To Lamorinda singles over 40: There's hope!

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By Nick Marnell



Lori Fowler and John George enjoy the fun at the Nov. 7 Lamorinda singles event

Photo Nick Marnell

writing my own articles for the pa-Boulevard in Lafayette.

first Tuesday in November, and not just mobbed, but buzzing. Three dozen-plus people drinking and talking and laughing and forcing me to sit at the counter. Co-owner Julie Mitchell walked over to me and explained: Her bar-restaurant was hosting a singles event, put together by the irrepressible Kim who works for an architectural Thanh, a Lafayette commercial firm in San Francisco, praised the banker.

"Lafayette is so boring. It's so hard to be single in the suburbs," Thanh said, as smiling and upbeat and positive as one would expect per offered her special take to the of an event planner. So Thanh evening. "Widows and widowers reached out on Nextdoor, a pri- have no organization," said Lori

game. No Warriors game. work, and organized the Nov. 7 Still plenty of time to procrastinate get-together. She promoted a singles event at Metro a month earper. It was Tuesday night and I had lier, which drew only 10 people, nothing to do, so I went to dinner albeit with a suggested age range at Rancho Cantina on Mt. Diablo of 28-48. The event at Rancho Cantina buried the earlier one: The place was mobbed! The Rancho was promoted as a 40-65 event. And did the 40-65 singles

> would be," said Cyndy Ayers of Saranap. "It's great to meet with people who have something in common from the same area."

Kristi Buckley of Lafayette, turnout. "We need this. It's so hard host a similar event for the 40to meet people in our city," Buck-

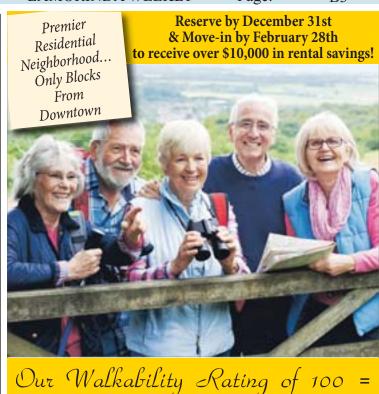
A faithful reader of our pa-

orld Series over. No Sharks vate neighborhood social net- Fowler of Lafayette, a widow herself. "People assume events for widows are for people only in their 80s. There are plenty of us in their 50s too," Fowler said. John George, a retired widower, agreed. "I've lived two and a half years in Lafayette, and I didn't think there were any singles here," George

> About the only professed "Way better than I thought it negative was the gender mix, as proclaimed by one attendee who wished to remain anonymous, who said the men didn't have the guts to show up. The turnout was 75 percent female. (I was working, so I didn't count.)

Thanh and Mitchell plan to 65 age group on the first Tuesday evening of each month. No official title, still a work in progress.

And guys: On Dec. 5, there are no Warriors or Sharks games



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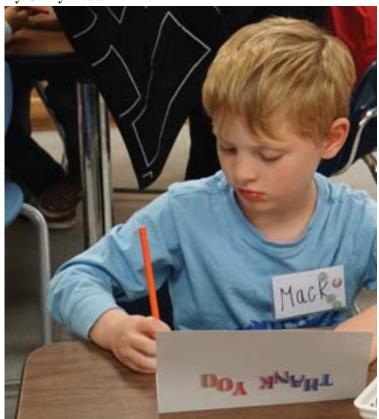
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Classic manners being taught in the classroom

By Cathy Dausman



One student works on a thank you card.

Photos Cathy Dausman



Tina Hayes discusses proper utensil use.

lished 400 years ago in France's Louis XIV court possibly be relevant today? Just ask the kindergarteners and fifth-graders tak-

ing Tina Hayes's etiquette classes. Those students might not ex- on their family.

an behavioral rules estab- pect to be addressed as "beautiful young ladies and gents" (in fact, the sobriquet elicited a round of giggling from the fifth-grade girls) but they have learned how their manners, both good and bad, reflect

In a world of instant gratification and self-importance, teaching classic etiquette may be a hard sell, but Hayes believes starting at a young age is the key to doing things right.

Hayes was at Husky House, a year-round school held on the Happy Valley Elementary School campus, to develop another group of good citizens. She has been at this location for four years and in business as founder and owner of The School of Etiquette and Decorum in Northern California for the last 10.

After 20 years in corporate management Hayes realized that if she was intimidated about making manners missteps in business settings, it made sense to train others to avoid making similar mistakes. After all, she reminds her charges, each student represents his or her family to the outside world.

The class begins with hats (and one Halloween mustache) doffed, students sitting upright, making proper eye contact and responding with a pleasant "good afternoon, Miss Hayes!"

The art of the handshake is broken into six steps (use your right hand, lock thumbs, make eye contact, smile, pump hands three times and include a verbal greeting) and table manners are dissected, from napkin selection (better restaurants will offer black or white, to minimize lint on clothing) to its proper placement during and after a meal (never on the chair seat!), and how to set a proper place.

The speed-setting contest near the end of the fifth-grade class was a challenge - not because the students hadn't mastered where each knife, fork and spoon was placed, but because they also needed to be well mannered throughout the event itself.

Hayes also explains, humorously, why burping, using a toothpick at the table or using your napkin as a bib won't do.

"She (Hayes) is doing a fantastic job. It is a charming class," said Anne Reardon, Husky House executive director. Reardon says it helps create all around citizens "the old school way."

And for that, a thank you note is

due.





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