

Roundabout at Pleasant Hill Road and Olympic Blvd

New safety measures for roundabout in Lafayette moving forward

By Lou Fancher

Public concern about pedestrian and bicycle safety were at the forefront at the city council meeting March 25, as Engineering Services Manager Matt Luttropp brought to the council new design modifications related to the reconfiguration of the roundabout at Pleasant Hill Road and Olympic Boulevard. Luttropp outlined new enhancements added to the plan following considerable input from residents at public outreach open town halls and in comments submitted online or by post, along with a number of meetings held by the Transportation and Circulation Commission (TransCirc) and staff presentations and discussions by city council between 2021 and 2024.

As part of the city's 2024 Surface Seal Program, traffic engineering firm Kimley Horn had been hired during the project's earliest iteration (in 2021) to assist in addressing transportation standard-compliant

design changes aimed at increasing safety. In consultation with TransCirc, residents, bicycle, and pedestrian advocates, including Bike East Bay and the City Manager, focused primarily on modifications designed to reduce vehicular speeds. Suggestions included lane narrowing, a reduction in the number of vehicle lanes on southbound Pleasant Hill Road, a reduction in the length of the right-turn slip lane from westbound Olympic Boulevard, and the installation of rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) at one of the crosswalks, speed bumps, and other traffic-calming features.

These preliminary plans were reviewed by staff, slightly modified, and then shared with TransCirc in November 2022. Staff implemented temporary versions of the modifications using paint and delineators in early 2023, and additional changes were

made at the council's direction in March 2023. Since that time, traffic speeds and delays have been monitored, and confirm that speeds on southbound Pleasant Hill Road have dropped from 46 to 35 mph, while traffic delays have not increased.

A virtual pubic meeting held in January this year showed residents evenly split on several modifications, such as lane drops and the amount of signage. Suggestions made included adding speed bumps, moving bike lanes, and adding an RRFB crosswalk to the eastern leg of the roundabout. At a TransCirc meeting Feb. 5, staff received additional enhancement recommendations that Luthropp reviewed for the council at the meeting.



Not to be missed Page A10 Page A10 How to contact us Obituary Page A11 Classified Page A11 Page B4 Love Lafayette Part 2 Summer Camps Page B2/B3



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Lafayette school board rejects plan to eliminate AIM class By Sora O'Doherty

A very large number of speakers, including current students, parents, and former students, showed up at the meeting of the Lafayette School Board on March 13 and spoke out against a plan to eliminate the AIM class for fourth and fifth grade students. After hearing recommendations and data from staff, and public comments, the Board decided not to proceed with getting rid of the AIM class at this time.

The discussion focused on two elements of the class, which is intended to group 25 gifted students from all four Lafayette elementary schools in one class for both fourth and fifth grade. One element was how the selection of students is made, and the other element is the nature of the class itself.

The board was presented with some data that seemed to show that the selection of students was skewed

such that it favored male students and disfavored female students, as well as Black and Hispanic students. However, a group of parents of AIM students criticized the way that the data was compiled.

Lafayette is alone in Lamorinda in having a special class for gifted and talented education, which has in the past been labeled as GATE, but is now known in the Lafayette School District (LAFSD) as AIM, meaning Alternative Instructional Model.

After hearing the analysis, the recommendations, and the comments from the public, the majority of the board seemed to agree with the parents and students that what the AIM class is really about is, as one director put it, "that students felt close bonds with their fellow classmates, that they felt safe in their environment." ... continued on Page A11

Celebrating spring: Lamorinda's colorful Holi Festivities

Submitted by Gayatri Krishnakumar



The extended Indian community welcomed the arrival of spring with a joyful Holi celebration at the Orinda Community Park on Sunday, March 24. This traditional Indian festival, known for its vibrant colors and lively atmosphere, brought families and

Sports

Photos courtesy Saurav Mohapatra friends together for an afternoon of food and fun.

Attendees participated in the celebration, applying colors (flour with food grade coloring) onto each other. ... continued on Page A6

Civic News

Moraga opposes November's State Ballot Initiative – Page A4

Public Safety

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Summer Camps

Part 2, Half Day Summer Lamorinda Camps and Classes — Pages B2-B3

Volleyball teams' standing -Page B1





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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

Chamber of Commerce:

LAFAYETTE

Lafayette Public Meetings **City Council** Regular Meeting: Monday, April 22, 7 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall **Planning Commission Meeting** Monday, April 15, 7 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Don Tatzin Community Hall

Design Review Monday, April 22, 7 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center-Arts & Science Discovery Room



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Quest for housing element certification continues **By Lou Fancher**

Planning and Building

Director Greg Wolff introduced a staff presentation on updates and next steps to the sixth Cycle Housing Element by saying, "We are here in our ongoing quest for a certified Housing Element from the State. As you know, we previously submitted in December, received our review in February and since that review came in on the 12th we've been to every council meeting since."

Wolff said three meetings with the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) reviewer have been productive and will continue until the final draft of the plan is completed.

Diane Elrod, Housing consultant, provided summaries of the changes required by HCD that included alterations to faith based organizations and how they are listed in inventories, actions related to SB9 and ADUs, added units necessary to meet mobility goals, alternative parking standards, added unity density, information about environmental constraints, specific timeline details, specific language related to affordable housing development, and more. Elrod also reviewed changes to the vacant opportunity sites inventory list for possible development. Elrod emphasized that using existing Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) allocations to distribute units in vacant sites results in a lower income buffer of 34%, but in doing the math, non-vacant sites results would be at 57%, a figure that is above required thresh-

olds. Using instead an income distribution of 30/30/20/20 would allow the city to meet the lower percentage standards sought (less than 50%). "(This is) a capacity analysis merely to show we have the capacity to meet the requirements," she said, adding that the RHNA allocations are approximately 28% extremely low/16% low. Elrod said using a 30-30 percentage for very low and low income and 20% for moderate and high income would result in a 44% lower income buffer and units on non vacant sites at 49%.

A reorganization of the distributions illustrated in a new visual graphic, Wolff said, showed all three applications: RHNA, 30-30-20-20, and 40-40-10-10 allocations. Elrod explained the "significant lift" of keeping the city-owned 949 Moraga Road site on the inventory list. Leaving it out would provide more flexibility to the city to implement other HE programs (there are 60) and reduce the lower income buffer from 56 to 54%.

The next steps to receive certification of the HE were made clear by HCD to involve action taken by the city to adopt rezoning of required areas and its plans to meet objective design standards together at the same time. A meeting with HCD March 28 had been scheduled to finalize minor revisions made to pipeline projects. The staff report included summaries of total housing applications submitted (39) and approved (40) during 2023, the first year of the eight-year period of the

sixth Cycle HE. Notably, 33 ADUs received permitting and 29 were completed. Staff asked the council to receive their report, continue the matter to the meeting on April 22, and offer feedback on five key issues related to sites and other matters.

Council Member Carl Anduri asked about the importance of getting the vacant site percentage below 50%. Elrod said being below 50% would mean the city wouldn't have to demonstrate (show evidence proving) that the sites would actually become available for development during the HE cycle's eight-year cycle. Asked about the 40-40-10-10 allocation and its risk factor, Elrod, without making a recommendation of either option, said while putting more units on very low and low income sites would "eat away" at the buffer, the 30-30-20-20 would satisfy HCD requirements. Council Member Su-

san Candell asked about requirements for opportunity sites that are on public land and listed in the inventory. Elrod said leaving sites such as 949 Moraga and Campana on the inventory list would mean the city must meet HCD requirements by specific dates. Projects related to those locations can be kept in the city's plan to support development of affordable housing, without having to meet those HCD-imposed timelines and terms. **Discussions** related to development projects that have recently been canceled, or the status and unit numbers have changed and therefore do not contribute to the

total allocations required by the RHNA, had Wolff saying developers point to construction costs remaining high and their difficulties raising capital for projects. The situation means revisions and changes mid-cycle will be possible and are expected and within certain HCD limits.

Council asked staff at their meeting with HCD to discuss the 1/2mile buffer addition to zoning, the laws related to various mobility provisions, and other matters. They asked for clarification of risks in changing allocation numbers and more information, along with access related to spreadsheets the staff used to prepare their report. Elrod and Wolff said all of the materials would be made available online for anyone to see. Wolff said HCD was "agnostic" about the choice of 30-30-20-20 and 40-40-10-10 allocations, as long as the result placed the city below 50%. Understanding the "fine line" between the choices, Mayor Dawson said, was a priority in determining the most favorable HE for Lafayette. "We want to do something realistic and when we look at this, (know it) will pursue our goals of getting affordable housing in





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the places that we hopefully might (develop it), but also that we will get this thing certified. That's the bottom line."

Wolff said staff would bring feedback from the meeting with HCD and their recommendations about the allocation designations and other maters to the next meeting addressing the HE on April 22.

Lafayette 'Call for Walls' seeking locations for public murals

By Lou Fancher

It's rare when beauty and high visibility result from following a simple, three-step process which is exactly why downtown Lafayette property owners might jump to join "Call for Walls." Plans and funding for adding four murals in the city's downtown over the next four years have been authorized by the city council and thematic, procedural, and logistical guidelines established by the Lafayette Public Art Committee (PAC). Together, they are putting out a call for interested property owners with public-facing walls to host a mural site; especially sought are locations along Mt. Diablo Boulevard or in the Downtown Core.

The application process begins by filling out a simple form ex-

pressing interest. If selected by the PAC for recommendation and given final approval by the council, property owners will begin working with ABG Art Group, the expert mural curation team chosen by council to facilitate the process. ABG has vetted local and regional artists, and will combine property owners' stated interests with the style of artist and mural themes approved by council to offer their recommendations.

Themes approved by council prevent a mural from becoming the equivalent of an outdoor advertisement billboard, but offer broad enough range to allow for creative artistic expression. The themes include landscape, abstract, botanical, and historical representations.

Importantly, property owners retain the right of refusal if the artwork design is not satisfactory prior to its being presented to the PAC. Permitting and all the logistics necessary for mural production of artwork designs approved by property owners and given the nod by city council are handled entirely by the PAC and ABG Art Group.

Clearly, outdoor artwork is subject to the vagaries of weather exposure and the natural aging of buildings - two realities well-thought through by the PAC. The Mural Program therefore includes funding and delivery of maintenance services for ten years. After the initial term, five year renewals are possible, as are exit options if the property is sold or major renovations are planned.

The council and PAC authorized the program with the goal of enhancing the vitality of the downtown area and, based on the themes available, to provide opportunities to honor the features most valued by residents and property owners. Beautiful open spaces, sustaining a healthy planet, paying tribute to significant people in the city's history, celebrating current and future generations—these things and more are possible to display, and all that's required are four entities to heed the Call for Walls.

The application and elated forms can be found at the Lafayette Downtown Mural Program's page on the City's website: www.lovelafayette.org/ murals.

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

By Sharon K. Sobotta



John Coleman

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 many. This is perhaps why 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

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. ... continued on Page A8

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Page: A3

4 Haven Ct, Moraga 4 BD | 2.5 BA | 2552 SF | \$2,295,000 Wonderful single-story home fully remodeled throughout. Great location in desirable neighborhood close to shopping center and commute routes.



3 Via Barcelona, Moraga 3 BD | 2.5 BA | 2417 SF | \$1,239,000 Meticulously updated home with remodeled kitchen, vaulted ceilings and many designer touches. Conveniently located close to Campolindo and Rheem.



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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 pre-

Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

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

Coleman's wife

beamed with pride as she

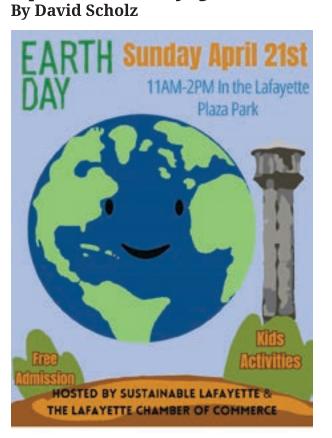
spoke about her husband

kids (in Boy Scouts)."

sented with a sash early in the evening, and

Lafayette Earth Day Festival

April 21 in Lafayette Plaza Park



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 tuneups 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 gaspowered 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.lovelafayette.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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See public meetings schedule on these pages and 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

Town Council Meetings Wed., April 10, 6:30 p.m. Wed., April 24, 6:30 p.m. Planning Commission: Tuesday, April 16, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 16, 6:30 p.r Park and Recreation Commission: TBA

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Moraga has begun its 6th during their March 13 Cycle Housing Element meeting.

Cycle Housing Element for the 2023 to 2031 period, which was adopted on Jan. 25, 2023 after achieving certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Municipalities are required by the state to submit an Annual Progress Report covering their prior calendar year in order to show whether they are on track with regards to meeting their specific Housing Element requirements. The town council accepted and adopted the 2023 Annual General Plan Implementation Report and the Housing Element Annual Report for submission

The town's last General Plan comprehensive update prior to 2023 was during the year 2002. According to a March 13 staff report by Planning Director Afshan Hamid and Associate Planner Mio Mendez, "California Government Code Section 65400 mandates planning agencies to: 'Investigate and make recommendations to the legislative body regarding reasonable and practical means for implementing the general plan so that it will serve as an effective guide for orderly growth and development, preservation and conservation of open-space land and

natural resources, and the efficient expenditure of public funds relating to the subjects addressed in the general plan." The Code also requires these annual reports to reach the Office of Planning and Research and HCD by April 1.

The state's General Plan Guidelines include identifying seven mandatory elements such as land use, circulation, conservation, housing, noise, open space, and safety. The town added additional elements to include community design, community facilities and services, and growth management. The staff report notes that all of the town's departments

collaborated on the updating of the General Plan implementation table, including identifying goals and actions for 2024.

Moraga's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is 1.118 units which is divided into four income levels (318 very low income units, 183 low income units, 172 moderate income units, and 445 above moderate income units). Three dwelling units in the low income level have been constructed and one moderate income unit has been built, bringing the new RHNA balance to 1,114. Several Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) are currently on the horizon.

Some of the Planning Department's ongoing objectives include processing major project applications/entitlements; prioritizing implementation of the programs in the certified Housing Element and working on Phase Two Zoning Text Amendments; moving the General Plan horizon year to 2040 (which includes an Economic Vitality Element); updating the Community Design Element; conducting outreach meetings to multiple community organizations, stakeholders, Planning Commission, and Town Council; and completing the Livable Moraga Road project.

Town Council opposes November's State Ballot Initiative: Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act

By Vera Kochan

The "Tax Fairness, Transparency and Accountability Act" intended for the November 2018 State Ballot was withdrawn thanks to opposition from the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and other partners. The bill was supported by the California Business Roundtable (CBRT) and would have impacted local governments' revenue authority.

Another recently filed initiative by the CBRT -- "Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act" -was certified in February 2023, by the Secretary of State and is eligible for the Nov. 5, 2024, Statewide General Election. According to Moraga Town Manager Scott Mitnick's March 27 staff report, the initiative is "a measure that would amend the California Constitution to change the rules with respect to how the State and local governments may impose taxes, fees, and other charges."

The League of California Cities Regional Public Affairs Manager for the East Bay Division, Sam Caygill, gave a slide presentation during the town council's March 27 meeting, noting that "CBRT is comprised of major corporations including developers, oil, insurance, pharmaceutical companies. and more." The measure, if passed, would allow corporations such as these to pay less than their share, forcing residents and taxpayers to pay more for maintained services.

Mitnick's report stated that Governor Gavin Newsom, the State

filed an emergency petition in September 2023, "for writ of mandate with the California Supreme Court seeking a pre-election review of the 'Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act' and to prevent the initiative from being placed on the November 2024 Ballot. The California Supreme Court did grant a hearing to rule on the petition to withhold the CBRT measure from the ballot." Arguments are set for April, and a decision must be reached by June 27 (the ballotprinting deadline).

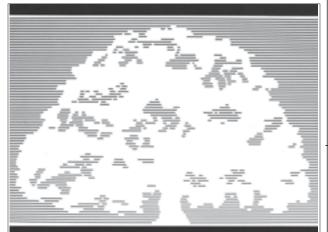
Caygill's presentation stated that the measure would significantly threaten local control by reducing state and local government funding by billions annually; would upend local government tax and fee authority; and would open the door to countless lawsuits against cities.

Additionally, Cal Cities' analysis indicated local government revenues over 10 years would be at risk; \$2 billion each year from fees and charges adopted after Jan. 1, 2022 would be in danger; and hundreds of millions of dollars of annual revenues from tax and bond measures approved by voters after Jan. 1, 2022, would be canceled.

The measure would upend local tax authority. Taxes and fees adopted after Jan. 1, 2022, that do not comply with the new rules would be void. Also, it would be more difficult for voters to approve funding for local services; city charters would not be amended to include a tax or fee; and all future taxes would contain a sunset (any measures passed after Jan. 1, 2022, without a sunset would be repealed, and general tax measures would also require the phrase "for general government use" on the ballot).

would be local fee authority in that, all fee increases would need approval by two-thirds of a local legislative body; fees and charges for corporations to use or lease government property would no longer be market-based; and fees and charges could not exceed the "actual cost" of providing service ("actual cost" is defined as the "minimum amount necessary").

Caygill provided a list of groups that are opposed to the measure besides Cal Cities. They include California Special Districts Association, Alliance for a Better California, California Alliance for Jobs, California Contract Cities Association, Rebuild SoCal Partnership, California State Association of Counties, and more than 250 individual cities, counties, and districts. Newly added to the list is Moraga, thanks to council members' unanimous approval of a resolution opposing the initiative.



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Two individuals in Moraga's Wells Fargo Bank mural identified By Vera Kochan

Customers of the Wells Fargo Bank in Moraga have now grown used to the lobby's mural, reflecting some of the town's history, that was installed in January of 2020. WFB initiated their Community Mural Project back in 1998, and has since installed more than 2,400 murals in locations nationwide. More locally, there are over 175 throughout the Bay Area. The murals are not painted – rather, they are designed by a team of graphic artists to create collage-style historical art.

Moraga's 8.7 foot wide by 4.8 foot high mural contains photos of Saint Mary's College, the iconic Moraga Center sign, the Carroll family and their horses c.1920, a sweeping view of the Moraga Valley, and Willow Spring School's eighth grade graduating class of 1957 (11 students).

WFB had offered a special bonus regarding each of their nationally located murals. If a family member of anyone featured in the murals was able to identify their relatives, they would be presented with a framed replica of the mural as a gift. Almost exactly four years later, Lamorinda Weekly received a phone call from someone who could identify two family members in the Willow Spring School photo. Joan (Huff) Holt,

who grew up in Moraga, was able to confirm that



Photo Vera Kochan

Joan Holt receives framed replica of WFB mural that depicts her siblings in the back row (second from left) Sharron Levy and (second from right) Sam Levy at Willow Springs School in 1957

her older brother (Sam) and sister (Sharron), who were twins, were in the photo taken when they were 14 years old. Their last name was Levy from their mom's first marriage. Back in the day, Holt said that locals referred to Willow Spring School as "Old Moraga School".

Another sister had seen Lamorinda Weekly's Feb.19, 2020 article about the mural's original installation on a social media site and forwarded it to Sam's caregiver. "He had suffered a stroke,

and his memory comes and goes," explained Holt. "When he saw the photo from the article he recognized it and knew that it was him and his sister." Sharron passed away in January 2017, but Sam will turn 81 in May, and since the photo brought him so much joy, Holt made the six hour, round-trip drive from her home in West Point, Calif. to visit Moraga and pick up the framed replica of the mural as a birthday gift for her brother. ... continued on Page A5 925-377-0977

Moraga's Business and Nonprofit of the Year By Vera Kochan



Children learn and play at The Child Day Schools-Moraga



Be the Star You Are! founder, Cynthia Brian, with some of her many books

With an overwhelming number of nominations to sift through (more than 80), Moraga Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Katie Bidstrup announced the town's 2024 Business of the Year -- The Child Day Schools-Moraga, and the Nonprofit of the Year --Be the Star You Are!

The Child Day Schools-Moraga, located at 372 Park Street in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center, teaches children between toddler and TK age groups. Opened in 1989, by Executive Director/Founder R. Ann Whitehead, the Moraga location is just one among several in the East Bay, along with Lafayette, Pleasanton, and San Ramon.

The schools' mission is to provide "a humanistic organization dedicated to providing dynamic, age-appropriate programs for children while actively supporting teachers, families, and the community." They also boast low teacher-child ratios; carefully planned classroom environments; well-trained, nurturing teachers; and programs that include art, music, movement, purposeful play, conflict resolution, and life skills. TCDS-Moraga Director Emil Delgado-Olson has been with the school for 17 years. "I found out a day or two prior to the general announcement that we were the Business of the Year," he said. "I was taken aback by the number of nominations.' With five classrooms and a staff of approximately 18 employees, the school's steady rotation of an average 70 students call Moraga home, with a few coming in from Lafayette and Orinda.

What makes TCDS-Moraga stand out is their commitment to the surrounding businesses. "We like to participate and support the community by doing things with them," explained Delgado-Olson. "After COVID, it was nice to help the local businesses." That included having their students utilize next door neighbor California Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA) facility, ordering lunches from local eateries, or walking down the block to Moraga Post Acute to sing songs during the holidays or bring flowers to the patients.

Assistant Director Laura Arnold arranged for the students to participate in a food drive to benefit the Food Bank of Contra Costa/Solano. Last year's effort brought in 500 pounds of canned goods. A toy drive during the holidays collected over 600 toys that were distributed to battered women and children's shelters. Delgado-Olson said, "We want to make sure that the kids learn empathy by helping the world around them." For more information about The Child Day Schools-Moraga visit: tcdschools.com or call (925) 376-5110. Moraga's Nonprofit of the Year, Be the Star You Are!, is a 501(c)(3), and the brainchild of Lamorinda Weekly's own Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian. Her career credits extend to book author, producer, interior designer, radio host, and more. While working with kids in 1995 as a casting director, Brian noticed that many of them had issues, especially with literacy. She was reading a lot of self-help books at Photos Vera Kochan

the time and wanted to get the same message out to kids and women. By calling her charity Be the Star You Are!, she was planting a seed that "every person is unique. They have their own beauty and flame. We all have it -- we are enough."

Brian founded BT-SYA! in 1999, along with her teen daughter, Heather Brittany, with the idea of empowering at-risk youth through literacy and positive media. "Had I had a crystal ball back in 1999 to foresee how challenging it would be to manage a nonprofit corporation solely with volunteers and donation dollars, I know I would not have taken the first step in creating Be the Star You Are!," she stated. "Thank goodness that I am not clairvoyant. I am a huge believer in being different, thinking outside the box, and valuing our individuality. My goal has been to provide encouragement, opportunity, and direction to women, families, and youth through increasing literacy, decreasing violence, providing positive media choices, and enhancing quality of life."

BTSYA!, is run by an all-volunteer staff that began by collecting and distributing books to nearly 70 organizations nationwide. It also produces positive-message radio programs that range from "education and advisement, to inspiration and guidance by covering every aspect of life, from abuse through money management, health, environmental stewardship, relationships, parenting, business skills, art, music, and entertainment." They support all ethnicities and have no religious or political agendas. While Brian hosts one of the radio shows called, "StarStyle-Be the Star You Are!, the other one is hosted by teens. "Express Yourself" is intended to give youth a voice while teaching them to be confident. authentic reporters and writers. Both programs feature authors, artists, activists, musicians, and entrepreneurs that are making positive contributions to humanity.

grams," stated Brian. 'We even have teens tutor teens. There are so many opportunities to help people. I support the kids and listen to what they want to do. Their suggestions have been important to the programs. We're constantly evolving and changing to make it relevant to the times. We also have a teen book review program." She estimates having coached over 70 kids/reporters over the years, and they have gone on to jobs all across the country. BTSYA! is always ready to welcome more volunteers.

As an author, Brian is working on her eleventh book. Her first book, "Be the Star You Are!" was launched in 2001. Since then, she's written inspirational books that include teens' stories, gardening books, and picture books for children.

BTSYA! operates through contributions, in-kind donations, and proceeds from fundraising events. They are not state or federally funded. For more information or to make a donation visit: bethestaryouare.org, or email: info@bethestaryouare.org.

The Moraga Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a coffee/pastry reception to celebrate the honorees on April 13 between 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Moraga Library's Community Room, 1500 St. Mary's Road. Please RSVP by visiting: Moragachamber.org.



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"We've done so many outreach pro-

Wells Fargo Bank mural

... continued from Page A4

She plans on making another six hour drive to visit Sam, who now lives in Winnemucca, Nevada.

"My brother liked to joke that the reason he was born with a bent nose is that Sharron kept pushing on it in the womb," chuckled Holt, while pointing to Sam in the mural. Her six member family (two parents and four siblings) grew up on Larch Avenue near St. Monica Catholic Church. She herself never attended Willow Spring, but did go from school to school in the Moraga system, as was typical back in the day, to finally graduate from Campolindo High School.

Holt's family moved to Moraga in 1951, when Larch was a gravelcovered, one-lane street. She grew up knowing the Carr, Sanders, Larch, and Baitx families, and her father, John Huff, was a captain for the Moraga Fire Department, located on School Street, between 1955-1976. Their one-acre lot was home to a few horses, which was not unusual during those early years.

Occasionally driving to Moraga to visit with old friends, Holt remarked about the changes she's noticed to the town, "It's so packed! It's so crowded! There are so many people living here." In this case, crowded is truly in the eye of the beholder.



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Dinner, 2 Drinks and Dancing Tickets @ \$125 per person available at www.moragajuniors.org/events

Benefiting

ETE NUBLES

Page: A6

ORIND

See public meetings schedule on these pages and check

online for agendas, meeting

notes and announcements

Chamber of Commerce: www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org

www.cityoforinda.org

Phone (925) 253-4200

City of Orinda:

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

City Council Regular Meeting: Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m. Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission Tuesday, April 23, 7 p.m. Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission Wednesday, April 10, 6:30 p.m. Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way

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MOFD fee hikes reflect recent salary increase, break out fees for solar installations

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By Sora O'Doherty

Although Moraga Orinda Fire District staff recommended an across the board fee increase of 2.8%, the Board of Directors on March 20 adopted a 5% increase intended to reflect an equal salary increase in the district. In addition to the higher fees, the directors also approved a dozen new fees.

The new fees fall into the areas of plan review, environmental review, and a miscellaneous fee for insurance property compliance inspection of \$170 per inspection. Plan review fees are on a per form, per permit, or per inspection basis and range from \$47 for a hydrant/fire service form to \$577 per permit for energy storage system or solar photovoltaic power system inspections.

Charles Porges, an Orinda resident, commented in writing on the new fees, saying, "I find the Solar and Energy fees unreasonable and unnecessary. As you know PG&E does a thorough review of the submitted plans and performs inspections as well. With the proposed fees you will add a \$1300 disincentive to installing photovoltaic systems. Photovoltaic systems with batteries will reduce the power required to be transmitted through PG&E lines which are a known fire hazard. I request that you eliminate them or reduce them by a factor of ten."

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> In response to questions raised by Porges and by Director Steven Danziger at the first reading of the proposed ordinance, Fire Chief Dave Winnacker explained that the fee was not a new fee; MOFD has always charged a plan review fee for solar systems as required by

Chapter 12 of the Fire Code, it just had not previously had its own category.

Winnacker added that PG&E does not perform any type of plan review required by California Code of Regulations Title 24 and, as an investor-owned private company, PG&E does not have the authority to do so. PG&E's review is limited to the interconnect requirements associated with grid connection. Should a resident be installing an off-grid system, PG&E would not be involved.

Winnacker also explained that the California Fire Code requires that the fire code official review plans and issue either a construction permit or operational permit. The office of the state fire marshal requires a construction permit for installation of energy storage systems regulated by Chapter 12 of the State Fire Code, Section 105.6.5 Energy storage systems. A construction permit is required to install energy storage systems regulated by Section 1207.

In addition to the solar and energy system fees, which, while listed as new, are really just being broken out to clarify what they are for, and the new insurance property compliance inspection fee, the other new fees are for the hourly service of senior officials during environmental reviews.

The 5% fee increases and the new fees take effect on April 22, 2024. The list of all fees, showing the 2023 levels and the new 2024 levels, may be found at https://d2kbkoa27fdvtw. cloudfront.net/mofd/c25 f0e47192374f4618bbcf 5482642ad0.pdf

Celebrating spring: Lamorinda's colorful Holi Festivities

... continued from Page A1

The park sported a kaleidoscope of hues as colors were thrown in the sky. Laughter filled

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Sotheby's

READINESS IS YEAR ROUND

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ORINDF

Measure R at Work



the air as kids darted around playfully chasing each other with colors in their hands and adults danced to the beat of Indian music. In addition to the colorful revelry, the event featured a spread of Indian savory snacks and sweets. The celebration honored cultural traditions and also highlighted the Lamorinda community's diversity. The Holi celebration was organized by the Lamorindians (a doubled dipped portmanteau of Lamorinda and Indians).



MONTHLY & BIMONTHLY ANNUAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS 925-377-0977



Volunteers gear up at MOFD Comm-Support Rodeo

By Sora O'Doherty



Volunteers at the 2024 MOFD Comm-Support Rodeo gather at the drone station.

25 local volunteers who support the Moraga Orinda Fire District during major events and incidents gathered for a pre-fire season exercise, called the Comm-Support Rodeo, on Saturday, April 6 at Station 41 on Moraga Way. The volunteers provide logistics and technology to help firefighters when they are in the field. Many of the volunteers have trained with the Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) or are members of the Lamorinda Area Radio Interest Group.

At the event on Saturday morning, volunteers spent about 45 minutes training at each of five stations, with five minutes in between to rotate. Volunteers were able to brush up their skills, and/or learn new skills.

At the Remote Communications Set Up station, participants set up portable communications equipment in a simulated major incident communications unit. The goal of this training is to be able to communicate via radio with fire and law enforcement agencies, local amateur radio operators, and the Lamorinda General Mobile Radio System (GMRS) radios that many CERT-trained residents have.

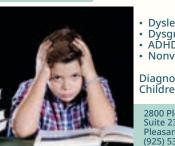
At the Mobile Water Supply/Portable Pump Operations station volunteers learned how to set up MOFD's portable water supply trailers and to move water from a large portable tank to an engine. The exercise simulated using local lakes or swimming pools to fill fire apparatus in a disaster.

Participants filled various roles (pilot in command, qualified observer, etc.) at the UAS (Drone) Operations station. They operated the MOFD drone to capture both video and still images during a simulated fire. The images were transferred from the drone to the Incident Commander and/or Public Information Officer.

The District's Environmental Beta-Attenuation Mass Monitor (E-BAM) is a very sensitive, portable air quality monitoring device. Participants at this station set up the unit and ensured it was reporting information to the dedicated monitoring website.

The Breathing Support unit carries much of the equipment firefighters need at a major incident. The event on Saturday provided volunteers with an opportunity to review the information and equipment needed to operate the vehicle and its systems.

For additional information about volunteering to help firefighters, contact Dennis Rein, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, at 925-698-4575 or email drein@mofd.org



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Impact fees

School districts in Lamorinda, like those elsewhere in the state, are facing a massive influx of new students due to the state housing mandate. This increase in student population does not appear to have considered by the consultants who project fu-

ture student enrollment, and thus those projections understate the growth. Speaking generally, the housing mandate will increase each city's population by about one-third, with a similar increase in student population, over the next eight years.

School districts are entitled to charge developers "impact fees" to cover the impact of development on public facilities and public services. See Govt Code section 66000(d). The need for additional schools and teachers would be included. If for any reason

such fees cannot be

charged, Article XIII B, section 6 of the California Constitution requires payment from the state to cover the cost of such impacts. Note the key distinction between a "tax" versus a "fee." It doesn't matter that a school district can tax; what matters is whether it can impose a fee on developers for the impact of the housing mandate. Cities also have the right to charge fees or receive compensation from the state.

But one issue the school districts face, that the cities do not, is that there are laws restricting the fees that school district can charge.

https://edcal.acsa.org/newrequirements-in-effectfor-schools-collectingimpact-fees ; www.schoolworks-gis. com/developer-fee-studies

Our local school districts should consult with counsel and file claims with the state Commission on State Mandates, seeking compensation for the difference between the amounts allowed by law and the actual impact, and/or file suit to invalidate the unique restrictions they face on imposing impact fees on developers.

Nick Waranoff Orinda

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 must be factually accurate. Lamorinda Weekly reserves the right to refuse publishing a letter submission. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, 1480 Moraga Road STE C #202, Moraga, CA 94556

Lafayette Citizen of the Year John Coleman Honored

... continued from Page A3

A lot of my work going forward will be in supporting people who live with and manage challenges-whether, they be neurodivergent or another kind of challenge."

Coleman said his own diagnosis and the education that's come along with it has allowed him to relate to a broader swath of people and offered a public service announcement. "If you know someone who has a challenge, embrace it.

Public Safety Emergency response:

Emergency: 24 Hours 911 Police Dispatch: 24 Hours 925-284-5010 Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or www.nixle.com **Lafayette Police Department:** 3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd. 925-283-3680 Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt

925-299-3221 Police Department Tip Line 94549Tip@gmail.com

Police Department Traffic Issues 94549Traffic@gmail.com Moraga Police Department: 329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055 Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049 Orinda Police Department:

Don't look down on others, because you may not know what's going on in their lives. It's important that they be able to do things and be able to move forward in their lives as much as anyone else."

Dan Rogers is the father of boy scouts, and came to know Coleman through his leadership of troop 243. "John is an inspiration to us as scouts and as community members, and it's an honor to be here celebrating his contributions to

3700 Block Sundale Rd. Disturbance-fight 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Disturbing The Peace 900 Block Yorkshire Ct. 900 Block Moraga Rd. Loud Music

Loud Party Martino Rd./Vista Bella Public Nuisance 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Springhill Rd./Prado Way 900 Block Moraga Rd. Vandalism

Vandalism 1700 Block Reliez Valley Rd. Other Brandishing Weapon Pleasant Hill Rd./Acalanes Ave.

3400 Block Monroe Ave.

800 Block Paradise Ct.

Stray-traf Haz Mt. Diablo Blvd./Village Center

Threats 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

3700 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Elder Abuse

Harassment

Litter

Loud Music 1000 Block Carol Ln.

Lafayette tonight," Rogers said. "The most amazing thing is when you hear about the initiatives that John has undertaken in the community-how they've transformed the community in ways that our families don't even know and recognize. Whether you're sitting at a concert or noticing the trees in downtown Lafayette (which Coleman's efforts helped bring to fruition), the contributions he's made to the community are limitless."

Nuisance to the Community Loud Music Seven Eleven Not Available

- Loud Noise Augusta Dr./St Andrews Dr. 1900 Block Ascot Dr. Moraga Commons Park
- Loud Party 60 Block Warfield Dr. Not Available
- Other
- Battery

- Battery Not Available Fire/Ems Response Info Moraga Country Club Mentally Ill Commit Miramonte Dr./Moraga Way
- Revoked License Moraga Way/Moraga Valley Ln.
- Trespass Moraga Swim And Tennis Club

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March 17 - March 30

Suspicious Circumstances

Patrol Req./Security Check Public/School Assembly Check

Accident Property Police Department Hit And Run Misdemeanor Pleasant Hill Rd./Deer Hill Rd.

Sundale Rd./Mosswood Dr. 1700 Block Reliez Valley Rd. 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)

Olympic Blvd./Reliez Station Rd. Pleasant Hill Rd./Old Tunnel Rd. Mt. Diablo Blvd./1St St Deer Hill Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd.

Reckless Driving Westminster Pl./El Curtola Blvd.

Pleasant Hill Rd./Wb Sr 24 Tc - Property Damage Moraga Rd./St Marys Rd. 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3600 Block Happy Valley Rd. Vehicle Theft

Vehicle Theft Mt. Diablo Blvd./Carol Ln.

Forgery 3500 Block Moraga Blvd. Fraud Credit Card Felony 3100 Block Sandalwood Ct.

700 Block Tanglewood Ln.

3700 Block Sundale Rd. 100 Block Peaceful Ln.

3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Identity Theft 4000 Block Legion Ct. 4000 Block Legion Ct.

3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (4)

Nuisance to the Community Disturbance-domestic Mt. Diablo Blvd./Pleasant Hill Rd.

Robbery - Arrest 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Shoplift 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (10)

Other criminal activity

Fraud False Pretenses

Petty Theft

Suspicious Subject Suspicious Vehicle Service to Citizen

Supplemental Report Vacation House Check

Ordinance Violation Vehicle violations

Welfare Check

911 Calls (incudes hang-ups) 10

Incident

Report

Alarm

Traffic

Summary

Lafayette Police Department

2 15

2

3500 Block Oconner Dr. (2) 900 Block Moraga Rd. (2) Trespass 900 Block Moraga Rd. 3500 Block Brook St. Unwanted Guest 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3) 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Violation Restraining Ord 4100 Block Hidden Valley Rd.



Violation Restraining Ord 1200 Block Rimer Dr.



Orinda Police

Department Incident Summary Report March 10 - March 16 Alarms 22 911 Calls (incudes hang-ups) 4 21 Traffic Suspicious Circumstances 43 1 Suspicious Subject Suspicious Vehicle Service to Citizen Patrol Req./Security Check Public/School Assembly Check 29 2 Supplemental Report Vacation House Check Welfare Check Ordinance Violation 8 0 13 0 Vehicle violations Accident Property Police Department Hit And Run Misdemeanor The atre Square Reckless Driving Wb Sr 24 At St Stephens Dr. Wilder Rd./Wb Sr 24 Eb Sr 24 At St Stephens Dr. Vehicle Theft 10 Block Orinda Fields Ln. Caldecott Tunnel Other criminal activity Commercial Burglary 200 Block Brookwood Rd. Residential Burglary 10 Block Van Tassel Ln. Shoplift Moraga Way Camino Pablo Camino Sobrante Warrant Arrest 4000 Block Galenez Way, Ant Camino Sobrante Nuisance to the Community Loud Music 10 Block Great Oak Cir. Loud Party 10 Block Great Oak Cir. Public Nuisance Overhill Rd./Moraga Way Vandalism Bates Blvd./Davis Rd. Other Fire/Ems Response Info 90 Block Underhill Rd. Mentally Ill Commit 20 Block El Toyonal Transient Contact 40 Block Camino Encinas Camino Encinas/Moraga Way Trespass Camino Sobrante

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community. Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorindaweekly.com

Go nuts with Toasted Pecan Maple Blondies By Susie Iventosch



Toasted Pecan Maple Blondies

When it comes to sweets, there are few I don't like, but brownies are one of my favorites. If they have nuts, even better! If you haven't tried the brownies from Sprouts Farmers Market bakery section, they are delicious and hard to beat. We often buy one or two when we shop there. But a few weeks ago, I was craving the caramel flavor of a blondie with pecans.

Sometimes blondies can be very dry and crumbly, so I added an extra topping on top of the blondie batter, so that these have a double layer of brown sugar and maple goodness! The topping keeps the Photos Susie Iventosch

blondies nice and moist, but with a delicious sugary top. The other key to keeping blondies moist is to be sure not to overbake them.

These Toasted Pecan & Maple Blondies are chewy, dense bars with a sweet, rich, and nutty flavor. They have the warm, caramel-like taste of maple syrup combined with the deep sweetness of brown sugar, and the texture is soft and moist like a brownie but with a hint of butterscotch.

Overall, they have a delightful combination of sweetness and depth perfect for indulging in a comforting treat any time of the day.

Toasted Pecan Maple Brownies

(Makes 16 two-inch blondies) **INGREDIENTS Blondie Batter** 6 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted and cooled 3/4 cup light brown sugar, packed 1 large egg 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract 1 tbsp. maple syrup 1/4 tsp. salt 1/2 tsp. baking powder 3/4 cup all-purpose flour 1/2 cup dark chocolate chips 1/2 cup toasted pecans, (or walnuts, or a combination) coarsely chopped **Maple Pecan Topping Mixture**

- 1 oz. butter, softened to room temp (equals 2 tbsp.)
- 1/2 cup light brown sugar
- 1 tbsp. pure maple syrup
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

1 cup toasted walnuts or pecans (or a combination, coarsely chopped)

DIRECTIONS

Blondie Batter

Preheat oven to 350?. Line an 8x8 inch baking pan with foil or parchment paper, leaving some length on either end to help remove the blondies once cooked. Be sure to tuck the paper/foil into the corners of the pan. Spray parchment or foil with cooking spray. Set aside. (This makes it easier to remove the blondies from the pan.)

Place the pecans (and walnuts if using both) on a separate baking sheet, lined with foil, and bake for about 5-7 minutes, or until the nuts begin to have a nice aroma and turn slightly brown. Keep your eye on them so they don't burn. Remove from oven to cool.

Blend flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. In a separate, larger bowl, blend butter and brown sugar until combined. Whisk in egg, vanilla, and maple syrup. Blend well.

Gently fold dries into egg mixture. Stir in chocolate chips. Spread batter into the bottom of the prepared baking pan.

Maple Pecan Topping

With a fork or wooden spoon, blend softened butter and brown sugar until blended. Stir in vanilla, maple syrup, and toasted chopped nuts to combine well.

Using an offset spatula, evenly spread a thin layer of this mixture over the blondie batter.

Bake for 22-24 minutes in preheated oven until golden brown and the top is not jiggly. Remove from oven and cool to room temp.

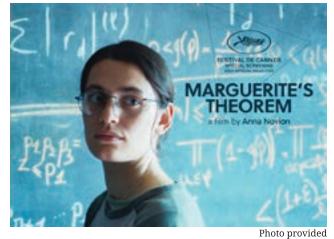
Remove blondies from the pan and cut into 2-inch squares. Store in an airtight container until ready to serve.



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. Or visit https://treksandbites.com

Marguerite's Theorem: A multidimensional love story

By Sophie Braccini



In this lovely film from France, the International Film Showcase brings you a story of passion and courage. A young woman - remarkably gifted, quite introverted, fiercely focused and determined, but closed off from her emotions. Facing unforeseen challenges that she will ultimately overcome, she opens up like a flower bud in Spring to new dimensions of life, empowering her creativity as a result. This beautiful movie opens in Orinda on April 12 and will run for at least a week. Marguerite is a math prodigy working on her PhD. She is serious, fixated, and passionate about her research. For

three years, she has worked on an undemonstrated theorem or conjecture, exploring a new avenue to crack this impossible nut. Under the supervision of a busy advisor, she is in the final stages of drafting her

thesis, but during a pre-

liminary presentation of

professors and students,

a new comer spots a crit-

ical weakness. Her whole

reasoning collapses, un-

dermining three years of

work and the prospect of

completing her PhD. Con-

fronted with her thesis

advisor's aloofness and

disinterest, she resigns

and jumps head first in a

confines of academia and

new life, away from the

into the realm of the or-

her findings to a group of

dinary. At first, the clueless and extremely introverted woman looks like she might have difficulty adapting to her new predicament; but Marguerite is ultimately smart and fearless. She starts thriving in her new life, but will her life passion for theoretical math catch up with her?

Marguerite Theorem is also a love story; Marguerite's break from her powerful but narrow path, at first looking rash and pointless, opens more than one door to her. The movie is ultimately about courage and taking risks, trusting one's instincts, and unapologetic integrity.

The math backdrop of the story is in fact entirely accurate and inter-

esting. Ariane Mézard, a

female French mathe-

matician, worked with

all the math aspects of

the movie is real, and

director Anna Novion on

the movie. The Goldbach

conjecture in guestion in

Mézard is in fact working

on it. According to her,

path to advance toward

its resolution. While the

movie is beyond complex,

it is never an annoyance.

math presented in the

she is on a promising

What one feels is the quest, the resolve, and what it takes to dedicate one's life to solving theoretical math mysteries. One feels how it can engulf a life, with the joys and miseries that ensue. It is also a marvelously creative process that requires boldness and grit. Marguerite embodies these qualities, adding humor and sensitivity as the movie progresses.

The movie also depicts the ruthless world of academia. Of note is Jean-Pierre Darroussin as Marguerite's advisor, a marvelous French actor known for depicting much sweeter characters, who gives a chilling rendition of a big shot preoccupied mostly by his career, mindlessly crush-

ing whoever or whatever

in his way. French-Swiss

actress Ella Rumpf gives

strength to Marguerite,

the young mathematician

fighting in a highly com-

petitive and mostly male

to Orinda Theater by the

local non-profit, Interna-

tional Film Showcase.

The movie is brought

her intensity and

world.

Tickets at



Round about

... continued from Page A1

The modifications included installing "sharks teeth" striping yield lines at entrances, "Yield to Pedestrian" signs at the free right turn onto the eastbound highway 24 crosswalk, a new RRFB on the east and west crossings on Olympic Boulevard, and alterations to green backed shared bike lanes at a number of roundabout locations.

In response to the most recent input from the public, staff explored the ramifications of installing a chicane instead of dropping a lane on southbound Pleasant Hill Road. A chicane configuration consists of single lanes leading into a roundabout for each direction of travel and includes no free right lanes. Due to space limitations at the Lafayette roundabout, this would

allow for a single lane shift of 12 feet and lane reduction to 6 feet in width. This lane shift would be toward the center median, and could result in vehicles crossing over the median and entering oncoming traffic. He said staff believes based on the science that a chicane could create additional hazards.

The staff also examined matters related to speed bumps and speed tables (humps) and held multiple conversations on the topic with Fire Chief Bachman at Contra Costa Fire. Initially opposed to speed bumps in the project because it could impede fire trucks travel, Bachman came to support bumps if placed farther from the roundabout. Luttopp said such placement would obscure signage and add "visual clutter" and therefore, moving back

and adding more speed bumps was not recommended.

Lastly, a suggestion that informational and wayfinding signs be consolidated resulted in a re-design that provides clear information in a more compact way, according to Luttropp. Also, a new RRFP sign will be added with council's approval to the east leg of the roundabout and a replacement for the RRFP west leg with upgrades has been ordered and will be installed at the same time.

Council member Susan Candell asked about additional changes and how they might impact timelines for the project. Luttopp said the project was ready to go out for bids immediately upon approval and addressed the possibility of future amendments. He said, "Nothing that we're doing now precludes us www.orindamovies.com/ from doing that. The only thing that we're doing now that would be somewhat costly to undue would be the lane drop." He emphasized that no issues had arisen due to the lane drop; projecting that it would be unlikely to be changed to a chicane or reinstated as a second lane in future.

Sign consolidation and other adjustments, council member John McCormick said, were a notable and positive improvement to "decluttering" the roundabout.

Council accepted staff's recommendation to complete design plans, send out a call for project construction bids that include the current modifications, and voted unanimously to approve moving forward with the project. PACKING SERVICE INCLUDES: plan, sort, pack, label and help with what to keep, toss, donate, consign

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

Not to be missed

Art ART CRAWL! April 27 from 1 to 3 p.m. at St. Mary's College Museum. Crawl is an event in con-

junction with Moraga Art in Public Spaces and SMC Museum. It will be held on SMC campus. Artists of high school age and artists from the community are invited to join the fun.

The Lamorinda Arts

Council presents artwork from students in grades one through eight of the Orinda Union School District from April 8 through 26 in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library. Participating elementary schools include: Del Rey, Glorietta, Sleepy Hollow, and Wagner Ranch, plus Orinda Intermediate School. Meet the students, their families, friends, and art educators at a reception on April 25 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. ONE hosts a snack table where students pick up their Arts Ambassadors ribbons. Enjoy the OIS Jazz Band on the terrace, and at 5 p.m. a chamber ensemble performs in the Library Auditorium. www.LamorindaArts.org/ (925) 359.9940.

Art Gallerv at Wilder:

Artistic License - A Couple of Artists Married to Art. The exhibit runs April 7 to May 5. The Gallery is now open Monday – Friday from 3 to 5 p.m.; new art is exhibited monthly. For more information or to apply to exhibit work, visit https://lamorindaarts.org/ current-exhibits-wilder/, info@LamorindaArts.org (925) 359.9940

Music

Pacific Chamber Orchestra (PCO), Lawrence Kohl, Music Director, is presenting Bruch Violin Concerto

#1 in g minor with violinist Livia Sohn, Mendelssohn Symphony #3 "Scottish" and Fanny Mendelssohn Overture for Orchestra on Saturday, April 27 at 7:30 p.m. at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church and Sunday, April 28, at 3 p.m. at Bankhead Theater, Livermore. Purchase tickets at PacificChamberOrchestra.org www.lesherartscenter.org

Berkeley Chamber Per-

formances (BCP) is presenting three chamber music concerts at the Lafayette Library, GCCP's former venue. Their final concert of the season features the Naumburg Prizewinning Telegraph Quartet on May 4, featuring string quartets by Fanny Mendelssohn, Kenji Bunch, and Dvorak. All concerts are Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m. and tickets are \$45, with a significant discount for season ticket purchase. www.berkeleychamber

perform.org

California Symphony's

season finale on May 4 at 7:30 p.m. and May 5 at 4 p.m. Artistic and Music Director Donato Cabrera reunites the music of Johannes Brahms and Clara Schumann. Hear Schumann's only surviving piano concerto, performed by soloist Robert Thies, and Brahms' brilliant first symphony. Resident Composer Saad Haddad melds the music of the West and the East in his first commission for California Symphony. Purchase your tickets at www.californiasymphony. org/shows/brahmsobsessions/ or by calling the Lesher Center at (925) 943.7469.

Diablo Ballet announces Firebird program May 17 and 18 at the Lesher Center for the Arts in Walnut

Creek. Performances are: Friday, May 17 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 18 at 2 p.m. & 7:30 pm. Single tickets are on sale now (\$28 - \$54) with senior and youth pricing available. Early Bird pricing is available through April 17. For tickets, call (925) 943-SHOW (7469) or visit or www.diabloballet.org.

925-377-0977

Jazz violinist Mads

Tolling joins the Diablo Symphony for a family concert on April 14 at 2 p.m. at the Lesher Center for the Arts. Featured are Tolling's jazz-inspired violin concerto, as well as dances from Copland's "Rodeo." Local high school students will also join Tolling and the orchestra in several of his fiddle tune arrangements. www.diablosymphony.org

Theatre

Town Hall Theatre Lafayette presents - Off The Page: "The Coast of Leitrim" by Kevin Barry on April 23, at 7 p.m. Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School Street, Lafayette, TICKETS: Free, suggested donation of \$25. www.townhalltheatre.com/ word-for-word

Literature

Join the Sweet Thursday Author Series on Thursday, April 18 at 7 p.m. in the Don Tatzin CH at the Lafayette Library & Learning Center to hear author Adam Plantinga discuss his book, The Ascent. This is a free event, but registration is required at Tinyurl.com/sweet-April2024. The doors will be open at 6:30 p.m. for coffee and treats. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Lafayette Library.

Pat's Book Club meeting on Thursday, April 24 at 11 a.m. will discuss Between Two Kingdoms by Suleika Jaouad, a deeply moving memoir of illness and recovery that traces one young woman's journey from diagnosis to remission to re-entry into "normal" life. Pat's Book Club meets at Orinda Books 276 Village Square, Orinda, (925) 254-7606, on the first Thursday of the month at 11 a.m. and welcomes new members.

www.lamorindaweekly.com

Not to be missed

In celebration of California Native Plants month, Helen Popper, author of California Native Gardening, will discuss her book, a month-by-month guide to gardening with native plants, on Saturday, April 20, at 2 p.m. Popper shows how by following California's unique, untraditional seasonal rhythm, home gardeners can have success incorporating native plants in their gardens. This is a free event, register at

www.eventbrite.com/e/ helen-popper-author-ofcalifornia-native-gardeningtickets-833924920887?aff =oddtdtcreator Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, Orinda (925) 254-7606

Local author & Mystery Writers of America NorCal president, Claire Johnson, will interview local author Michael J Cooper about his prize-winning historical mystery, Wages of Empire on May 11 from 3 to 4:30 p.m. at Reasonable Books, 3645 Mt. Diablo Blvd in Lafayette. Free event with refreshments. For further details re: book, visit https://michaeljcooper.net/ For venue details: Reasonable Books: https://reasonable.online/

Poetry for the Ages: Tuesday, April 30, 11 a.m.

Lamorinda's Religious Services

Lafayette United Methodist Church 955 Moraga Road 925.284.4765 thelumc.org Sunday 10am in person worship

We are a church that strives to love as Jesus loves. Our congregation welcomes, includes, and affirms everyone on their journey of faith regardless of race, ethnicity,

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to 1 p.m. Town Hall The-

atre, 3535 School Street,

Lafayette. Celebrate Na-

tional Poetry Month with a

Spring-themed salon-style

poetry reading sponsored

by the Lafayette Public Art

Committee. Bring your

own lunch and immerse

yourself in the ambiance

lon. Free event with lim-

lafayette.org. For more in-

formation or to apply to

www.lovelafayette.org/

Other

Sustainable Lafayette's

from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at

the Plaza Park, 3530 Plaza

Way, Lafayette. Support

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Earth, Seeds4Bees, Lamor-

inda 4-H petting zoo, and

kid activities by Lafayette

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justments hosted by Sharp

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p.m. For more than twenty

Tour will take place on

May 4 from 10 a.m. to 3

vears. The Lifestvle Tour

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niors has continued to be

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www.LafayetteJuniors.org.

Lamorinda Idol 2024: Au-

dition Registration Open

through April 30. Estab-

lished in 2006, Lamorinda

Idol is a singing program

open to students in K-12

grades who either attend

school or reside in Lamor-

inda. Singers may enter as

The Lafayette Lifestyle

guided tour featuring

indoor and outdoor

able at

beloved events and the Ju-

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free annual Earth Day

Festival is on April 21,

read as a poet visit

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ited space. Register by

emailing jrosen@love-

of a welcoming literary sa-

Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan invites the public to a Film Screening and Panel Discussion: Miss Representation pm Thursday, April 18 from 5 to 7 p.m., at the Walnut Creek Center for Community Arts, 111 N Wiget Ln, Walnut Creek, RSVP at https://lcmspubcontact.lc.ca. gov/PublicLCMS/rsvp_main.

php?district=AD16&rsvp =1736

Community celebration

honoring Moraga's 2024 Citizen of the Year – Moraga iKind Project's Wendell Baker, on Sunday, April 14 from 4 to 6 p.m. at MVPC; tickets \$35. Visit: MCN-Moraga.org. Registration ends April 10, 5 p.m. to purchase tickets

Lafayette Nursery

School's 47th Annual Science Day of Discovery on Saturday, May 4, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost: \$5 per child. 979 First Street, Lafayette, More Information: Call Lafavette Nursery School at (925) 284-2448 or visit the website at www.lafayettenursery school.org

Health Care for All - Contra Costa and Alameda **County Chapters invites** the public to a presentation and discussion about current healthcare costs, quality, equity, access, and remedies for our healthcare system's problems. May 9, 7 to 8:30 p.m., Lafayette Library and Learning Center Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette, registration appreciated tinyurl.com/HCAMay

Garden

The Montelindo Garden Club, welcoming new members, presents "All About Soils," by John Fisk, Master Gardener, on Friday, April 19, starting with a 9 a.m. social time with speaker at 10:20 a.m. Learn about how to achieve healthy, sustainable soils in our gardens. Free. Lafayette Library, 3491 Mt Diablo Blvd. See montelindogarden.com/2024meetings.html for more information.

Lafayette Garden Club monthly meeting begins



Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Not to be missed

age, economic status, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church 433 Moraga Way, Orinda, 254-3422 www.holyshepherd.org



ONLINE WORSHIP SCHEDULE Facebook Premiere Community Worship every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Go to facebook.com/HSLCOrinda/ WORSHIP SCHEDULE In person worship at 9:30 a.m. Live stream on facebook.com/HSLCOrinda/ Visit our website to access the current and recent sermons.



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the Program Description for Lamorinda Idol 2024 visit

https://lamorindaarts.org/ idol-2/. If you have questions, send them to idol@lamorindaarts.org.

Mocktails & Cocktails:

Sunday, April 28 from 4 to 6 p.m. at Tutu's Lafayette. Join those who love art, poetry, music and everything in between at Tutu's, 53 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. Time for some conversation with creatives of all kinds. Bring whatever you're working on. Look for the knockoff Picassoesque poster of surrealist Dora Maar. No host bar. Just show up. literary@lamorindaarts.org or call (925) 359.9940.

on April 11 at 9:30 a.m. for social time and some tasty nibbles before a short business meeting at 10. At 10:30 a.m., club member Robyn Barker will give a talk on The Hot Take on Chili Peppers - sure to be spicy! The 11 a.m. program will be presented by Burling Leong, owner of Burlington Rose Nursery in Visalia. He will tell us all about the restoration of the Rose Garden at Hearst Castle. We meet at the Lafayette veterans Memorial Ćenter, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. It is free to attend, guests welcome. Visit www.lafayettegardenclub.com for more information.

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

Lamorinda Weekly

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Contact us:

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Moraga Elementary School Odyssey of the Mind Team qualifies for world tournament Submitted by Liz Coyle



From left: Connor Sakai, Willie Coyle, Niko Smith, Sean Baitx, Everett Fieser, Kira Fey, Jake Barar Photo Michelle Barar

A team of third and fourth graders from

Camino Pablo, Los Perales, and Rheem Elementary Schools in Moraga qualified for the world finals for their creative solution to a vehicle-based problem in the STEAM program, Odyssey of the Mind (OM).

The team, which includes members Connor Sakai, Everett Fieser, Jake Barar, Kira Fey, Niko Smith, Sean Baitx and Willie Coyle, and coaches Michelle Barar and Nicole Smith, surpassed approximately 20 other teams from Northern California, over the course of two competitions, to secure their invitation to the world finals.

OM is a creative problem-solving program where teams present their solution to a predefined long-term problem. The solution takes many months to complete, and involves writing, design, construction, and theatrical performance. OM emphasizes a completely participant-driven process, without "outside" assistance from adults or non-team members.

"I like the teamwork and problem solving. We build really unique props, costumes, a vehicle and a play," explained Jake Barar. "I especially like making the costumes and performing in our skit," echoed veteran team member, Sean Baitx.

The Moraga Elementary School team created a vehicle that was powered by three different sources, and performed numerous functions in the context of a skit about an underwater drive-in movie. The skit included original costumes, special effects, music, and a backdrop made from recycled and repurposed materials. "I'm happy to make new friends through OM, like Kira, who really helped our team this year," said Willie Coyle, who has been part of the team for three years. "I'm proud of our teamwork and how everyone worked together so well on our solution," added Niko Smith.

A huge congratulations to the team, and much gratitude to the coaches, the schools for the use of space, and the team's sponsor, the Moraga Rotary Club.

Troop 219's recent Eagle Scout Court of Honor Submitted by Catherine Davis



Troop 219 of Lafayette held an Eagle Scout Court of Honor on March 10 to recognize and celebrate eight outstanding young men who achieved BSA's highest rank, Eagle Scout: John Douglas Orear, James Davis, Toby Brock-Utne, Pierce Gallegos, Henry Joseph Hagel, Jackson Jones, Photo Provided Caleb Sherman, and Simon Vincent Werner.

In addition to earning at least 21 merit badges, Scouts also completed the following community service projects. Orear refurbished a planter box at Glorietta Elementary school, Hagel built a sports cart for Burton Valley Elementary School, Sherman expanded and refurbished a fence around the Acalanes High School garden, and Werner restored infrastructure of the garden at Springhill Elementary School. Davis, Brock-Utne, Gallegos, and Jones all built separate 100 feet sections of a fence in Joaquin Miller Park. These eight new Eagle Scouts received recognition and proclamations from the City of Lafayette, Mayor Gina Dawson, Congressman Mark DeSaulnier, California State Senator Dianne Feinstein, The White House, and Contra Costa County.

Lafayette school board rejects plan to eliminate AIM class

... continued from Page A1

The director continued saying that "the project based learning specifically and the mentoring opportunities kind of all stood out to me."

Another director said, "That's what I saw when I entered our AIM classroom. I saw kids who had found their tribe. I saw kids whose needs were being met at the individual level, who, you know, if we viewed them as special ed kids - and we could their needs were being met at where they were found." Another added, "every time we hear from families who have been in the AIM program, the one thing that stands out to me is not necessarily the academics . . . but it's really the feeling of belonging that their student has felt being part of a two year class cohort." Continuing, the director added, "this is the environment where students thrive; a really successful incubator for a lot of the things that help kids . . . feel like they belong, that they're welcome, they're accepted for who they are." Another director noted that "I love hearing about the deep project-based learning that happens in those classes [and] the feeling of commonality like a common spirit," but added that it stood out and made her sad to hear a student say, "It was really bad for me until fourth and fifth

grade."

Additionally, board members felt that the proposed options being recommended to replace the AIM class were not sufficiently developed. As one director said, "You don't drive your car towards the canyon and then build the bridge as your car is moving in that direction!"

Parents and students agreed. One student who has participated in the Odyssey of the Mind program, which is one of the suggested offerings, said that while she had participated in the program for the past two years, and her team placed first in regionals both years and she was invited to the world competition in 2023, "Odyssey could not replace all the collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving that

a regular classroom. It also provides an opportunity to challenge them, as you've heard. Whether it's in reading, writing, social studies, math, whatever. They're given the opportunity to pursue their own interests." She did agree with others, however, who felt that the OLSAT test, administered to third grade students, and which currently is the only criterion for admission to the AIM class, is not a suitable means to determine eligibility.

Parents were unhappy about the fact that they were only given notice that the Board would be considering the proposal three days in advance of the meeting. A group of parents who talked to the Lamorinda Weekly complained that the district appeared to use conflicting methodologies in comparing data to show that the AIM program was not as diverse as the general school population. The parents said that the school appeared to be saying that AIM had no effect on academic performance, but pointed out that the AIM kids scored as high as was possible, and could not have scored any higher. However, the parents emphasized that the main benefit of the AIM program is the students in the AIM program do not do well in regular classes, where they aren't challenged. They also suggested that as Stanley Middle School

does not have a gifted program, roughly onethird of AIM students go to private middle schools directly out of elementary, with a continuing

trickle to private schools

afterwards.

Following the meeting, the board, having reached the conclusion that the AIM program will be continued for the time being, released the OLSAT scores, which had been withheld from the third grade students who took the test, and invitations were offered to those who may join AIM next year.

Laszlo George Bonnyay Resident of Moraga



Laszlo George Bonnyay of Moraga, CA passed away on March 19, 2024, aged 86. Born in Budapest Hungary to Laszlo and Erzsebet Bonnyai. During the turbulent political times of 1956, he fled Hungary at 17. He studied engineering at the Technical University of Munich, where he met his future wife, Ene.

IIM MEMOR

The two married and moved to the US, settling in Connecticut. In 1967, Laszlo became an American citizen and joined Dorr-Oliver, Inc. where he worked for 28 years and became a Member of the Board and Partner. Laszlo had a passion for

takes place in our AIM classroom every day."

Other speakers noted that Odyssey of the Mind is largely an afterschool program, and is mainly run by parent volunteers. Another suggested program to challenge students is the addition of a student newspaper.

Teacher Kathy Martinson, who has been the AIM teacher for the past 11 years, spoke in favor of the program. "First and foremost," she said, "it provides a community, and that's what I keep hearing over and over, a community for those, this special population of kids, many of whom have difficulty in business, attaining his MBA from the University of Connecticut in 1972.

Laszlo and Ene adopted their daughter, Deborah, in 1972. They moved to Elmhurst, Illinois in 1972, adopting their son, David, in 1975. They arrived in Moraga in 1978 and fell in love with the town. They were soon abroad again, to the Netherlands in 1982, and the United Kingdom in 1989. They moved to Westport, CT in 1992.

Laszlo retired in 1995, returning to Moraga. He volunteered with SCORE for 20 years. Sadly, Ene passed away in 2009, 50 years to the date of their meeting.

Laszlo met Marcia Fisherkeller, with whom he would spend the rest of his life, in 2012. They joined together their lives, interests, and friends and enjoyed interesting trips and many social activities together. Their families too came to enjoy one another, even though they lived on opposite sides of the US.

Laszlo leaves behind his adult children, David Bonnyay and wife Jennifer, Deborah Flaherty and husband Brian, two beloved grandchildren Liam Flaherty and Shea Flaherty, his brother Gyorgy Bonnyai, two nieces, Boglarka and Krisztina Bonnyai, and other extended family across the world.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Doctors Without Borders and the Salvation Army in Laszlo's name.

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April showers bring May flowers By Toris Jaeger, Naturalist

In most years in California, our rains begin at the end of October and end usually at the end of March.

Flowers are one of Mother Nature's precious gifts for the pollinators which in turn propagate our food plants and shrubs and trees.

Nature comes alive with much beauty in the Spring and Summer months.

I always think of the flowers as "eye candy". Since Mother Na-

ture is so generous with her gifts to us, we can help her by removing many of the non-native plants that have found their way into our landscapes.

Some were brought here accidently, the nonnative grass, while some were brought here as food like some of the fruit trees.

At the top of the list of unwanted plants are: French Broom, Vinca, Ivy, Hemlock Chinese Parsley and Oxalis. They are in bloom

now and should be pull up by the roots before they go to seed.

You can also help Mother Nature by planting California Native once the weeds have been removed.

This time of the year growing along side the invasive plants is our Native Indian Lettuce. The OHLONE word for the lettuce is ROO'

REH. It is very high in vitamin c and is very tasty.

Westeigh, and Rosemary Wheeler. Also on

display are paintings and drawings by stu-

Acalanes Adult Educa-

dents in several

Enjoy your pursuit



Indian Lettuce/ Roo' reh

of removing the nonnative plants, planting Natives and enjoying the ROO' REH.

Nine East Bay photographers, including two de Young Museum Alumni, featured in Walnut Creek advanced photography exhibit



Photo Bill Helsel From left: Jeff Heyman, Sunyo Suhaimi, Westeigh, Rosemary Wheeler (front), Jonathan Bitz (rear), Robin Sullivan, and Kimberley Enright.

Nine East Bay photographers are featured in a photography and art exhibit, including two who have previously shown at San Francisco's de Young Museum. The show, at the De Valle Educational Center in Walnut Creek, runs now through May 23, 2024.

The exhibit is the

culmination of an Ad-

vanced Photography Workshop led by longtime Acalanes Adult Education photography instructor Bill Helsel. The nine photographers are Jonathan Bitz, Kimberley Enright, Rob Hamner, Jeff Heyman, Rich London, Sunyo Suhaimi, Robin Sullivan,

tion art classes. The Advanced Photography exhibit is a wide-ranging collection of photographic genres and styles: Bitz displays a unique array of black

and white and color photos, while Enright presents a series of "rustic" photographs. Hamner explores

camera movement in beautifully rendered color images, and London uses a lightbox to create a unique view of everyday objects. Suhaimi explores Niles in vivid, nostalgic color photos. Sullivan tells a uniquely "noir" story in black and white, and Wheeler features photographs of outdoor scenes from a different perspective.

Heyman and Westeigh both had landscapes exhibited as part of The de Young Open, held at the de Young Museum in San Francisco last year. In the Advanced Photography exhibit, Heyman juxtaposes clouds, land, and water, while Grant explores "Echoes of Absence." Both are a series of black and white photographs.

Running now through Thursday, May 23, the exhibit can be seen at the Del Valle Education Center, 1963 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, Calif., Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

See the photographers and their work here: https://heymanfoto.smugmug.com/Exhibits/Advanced-Photography-Exhibit



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Lamorinda Volleyball a mixture of success, potential, and development **By Jon Kingdon**

CAMPOLINDO

Heading into spring break, Čampolindo has already won 20 games with only seven losses. Despite only eight returners and ten new players, Head Coach David Chen is very comfortable with this team: "There's an energy and a focus that reminds me of the earlier years when we first got started and it's getting back to our roots in the best possible way. There's a connection that the players have with each other, celebrating each other's success on the court."

The Cougars have good size up front with 6'5" Tim Smith, 6'8" Will Marusich, and 6'3" Will Balassi and Adrian Brown. "That allows us to have a presence at the net and the ability to control things," Chen said. "However, we're trying to get them to play team defense and be fluid on the defensive end."

Campolindo runs a 6-2 set using Graham Volk, Alex Chng, and Braden Purcell as setters. "It's great to have three people that can run the offense," Chen said. "They all have great knowledge and vision. Each is a little different but in a great way. Andre Hanhan and Kai Iwasaki anchor our defense and Andrew Hanhan is our starting libero and is backed up by Kyler Hastings."

With nine seniors on the roster, Chen is already preparing for next year. "We need to share as much information as we can with our underclassmen to make sure we will have consistency," Chen said. "They're coming along quicker than they realize even without getting that much court time."

The only freshman on the team, outside hitter Claes Bell, has been a key addition. "Claes' technique and form are there, and he shows good instincts, footwork and passing form with good knowledge," Chen said.

With so many players that have come up from the J.V., their coach, Scott Forney, has joined Chen and John Vuong on the varsity staff. "Scott has done a great job in preparing the players coming up, they're a tough group," Chen said.

Campolindo is playing in four different tournaments this season. "We have to learn how to play against teams with different styles," Chen said. "We get to play against big teams with power and finesse teams, so we can figure out what type of system gives us a problem, so we can adapt and prepare for the postseason."

Chen is still looking for the team to elevate it's game. "We have to improve our team defense

and making sure that with our first touch, it a touch where we can get an effective attack. We are also working on our serve-receive game, which is important because every team succeeds or fails with that and having the mental toughness to grind through a game when we're not at our best, not giving in to doubt." ACALANES

ORINDA SPORT

With a 6-5 record, Acalanes has a roster of six seniors and six juniors, with only two sophomores. "What's nice is that I've coached all of the upperclassmen the last three years here at Acalanes," Head Coach Lexi Hammer said. "It's the making of community and knowing how the players work, and they're knowing how I work. We have a very positive attitude when it comes to playing aggressively and working together, which builds character within them and within our team."

The front line is led by senior Evan Sverak and juniors Matt Law and Avyn Morales. "They're my front three and they rocket," Hammer said. Evan is a whiz at blocking and reading the other players, being able to put up a block. Though Matt is only 5'6", he's up there with kills and aces. He knows where to put the ball and he reads the

blockers so well and knows how to play it smart."

Junior Miles Thomas leads the team in blocks, digs, and assists as the team's setter, and he and Law are the team's leading servers. "Miles finally got down his top jump spin," Hammer said. He's really communicative and he wants everyone to be successful, and that's the mindset you need, setting everyone else up for success."

The team's two sophomores, Arthur Tam and Mason Briones, have been helped along by the upperclassmen. "All the seniors, especially Miles, have been taking them under their wings, making sure that they're following along and understanding everything."

Senior co-captain Douglas Roberts is the team's libero. "Douglas does a great job in communicating with his teammates and with Law, they both just know how it works with the ability adjust so I know that they will get the job done.'

With a tournament coming up in Granite Bay, Hammer is looking for the team to improve their team defense: "We're letting a lot of balls drop due to miscommunication with the newer players," Hammer said. "Our hitting is strong and our serving has very much improved since the beginning of the year." MIRAMONTE

First year Head Coach Aria Jahangiri has brought his own ideas to Miramonte. "My philosophy is that volleyball is a sport that's growing, so we have to grow with it," Jahangiri said. "It's about fun volleyball and hard work and commitment as a team. We've got to learn new ways to do what we already do, making sure



Evan Sverak spiking the ball against College Park

we understand every skill and grow a culture that will take over and make volleyball important to the players."

Two thirds of the team are juniors and seniors, but a number of them are new, with some returners from last year; many of the players are learning from Jahangiri that volleyball can be a fun and rewarding sport.

The offense is led by the team's outside hitting co-captains, junior Pierson Smith and sophomore Ryan Balonic, who is also used as a setter. Outside hitter Ian Luquis-Diaz and the team's two middle blockers, Will Hashimoto and Sebastian Hall, are all playing well.

"Pierson and Ryan have been very good leaders, showing their teammates the rewards that can come from hard work in volleyball," Jahangiri said. "They've played for a number of

years and seen firsthand the challenges and rewards of being a committed player."

Photo Jon Kingdon

The defense is led by freshman libero Brandon Collins, and Orion Swanson, a libero and defensive specialist. "Brandon is a committed athlete that is mentally strong, balancing his time with cross country and volleyball," Jahangiri said.

Jahangiri is focusing on improving the team's offense. "It might seem like most teams are fine at offense, but when it comes to boys' volleyball, everybody needs to have a decent base of servereceive defensive mechanics," Jahangiri said. "However, what really wins a game is being able to put up a block wherever their hole is and then being able to finish with a swing. If you can't score on that swing with a perfect set, you're not going to win a lot of games.'

Individual and team success for Lamorinda softball

By Jon Kingdon

MIRAMONTE

Miramonte has shown a major improvement over last season, when they started out 0-11 and were outscored 213-28. After 11 games this season, the 8-3 Matadors have outscored their opponents 133-57. Mira-

led by freshmen Gianna Granzella, Maddie McKim, Talia Kardon, sophomore Abby Warren, Junior Julie Quinn-Ferguson, and senior Madilyn Roesner. "I call our offense a "pinball offense," putting the ball in play and forcing the

playing for the name on the front of their jerseys," Schott said. "They have embraced it even when they are not playing their normal positions. Madilyn Roesner and Antonio Lawrence, our cocaptains, have been great leaders on the team

monte has also had two shutouts -their first since 2013.

With a roster of ten freshman and sophomores and only four juniors and seniors, it's still a team that knows how to play the game. "We have five returners from last season and a number of our new players have softball experience with club teams, and that's a huge difference," said head coach O.C. Schott.

defense to make plays," Schott said. "Gianna, Maddie, and Abby are very good hitters, Julie is a great athlete, Talia came in late due to her playing on the soccer team, Madilyn does a good job putting the ball in play, and Alexis Sandstrom and Antonio Lawrence have both been good returning players."

The character of the team has been just as important to the team's The offense has been success. "Our players are

The pitching staff is set with Abby Warren, Penelope Hagan, and Gianna Granzella, and all are pitching fine.

The team is also playing solid defense with Granzella at short, Sandstrom at second, Hagan at Roesner, and Quinn Ferguson are showing up well in the outfield. ... continued on Page B4

third, and Lawrence at first. Kardon has been solid at catcher even though she is new to the position and McKim,

Sydney Gray chosen female athlete of the week **By Jon Kingdon**





Sydney Gray (12)

After scoring six goals and having had two assists in an 18-16 victory over Berkeley, Miramonte freshman lacrosse player, Sydney Gray, was just named the Bay Area News Group female athlete of the week. "I was

Photo Mark Bell

very excited when I heard that I was named, and that so many people in the community voted for me made it more surreal," Gray said. "The team has been super supportive with everyone cheering for each other,

and the team working so well together has really helped me on the field. Coach (Jackie) Pelletier has been coaching me since the sixth grade, and she's the most supportive on the field and has a lot of care for everyone."

"Sydney is on a short list of freshmen that I have coached and been so dominant," Pelletier said. "She's very confident and has great field IQ, seeing the field and understanding the game. She has worked very hard on her stick skills, shooting, footwork, and is just a very graceful player. She has been an attacking player and is now a midfielder because her defense is phenomenal and been dominant on the draws."

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| 5.12 | NORTH TEKAS SC | 5PM |
| 5.19 | LAFC 2 | 5PM |
| 6.11* | TACOMA DEFIANCE | 5PM |
| | LA GALAXY II | SPM |
| 7.05 | COLORADO RAPIDS 2 | SPM |
| 7.14 | SPORTING KC II | 5PM |
| 7.21 | REAL MONARCHS | 5PM |
| 8.04 | PORTLAND TIMBERS 2 | 5PM |
| 8.18 | VANCOUVER WHITECAPS 2 | 5PM |
| 8.25* | TACOMA DEFIANCE | SPM |
| 9.22 | ST. LOUIS CITY SC 2 | 3PM |
| 9.29 | LAFC 2 | 3PM |





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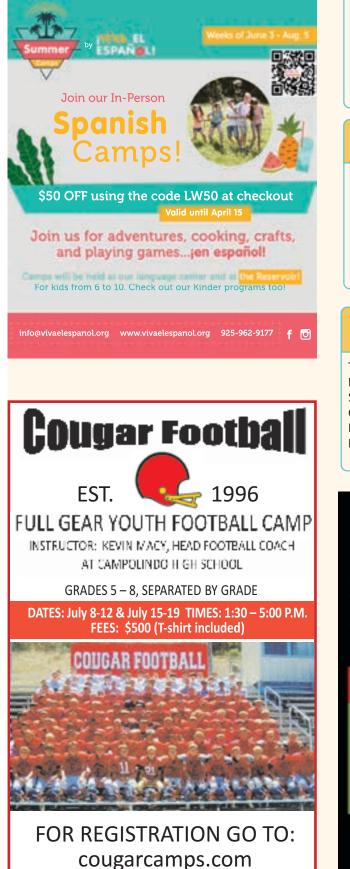


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California Academy of Performing Arts Summer Program (Moraga)

Come dance this summer at CAPA's 8 weeklong program! CAPA offers classes in several genres including ballet, contemporary, jazz, tap, and musical theater. Students, ages 3-18 receive outstanding instruction led by some of the best professional dance instructors in the Bay Area. Dates: June 10-August 3 (925) 375-2454 www.capadance.net

Cheer Spark Spirit Camp (Orinda)

Jump, tumble and cheer your way through summer with Cheer Spark Spirit! Our camps are designed for boys and girls ages 5-12 to learn the fundamentals of cheerleading in a fun and positive environment. Half day camps are offered in Orinda June 10-14, July 8-12 and August 5-9. Learn more at www.CheerSparkSpirit.com.

Bay Area Ballplayers (Moraga)

Hone your skills with afternoon Indoor Multi-Sport Camps at our facility 4-6pm Mon-Thurs. Baseball, Soccer, Lacrosse, Water Polo & other games!

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Camp Awesome Summer Camp (Lafayette)

Camp Awesome is back this summer for another Awesome camp experience. Awesome games, activities, and phenomenal summer shows. Open all 11 weeks of summer: Early care 8 a.m., Day Camp 9 a.m.-2 p.m., and Afternoon camp 2 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Registration opens March 25 at midnight. And camp runs from June 3 through August 8. www.LafayetteRec.org | (925) 284-2232

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Art, Soccer, Cooking, Dance, Science, Engineering, LEGOs, Pickleball, Archery, Basketball, Carpentry, Singing, Chess and more www.LafavetteRec.org (925) 284-2232

Beach Volleyball Camps at SMC (Moraga)

Kids Camp - A day of fun developing volleyball skills. High Potential - Clinics provide high level coaching instruction from coaching staff, current and former players -essential work in the fundamental skills of the game along with game strategies, techniques, and communication.

www.smcbeachvolleyballcamps.com

Cougar Youth Football Camp (Moraga)

The Cougar Youth Football Camp directed by Head Coach Kevin Macy for grades 5-8 is held at Campolindo High School July 8-12 & July 15-19 from 1:30 -5:00 p.m. Cost is \$500 with all equipment including T-shirt supplied. Registration forms online. Register at www. cougarcamps.com

Contra Costa Ballet Center (Walnut Creek)

CCBC offers comprehensive ballet training for beginningadvanced dancers. Ages 4-7 are invited to join Ballet Classics Camp which introduces ballet foundations through classic fairy-tale ballets. Ages 7-18 may audition for our intensive which includes ballet, pointe, character, contemporary, conditioning, anatomy, rep & more! Dates in June/July. www.contracostaballet.org | (925) 935-7984

DONS Youth Football Academy (Lafayette)

The Dons Summer Football Academy, run by current Acalanes coaches, will teach fundamentals, develop skills, and help kids with the transition to tackle football in a fun, fast-paced, non-padded and non-contact environment. Both skilled position players and linemen from 4th to 8th grade should attend. Cost is \$200. June 17-20, 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. www.acalanesdonsfootball.com

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No Day Camp Jr. the week of 7/1 or 8/5

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Cheer Camp

Campers ages 5-12 will learn cheer fundamentals including jumps, dance, stunts & tumbling. All levels welcome, no experience necessary.



www.SparkCheer.org

Eclipse Soccer - Summer Development Program

A program for players in the U9-U13 age groups (2012-2016 birth years) to continue developing the skills that will help them improve and be competitive in their soccer experiences and have a ton of fun in the process! 1.5-hour sessions twice per week over the course of the summer. Registration opens in May. www.eastbayeclipse.com

Girl Power (Orinda)

Girl Power is led by Sylvia Colucci, a Girls Life Coach with 20 years' experience. Explore topics like social media, nutrition, communication and goal setting. Camp dates: June 10-13, 17-20, 23-27; July 8-12, 15-19, 22-25, and Aug 5-8. Morning (9am-12pm) or afternoon (2pm-5pm) sessions available. Girls 10-16 years. Visit www.sylviacolucci.com.

LOPC "Scuba" Vacation Bible Camp (Lafayette)

Get ready to "splash" into fun, where kids dive into friendship with God. Days include hands-on science experiments, team-building games, standout songs, and tasty treats! Parents and friends invited to join the Fintastic finale each day. Ages 4 - 4th grade. Dates: 1 week June 10-14, 2 - 5 p.m. lopc.org/vbcamp

MVPC Vacation Bible Camp (Moraga)

This summer, Moraga Valley Presbyterian VBS is headed to the beach! Catch this epic wave of FUN as we dive into a friendship with God! We hope to see you here where it'll be all about the sea, the sand and the SONI SonSurf Beach Bash June 10-14 9am-12pm



(Lafayette)

FireCracker Summer Math Camp for curious and challenge-loving kids ages 6 to 16. Instructions employ math games, projects, and magic tricks, sparking kids' interest in math and boosting their skills and confidence. www.firecrackermath.org (510) 488-4556

Lady Mats Basketball Camps (Orinda)

Lady Mats Basketball Camp will take place at Miramonte High School and be run by Miramonte Coaching staff, as well as current and past student athletes. Grades 3 - 8 are welcome. Camp will focus on Basketball Fundamentals as well as team building skills. Dates June 24-June 28. Please contact vwirthman@gmail.com

Moraga Day Camp Jr. (Moraga)

Step into the world of Hollywood with arts, crafts, games, and field trips inspired by the finest works of Tinseltown. Weekly sessions 9 am to 1 pm June 10 – August 2 (except July 1-5). (925) 888-7045 www.moragarec.com

Orinda Parks and Rec (Orinda)

Make new friends, learn new subjects, and have fun in a safe, engaging environment. This year's summer camp theme is Curiosity Quest. Orinda summer camps will run from June 3 - Aug. 9, and there will be no camps on June 19 or July 4-5. Registration opened on Monday, March 4. www.cityoforinda.org/188/Camp-



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Randy Bennett Basketball Camps (Moraga)

The Randy Bennett Day Camps held at Saint Mary's College in University Credit Union Pavilion are a great way for boys and girls grades K-8th to receive topclass instruction on every aspect of the game, led by Coach Bennett and his staff. Morning, afternoon and full day options available. Day Camps June and July www.smcmensbasketballcamps.com/

Information

SMC Creative Camp (Moraga)

Embark on a summer of creativity at Saint Mary's College Creative Camps! Our Moraga campus sets the stage for elementary, middle, and high school students to explore art, writing, acting, music, and filmmaking.

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www.SMCCreativeCamp.com

Town Hall Theatre (Lafayette)

Strengthen your roots in skill-based camps, or bloom in production camps. Our Summer Camps for rising pre-k through High School offer a theatrical blend of fun and learning, with varying levels of intensity for students of all ages. With new camps beginning all summer long, there's sure to be something to fit your schedule and student. www.townhalltheatre.com/summer-2024

Lady Mats Basketball Camp 6/24 — 6/28

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Lady Mats Basketball Camp will take place at Miramonte Highschool and be run by Miramonte Coaching staff, as well as current and past student athletes. Grades 3 - 8 are welcome. Camp will focus on Basketball Fundamentals as well as team building

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Individual and team success for Lamorinda softball



Photo Jon Kingdon

Esa Orman (22) being met by her teammates after hitting a home run against Las Lomas

... continued from Page B1

Schott is looking for the team to keep improving. "We're always striving to play our best," Schott said. "Our players are putting in the work and are preparing for the games properly, and we've been getting the good results. We're going to maximize what we have and play the best we can and hopefully the results will be there." ACALANES

With five freshmen, six seniors and juniors, and a couple of sophomores, Acalanes has a young team with a 7-4 record. "We have some other freshman that are really pushing the upperclassmen," Head Coach Victor Silva said. "Just about all of our players compete all year round and they really want to be here. They're working hard and I'm really proud of our team."

The Don's offense has shown steady improvement, with the team now batting a combined .289. The leading batters are co-captain Emme Young, (.516), co-captain Esa Or-

man (.441), Ella Greenfield (.429), Santana Tamayo (.310) and Lauren Foster (.333). "We're still looking for more depth in our batting order," Silva said. "Lauren has recently come back from an injury and has been learning to be a slap hitter."

The pitching staff relies on two pitchers: sophomore Maya Shoenhair and senior Lana Cerejo. "They have both been pitching well but we need to cut down on the walks," Silva said. "Esa is our catcher and is backed up by Ella and Santana if

necessary."

The infield is led Riley Zirkel at short, Avery Robb at second, Tamaya at third, and Nicole Parlett at first. "They've all been doing a great job and have shown the ability to convert the double play," Silva said. "Our defense has been there every game and that's something we've really been able to hang our hat on." The outfield is led by

Young in center, cocaptain Lulu Levy in right along with freshman Vanesse Choi, and sophomore Lauren Foster. "They have all been doing a good job," Silva said.

Silva has a lot of confidence in the team going into the second half of the season: "We're working our butts off in practice and we're going to be okay. I'm excited about this team and for the future as well with so many young players." CAMPOLÍNDO

With only one senior on the roster, the Campolindo softball team is a work in progress. "We're a relatively young team," Head Coach Saul Tallarico said. "We do have nine juniors and a strong freshman group with our starting battery both

freshmen, so we've had some growing pains."

It's been feast or famine with the team's batting. Freshman Paige Williams (.562), senior Kylie Dowdall (.462), juniors Lucy Wilson (.389) and Clara Hwang (.308), and sophomore Cassidy Mintz (.278) have been leading the offense with a number of other batters still looking to elevate their averages.

"Our bats have been a little quiet at the start of the year, but I'm confident that it will be turned around," Tallarico said. "Paige has been doing a great job in batting in the three-hole. Clara was a top hitter last year and has missed some time with an injury. Kylie is an aggressive hitter, batting cleanup and playing a great first base and she is the vocal leader on the team."

Tallarico's plan to improve the team's batting is simple: "It's just a matter of repetition with live pitching and the pitching machine. We've had some better at bats where we hit the ball that turned into outs and I'm counting on our bats coming around for sure." The defense has been

setback a bit due to various injuries. "We have a number of players in new positions that are becoming more familiar with their positions, and seeing it becoming second nature to where they're playing," Tallarico said. "Once we can get a constant lineup out there, the flow will be much more positive.

The infield is set with Dowdell at first base, Wilson at short, Maya Hammerman at second, and Cassidy Mintz at third. Williams and Wilson are the team's pitches, and freshman Nikki Sturtz is the team's catcher.

"Nicki had never played catcher and she's learning on the fly and doing a great job," Tallarico said. "The outfield is in good hands with Hwang in centerfield, covering a lot of ground with a strong arm, and Peyton Tallarico is playing a solid right field for us.

Dowdell, Wilson, Hwang, and Williams are the team's co-captains. "They've all been doing a great job and even though Paige is only a freshman, she has been great, leading by example, diving for balls, clapping and getting on everybody."

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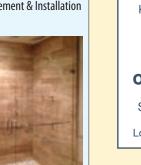
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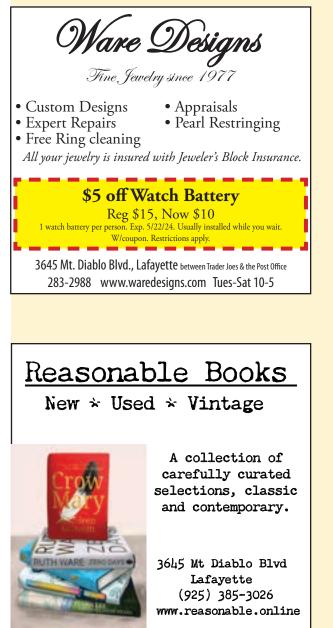
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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian April Powers By Cynthia Brian



Native trillium starts off white and turns magenta.

"April hath put a spirit of youth in everything." William Shakespeare

Gardeners refer to April showers bringing May flowers, and that is a truism. As an avid gardener, I believe in April powers as gardens burst into life, with abundant floral reveals marking the beginning of a vibrant growing season.

In late 2023, the United States Department of Agriculture updated hardiness zones based on weather conditions between 1991-2020. The upward trend in warming temperatures is no surprise, yet our area has remained at zone 9b. The zones are a recommendation for hardiness when planning your planting. To find specimens that will thrive in our gardens, I advise buying local at your preferred nursery, as you'll find natives and plants that are acclimated to our climate. Also, local nurseries employ knowledgeable garden gurus who can answer your questions to help you be more successful. Wherever you are making your purchase, keep in mind that our 9b hardiness zone is only one factor when you are searching for the best plants for your yard. Your garden may experience a micro-climate different from your neighbors. Always familiarize yourself with the light, soil, and water requirements of your garden.

Intentional use of native plants that have formed symbiotic relationships with native wildlife over millions of years creates the most productive and sustainable wildlife habitat according to the National Wildlife Federation. Entomologist, Dr. Douglas Tallamy, and his team have identified what we call keystone plants, the 14% of native plants that support 90% of butterfly and moth species. Our ecosystems suffer without these keystones. You can search by zip code for necessary natives at www.NWF.org. Our live oak trees alone can host 275 species of caterpillars! Consider scattering seeds of sunflower, aster, fleabane, and lupin. Plant strawberries, trillium, goldenrod, dogwood, roses, and berries, as well as fruit trees including apricot, cherry, peach, and plum as hosts to moth and butterfly caterpillars, and pollen for bees. When broadcasting seeds either by hand or hydroseeding, don't cover the seeds or rake them. Do a light compression either with pieces of cardboard, a lawn roller, or even your feet. Yes, the birds and squirrels will consume some of your ... continued on Page OH6 seeds. Sharing is caring.



Hyacinthoides, English bluebells or wood hyacinths.



Foreget-me nots Photos Cynthia Brian





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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS-T; Licensed Real Estate Broker

The first quarter of 2024 began with a slightly increased pace in activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate versus last year. Demand remains high but the supply has continued to be low. The closings that occurred, for the most part, came from properties that went under contract in late November to late February.

The average sales price has increased over a year ago in Lafayette and Orinda, and in Moraga there was a minimal drop. The days on market remained short and the homes that had multiple offers were plentiful.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from Jan. 1 through March 31, 2024, 51 single family homes closed in Lafayette. A year ago there were 35 and in 2022 there were 66. Sales prices ranged from \$981,000 to \$6,500,000 and the average number of days on market was 19. The average sales price was \$2,280,036. A year ago it was \$2,059,520.

In Moraga, the number of single-family closings was 17. A year ago it was 13 in the first quarter, and well below the 26 in 2022. Prices so far this year have ranged from \$1,200,001 to \$2,800,000. The average sale price was \$1,943,694, a slight drop from the first quarter of 2023 when it was \$1,964,615, and a drop from the record first quarter in 2022 of \$2,350,260. The average marketing time was nine days the lowest it has been in many years.

In Orinda, the number of single-family closings was 33; in 2023 it was 28. Sales prices ranged from \$1,075,000 to \$4,970,000 with an average price of \$2,272,000. A year ago it was \$1,919,205. In the first quarter of 2022 it was \$2,268,258. It took an average of 22 days on the market to sell a home versus 40 days on the market to sell a home in Orinda in the first 90 days of 2023.

In the first quarter of 2023, Lafayette homes sold at an average of \$830.62 - an increase from the \$812.92 per square foot last year. Moraga came in at \$816.58, a slight drop from the 840.12 a year ago. Orinda was at \$829.38; one year ago it was \$773.00.

Again, as the number of closings in the first quarter usually contain a much smaller sample size, these numbers are different and can be affected by just one or two closings at the high end or the low end.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had three resale

closings reported to the MLS (what does this stand for?). They ranged from \$925,000 to \$1,350,000. Moraga again had eight, ranging from \$448,444 to \$1,660,000. Orinda had four from \$445,000 and \$1,460,000. One of the four was a BMR (Below Market Rate) sale for \$609,000 on Hazel Tree Ridge.** BMR sales are limited on the prices where they can transfer so they can also affect the average sales prices. **

As of April 3, 2024, there were only 57 homes under contract per the MLS in the three combined communities (a year ago it was 38, in 2022 it was 94, and in 2021 it was well over 100.) The asking prices are between \$899,000 to \$4,895,000. This again points to the lack of supply of homes that have hit the market since the middle of February.

Inventory is at 66, comparable to the 64 a year ago and 60 at this same point in 2022.

There are 34 Lafayette properties currently on the market versus 30 properties on the market in April, 2023. Asking prices in Lafayette currently range from \$999,000 to \$9,495,000. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of 13 homes, the same as the 13 homes at this time in 2023. The price range is \$425,000 to \$2,695,000.

In Orinda there are 19 homes on the market. One year ago there were 21. The list prices range from \$1,550,000 to \$12,900,000.

There are no distressed (bank-owned or short sale) properties available in Lamorinda.

As is the case nearly every quarter, the most active price range is in the more affordable ranges. At the high end, 18 homes sold above \$3,000,000 in the three communities combined. The affordability factor is subject to a lot of interpretation. There are 13 currently available above this amount in Lamorinda.

Interest rates have stayed above historical lows, which have pushed some buyers either out of the market, to lower priced homes, or out of Lamorinda. Relocation from the corporate side has continued to increase as companies now want their employees to work out of their destination offices versus working remotely from their old locations.

... continued on Page OH7

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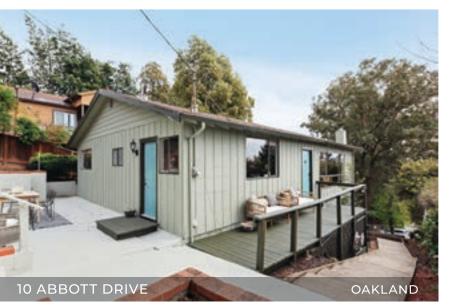
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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian **April Powers**



Western redbud is a beautiful native tree.

... continued from Page OH1

These seeds require light and air to germinate properly. Seeds that are buried too deeply struggle to access necessary nutrients and may die.

Nature awes me as I walk around my garden. Wildflowers are in glorious abundance. So much is in flower that I don't know where to point the camera. Western redbud, sour, choke, and sweet cherries, prune, horse chestnut, tulip magnolia, mock orange, and crabapple are just a few of my trees that showcase stand-out blossoms, many intoxicatingly fragrant, and all of them populated with pollinators. My camellia has been repeatedly blooming since December. It was planted as a one-gallon plant several years ago and is now 17 feet tall and 12 feet wide. When planting anything, make sure you understand how large the plant will be at maturity so that you dig the hole in an area where it will grow and thrive.

My roses, which I heavily pruned in February, are also blooming. Not to be overlooked, forgetme-nots blanket shaded areas, while woodland hyacinths, also known as English bluebells, and sea foam statice have naturalized in sunny locations dressed to impress the garden in shades of blue and purple. Supporting the butterfly and bird population, the white clusters of viburnum flowers provide nectar for the flitting butterflies, while the forming black berries feed the birds. California poppies, calendula, tulips, daffodils, potato vine, anemones, Dutch iris, bearded iris, Calla lilies, periwinkle, a variety of succulents,



Purple potato vine.

and masses of weeds carpet my meadow hillside

The wisteria is budding, and, by the time I

write my next article, I imagine a glorious gauze

of lavender pea flowers cascading over the pergola. When growing wisteria, it is essential to

consider the sturdiness of the structure where

climbing support. Arbors, fences, trellises, and

even trees become their ladder. To maintain its

powers on in April is allium triquetrum, wild

Foragers are fond of this delicious triangular

ramps, also known as the three-cornered leek.

onion stem, yet it can be invasive. If you cultivate

it, make sure it doesn't escape. These wild onions

the Valley, which is not an allium and non-edible. Lily of the Valley is poisonous with white, bell-

shaped flowers, whereas the ramps produce um-

bels of small white flowers. All alliums have a

very distinct onion smell. If you think you are

gathering ramps but there is no onion smell, do

not taste it. Always be certain of what plant you

are eating, as there are many plants poisonous

and toxic to humans that resemble edible ones.

plot through June to determine when the best

Although it's early, I'm experimenting with

growing tomato seedlings. I started with a couple

closely resemble the lance-shaped leaves of Lily of

shape and size, as well as to encourage flowering,

One of my favorite edible wild species that

with stems that become woody as they seek

wisteria needs regular pruning.

your vine will twine. Wisteria forms a thick trunk

and orchard. I'll be busy for months to come!

Photos Cynthia Brian



Silver succulent in a container requires minimal moisture.

time is to grow this favorite fruit. As you plant your tomatoes, peas, and beans, support them with strong cages or wire. Tomatoes need six to eight hours of sunlight daily and are best spaced two feet apart. They will do well in large containers or pots of 15 gallons or more.

Our mild weather, warm sunshine, occasional showers, diverse plant species, wildflower displays, and lavish blooms, plus the humming, buzzing, singing, crowing, croaking, cawing, and hooting of wildlife make this gorgeous month a time of vitality, color, and renewal as youthful April powers!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing! Happy April!

Close-up of viburnum bloom, a pollinator magnet. of plants in March and will continue adding to my



The Real Estate Quarter in Review

... continued from Page OH3

Lamorinda continues to be attractive with, BART access and highly rated schools. The real estate markets in Oakland, Berkeley, and Piedmont have continued to be active, so there has been some spillover effect where buyers are willing to make longer commutes in order to find more affordable housing. Of course, Lamorinda and affordable housing is also subject to interpretation.

We also continue to see a lot of buyers in Lamorinda being represented by agents based in San Francisco and the Peninsula. Prices in those areas have been higher for many years, so many have sold to buy more house for less money in Lamorinda.

Lastly, it is important to look at what homes are selling for versus their list prices. On occasion, homes come on the market at unrealistic prices and they do not sell. We also are seeing more homes listed well below true values in the hope it will encourage bidding wars that ultimately generate a higher overall sales price. In the first quarter of this year many homes have

Cynthia Brian sits among the flowers and the weeds.

For more gardening advice for all seasons, check out Growing with the Goddess Gardener at https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3 which was just honored as the 2024 Nonprofit of the Year by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Her newest children's picture book, Family Forever, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures is available now at https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com https://www.CynthiaBrian.com

had multiple offers and have sold at or above the list price.

Of the 51 single-family home sales that closed in Lafayette in the first quarter of 2024, 32 sold at or above the list price. In Moraga, 14 of the 17 sales sold at or above the asking price, and in Orinda, 23 of the 33 sold at or above the final listing price.

This will typically happen when a house goes pending in the first two weeks on the market. Of the 57 currently pending sales in the three Lamorinda communities combined, 40 went pending in 14 days or less. The actual average days on the market would be markedly lower, but many agents are setting up marketing plans where they market the home to the public and to brokers and follow with an offer date in a week or so after exposing the property to the market pointing to a high likelihood of a continued trend in homes selling above the asking price.

In the detached home category in the first quarter of 2024, the average sale price in Lafayette was 102.7% of the final asking price. In Moraga it was 102% and in Orinda it was 103%.





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91 La Cuesta Road, Orinda 3 Bd | 3 Ba | 2401 Sqft | \$1,650,000 Mid-century 2400+ sf contemporary--soaring ceilings, glorious view, fabulous out-door setting--expansive patio, deck & gardens!



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8 Mountain View Place, Lafayette 3 Bd | 2 Ba | 2061 Sqft | \$1,495,000 This single-level home features 3 bd/ 2 ba & 2061 sqft on a .5 acre lot, all walking distance to downtown Lafayette!



160 Greenwood Circle, Walnut Creek 3 Bd | 2 Ba | 1472 Sqft | \$1,295,000 Charming single-level rancher features 3 bd/ 2 ba, two separate living rooms & spacious backyard w/ level lawn!



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