

LAMORINDA

Independent, locally owned and operated!

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FREE

See's
Moraga Center
 1 PM - 5 PM
 &
Rheem Center
 10 AM - 5 PM
 Kiwanis Fundraiser



Moraga



Orinda



Lafayette

Lamorinda Community Comes Together to Celebrate the Holidays

By Sophie Braccini

Excitement is building around local towns and cities, the air filling with the scent of pine as tree farms pop up along decorated streets and next to nearby storefronts in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. Whether you are looking for one-of-a-kind gifts for loved ones in a festive historic setting, seeking a visit from Santa, a sleigh ride, or the glitter

of lights on trees or menorahs, Lamorinda will deliver this December.

Santa will make his first official Lamorinda visit at the Moraga Tree Lighting ceremony at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 3 in the Moraga Commons Park. Entertainment begins at 6:30 p.m. and the tree will be lit at 7 p.m. Then on Dec. 4-6, for the

first time Donald Rheem's historic mansion, the Hacienda de las Flores, will be decorated and open for the Hacienda Holiday Faire. The fair will give Lamorinda residents the opportunity to discover the beautiful home and grounds that Rheem developed into an estate during his residency in the 1930s for his wife, Alice Goodfellow Rheem. ... continued on page A12

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Join us for delightful Holiday Events at 5A Dec. 5th 11am-3pm

Santa will be at 5A with Free Photos, frame, cookies, cocoa, arts & crafts! Don't forget to use our FREE Wrapping Room with everything you need to wrap presents clear 'till 12/24!

5Aspace.com     



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Tenants Criticize Landlord Practices – Again

Mayor calls situation “abusive”

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Cathy Tyson

Calmly and politely, tenant representative Nick VanHole thanked the city council for stepping in to deal with spiraling rent increases earlier this year, and asked for their help once again in dealing with their landlord at the 1038 on Second apartment complex.

San Francisco-based owner, Sack Properties, purchased the older complex at the end Second Avenue, and proceeded to address long-deferred maintenance issues, while also significantly raising the rental rates. Tenants were so infuriated at the shocking increases, they brought their case to the city council to ask for help in May, 2015. Ultimately a 10 percent rental cap was promised by Sack Properties, only after the city considered a rent increase moratorium.

Now, while the rent may only have increased by 10 percent, a slew of other charges and fees have been tacked on to the rent that result in an actual 25 to 35 percent increase, according to VanHole.

He outlined the many charges and fees: water charges, marked-up garbage costs, pet rent, parking rent, mandatory renters insurance, questionable language in new leases that give the landlord the right to evict tenants for anything deemed to be an excessive mess, and a \$3,000 charge for an early break of the lease.

A parade of concerned tenants spoke to the council about all of these issues, emphasizing the serious inconsistencies in utility charges, and lack of transparency.

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