behind Si Si Caffè). The two young men are certified trainers; Au has a background in Taekwondo and worked as a trainer for athletes as well as ordinary folks wanting to get back in shape at Living Lean in Orinda. Ma graduated from Cal in nutrition



Tommy Au with client Eliana Cordero in his new studio in Moraga. Photo provided

before becoming a trainer. “Our objective is to help people live stronger and healthier, and prevent injuries,” says Au. “We work with clients that have lower back problems and want to get back into shape, with people who want to lose weight, with teenagers who want to achieve a higher degree of fitness.” The two often practice compound or functional exercises with their clients, such as picking up and transferring weights on a shelf without injuring the back or the shoulder. “We want people to realize their full potential, whatever their age,” adds Au. The two trainers work with people individually or in small groups of up to four people.

Business Anniversary

Reflexion Salon's 15th Anniversary
508 Center Street, Moraga, (925) 376-7222

Reflexion Salon recently celebrated its 15th anniversary at the Rheem Valley Shopping Center. The salon, owned by Shirley Takeuchi, specializes in teenage acne, anti-aging treatments, including peels and microdermabrasion, and waxing. Reflexion Salon also offers relaxing customized facials with a “reiki” touch. The hair stylist specializes in styled cuts, color, and perms. Reflexion Salon wishes to thank all of its Lamorinda clients for their continuing patronage and support.

News from the Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Ribbon cutting for Bay Sotheby's International Realty at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 4, 3725 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Annual Holiday Mixer from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 10 at Mechanics Bank, 3640 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Food, fun, beverages and a big holiday raffle. The mixer is \$10 for members; bring at least three canned items for the Food Bank and admission is free.

Ribbon cutting for 18/8 Fine Men's Salon and Amphora Nueva at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 11, La Fiesta Lane.

Moraga

Holiday Mixer at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 11 at Moraga Royale, 1600 Canyon Road. The mixer is \$15 at the door; for reservations email Kathe@moragachamber.org.

Orinda

Holiday Mixer from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 11 at Oak Springs Pool Clubhouse, 39 Spring Road. For more information call (925) 254-3909.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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Moraga: Aegis of Moraga • Asia Palace • Berg Senior Services • Bianca's Deli & Catering • Camino Pablo School • Chef Chao Fine Chinese Cuisine • Golden Palace • Home/made Kitchen & Café • Joaquin Moraga School • Kirin Sushi • Los Perales Elementary • Moraga Country Club • Moraga Produce • Mountain Mike's Pizza • Pho Little Hearty Noodle • Ranch House Café • Rheem Elementary • Ristorante Amoroma • Round Table Pizza • Royal Siam • Saint Mary's College • Saklan School • Shish Kabab Show • Starbucks • Terzetto Cuisine

Orinda: Baan Thai • Barbacoa • Del Rey Elementary • Geppetto's Cafe • Glorietta School • La Cocina Mexicana • Lava Pit Fire Grill • Maya Mexican Grill • MexCal • Miramonte High School • Niwa Restaurant • Orinda Country Club • Orinda Intermediate School • Orinda Senior Village • Orinda Theater • Peet's Coffee • Petra Café • Piazza • Piccolo Napoli • Republic of Cake • Serika • Shelby's • Siam Orchid Thai Restaurant • Starbucks • Subway • Table 24 • Village Inn Café • Yan's Restaurant



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Civic News Lamorinda

The High Price of Housing in Lamorinda

By Cathy Tyson



Photo courtesy Tumbleweed Tiny House Company

A recent ad on Craigslist extolled the virtues of life in a "cozy" 240 square foot recreational vehicle behind a home in Lafayette, with a price tag of \$675 per month. Seemed rather unusual, but given the high price of housing locally, maybe an option for a person on a very limited budget. It was rented quickly, said the homeowner/landlord who wished to remain anonymous.

According to Lafayette's code enforcement officer, Adam Foster, the Municipal Code has language regarding living in recreational vehicles on private property that is very clear, "No person shall use any vehicle for living or sleeping purposes." Vehicles shouldn't be confused with the smattering of guest cottages and in-law units in Lamorinda that can be found on craigslist.

There is, however, a new gray area that Lafayette is grappling with – tiny houses, really small homes, around 177 square feet of usable space on wheels that can be self-built or delivered, ranging from 18 to 24 feet long. It's an interesting new type of dwelling for people who want to simplify and downsize, or perhaps for boomerang kids who come back home. Foster says the city will be working on guidelines in the near future.

Don't even think about renting out a recreational vehicle in Moraga or Orinda. Moraga's Municipal Code is straight forward, "It is unlawful for a person to maintain or use for human habitation or a living quarters including sleeping, a mobile home, trailer coach, camp car, boat or vehicle on public or private property in the town."

Orinda also has rules on prohibited dwellings, "A vehicle or trailer may not be used for habitation, for keeping animals, or for any other residential use," according to their Municipal Code.

For long term homeowners who have been diligently

paying off their mortgages, that presumably were a semi-reasonable dollar amount to begin with, the going rate for rentals, as well as to purchase a dwelling, is eye popping. Aside from the "cozy" Lafayette RV, the most economical place to rent in Lamorinda is in Moraga, where a 400 square foot studio is available for \$900 per month, but it does boast a big yard with a rose garden.

On a budget? Recently listings in Lafayette ranged from a low of \$1,650 for a studio "plus" to a whopping \$7,500 per month for a spectacular five bedroom, three bathroom home in Happy Valley. While that may seem expensive, it does come with pool service, a gardener and regular professional house cleaning.

In Orinda the rental scene is about the same as Lafayette and Moraga – a very basic unfurnished one bedroom, one bath unit in Orinda goes for \$1,600 per month; a three bedroom, three bath home with an office is \$7,500.

Perhaps due to Saint Mary's College there are a number of two and three bedroom apartments available in Moraga, but they are in roughly the same price range as Lafayette and Orinda. In an unscientific review, the average price for a two bedroom, two bathroom rental in late November in Lamorinda is \$2,226 per month, working out to over \$1,100 per person if two roommates share the cost. For those who would like to turn the lights on, eat, get a haircut, purchase gas for a car, or go crazy on a movie ticket, balancing a budget is truly all about allocating resources in an environment of scarcity.

Prospective buyers will find no bargains in our zip codes. According to Dean Okamura of Pacific Union in Orinda, the most economical dwelling for sale in Lamorinda was listed at \$285,000, and sold for \$310,000, for a two bedroom, two bathroom, 964 square foot condominium on Ascot Drive in Moraga; keep in mind that homeowners association dues run \$370 a month in addition to the mortgage payment, along with taxes and insurance. The next most economic home with endless potential, according to the agent, sold for more than twice that price, closing at \$765,000 for a 1,950 square foot home on Janet Lane in Lafayette.

Don't expect the situation to improve anytime soon. According to Okamura, the prediction from the National Association of Realtors is that prices will remain flat locally in the near term. "It's very difficult for a young family or a couple starting out."

From Front Page

Local Government Goes Wild with Holiday Sweaters

... continued from page A1

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 dis-

criminating 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.

Local Teen Competes on 'Project Runway: Threads'

By Jennifer Wake



Julia Husch's "The Art of Education" collection she made this past May included three looks made entirely of her homework from her first two years in high school. "The one I'm wearing is Spanish worksheets," said Husch. "The one in the middle is binder paper folded and sewn together with a button closure on the hip and the third on the left is a bustier top made of colorful note cards and the skirt is math and Spanish workbook pages woven into sheets with zippers down the sides. All the sheets are intact. I didn't cut them up, only folded." Photos provided

Susan Goldie. "She continuously thinks outside the box and knows how to use her tremendous energy to conceive of and complete some very complicated tailoring and garment projects. She has been dubbed aptly by one of our younger sewers as the 'James Bond of Sewing,' and it is true!"

Before filming the program, Husch said there was an at-home challenge, and each designer brought a look they made ahead of time to show. "The winner of that got an advantage later. We had one day to complete the challenge along with a surprise twist challenge, which at the time we didn't know was coming," Husch said. "Then both looks walked the runway and were judged." She also conducted interviews on Skype as part of the qualification process, where she showed off some of her designs.

"The competition was crazy fun and crazy stressful!" she said. "I was against two other designers, both of which were older than me and very talented."

... continued on page B5

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Julia Husch, 10, in fifth grade at Sewnow. "When wearing this sweat-shirt in class my teacher asked me if I was going to be a fashion designer," said Husch. "I responded yes and have never thought of another career option since."

Most girls dream about becoming a princess when they're little, but for 16-year-old Julia Husch, a junior at Acalanes High School, her dream focused more on designing the princess's dress. Since she was a preschooler, Husch has been sewing. "When I was 3 years old I started sewing doll clothes with my mom," Husch said, "and in fourth grade I began classes at Sewnow (in Lafayette)."

Husch now teaches at Sewnow to mixed age classes, including adults, and on Dec. 11 she will put her design abilities to the test as a contestant on the TV show "Project Runway: Threads," where three young designers compete to see whose fashions will lead them to a \$25,000 prize package, including being featured in Seventeen magazine.

"Julia has that rare combination of technical expertise and design talent and she is always excited to try new ideas, learn new techniques, and contribute in a team environment," said Sewnow owner

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By Cathy Dausman



Kennedy Tunnel western entrance, 1924

Photos courtesy Lafayette Historical Society

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When two authors – one with a degree in science, the other in English – collaborated on their latest book, it took two years, start to finish. But in a larger sense, the project was more than a century in the making. As Mary McCosker, the English major, joked, “We wrote about a ‘boring’ topic,” specifically, the building of the Caldecott Tunnel, from its humble, single-bore beginning when it was variously known as the Inter-county, Kennedy or Broadway tunnel in 1903 to the completion and opening of the fourth bore in 2013 and all things tunnel in between.

McCosker and Mary Solon, the science major, both members of the Lafayette Historical Society, previously co-authored a book about Lafayette. Solon said this year’s book, “Images of America: Building the Caldecott Tunnel” (Arcadia Publishing), was “a lark” to work on, but warned it was the duo’s last publication.

“It’s a bit like childbirth,” McCosker explained, alluding to the pain sometimes forgotten until the next baby rolls around. The books likely won’t make it onto any bestseller lists – “I think its rated 800,000 [in popularity] on Amazon,” joked Solon, but it should do a reasonable business in Contra Costa County, where nearly every driver has had occasion to drive under the Berkeley hills.

“We think this book will have legs,” Solon said. “We’re women, we’re not engineers, but we got into it,” Solon explained.

The 127-page soft-cover book is chalk full of black and white photos and illustrations, mostly two to a page, assembled by the authors which document the century-long progression of the Caldecott Tunnel, from the “Trails and Roads” era of the Kennedy Tunnel opening in 1903 to the Fourth Bore dedication Nov. 15, 2013.

The photos were culled from a variety of sources, including private collections, area libraries, newspapers, historical societies, museums and the California Department of Transportation. While too small to be considered a coffee table book, it is nevertheless jammed with facts, figures and history lessons befitting

Solon and McCosker’s associations with the Lafayette Historical Society.

As the authors explained in the book: “For centuries, the natural barrier provided by geography divided the California counties on either side of the Oakland/Berkeley hills.” Even the “often inadequate” first tunnel “conveniently linked the two counties of the East Bay ... and provided the farmers of those towns with safer access to the markets of Alameda County and San Francisco.”

Solon and McCosker were pleased to learn a woman, Cristina Ferraz, helped conceive the idea of a public medallion competition during the design of the Fourth Bore in 2008. The authors were also impressed that the safety record for building tunnels improved over time. Solon said one

person died in 1936 during construction of the first bore; three died during a cave in when the second bore was built and there wasn’t so much as one lost work day during the fourth bore construction.

Solon described feeling “higher than a kite” to be included in the official Fourth Bore dedication ceremonies at the invitation of Ivy Morrison, public information officer for the Caldecott Fourth Bore Project. “It was exciting to be there with all the luminaries,” McCosker added.

The book is available at local bookstores as well as at the Lafayette Historical Society. All proceeds from the sales of both books – “Building the Caldecott Tunnel” and the pair’s earlier publication, “Lafayette” – benefit the Lafayette Historical Society.



The Broadway Low Level Tunnel. “The first phase of construction involved clearing the hillside and grading (shown here on the Oakland side). The Kennedy Tunnel and the original roads leading to it are visible in the upper part of the photograph. The lower location of the new tunnel meant a shorter climb but a greater distance for construction workers to bore.”

“Images of America: Building the Caldecott Tunnel,” page 36



Eastern entrance of the Kennedy Tunnel in 1918.



Cars at the Kennedy Tunnel Eastern Entrance, 1918

California Wine Expert to Speak in Lafayette

By A. K. Carroll

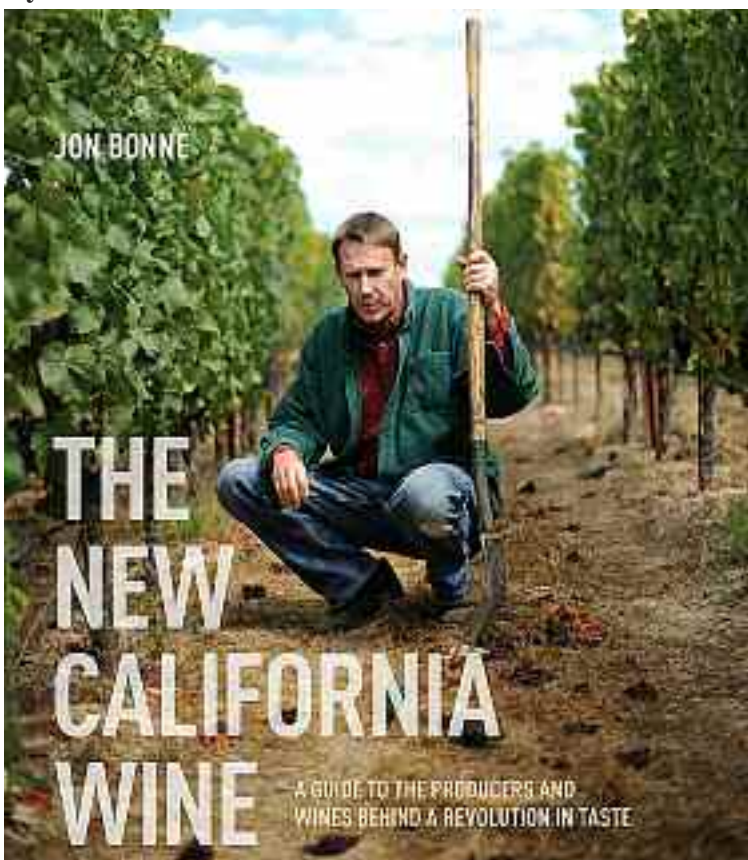


Image provided

“It’s been a thing all my life,” said Jon Bonné, sipping the last of his Sight Glass coffee on a Monday afternoon in San Francisco. “I kind of grew up with wine.”

The wine editor for The San Francisco Chronicle and author of “The New California Wine” (released in 2013), Bonné will be speaking at The Commonwealth Club of California’s “Tasting the New California Wines with Jon Bonné.” An informational talk followed by a wine tasting, the event will be held at the Lafayette Library on Tuesday, Dec. 9, bringing one of the nation’s top wine experts to the Lamorinda area.

“It’s an industry that covers so many different pieces of the world,” said Bonné, whose early ventures in

journalism included politics, business and environmental science among other fields. By the time Bonné turned to covering wine, he realized that not only was it a good beat, but that much of his previous work had prepared him for success in the field. “You have to be able to do a little bit of all of those other skills,” he remarked. Or you do if you want to do well.

Bonné’s work with the Chronicle has earned him two James Beard Foundation Awards. His writing, which has also appeared in Decanter, Saveur, Food & Wine and the Art of Eating, has additionally won numerous awards from the Association of Food Journalists. Bonné’s upcoming Commonwealth Club presentation will focus on his book, which explores

young, innovative wine producers who are “rewriting the rules of contemporary winemaking” in a “quest to express the uniqueness of California terroir” and to “move the state away from the overly technocratic reactionary practices of its recent past,” according to Bonné’s website.

“The revelation for me is that these aren’t necessarily new discoveries,” Bonné remarked on his research for the book. “They (the wine producers) are simply looking to a time before wine became so snobby and so elitist; when wine was simply a part of people’s lives. There was a much greater diversity and all of these really interesting grapes and wines had enormous appeal.”

As the nation’s oldest and largest public affairs forum, The Commonwealth Club looks forward to offering this presentation in the Lamorinda area. The hour-long program (which will likely include a time of Q&A), will be followed by a wine tasting and book signing. “We’ll talk about the change in California wine, the style and layers,” Bonné remarked. “Also, what that means culturally and how it fits into these larger changes in food culture and farming culture, the way that people eat and drink.”

It’s sure to be an evening of new and unexpected information and experience.

The formal program begins at 6:30 p.m., with check-in starting at 6 p.m. Wine tasting follows at 7:30 p.m. at the Lafayette Library. Tickets are \$25 for general admission (participants must be over 21) and \$15 if you are a member of the Commonwealth Club. Register online at <http://www.commonwealthclub.org/events/2014-12-09/tasting-new-california-wines-jon-bonne>.

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‘The Theory of Everything’

By Derek Zemrak



Image provided

It’s that time of year again – the leaves are changing colors, the weather is getting colder and families are gathering together for holiday celebrations. As the leaves are falling, Oscar buzz is in the air. The Oscars are always an unpredictable event but this year there is a sure front runner for best actor – Eddie Redmayne for his portrayal of the 20th century genius Stephen Hawking. No one has been a shoe-in to win best actor since maybe Daniel Day Lewis for his role in “My

Left Foot.”

I wrote in 2011 after seeing Redmayne in the independent film “My Week with Marilyn” that he is the one to watch and will receive an Oscar someday. Well this is his year. He already won Best Breakout Performance two weeks ago at the Hollywood Film Awards, which kicks off the award season.

“The Theory of Everything” is a movie based not only on Hawking’s incredible mind but also on the relationship between

Hawking and his college sweetheart and wife, Jane, solidly played by Felicity Jones (“The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014),” “Like Crazy”). When the two met while studying at Cambridge, it was love at first sight. They experienced a healthy relationship as college students until one day when Hawking was stricken with a motor neuron disease related to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). This event changes everything in both their lives. Hawking was told he had only two years to live. Jane loved him so much she agreed/demanded to marry him and take care of him.

What is the theory of everything? Love.

“The Theory of Everything” is rated PG-13 and has a total running time (TRT) of 2 hours and 3 minutes.

Derek can be heard each Saturday morning at 8 a.m. on KEST 1450AM discussing movies and entertainment in the Bay Area.

MOVIE REVIEW



You'll Wish You WERE HERE

Orinda Theatre Square

SATURDAY, DEC. 6
 Real Snow Wonderland - Build Your Own Snowman / noon until the snow melts
 Kids Ornament workshop hosted by Hello Tiara / 4-6 pm

SATURDAY, DEC. 13 5-7PM
 Visits from Santa Around the Square
 Horse & Carriage Rides
 Holiday performances by Lamorinda Theatre Academy / beginning at 6:30pm
 Free hot chocolate and gourmet coffee drinks
 A Merry & Bright Close to the Evening with a Tree Lighting / 7pm

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Magical Thinking Comes to Lamorinda

By Cathy Dausman



This Babylonian incantation bowl dates from the 4th-6th century (approximate) CE. It was buried underneath a house in order to protect its inhabitants from demons. Photo courtesy Maggie Anton

“Magical thinking has been with us since the beginning,” said author Maggie Anton, despite the fact that “not a whole lot” has been written about women who practiced magic, especially in 3rd or 4th century Babylonia (now Iraq). Just don’t equate those practitioners with ugly, evil hags in black clothes. Those female practitioners of magic are better called a sorceress, or enchantress. Indeed, “Enchantress” is the title of Anton’s latest work, new this year from Penguin Books.

Anton will speak about the re- search behind her book and the existence and acceptance of magic in that ancient world Dec. 10 at Lafayette’s Temple Isaiah.

Anton’s historical fantasies are based on Jewish history and her own Talmudic studies. The author, who “didn’t intend to be an author” (her first career was in clinical chemistry) has published six books – five stories and one young adult adaptation since 2007 and won a 2012 National Jewish Book Award for “Rav Hisda’s Daughter.” But Anton says the reader needn’t be Jewish or even religious to

enjoy her books. Eighty percent of Americans already believe in angels, she said, and only a “fuzzy border” separates the word incantation from spell, blessing and prayer.

Magic is a “hot topic” in scholarship circles, Anton said, and one she really enjoyed researching. While searching for historically accurate female names, Anton discovered Babylonian incantation bowls. She now owns two. “These were ordinary pottery with inscriptions inside whose purpose was to protect the people under whose home the vessels were buried. Thousands of these bowls had been unearthed in what is now Iraq and dated to the 4th, 5th and 6th century,” she said. “Archeologists ... discovered Hebrew magic instruction manuals that list an astonishing variety of spells, some benevolent and some not. Magic was clearly an integral part of life in this world,” Anton said, and through magic women gained power and autonomy. “My literary task was to show the heroine becoming an enchantress in a society where, unlike today, highly educated people accepted magic as real and effective.” A subject like that will undoubtedly leave her audience spellbound.

Anton’s presentation will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 10 at Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, Lafayette.

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Elder Abuse: “Yes, It Can Happen to You”

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC

“Hi Grandma, it’s me your favorite grandson. I was in an accident. ... I’m fine, but if I report it, I’ll lose my insurance and driver’s license. Can you wire me money?” Or, so the story goes. These scams are prevalent, and even those with sound minds and good hearing are being taken for thousands of dollars every day. This exact scenario happened to my mother, and she actually sent the perpetrator \$4,000. A friend of mine in Lamorinda has received two of these calls already!

So, what should you do if these criminals ring? First, take down any information the caller gives you – such as name, location, and the amount of money requested – then, forward this information to Adult Protective Services by calling their toll free number at (877) 839-4347. If the same person calls again, say you don’t have that kind of money or just hang up.

How do you protect yourself and/or an older relative from being scammed? It is more than being careful – it is taking preventative precautions with your personal information, especially financial information.

A few things to keep in mind:

- 1) Personal information should never be shared over the phone. If a bank or financial institution calls you and asks for any information, do not give it out. Call the phone number on your bank statement or on the back of your credit card to confirm the call was legitimate.
- 2) Similarly, if you receive an email from a bank or other institution, even if you do have an account with them, do not open anything in an email or call any number listed. Find a phone number from a statement and call that number to check the situation.
- 3) If you are shopping online, look for the secure website emblem at the bottom of their website or

check for the “https:” as opposed to “http:” at the start of the web address (URL).

- 4) Use direct deposit for all regular income.
- 5) Shred personal information before putting in the trash.
- 6) Check your credit card charges often – this could be done daily to a few times a week. My credit cards have been compromised more than once, and we were able to stop the problem by calling the bank and closing the account quickly.
- 7) Be careful with “passwords” – don’t use a simple password for everything. Find lines of poems and use the first letter of each word or a place you visited and scramble some of the letters with numbers. Be sure to change passwords a few times a year.
- 8) Family members can also take financial advantage of someone with a big heart, with a sad story, or a big opportunity that they say will make you money, too! Be cautious! Tell them you want to consult your attorney or financial planner first. One of the biggest areas of this type of abuse is to get you to do a reverse mortgage and then they use the money and you are left with little or no equity in your home.
- 9) When you contract for services for any home repair get the estimate in writing. Check to see if the person is a licensed contractor and remember - only pay a portion of the total cost upfront, and pay the balance due when the job is done to your satisfaction. As a deposit, a licensed contractor can only charge the lesser of \$1,000 or 10 percent.
- 10) Lotteries where you need to send dollars in order to receive your prize are scams.
- 11) Hiring caregivers privately can be a problem. Don’t use websites like Craigslist. If you get a referral

from a friend or family member of someone experienced, it might be fine. However, do a national criminal background check. If you hire from a reputable agency, ask about liability insurance.

12) Do not let someone in your home who says they are from a “utility” company and needs to check some appliance or the water. 13) Keep valuables in locked drawers or safes. Purses should also be kept out of sight as well. My mother gave a “glass of water” to someone on a warm day and when the lady left, so did her purse!

One in nine seniors has been abused in some way. One out of 20 seniors is financially abused. According to the National Adult Protection Services Association, almost 90 percent of elder abuse cases involve a family member or other “trusted” relationship. Be aware and be safe.

Please feel free to email me any questions. I may use your questions and the answers for a future column. Email me at: Linda@ElderCareAnswers.com.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC is the Executive Director and Founder of **Eldercare Services**. Eldercare is a Joint Commission Accredited Home Care Agency, which provides Professional Care Management and Family Education. For information, call (925) 937-2018 or visit www.ElderCareAnswers.com.

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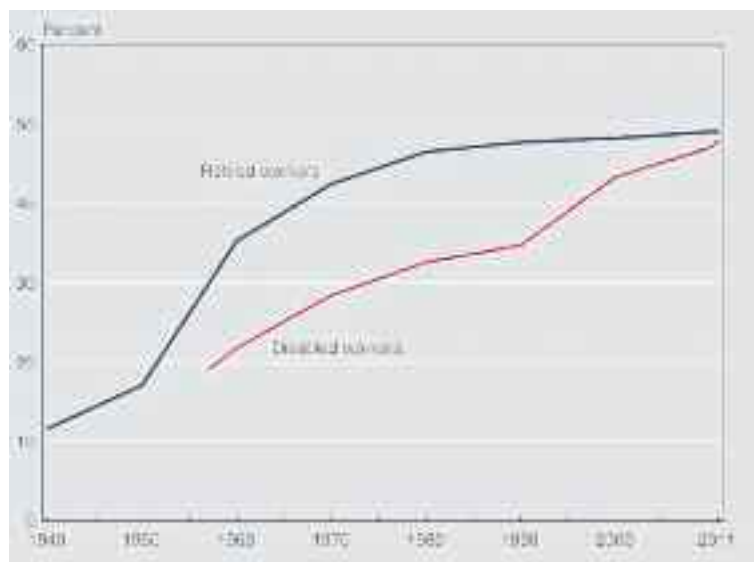
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SMC Lecture on Ageism Points to Need for More Support

By Lauren Kim



Source: Social Security Administration

Everybody loves new things. Whether it's for the latest iPhone update or the most recent car model, Americans will line up in the street, figuratively and literally, to seek out anything sparkly and new. According to Mary McCall, professor of psychology at Saint Mary's College who spoke about ageism Nov. 11 at SMC, America is a stridently youth-oriented nation.

Most people are aware of their innocent penchant for the latest and greatest when it comes to inanimate objects. What many fail to realize, however, is that this same attitude also exhibits itself in a much more serious form as applied to human relations.

A shocking 63 percent of older people who participated in a recent study about ageism headed by Ye Luo, a sociology professor at Clemson University, reported that they had experienced discrimination. In the same study, 30 percent of the elders claimed they had been mistreated due to their age.

"Because I believe that we are a youth-oriented culture, then everybody wants young blood, young ideas, and young energy, and not so much the value of experience," said McCall.

In her recent lecture, "Culture, Class and Care: Ageism in the 21st Century," McCall said that ageism in the United States is a natural manifestation of America's foundational cultural values: independence, freedom, and power. As a result of this capitalist mentality, American society tends to inadvertently discriminate against the elderly, who are generally dependent on others either emotionally or physically.

"We generally assume and expect that people should be able to get what they want," said McCall. "And people should be able to get what they need and provide for themselves. If you can't, there's something wrong with you and not the system."

Compared to most other foreign cultures, America's attitude toward the elderly is dismally poor. While most social democratic nations like Sweden and Norway tend to be more communalistic, and more appreciative of its older citizens, American

society hosts a widespread lack of respect and concern for elders. This kind of contempt toward the elderly is detrimental to their state of mind, noted McCall.

"I think like any other marginalized group, [the elderly] experiences low self-esteem, a lack of self-worth, you know, like, 'Why am I here if I have nothing to contribute?'" said McCall.

With the great shift in the global demographic underway, however, McCall said the general conduct toward elders everywhere is expected to be in continual decline. As the baby boom generation ages, the global community holds more elders than working youth and middle aged. It becomes economically unfeasible to provide government subsidized care for such a disproportionately large number of elders.

America's Social Security program, which provides guaranteed financial retirement benefits for everyone over age 65 who worked and paid into the program, is suffering terribly from underfunding, especially as people's life expectancy continuously increases.

"You can start getting Social Security when you're 65, but if you wait until you're 67, you get a little bit more money. If you wait until 70, then you get even more money," said McCall. "So they're trying to make incentive for people to wait until they're 70 to start collecting Social Security. And my guess is that the age is going to keep moving. In another 10-15 years, it's not going to be 65. It's going to be 67. So when you get to 67, you can start collecting Social Security."

McCall said that as the government becomes increasingly incapable of funding support for older people, the best remedy is a dramatic growth in the civil society sector of elder care. Communities must be more inclusive and sensitive to their older citizens.

"There's no doubt that when I talked about the civil society in terms of family and neighborhoods, neighbors, and organizations, you know [they] are going to have to play a bigger role because governments are going to play a smaller role," said McCall.

Local Teen Competes on 'Project Runway: Threads'

... continued from page B1

Husch also student directs, designs costumes and build sets for the Acalanes DramaDons and musical productions, and she participates in Odyssey of the Mind (her team made it to the World Finals last year), but fashion is her first love. "When I'm sewing/designing it's like I've escaped the outside world, my sewing room is my happy place," said Husch. "My friends like to say I live under a rock with my sewing machine due to my complete lack of popular culture knowledge and an abundance of anything sewing related. I really love how clothes can transform or reflect how a person feels or sees themselves." Her goal is to have her own clothing line, "Julia Husch," and create clothes

women love and feel great about wearing.

"I believe that appearing on 'Project Runway: Threads' is a wonderful milestone for Julia because not only did it allow her to connect with her design and age peers, it allowed her to showcase her designs to a much wider audience," said Goldie. "There are very few avenues for recognition in the fashion design field for designers Julia's age and this is a phenomenal opportunity for her. I am so very proud of her and super excited to watch the show."

"Project Runway: Threads" airs at 10 p.m. Dec. 11 on Lifetime. Check local listings for more information.

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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 with the subject header In Service to the Community.

NCL Hosts Luau at Moraga Royale

Submitted by Emma Godfrey



Ticktockers outside of Moraga Royale after enjoying a tea with the residents. Photo provided

The 10th grade class from National Charity League, Lamorinda Chapter, gathered at Moraga Royale Assisted Living Nov. 16 for festivities and the joyful company of the elders. The 15- and 16-year-old locals, with the help of their mothers, organized a Hawaiian-themed luau with entertainment featuring the talented Grace Baer singing a beautiful rendition of "Somewhere over the Rainbow." Guests were

asked to dress in Hawaiian attire, with leis provided. While swapping stories and chatting with one another, the girls and guests enjoyed a mouthwatering snack including tuna sandwiches, tropical fruit kabobs, lemon bars, and cupcakes. The Moraga Royale residents enjoyed an afternoon filled with vibrant activities, stories, and most importantly, memories.

The Gift of Sight

Submitted by Bob Murtagh



Photo provided

Ten members of the Campolindo Leo Club and nine members of the Moraga Lions Club gathered at the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Station 42 on Moraga Road Nov. 16 to sort and clean 3,500 pairs of used eyeglasses. The main mission of the Lions and Leos is to aid the visually impaired. Each year the Lions clubs in California and Nevada collect over 700,000 used eyeglasses and ship them to third world countries. Once sorted and cleaned, the eye-

glasses are sent to the California Medical Facility in Vacaville where inmates determine the prescription and place them in individual plastic bags. Lions clubs are located in over 200 countries worldwide and these clubs will request both glasses and host doctors who will conduct exams and issue the correct prescription. To learn more about the work of the Leos and Lions or to donate used eyeglass contact Bob Murtagh, (925) 283 1841.

Kiwanis Holiday Candy Shop Open for Business



From left: Moraga Valley Kiwanis president Gloria Eive; Moraga School District Superintendent Bruce Burns; Mayor Ken Chew; Moraga Education Foundation president Nikki Peterson; Chief of Police Bob Priebe; Moraga-Orinda Fire District Battalion Chief Felipe Barreto Photo S. Braccini

Outgoing mayor Ken Chew cut the ceremonial ribbon Nov. 20 as Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club opened its See's Candies holiday shop. Net proceeds go to the club's Community Contributions Fund and from there will be do-

nated to local charities focusing on services to youth – including Lamorinda's education foundations. The volunteer-run store will be open through Dec. 23 in the Rheem Shopping Center next to Starbuck's. S. Braccini

Scrapbooks Highlight a Lifetime of Service in Lafayette

Submitted by Rosylyn A. Stenzel



From left: Veronique Kuhner, Rosylyn Stenzel, Betsey Young, Pam Severson, Amy Parlett and Tina Sebree Photo Rosylyn Stenzel

Meeting in the same room where the very first Lafayette Juniors meeting was held in 1953, founder Betsey Young invited Juniors past presidents to her home to collect her scrapbooks of which she documented over 60 years of fundraising and volunteering in the Lafayette community.

Larry Beans' Post Office



Larry Beans with a few of the many Reidelberger stamps.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Before he passed away, Bob Reidelberger asked Moraga resident Larry Beans if he would disperse his stamp collection to benefit his family. Reidelberger owned thousands of stamps he had collected all his life that filled a whole room in his house. Beans has sold the very valuable ones already, and to put the U.S. stamps that come in all denominations to good use, he is offering to affix the proper postage and take to the post office any quantity of Christmas cards, Hanukkah greetings, wedding invitations, and packages from the community. "I will take all packages that don't require special forms or

insurance," says Beans. "Let me know your preference of stamps and I can probably fulfill your request. (Christmas, Hanukkah, Love, Flags, Flowers, Olympics, etc.) You can give me the envelopes either before or after stuffing them." There is no service fee; Beans will take the mail to the post office and people will pay the actual cost of stamps. "For regular mail, I will charge 45 cents for 49-cent stamps," says Beans, who adds that all proceeds will go to Reidelberger's family. Send him an email at larrybeans@comcast.net and he'll give you his address to drop your mail. — S. Braccini

Donation Requests from the Community

'Tis the Season of Giving

Orinda's 'Cans for a Cause' Food Drive

Benefits Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

Show how much you care, Orinda, by helping to collect 10,000 pounds of food this holiday season. Drop off your donations at specially marked collection bins at: Orinda City Hall, Orinda Community Center, the Orinda Union School District's administration building, or any of Orinda's elementary schools through Dec. 19. (Contact sites for specific collection dates and times.) Items needed: peanut butter, hearty soups, dried or canned beans, canned tuna and chicken, canned tomato products, 100 percent fruit juice (48 ounces or less plastic bottles), canned vegetables and fruits, enriched rice or pasta, iron rich and whole grain cereals, powdered milk. For more information, call: (925) 570-5654.

Lafayette Rotary Club Coat Drive

Every year the Lafayette Rotary Club is collecting gently used coats to donate to Shelter Inc. of Contra Costa. At a recent Rotary meeting Executive Director Timothy O'Keefe pointed out how important the Rotary coat drive is every year at the start of the cold season to serve many homeless community members with warm clothing. This year the club is inviting the community to bring gently used coats (adult or kids sizes) to the following locations in Lafayette: Blodgett's Abbey Carpet & Flooring, 3291 Mt Diablo Ct., Lafayette, and the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, 100 Lafayette Circle, Ste. 103, Lafayette.

Toy Drive for Needy or Homeless Children

Every year since Leslie DeWolf's daughter started Brownies/Girl Scouts, they have taken a barrel from the Bay Area Rescue Mission and asked a business to host it. "We have seen amazing generosity and felt the true joy of the season," she says. If you feel blessed and would like to bring happiness to a needy or homeless child this season, bring an unwrapped gift for a boy or girl of any age to Smile Tu, Inc., 2933 Ygnacio Valley Road in Walnut Creek.

Support the Spirit Van Through Donations, Volunteering

The Lamorinda Spirit Van is a transportation program that offers affordable rides to local shopping centers and medical appointments for Lamorinda's most vulnerable older adults. Its clients are overwhelmingly widows in the later years of their lives who have not only outlived their husbands, but also their ability to drive. In most cases it offers some sort of independence, and avoids the need for these folks to rely on the generosity of friends and family or to move into institutions. Almost all the drivers are volunteers who donate the equivalent of about \$75,000 per year of their time to support the program. The program needs your help. A small donation from Lamorinda families could provide additional funds for the support of these vulnerable folks and improve individual lives "one trip at a time." Your tax-deductible check may be made payable to the City of Lafayette and mailed to: Lamorinda Spirit Van, c/o Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette, CA 94549. For anyone interested in becoming a volunteer driver, please call (925) 283-3534.

Need Donations?

Each year Lamorinda Weekly includes announcements from the community about local charitable giving opportunities. Need Donations? Submissions with a brief summary of your organization and charitable drive can be sent to calendar@lamorindaweekly.com (include "Season of Giving" in the subject line). Season of Giving announcements will continue through Dec. 17.

The Soothing Impact of a Pet

Hospice volunteers bring pets like George to offer comfort

By Bobbie Dodson



George Waterman, a canine companion of a Hospice volunteer
Photo provided

“They recognize me as the lady who brings George to visit. He is the important one,” says Orinda resident Marie Waterman. She is one of the Hospice volunteers who take their dogs to visit Hospice patients. It is just one of the many services this organization offers.

Both the dog and the owner attend training classes. The dog must receive a Canine Good Citizen Certification from the American Kennel Club. The well-known local organization, ARF, provides this training in which the dog must perform accurately such tasks as good interaction with other dogs; navigating an obstacle course; obey the “stay” command while the owner walks away and not moving until the owner tells them to; and giving the dog to a stranger while the owner walks out of the room and the dog obediently stays. The dogs are also scored on how they react to people with walkers, crutches, or to a patient whose oxygen machine makes a strange sound. “George didn’t pass the first time,” Waterman admits, “but came through with flying colors the next time. Mainly the dog must have a good temperament. George loves attention and is friendly with anyone who pays attention to him.

“I was a hospice volunteer making calls on patients who requested it. Engaging them in conversation I sometimes would ask if they had a pet, what was it, its name, and so on. I saw how they often perked up when talking about their pet and thought bringing my pet would really add to my visit,” she says. “I guessed George would be a good candidate. He’s a terrier mix, just a mutt with a loving disposition.”

Waterman stresses it is the dog’s personality not its pedigree that’s important. George was picked up as a stray on the streets of Concord and taken to the Martinez Contra Costa Animal Services where she picked him out to take home. A veterinarian thinks he’s about 7 years old.

Dogs in the program wear the Pet Hug Pack Visiting Animal vest from ARF because that’s where they trained, but they belong to the Hospice program and that is the place from which all assignments come. After being told about the program, if patients say they would like to participate, they are given the choice of a large or small dog, perhaps the breed, and then available volunteers with a dog to match the choice are called to check availability.

“We completely respect their privacy,” Waterman explains. “We are sent records so we know about their illness, but everything is confidential.”

She says it is so rewarding to see the way most patients react to George’s visit. “I ask them if they’d like to pet him, have him on their bed, take him for a walk. Mostly they just want him close so they can hug him. It may be the patient is ‘partially aware’ when we arrive but they can become animated, full of life after some time with George.

“I’ve made up baseball-like cards with George’s picture on them. They so enjoy having them on the wall next to their bed. When I come they may stare blankly when I introduce myself, but then George jumps on their bed to be petted and they are a different person. Family members are delighted you’ve come and ask ‘When are you coming back?’ I typically visit once a week.

“People ask me, ‘Doesn’t it make you sad when a patient you’ve been seeing dies?’ Yes, but mainly I have to remember George and I made their last days happier,” Waterman says.

The goal of the program, which began in 2002 when ARF initiated it, is to provide comfort and something that will make their clientele happy. There is also a Hospice Bereavement program, The Bridge, for children, parents, and caregivers – anyone who has lost a loved one. Waterman comes to this program where George is just there to interact with the participants. She also acts as a mentor to help new volunteers.

It’s been four years since Waterman joined this Hospice program and she finds fulfillment in what she is doing. She modestly explains, “George is the one who does all the work. I’m just the driver.”

For information about the Pet Hug Pack program, visit <http://www.arf.net/people-programs/pet-hug-pack/>. To become a Hospice of the East Bay Patient and Family Volunteer call (925) 887-5678, email volunteers@hospiceeastbay.org or visit www.hospiceeastbay.org.

‘It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play’

Unique production opens at Town Hall Theatre just in time for the holidays

By Sophie Braccini



From left: Harry “Jazzbo” Heywood (Jerry Motta), Jake Laurents (Dan Saski), Sally Applewood (Jenna Stich), Dennis Kirkwood (John Blytt), and Carol Roundtree (Jacqui Herrera)
Photo Stu Selland

Beginning Dec. 6 in Lafayette, you can step back in time and be part of a radio show’s live audience during Town Hall Theatre Company’s production of “It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play.”

It’s the night before Christmas in 1948 at a radio studio in New York City, and a live audience has been invited to the recording of the radio show’s version of “It’s a Wonderful Life.” The studio is decked out for Christmas, and the voice actors are dressed up and ready to go – the actor who will impersonate George Bailey, the actress who will be Mary Bailey, the others who will play two or three different characters – and of course the sound specialist is there, too, ready to create the atmosphere for the listeners who are cuddled around radio sets in their living rooms, close – but not too close – to the fireplace, to listen to Philip Van Doren Stern’s story while sipping their eggnog or hot cocoa.

There are a few major attributes about this show that make it a perfect holiday experience for the whole family. The story itself, of course, is so hopeful and profoundly humanistic, even if it deals with someone

who has decided to end his life. As a radio show, this rendition of the story condenses its meaning to its essence, without taking away any of the emotion. Here, tribute goes to the talented actors. As they read their scripts over the “microphones,” the power of their emotions and the images of their adventures are evoked in the spectators’ minds, just like listening to a story on the radio or on tape underscores the magic of the imagination.

For many families, watching “It’s a Wonderful Life” is a holiday tradition. Religion does not play a role in the play, since it deals with questions of humanity and, as THT director Samantha Fryer puts it, how each individual has an important part to play in this life, and how we all make a difference every day. For her, though, watching the movie was never a tradition; she said she’s never seen the Frank Capra movie with Jimmy Stewart. Fryer nonetheless is familiar with the play version, as she produced and played it several times in the Bay Area, and now for her debut at Town Hall Theatre, she directs the show.

Fryer said it was difficult to pick the perfect cast: More than 100 actors

responded to the audition announcement. “We saw many very talented actors,” says Fryer, “but what I focused on was their interaction and vocal talent.”

This play focuses on the power of that vocal talent. “I think that Jerry (Motta) is the only character who actually talks to himself with different voices,” says Fryer about the actor who plays Uncle Billy, Clarence the angel, and Harry “Jazzbo” Heywood. The actors portray different characters who have a similar vibe in their relationship to George.

The actors’ work to bring the show to maturity was quite involved. During the auditions, Fryer asked them to read entire pages of the script to see how they would impersonate different characters; during rehearsals she would sometimes close her eyes or turn her back to the stage to identify each character only by their distinctive voice. “We also did a very serious work of character development, working on intentions, because the more you deepen your understanding of a character, the more the voice develops,” she states.

All the actors selected for this show are seasoned and know how to evoke powerful emotions. The result is quite stunning, and this reporter challenges any viewer not to shed a tear at one point or another during the show.

Also, special kudos to James Frankle, the sound-effects person on stage who uses delightful live tricks to trigger auditory responses.

“It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play” runs from Dec. 6-20, with previews on Dec. 4 and 5, and matinees on the weekends. For more information, go to townhalltheatre.com or call (925) 283-1557.

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LECTURE & LITERATURE

Sunrise Rotary presents speakers Ryan Sykes, "My Life and Sentinels of Freedom," at 7 a.m. Friday, Dec. 5 and Dennis Erokan "Get Famous" at 7 a.m. Friday, Dec. 12 at the Lafayette Park Hotel. Go to www.lamorindasunrise.org for more info about the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Group and its initiatives.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Lamorinda Reads: Write to a Service Member anytime between 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 8 at the Orinda Library. The Orinda Library is partnering with A Million Thanks to send letters of appreciation and support to service members, both active and veterans. Write a note at our table and it will be forwarded to a service member. Contact Lin Look at the Orinda Library for details. All ages.

The Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA) has created a new scholarship for high school students who are implementing waste reduction and recycling programs on their high school campuses. Up to three scholarships (\$4,000 each) will be awarded to high school seniors entering college next fall. Please contact Ruth Abbe or Nancy Deming for more information about the program: email Ruth.Abbe@abbeassociates.com, (925) 974-2575 or nancyldeming@gmail.com, (510) 290-4875.

OTHER

Social Media Strategies Workshop Series - Building a Strong Local Network in a Social Media World will highlight local opportunities for forging new connections and how social media can build upon those face to face interactions at 8 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 19 at the Lafayette Library.

All are invited to attend the Saint Mary's College Guild Christmas Party celebration at 11 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 4 at the Saint Mary's College Soda Center. In addition to an elegant and delicious meal, the Saint Mary's College gold medal-winning Chorale who traveled to Europe to compete and win the choral challenge with similar groups from other countries will perform. The committee also plans to have baked items, a money tree, and beautiful items in Christmas baskets. Cost: \$45 per person. Contact Pat Mc Enaney for more info at (925) 376-3308.

Join the Toys for Tots event for families to donate unwrapped gifts appropriate for kids 13 and up from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday Dec. 6 at Campolindo High School. There will also be a bake sale to raise money for the Campolindo Girls Softball team.

Rx SAFE - Lamorinda Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse Initiative - a community awareness program that will help curb this health crisis in our local communities from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 10 at Orinda City Hall. For info, or to RSVP, contact Jaime Rich (925) 349-7338 or Jaime@chd-prevention.org.

Winter Solstice Ceremony Celebrating Lucina, Scandinavian Goddess of the Returning Light, Dark Moon in Sagittarius by Local Goddess Circle. Daughters of the Goddess, a Bay Area women-only Goddess Temple, will be holding our yearly Winter Solstice Ritual from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 20. Location: East Bay address upon RSVP. Newcomers: \$15. Contact Leilani at (925) 787-9247 or email Leilani@DaughtersoftheGoddess.com. Website: www.DaughtersoftheGoddess.com.

Registration is now open for the next series of Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) classes. They will be held at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road. Classes begin Jan. 13 and are held from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. every Tuesday night through Feb. 24. Classes are open to residents and employees of the Lamorinda area, as well as teenagers 16 and above with a parent and are free of cost, however we do ask for a commitment to attend all classes. Register online at www.lamorindacert.org.

SENIORS

Living with Alzheimer's: Early Stage Alzheimer's - Educational program for individuals with Early Stage Alzheimer's disease or related dementia, and their Care Partners. Many topics covered, including coping with the diagnosis and changes, planning for the future, learning about research and treatment options and caring for important relationships Wednesdays, Dec. 3, 10, and 17 in Lafayette. Time given at completion of registration. Pre-registration is required. Please contact Lan Trinh at (800) 272-3900 or ltrinh@alz.org to register.

Moraga Movers Holiday Luncheon at Saint Mary's College Soda Center from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 8 will feature the College's international award winning singers in a program of contemporary and holiday music. The entrée will be London broil with all the trimmings and apple pie for dessert. Reservations are required and can be made at (925) 376-6622 or on the Movers website. Cost: \$20 per person.

Document Your Life Story - a memoir workshop and craft class that emphasizes the importance of storytelling and is offered through Lafayette Senior Services and Saint Mary's College of California's MFA

program. DYLS will be hosting its first-ever Celebration of Writing Class Reading, during which members from the class will share some of their incredible stories. The reading will take place from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in the Elderberry Room of the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road on Wednesday, Dec. 10. Refreshments will be provided. Family, friends, and members of the community are invited to attend.

Sons In Retirement - Las Trampas Branch 116 Christmas party for SIR members, their spouses or guests. Don your holiday attire and enjoy an excellent dinner and dancing Tuesday, Dec. 16 at the beautiful Round Hill Country Club. For info about SIR activities for retired men, please visit www.Branch116.org or call (925) 322-1160.

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com



Service Clubs Announcements

Rotary

Explore Lamorinda Rotary clubs The heart of Rotary is our clubs- dedicated people who share a passion for both community service and friendship. Learn about Lamorinda's Rotary clubs.

Please join us at our new location **THE LAFAYETTE PARK HOTEL** on Friday mornings at 7am. For more info, please email us at lamorindasunrise@gmail.com

December 5:	December 12:
Veteran, fellow Rotarian and Sentinels of Freedom graduate Ryan Sykes will speak about the Sentinels of Freedom program.	Dennis Erokan, CEO of The Placemaking Group and founder of BAM and the Bammies will speak to us about how to "Get Famous".

Please join us for a great speaker and breakfast!!

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Spicing Up Your Condiment Selection

By Susie Iventosch



Holiday Red Onion Jam

Two of my favorite condiments are cranberry sauce and chutney. I just love them on almost anything from turkey to curry to crostini with goat cheese and cream cheese. One day, a friend sent a jar of her homemade yellow onion jam home with my husband and my condiment assortment has never been the same. I finished the entire jar inside of a week ... all by myself! It is so delicious, you can almost eat it by the spoonful. But, better to save it for your holiday entertaining. For this

recipe, I used red onions, and the color is a beautiful burgundy red when it is finished – just perfect for festive menus.

This recipe is a variation of one I found online, but I reduced the white sugar, increased the brown sugar and added sea salt, cider vinegar and a little more sliced onions. Actually, you can add even more onions, if you like a little more texture in it. You can play with this recipe, too, to come up with a version perfect for you!

Holiday Red Onion Jam

(Makes about 2 pints or 4 cups)

INGREDIENTS

2 large red onions, peeled and thinly sliced (4-5 cups)
1 ¼ cups apple juice
¼ cup cider vinegar
¼ cup red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon powdered sage (or poultry seasoning)
½ teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 box (1.75 ounces) fruit pectin
2 cups granulated sugar
1 cup, packed, light brown sugar

DIRECTIONS

Place sliced onions in a medium-sized cooking pot. Add apple juice, both vinegars, sage, pepper, salt and pectin. Stir well. Bring to full, rolling boil stirring constantly. Add white and brown sugars and stir well with a whisk. Bring to boil again and boil for about 3-5 minutes. Remove from heat.



Now you have to decide if you are going to can the jam or just put it in containers to refrigerate. I am not a canner, so I opt to pour it in glass jars or containers with tight-fitting lids, cool to room temperature and then refrigerate. Mixture will thicken as it cools. Once cooled, refrigerate until ready to use. Serve as an accompaniment to meats or roasts, or as a spread over cream or goat cheese for an appetizer. It would also be delicious spread over boneless, skinless chicken breasts before baking or grilling.

If you opt to can this jam, then pour mixture into sterilized jars immediately after removing from stove. Fill to within ¼ inch of the tops and then follow the guidelines for canning that you normally do for jams and jellies.

Photo Susie Iventosch

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 suziventosch@gmail.com.

This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



Looking Good in Lamorinda

Holiday Stylin'

By Moya Stone

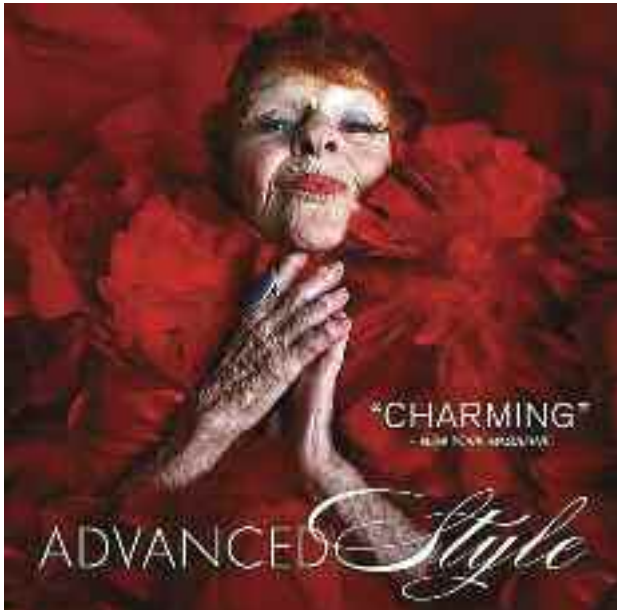


Image courtesy of the producers of Advanced Style

It's the 2014 holiday season and our local fashion boutiques are ready to party.

J. Colleen in Lafayette kicks off the season with an open house from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4. Owner Julie Rubio says sweaters and scarves are big holiday looks this year – hats, too. And don't forget jewelry! J. Colleen has an array of styles including the new delicate layered necklaces.

Santa's Bag Boutique returns Dec. 5-7 at the Lafayette Community Center. This year's boutique will include hot fashion accessories such as hand-woven scarves, handcrafted hats, and vintage-inspired jewelry, all made by local Bay Area artists. And Glamorous Boutique in Lafayette is marking three years in business with a Holiday Gift Show from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Dec. 6. In addition to great fashion jewelry and accessories, owner Eliza Jamkochian will offer soaps, body butter, and scrubs all custom-made with organic ingredients.

Known as the local place to go for special occasion clothing, Glamorous Boutique is now also stocking day wear for women including the ever popular leggings. With added faux leather insets (for a slimmer silhouette), color blocking, and details such as zippers, leggings are a dressier option and can now easily go from day to evening. For afternoon shopping,

layer leggings with a soft cotton tunic and chunky sweater and pair with boots or flats. Make a seamless transition to Happy Hour or a holiday gathering with heels and an elegant shawl.

Glamorous Boutique has also started a new personal shopping service. Sounds like the perfect self-gift idea to me. Jamkochian will come to your home with fashion ideas and after a consultation and a peek into your closet she will make suggestions on what current trends suit you and your lifestyle.

With the much needed wet weather lately (and with a bit of luck we'll have more), how about new rain gear to celebrate? Mycra Pac Designer Outerwear in Moraga will host their semi-annual sale Dec. 10-15.

Looking for other fashion-focused gift ideas? I am always reading fashion history books and one of my favorites this year was "Seven Sisters Style: The All American Preppy Look," by Rebecca C. Tuite (Rizzoli, 2014). Seven Sisters refers to the seven liberal arts women's colleges located in the Northeast United States such as Smith and Hilary Clinton's alma mater, Wellesley.

"Seven Sisters Style" tells the story of how, in the early 20th century, Seven Sisters students made great strides in getting away from the restrictions of fashion dictates, such as corsets. Borrowing from their male peers at Ivy League colleges, the young ladies adopted more casual and comfortable wear and eventually developed what is now called the Preppy Look. We all know what that is – Bermuda shorts, varsity sweaters, saddle shoes, Oxford shirts, plaid skirts. Preppy changes and evolves with each new generation but it retains its style identity and collegiate roots. Interesting narration and plenty of photos makes "Seven Sisters Style" a fascinating read on American fashion history.

Also this fall I was thrilled to see the Bay Area premiere of Advanced Style, a documentary featuring seven chic ladies of New York City who also happen to be mature (60s to 90s). The oh-so-popular Advanced Style was first a street style blog by photographer Ari Cohen, then it was a book and now it's a documentary available on DVD from Amazon.

The Advanced Style women are creative individuals who are less about current fashions and more about their own signature looks. They use color with abandon and don lots of chunky jewelry. They're not afraid of hats, they adore scarves, and appreciate a good vintage find. To them, dress-

ing every day is a form of art. There's much to be learned from these fabulous women, not just about fashion but about aging and spirit and ... life.

Celebrate the season and go forth in style.

Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at <http://over-dressedforlife.com/>.

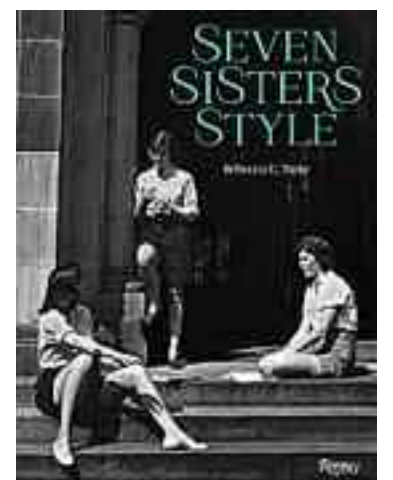


Image courtesy of Rizzoli



Leggings, tunics and more are available at Glamorous Boutique. Photo Moya Stone

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

One More Win

Campo Headed to NCS Finals

By Michael Sakoda



Nick Fadelli rushed for five touchdowns in the first half against Analy.

Photos Gint Federas

The Campolindo Cougars remain the last Lamorinda team in the NCS football playoffs. They will face Marin Catholic in the NCS finals. After routing Cardinal Newman 56-14, the Cougars took on Analy to advance to the finals. Acalanes lost a heartbreaker to Analy in the quarterfinals to end its season.

On Nov. 28, Campolindo kept their winning streak alive by defeating Analy, 62-46, in a game that was much closer than the final score would indicate.

The Tigers drew first blood, taking a 7-0 lead with 8:48 left in the first quarter. Campo responded by capping a six-play, 58-yard drive with a 6-yard rushing touchdown from Nick Fadelli. On Analy's next drive, Adam Remotto intercepted a pass setting up the Cougars with first and goal from the 1 yard line. Fadelli quickly scored a second touchdown to give Campo a 13-7 lead.

The back and forth continued as the first half saw seven lead changes. The game turned late in the third. With 2:48 left in the quarter, Campolindo blocked an Analy extra-point attempt, keeping the Cougar lead 48-40.

Campo was forced to punt on their next possession, and Analy scored a touchdown. However, the Tigers failed to score on the subsequent two-point conversion, leaving Campo up 48-46.

With 7:40 left in the game, Campolindo began an eight-play, 74-yard drive that ended with Jack Stephens finding Max Flower in the back left corner of the end zone. After the extra point, the Cougars held a 55-46 lead. Flower returned an interception for a touchdown with 13 seconds left, making the score 62-46, putting the final touches on a great win.

"It was an incredible effort by all the kids in the secondary," said Cougars head coach Kevin Macy of Remotto, Flower, Tiger Garcia, and Jack Shurtz, all of whom recorded interceptions. "Analy has a great passing game, so we knew that we were going to be under stress all night, and

I give our kids credit for hanging in under that intense fire."

Fadelli rushed 23 times for 111 yards, four touchdowns, and returned a kickoff 90 yards for a touchdown. Stephens completed 11 of 17 passes for 186 yards and a touchdown, and Caleb Whalen led the receiving core with three receptions for 80 yards.

The Cougars face No. 3 Marin Catholic (10-3, 6-1 MCAL) on Dec. 6 at Diablo Valley College for the NCS Division III Championship. Campo beat Marin Catholic for the title in 2011. Marin Catholic has reached the NCS finals the last three years, winning in 2012. It should be an exciting match-up for Campolindo.

On Nov. 22, Acalanes (8-4, 4-2 DFAL) found themselves in a shootout with Analy in their quarterfinal game. Acalanes scored in the final five minutes, bringing them to within a touchdown, 41-48, but the Tigers ran out the clock.

"They have some explosive athletes, and we struggled to stop them," said Dons head coach Mike

Ivankovich. "It was a great game, but that's it. You lose in the playoffs and that's it."

While Acalanes ultimately finished with the same record as their 2013 campaign, 8-4, this year's Dons showed improvement in league 4-2 (up from 3-3 in 2013).

"Offensively, I think we accomplished what we set out to, threw the ball well, pass protected well, and defensively, I think we did a really good job of maximizing ourselves," said Ivankovich.

The Dons will lose quarterback Casey Harrington, All-DFAL center Michael Fink, and Oregon-committed left tackle Brady Aiello to graduation this offseason, but they return a handful of key players including Nathan Edwards, Matt Bostwick, and Jake Berry.

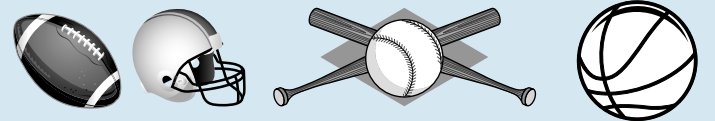
"I think Jake's going to catch some people by surprise with just how great he is, his footwork, vision, mechanics, he can play," said Ivankovich of his future quarterback.

Look for more great play from Acalanes next year.



Adam Remotto had a interception in the win.

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Campo Volleyball Season Ends in State Tournament

By Scott Wu



Lauren Budde and MacKenzie Brown

Photos Gint Federas

After a strong start in the NCS playoffs, the Lamorinda volleyball teams were unable to take home a championship. All three schools qualified, and Campolindo even advanced to the CIF State Tournament. Miramonte was ousted in the second round of the NCS. Acalanes lost in the semifinals.

On Nov. 19, Campolindo hosted the Dons in the semifinals. A powerhouse, Campolindo (29-7) had not lost a set in the NCS playoffs and had already swept No. 4 Acalanes (23-8) during the regular season.

In the match, the Dons looked to senior Molly Dalziel, who had seven kills in the first set. Acalanes' junior Hannah Roberts and senior Dory Grobeck both served well for the Dons. Despite the tough play from Acalanes, Campolindo managed to hang on to beat the Dons 25-22 in the first set.

The second set belonged solely to the Cougars, who utilized multiple kills by Yale-bound senior Kelly Wirth and junior Emma Johnson to win 25-16. Acalanes put up a fight in the third set, but it was not enough and Campolindo recorded the sweep.

While content with his semifinal win, head coach John Vuong was eager to play No. 3 seed Sonoma Valley in the final.

"After the win, we needed to be mentally tough and put all of our focus on the upcoming performance," said Vuong.

In the NCS finals on Nov. 22, Wirth was a dominant force. Early in the first set, she had one spike from the back of the court that seemed to make its way through three different Sonoma defenders. However, the Cougars lost the first set 21-25.

"Sonoma played better defense and had

fewer digs than us, especially early in the game," said Vuong of the match.

Campolindo dropped the second set 21-25. In a must-win third set, Campolindo took control. A hard hit from senior Lauren Budde ensured that Sonoma would not sweep the match. Campo pulled out the 25-21 win.

In the fourth set, Campolindo took a quick lead with a pair of kills by sophomore Sabrina Smith, but could not hang on. They lost 25-23.

Despite the loss in the final, the Cougars still earned a spot in the CIF State Championship Tournament. "Despite the tough loss, our team played well, and the players are excited as we look towards the state championship tournament," said Vuong.

Campolindo was given the No. 6 seed and played No. 3 El Camino High of San Francisco. Although they jumped out to an early lead, winning the first set 25-20, the Cougars lost the next three sets.

Although the score of the final game did not reflect their dominance, the Cougars' season was truly remarkable. They finished the season 29-9.



Sabrina Smith

Saint Mary's Basketball Programs Off to a Hot Start

By Spencer Silva



Aaron Bright



Lauren Nicholson

Photos Tod Fierner

With the basketball season underway, the Saint Mary's Gaels once again field two of the better teams in Northern California. Both the men (5-0) and women (5-1) have begun the season strong and appear poised for success in the WCC.

On Nov. 29, the Saint Mary's men defeated the Cal Poly Mustangs 82-56. They extended their home winning streak against non-conference opponents to 33 games, a streak that ties with Illinois for fifth best in the NCAA.

The Gaels are led by senior Brad Waldow, a preseason All-WCC pick who is averaging 21.6 points. The only other returning starter from the 2013-14 squad is senior Kerry Carter, who made four of the team's 15 three-pointers in Saturday's game.

The most noticeable difference from last season, however, is the absence of Stephen Holt. Holt ended his Saint Mary's career 10th on the all-time scoring list and is now attempting to carve out a career in the NBA.

The team is adapting well to its new personnel. Aaron Bright and Desmond Simmons, who are fifth-year transfers from Stanford and Washington, respectively, are new faces in the starting lineup. Redshirt freshman Emmett Naar has also stepped into a starting role and appears to be developing chemistry with Bright and Dane Pineau.

After Saturday's game, Coach Bennett spoke about the outlook of his team.

"This was our best performance yet," he explained, "this team, more than any team I've coached in awhile, has a chance to really improve. They're not close to their ceiling."

The Saint Mary's women also played on

Nov. 29, securing a 67-63 win over Idaho State, and with it the title to their third straight Hilton-Concord Classic.

Junior Lauren Nicholson has starred in the early season. She was named tournament MVP Saturday after her 25-point effort in the championship game. She and the rest of the team have been tasked with picking up the slack left behind by Jackie Nared, Danielle Mauldin and Kate Gaze. Nared and Mauldin were First Team ALL-WCC in 2013-14.

"For every three that we lose, we expect that three more girls will breakthrough and contribute," said head coach Paul Thomas. "The culture here with this program is important. We don't coach the starters any different from the bench players. We treat everyone the same."

The team is also bolstered by the return of Carli Rosenthal, a key player around the basket who spent most of last season injured. The starting lineup is rounded out by freshman Stella Beck, junior Shannon Mauldin and senior Hayley Hendrickson.

Thomas enters his ninth year as head coach of the women's team and his emphasis on consistent free-throw shooting and winning on the road are still key pillars of his philosophy.

"We're consistently Top-5 in the country in free-throw shooting," he said, "and we play a game that travels well. The style of defense and offense we play allows us to win games on the road. Anyone who follows college basketball knows how important it is to win over the road."

The men's next game is at home against Boise State on Dec. 6. The women host Cal State Northridge on Dec. 4.

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Campolindo Girls' Cross Country Team Claims Second at State Meet

By Karl Buschek



Campolindo cross country team

Photo provided

After a strong season, the Campolindo girls' cross-country team finished in second place at the Division III CIF State Championships on Nov. 29 at Woodward Park in Fresno.

The Cougars placed two runners in the Top 11—senior Toni Finnane claimed second place and Mary Orders finished in 11th.

Ranked No. 1 entering the race, the squad actually had even bigger plans for the day. "Although we were very pleased to be on the podium, I think it was kind of a letdown, as the girls had some pretty high expectations," said head coach Chuck Woolridge.

Senior Parker Lothamer set the pace for the Campolindo's boys' team, finishing in 16:07. The boys placed ninth overall.

"To be a Top 10 State meet finisher is always pretty significant," said Woolridge. "It's the 11th year in a row that we've done that. The boys can walk away feeling proud of continuing our streak."

The Miramonte boys' team also took part in the State meet, claiming 18th place in the Division III race. Senior Sid Bagga, who ended up in 85th place, led the way for the Mats.

The Acalanes boys' team ended up placing 23rd out of 23 teams, but co-head coach Nate Beach believes there are positives to take away. "It was good for them to get the experience and I think that it's going to help them build toward next year."

On Saturday, Nov. 22, Campolindo took first place in both races at the NCS Championships at Hayward High School. On a rainy and windy day, the girls' team had five runners in the Top 10. Woolridge called it the "best performance" of the season.

"The course was muddy and it was raining during our race, and yet they posted the fourth-fastest team time ever in the history of that course," said Woolridge.

Even though nobody finished higher than ninth, the Campolindo boys' squad had five runners in the Top 15. "What I like about our boys' team is that it really isn't a team, it's a pack," said Woolridge.

The Miramonte boys' team punched its ticket to the State meet by finishing fourth. The Mats also had a strong "pack." Out of the top five runners, nobody finished higher than 14 or lower than 28th.

"Our theme all year was that we didn't really have a front runner," said head coach Brian Henderson. "My mantra to them before each race was 'to mind the gap.' Make sure that that gap was as small as it possibly could be."

The Acalanes boys' team snagged the fifth and final State qualifying spot.

While the season came to an end for the Acalanes girls' team, junior Sammy Taketa qualified for the State meet as an individual. She finished in 22nd place.

Lightning Strikes in SoCal

Submitted by Art Thoms



Photo provided

The Lafayette Lighting girls' AAU basketball team won five games to win the Swoosh High School tournament on Nov. 1-2 in Anaheim. All the members of the team are freshman, but they beat varsity teams.

The Lightning started in 2009 and over the last five years the team has won 33 AAU tourna-

ments and tallied a record of 160-28 against teams their age.

Members of the team include Leah Walton, Aubrey Wagner, Zoe Delrosario, Kate Miles, Jessi O'Reilly, Lauren Etnyre, Amanda Alessandria, Clara Kobashigawa, Ashley Thoms, Haley Van Dyke and Lexi Romero.

Brothers Kick Competition

Submitted by Thomas Westernoff



From left: Trevor (gold in Kata, Kumite) and Justin (silver in Kata, bronze in Kumite) Photo provided

Trevor and Justin Simpson participated in the RyuKyuKan International Karate Tournament in Dixon on Nov. 15. The brothers returned home with a total of four medals.

Volleyball Champs

Submitted by Debbie Standing



From left, back row: Coach Debbie Standing, Nina Naffziger, Panna Vyatkin, Kelly Robles, Lily Martranga, Kelly Gagnon, Danielle Duffy, Helena Devine, Lily Storrs, coach Michael Standing; front row: Michelle Thorne, Amy Flett, Audrey Pak, Arielle Allen, and Taylor Floyd Photo Jimmy Pak

The Joaquin Moraga 7A girls volleyball team finished off their fall season by winning the Foothill Volleyball Tournament on Oct. 30 in Walnut Creek. The girls were 12-1 on the season, winning most of their matches in two sets.

State Champions

Submitted by Tiraporn Olsen



From left, front row: Luke Olsen, Sam Barbir, Diego Heredia, Finn Lutton, Cole Davidson, Zack Donovan, Henry Souza; back row: Marco Green, Trevor Rogers, Adrian Artale, Charlie Hill, Luke Amanquah, Andrew Huchingson, Coach Alex Photo provided

Lamorinda Soccer Club U10B Navy Ramon Azuri 2-1 in extra minutes. Sam Barbir and Gary Hill scored the goals for Lamorinda. team won the NorCal State Cup Championship on Nov. 16 after defeating San

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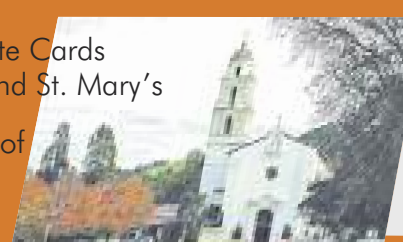
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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 08 Issue 20 Wednesday, December 3, 2014



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for December ...read on page D9

Holiday Traditions, from Then Till Now

By Chris Lavin



Deb Potter of Moraga grew up on the East Coast with single candles in the windows during the holidays, so she continues the tradition at her home in Moraga each year. The neighbors now expect to see them.

Photo Chris Lavin

Deb Potter of Moraga remembers the event distinctly. It was after Thanksgiving, she was a little girl, and she'd been counting the days to Christmas. Finally it was Christmas Eve night, and her father urgently called her outside to see something special.

"He said, 'Debbie, come here!' and it was a red blinking light slowly moving across the sky," said Potter, who was growing up in Philadelphia and now lives on a cozy cul-de-sac at the edge of Moraga. "I climbed into his lap, leaned back and looked up, and there it was." Her father could sense her

wonder, and he wrapped his arms around her. "That," he said, "is Santa's sleigh, and he's coming tonight!" Potter was thrilled.

Fast forward to 2014, when Potter is, ironically, a flight attendant (she suspects now that what her father pointed out was a plane, but she will not testify to that in court), and the traditions continue. She keeps an eye on the sky for her relatives and neighbors. Her neighborhood has come to expect the single candles in the windows of her home, electric candles she has carefully arranged and put there for 19 years during the holiday season.

Growing up in Philadelphia, Potter loved the simple tradition on the East Coast of putting single candles in windows to signify the holidays, and she has continued it ever since. She is about 19 years before her time, according to holiday decorating aficionados – because throughout Lamorinda the holidays have taken on a more secular, simple feel. Fewer lights, less ... hoopla.

"I would say that it's more rustic, it's more natural," said Susan Marconi, a home goods buyer at Across the Way in Moraga. "There are lots of boughs, deer antlers – it's natural. It's foraging from the earth, and simple is better. Burlap is big, for instance. Burlap is everywhere this holiday season."

In other words, gone are the days when neighbors competed with neighbors for the most spectacular display, ala how Chevy Chase blew out the electricity in his neighborhood when he plugged in his lights in the movie "Christmas Vacation." That would never happen here, Marconi says.

... continued on page D4



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City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
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MORAGA	11	\$355,000	\$1,305,000
ORINDA	4	\$850,000	\$2,750,000

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- 860 Acalanes Road, \$801,000, 3 Bdrms, 1528 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 10-24-14
804 Avalon Avenue, \$1,225,000, 4 Bdrms, 2167 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-29-14;
Previous Sale: \$215,000, 08-14-87
3366 Carlyle Terrace, \$1,045,000, 4 Bdrms, 1730 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 10-24-14;
Previous Sale: \$780,000, 09-18-09
36 Deer Trail, \$1,525,000, 2 Bdrms, 2070 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 10-28-14
525 Florence Drive, \$880,000, 3 Bdrms, 1468 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-23-14;
Previous Sale: \$791,500, 08-09-07
1101 Magnolia Lane, \$1,160,000, 3 Bdrms, 1996 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 10-28-14;
Previous Sale: \$300,000, 06-08-99
3279 Mt. Diablo Court #20, \$552,000, 2 Bdrms, 1386 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 10-24-14;
Previous Sale: \$399,000, 09-23-09
699 Old Jonas Hill Road, \$1,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 2745 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 10-23-14
1239 Quandt Road, \$1,020,000, 4 Bdrms, 1944 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 10-29-14;
Previous Sale: \$280,000, 05-01-97
3777 Sundale Road, \$500,000, 2547 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 10-24-14
1071 Sunrise Ridge Drive, \$1,045,000, 4 Bdrms, 3572 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 10-22-14;
Previous Sale: \$761,500, 03-23-00
3319 Sweet Drive, \$775,000, 3 Bdrms, 1226 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 10-24-14;
Previous Sale: \$725,000, 12-19-05
3147 Windsor Court, \$1,052,000, 3 Bdrms, 1592 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-21-14

MORAGA

- 2059 Ascot Drive #213, \$355,000, 2 Bdrms, 1193 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 10-30-14;
Previous Sale: \$355,000, 10-29-04
12 Buckingham Drive, \$940,000, 4 Bdrms, 1648 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-24-14
3830 Campolindo Drive, \$1,225,000, 5 Bdrms, 2653 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 10-24-14
820 Country Club Drive, \$649,000, 2 Bdrms, 1262 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-29-14;
Previous Sale: \$497,500, 10-16-09
192 Cypress Point Way, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 1644 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-30-14;
Previous Sale: \$600,000, 06-28-00
15 Idlewood Court, \$1,085,000, 4 Bdrms, 2255 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-24-14;
Previous Sale: \$40,000, 12-01-70
28 Lance Court, \$1,305,000, 4 Bdrms, 2722 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-22-14;
Previous Sale: \$840,000, 10-19-12
27 Miramonte Drive, \$560,000, 3 Bdrms, 1447 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-23-14
1345 Rimer Drive, \$1,105,000, 4 Bdrms, 2191 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-30-14
28 Sarah Lane, \$990,000, 4 Bdrms, 2142 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-24-14
104 Walford Drive, \$995,000, 4 Bdrms, 2011 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-24-14;
Previous Sale: \$870,000, 12-30-04

ORINDA

- 34 Ardilla Road, \$850,000, 2 Bdrms, 1245 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 10-29-14;
Previous Sale: \$495,000, 12-12-01
176 Crestview Drive, \$2,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 4422 SqFt, 2005 YrBlt, 10-22-14;
Previous Sale: \$2,870,000, 02-15-07
8 Darnby Court, \$1,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2224 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-22-14;
Previous Sale: \$137,500, 09-02-80
147 Moraga Way, \$870,000, 3 Bdrms, 1663 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 10-24-14



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Holiday Traditions, from Then Till Now

... continued from page D1

The trend Marconi has seen coming is now in full force. "It's not so over the top anymore," she said. "People don't have lights all over the place. They are keeping it simple." She sees the trend this year as downsizing. "People are more frugal," she said. She believes the farm-to-table movement has influenced the holidays enormously, making people think of sustainable approaches to the holidays, from the food on their tables to the natural decorations in their homes.

"It should be about spending time with people you want to spend time with," Marconi said. Some items she has seen selling a lot fits that theme, including recyclable table runners made of printed butcher paper that you can rip off, lay down on the middle of the table, get it all messed up during a fun dinner, then stick it in the recycle bin. Or she also likes placemats that you can write on and recycle, or write in chalk and wipe it off. "You can write guests' names on the mats, or put a message to your children. I like the idea of making a theme over dinner, like 'Write down what you're thankful for, and we'll talk about it,'" she said. "People can get really creative."

"It's really all about the holiday spirit, no matter what you celebrate," she said. And that includes magic. Sometimes the best parts of the holidays have nothing at all do to with trees or lights or decorations or food.

So if you are 9 or 10 years old or younger, living in certain parts of Lamorinda, and you are still reading this article, stop now. Because we all know that you have heard rumors that certain members of your neighborhood might go out on a Christmas Eve night, say around bed-time, and point out a red blinking light traveling across the sky, or secretly jangle certain bells that could sound as if they might hang around a reindeer's neck. There might even be a sound of clatter on the roof, caused by a tossed rock.

But don't believe those rumors about the neighbors doing it. It's really the result of the red light blinking across the sky, reindeer harnesses decorated with bells, and the sound of hooves clattering to a stop on the roof. Honest.



Even a drive-by of the Potter home in Moraga lends itself to a secular, simple, holiday feel. Photos Chris Lavin



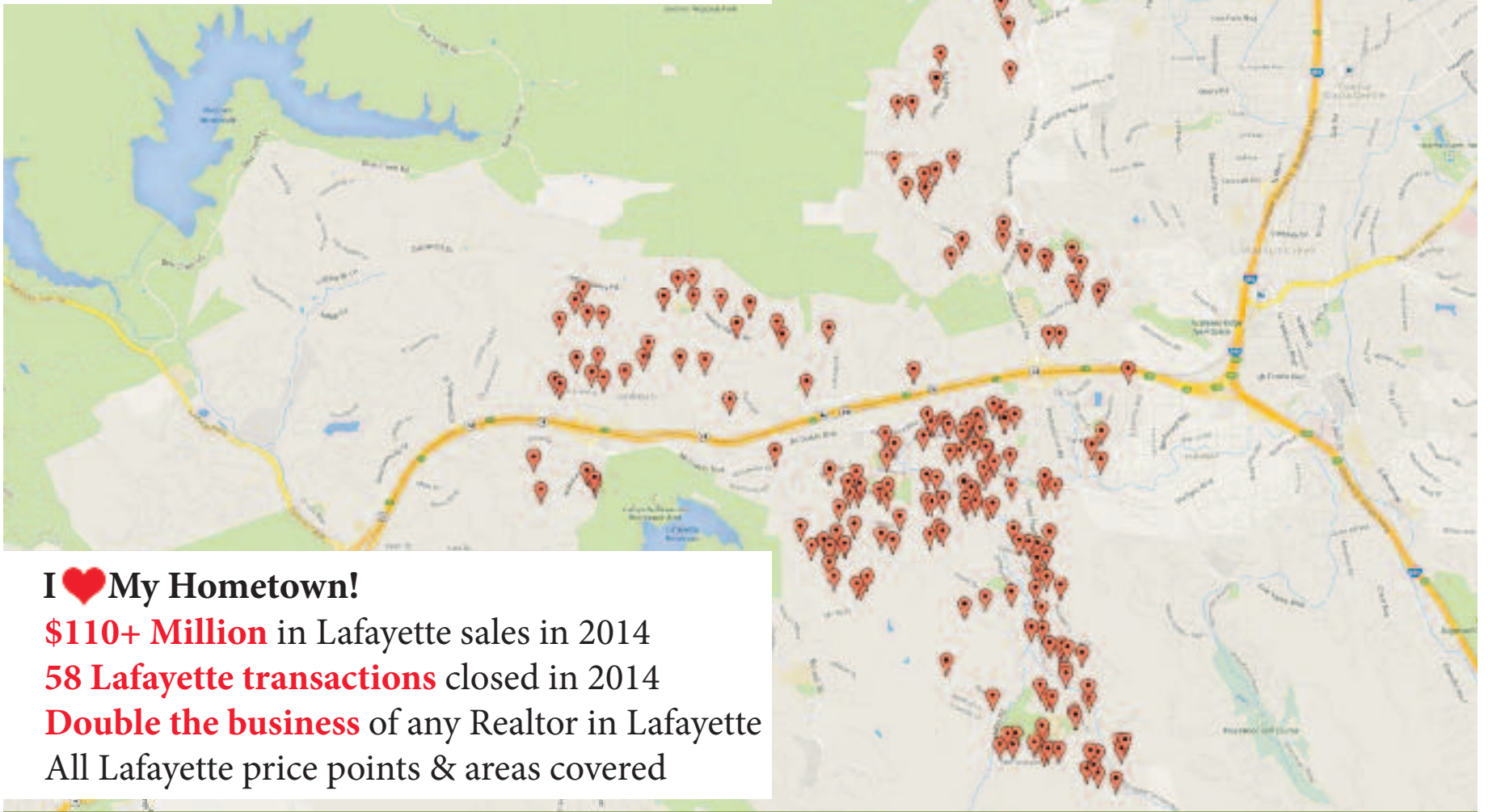
Besides the relatives even the neighbors get in on the action in a cul-de-sac in Moraga to put in the Potters' single candles in the upper story windows for the holidays, including, from left, Bridget Kelly, Sydney Reed, twins Brody and Maya Reed, Crosby Kelly, Colin Kelly, and Skyler Reed. They remember seeing the candles appear magically in the Potters' windows their whole lives.

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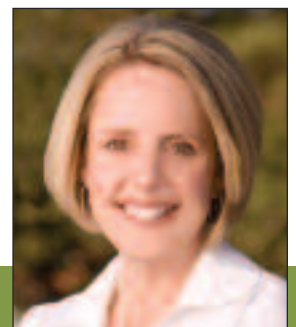
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Living Room Feng Shui for the Holidays

By Michele Duffy



A sofa against the wall in this living room would benefit with seasonal balance, like poinsettias, red throws or pillows (fire element).

Photo provided

Our home is a reflection of our inner subconscious and our aspirations in feng shui. The home is viewed as a single functional unit where all rooms of the house work together. Much like our physical body which has separate parts, the rooms in our homes are like the organs in our body, inter-connected and interdependent.

Wonderful holidays at home involve entertaining family and friends, and spending time together in our living rooms, so ... is yours ready for the crowd or in need of a Qi overhaul? Does the room feel dull and lifeless or is it brimming with excitement and the promise of conversations in hushed and eruptive tones? There is so much conflicting information about what is "good" or "inauspicious" feng shui, but if you follow these straight forward tips you will be well on your way to a magical holiday season of enchantment spent in your very own energetically balanced living room.

Good living room feng shui relies on many of the same design principles we recommend for other areas of the home or office. It is important that your living room is in an area of the home with at least two exterior walls so there is plenty of natural light. This way the area, associated with nurturing the entire family and our closest friends, has balanced energy.

Clutter must be kept at bay and eliminated altogether in your home and, in particular, the family-important living room. In feng shui a cluttered home stifles the flow of Qi (energy) and has stagnant energies — which means no new energy can enter the home. Remember what happens to water when it stagnates? It becomes smelly and dirty. Feng shui principles embrace and encourage flow and rejuvenation of Qi energy in our living spaces.

... continued on page D8



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Living Room Feng Shui for the Holidays

... continued from page D6



This bird wood panel serves as a nice focal point in this Orinda living room.

Photo provided

Clear your living room of clutter and watch the family's finances miraculously improve. Get rid of the unnecessary, unused, and in-the-way objects, especially when we are gift giving and welcoming new things, hopefully judiciously, into our spaces.

Living room seating and furniture arrangement should be cozy, where family and friends can enjoy conversations, relax or watch TV. Living room furniture placement includes setting up the furniture in a "conversational" arrangement so people seated in the living room can see everyone entering the room.

Like other areas of the home, it is important not to overwhelm the space with furniture that is too large or with too many pieces. The goal is to maximize seating without over-crowding the space, so the Qi can circulate throughout in a healthy manner. It is considered good luck to keep the center of the living room as open as possible, without objects in the middle that prevent people from entering the room. The main sofa should be pushed up against solid walls, if possible. Furniture

or other objects that obstruct the smooth flow of healthy energy should, ideally, be removed. If you keep tripping over a basket, a chair, or the back of the sofa greets you as you enter the living room, make the adjustments you need to create a living room that functions nicely for all occasions. Coin shaped leafy indoor plants and colorful flower arrangements introduce abundant live Qi into your space.

This is a good time of year to introduce plants like mistletoe, poinsettias, evergreens and other plants into your home. Remember, not all plants are safe for children or pets, such as poinsettias, which have poisonous leaves. And, of course, if you celebrate the holiday, don't forget the Christmas tree, which will introduce yang (active) energy into your home during this joyful time of year.

Make sure that fresh flowers adorn this room but if they fade, replace them with a fresh arrangement. It also helps to understand what area of the feng shui map your living room occupies so you do not mistakenly

add too much of the wood element (plants) if it happens to be located, for example, in the metal or earth element areas.

Living room lighting should be multilevel – recessed lighting on dimmers, and soft table lamps that are strong enough for 100 watt bulbs. Use seasonal cinnamon or vanilla candles to create a cozy atmosphere, or add a few extra warm throws and seasonally hued pillows to enhance the room's comfort level.

Create a focal point in your living room by painting your fireplace a slightly different hue than the wall color or choose a large piece of art that pops in the space. Your living room artwork and imagery might include a large family portrait to enhance the importance of family members. A large mirror reflecting pleasant views from outdoors will suggest a vast expanse of pure energy. Water views welcome prosperity. Views of trees bring in growth energy while views of scenic mountains bring greater contemplation and rock-solid relationships.

Try making a few of these simple changes and then gather your family, sit back, and look into the faces of your contented loved ones and bear witness to the happy results of the new energy you created this year in your living room. Happy Holidays!



Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating "Space as Medicine" Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng

Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. For more info, visit www.mandalafengshui.com, email spaceharmony@gmail.com, or call (520) 647-4887.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for December

By Cynthia Brian

"Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour." –John Boswell



Evergreens, hydrangea, and lilies create a stunning holiday centerpiece.

Photo Cynthia Brian

With less than three more weeks of autumn, we look forward to the festivities of December. Like a little child, I adore the holidays, the sparkling lights, the smells of gingerbread, and the good cheer circulating among people everywhere. However, I've always been distressed that so many retail establishments begin showcasing Christmas décor in September diminishing the enjoyment of that first weekend after Thanksgiving when yuletide revelry is traditionally unveiled.

According to a 2013 consumer research study, 81 percent of people visiting stores are extremely annoyed by the three-month premature Christmas jingles blasting from the sound system. Fortunately, most nurseries and garden centers live in the moment displaying the appropriate embellishments for the current season. It's a pleasure to witness the plethora of firs, pines, and other evergreens that will soon become decorated trees and inviting wreaths in local homes. Kalanchoe, Christmas cactus, cyclamen, poinsettia, fuchsia, anthuriums, and pansies are in bloom, brightening the darker days.

Grateful for the recent rains, our garden hours are winding down just in time to gather our golden moments making memories at fun-filled holiday gatherings with family and friends. It's recharging time. Put your feet up, drink hot cocoa, kindle the fire, and smell the last of the roses before Santa Claus comes to town.

... continued on page D10



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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for December

GIFT packets of seeds for the holidays. Easy grow treasures include cosmos, peas, sunflowers, and morning glory. Give a wooden salad bowl filled with seeds of lettuce, peppers, cucumbers, basil, and arugula.

FEED your trees while they are dormant. Underground the roots are active and can use the nutrient boost.

PLANT nutrient rich bok choy in your garden. The fiber and sulfur compounds prevent against cancer and bok choy is rich in vitamins A and C. Bok Choy contains 100 percent of your daily beta carotene, an antioxidant that boosts your immune system and maintains vision. It's also delicious chopped in salads, steamed, or added to soups. Do you need more reasons to add this ancient Chinese veggie to your planting list?

TAKE cuttings of coleus, pelargoniums, and geraniums before you prune them back for the winter. Put the stems in a jar of water and when they root, you can transplant them to use indoors.

DIVIDE your peonies, daylilies, and bearded iris if you didn't do it last month. Exchange with friends or find new needy places in your December garden.

BRING the tropics home by adding red bromeliads or anthuriums to your holiday décor.

SAVE birds by going organic. Provide seeds, berries, and safe nesting areas. Add a few native plants to your landscape that native birds already enjoy or stop pruning roses to allow the rosehips to form and feed our flying friends.

PROTECT roses from extreme temperature changes by covering plants with 8 to 10 inches of mulch above the crown.



The bright shiny leaves and fronds of red anthurium sparkle for the holidays.
Photo Cynthia Brian

FEED the soil, not the plants. Continue adding organic materials including hay, leaves, and compost to enrich your soil over winter.

SPREAD seeds of a cover crop on any bare soil to prevent erosion, save water, increase soil fertility, and create habitats for beneficial insects.

SUPPORT a vole, mole, gopher, and rat free environment by incorporating owl nesting homes. Habitat for owls can be as simple as brush piles or construct a true owl nesting box in an old tree positioned at a minimum 10 to 15 feet off the ground. A family of owls will scarf down several thousand rodents during a season as the young consume two to four a night. No need for harmful poisons when you have a wise owl living *chez vous*.

GROW wisteria by collecting the seeds from the popped pods. Soak in water for three or four days, scrape off the hard exterior and plant in pots. Within four to six weeks, sprouts will form and you can transplant to an area in your garden that will support this very hardy twining vine. Wisteria can also be trained to be a tree. It could take five to 15 years to bloom and has the potential to live for over 500 years! Now that is a legacy of growing.

CONTINUE reusing your gray water for outdoor container plants that won't benefit from any rainy weather. Every drop you save is crucial as we are not out of the drought woods yet, even with the rainy days.

DECK the halls with boughs of holly, pyracantha, cotoneaster, magnolia cones, rose hips, or any other merry berry!

VISIT 5 A Rent a Space, 455 Moraga Rd #F in Moraga from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Dec. 13 to have your children write Letters to Santa with me and volunteers from Be the Star You Are!® charity. I'll have seeds for you, and the kiddies will get candy, cookies, cocoa, and caroling! Info: http://www.btsya.com/events_calendar.html

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WINTER TREE TIPS

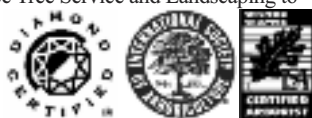
Winter brings cold and rainy weather. "While many trees will be dormant in the winter, exposure to the tough conditions can cause them major stress," says Darren Edwards, Certified Arborist with Advance Tree Service. "Minimize that stress by helping your trees through the cold months. If you take care of your trees in the winter, you will be rewarded in the spring."

Winter can be a good time for pruning most trees, while they are dormant, and pines should only be pruned in the winter months. Removal of large, dead, broken, poorly positioned limbs and corrective pruning can minimize winter storm damage, and maximize optimal spring growth.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you with your winter pruning.

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Magnolia cones are bright reddish pink in December, perfect for adding to mantle decorations. Photos Cynthia Brian



A holly hedge is merry and bright.



Happy gardening, happy growing, happy holiday glowing!

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