

Antenna Donation Aids Emergency Communications

By Cathy Dausman



LARIG volunteers Dan Spisak, left, and Al Archangel install a multi-purpose antenna at 335 Rheem Blvd. Photo Cathy Dausman

Six antennas now sit atop Moraga's new Town Council Chambers at 335 Rheem Boulevard. The antennas and the two-way radios they are connected with link town employees or emergency communicators to police, public works and amateur radio operators across Lamorinda and throughout northern California. Moraga Rotary donated approximately \$1,700 a few years ago to purchase one of the antennas for Emergency Operations Center use, according to Rotarian Gary Irwin.

The radio setup allows the town of Moraga to connect with amateur radio operators across California and even around the world in event of an emergency. The donated antenna originally sat on the town hall roof; its signal was fed into the town's earlier Emergency Operations site, which was a small storage room in the planning department. Its recent placement atop the town chamber

building by Lamorinda Area Radio Interest Group volunteers finally gives the antenna a permanent place, Police Chief Robert Priebe said, adding that Rotary members have been very patient with the entire process, from the original installation, its removal and current installation.

In November, LARIG volunteers completed the installation of six new rooftop antennas on Moraga's town chamber building. Each antenna connects with a two-way radio inside the council chambers. The antennas will eventually be painted "sky grey" to minimize their visual impact. Priebe says the Rotary-donated radio and antenna, no longer waiting for a place to go, will become "a major communications tool for gathering and dispersing information in event of emergency when time is always of the essence."

Lafayette and Orinda have similar two-way radio systems and antennas in use as well. Orinda re-

Orinda Eve Phillips

... continued from page A7

She wanted to get more involved and improve the community, particularly its downtown center, and to improve communication with the public. "You can never communicate too much," she says.

On Phillips' want list is another downtown grocery outlet and more restaurants. She cites the petition recently presented to the council as a demonstration of the community's desire to bring in these services. She works out of her home office, and would like to see co-working spaces in Orinda, perhaps with associated daycare facilities. Recently married, she and her husband are expecting their first child in the coming year.

She is interested in transportation and parking issues, and serves as the council's liaison to BART. There are "multiple problems to talk about" in this arena, including an overflow parking issue and the need to optimize the parking situation, particularly with the capacity on the Village side. She also acknowledges the increasing push for four-hour parking zones on the Crossroads side, and although she is opposed to parking meters for Orinda, she concedes that they will very likely be reviewed as one of the options she will have to consider in the city's current parking study.

She also says Orindans "obviously have to raise more money for roads," but at the same time warns that the community should be looking very carefully at

whether it is exercising good stewardship of its finances.

An avid user and supporter of sports facilities and open space, Phillips believes that there is always a need for more ball fields, and is "glad some are coming in soon." She stresses the need to be sensitive in creating access to such community facilities as the Moraga Adobe, balancing the desire to preserve and protect buildings and open space with the interests of residents who live nearby.

Phillips wants to be a governmental leader, but not in a directive way. She says her governance philosophy is to be a facilitator, and to encourage business and property owners to resolve economic development issues while respecting their property rights. But within the parameters of the Orinda General Plan, it is really about what the community wants, she says. "There are a lot of places that have lost their soul. I wouldn't want to see that here."

With two years left in her current term of office and the strong possibility that she will serve as Orinda's next mayor, Phillips will have ample opportunity to test her approach to leadership and governance. Given her track record since she walked out of Miramonte High School 20 years ago, she appears well equipped to take on the new challenges of her office.

ceived a monetary donation from Orinda Rotary toward the purchase of an amateur radio to be used for emergency communications, said Rotary and LARIG member Gene Gottfried. Orinda's antennas are situated above Orinda City Hall. Lafayette public safety and amateur radio antennas are distributed atop the city office building, the public works building and atop the Lafayette Community Center, said Fred Lothrop, chair of Lafayette's Emergency Preparedness Commission.

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