

Lafayette Citizen of the Year John Coleman honored for decades of service in Lafayette

By Sharon K. Sobotta



John Coleman

Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

John Coleman is one of those people who has never taken commitment or service lightly. Earlier this year, Coleman wrapped up more than three decades of service with the East Bay Municipal Utility District, making him the longest serving elected EBMUD Board Member. This summer, Coleman will partake in his 56th consecutive year of Boy Scout camp. He is also a committed husband, father, grandfather, and role model to well over 100 people gathered at the Lafayette Park Hotel to honor and celebrate Coleman as the citizen of the year on March 28.

"You're probably one of the most deserving citizens of the year that the city has ever seen," Mike Anderson, the 2023 Lafayette Citizen of the

year, told Coleman. "It's not so much about the policy but it's the heart and soul in the ground, doing the work, talking to people, dealing with the kids (in Boy Scouts)."

Coleman's wife beamed with pride as she spoke about her husband with the couple's grandchildren by her side. "John frequently jokes that the only time people get to hear good things about themselves is at their memorial service," she said. "And this is so much better." She gave a glimpse of life with John Coleman, describing him as a morning person who can offer the weather forecast before 6 a.m., and who even conserves water with limiting his at home flushes.

Coleman was presented with a sash early in the evening, and

speakers and presenters added their pins and patches of recognition to it throughout the evening. Coleman cheekily poked fun at parts of the scouting uniform he refused to embrace, sashes included, but thanked the organization for giving him far more than he credits himself offering in return.

In receiving his award, Coleman expressed gratitude for each of his community and professional endeavors. "I've had a great time working and being on the board with East Bay MUD for 33+ years, the Bay Planning Coalition for 11 years, (and) the California Technology Fund," Coleman said while going through his laundry list of involvement. "But having you here-friends, family, and community members, is awesome."

Coleman also returned the accolades his wife offered, earning a round of applause when he revealed that he proposed to her at a Lafayette Chamber event.

While Coleman had the crowd laughing for a good share of the evening, he seemed to touch hearts when he shared a recent discovery regarding a trait he has common with his grandson - they're both on the autism spectrum.

"When I found out my grandson was on the spectrum and I read about it, it made sense," he said, before discussing his own diagnosis - which he received three years prior - in an effort to destigmatize autism and neurodivergence. "I can identify much more with people who have challenges."

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Lafayette Earth Day Festival April 21 in Lafayette Plaza Park

By David Scholz



Celebrate all things Mother Earth at the 17th Lafayette Earth Day Festival, which will be held on Sunday, April 21, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Lafayette Plaza Park.

The event, hosted by Sustainable Lafayette, will offer a range of activities for everyone. Here's a rundown:

Bikemobile.com will provide free bike tune-ups and safety checks, including adjustments, lubrication and proper tire inflation;

There will be arts and crafts hosted by The Art Room and games for kids supervised by members of Lafayette's Youth Commission;

Local projects from Safe Routes to Acalanes, Lafayette Community Garden, and Outdoor Education Center;

Community resources and utilities such as MCE, Republic Services, 511 Contra Costa, and San Francisco BayKeeper;

Non profits with Mount Diablo Beekeepers Association (featuring a honey making demonstration), 350 Contra Costa, and Mt. Diablo Audubon Society;

Youth projects such as the Lamorinda 4-H with its petting zoo and Stanley School's Project Earth team;

Lafayette Plaza businesses such as Sideboard with its menu featuring locally sourced ingredients, and Hollie Homegrown with farm fresh retail products;

Environmental Task Force will be on hand to educate homeowners about the benefits of electrifying their homes, and providing information about pollution-free leaf blowers and induction cooktops.

Under the heading "Every day is Earth Day," Lafayette residents are encouraged to try out electric leaf blowers, as the community starts weening itself off gas-powered devices. Starting July 1, Lafayette will no longer allow the use of gas-powered blowers.

Electric leaf blowers are healthier to operate, easier to maintain, and much quieter. Residents can borrow an e-blower for up to two weeks thanks to an e-lending program made possible by the city's Environmental Task Force. Use of e-lawn blowers is allowed from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Look for Electric Leaf Lending Program on www.love-lafayette.org for details.

Volunteers looking to help with the festival can contact brad@sustainablelafayette.org for opportunities. Assistance is needed before and especially on the day of the event.

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