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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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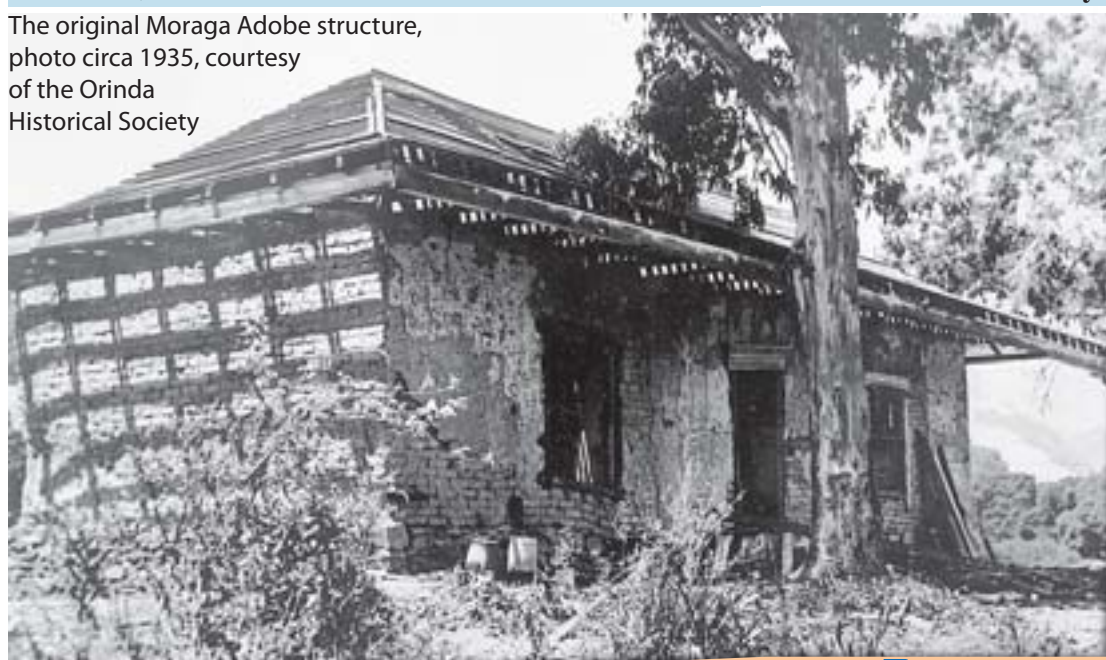
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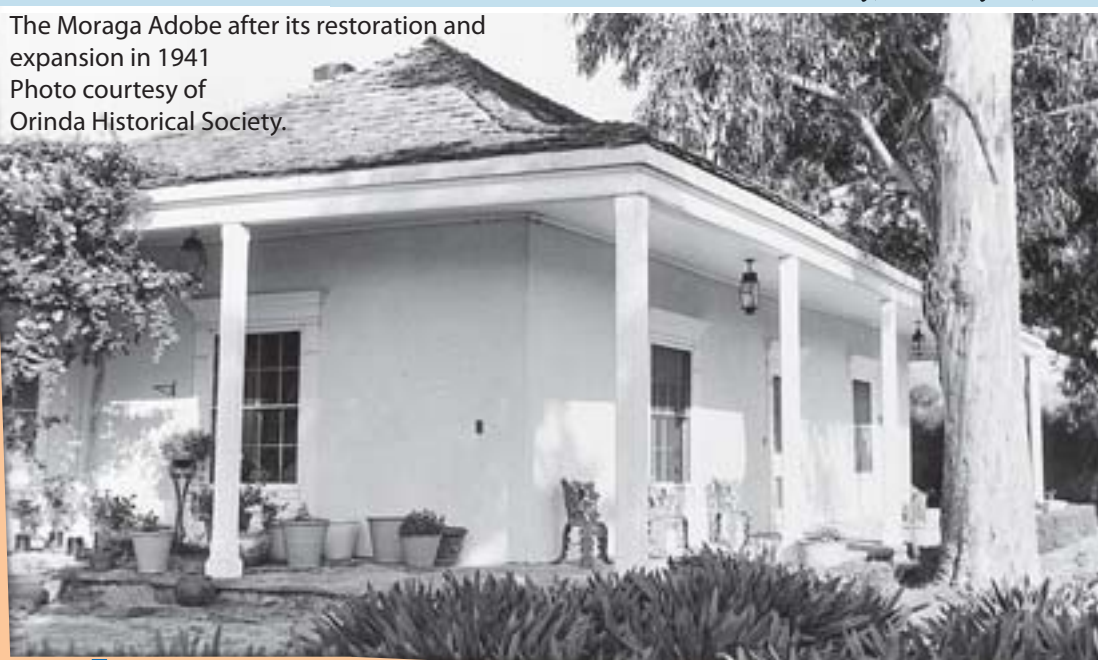
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Wednesday, February 18, 2009

The original Moraga Adobe structure, photo circa 1935, courtesy of the Orinda Historical Society



The Moraga Adobe after its restoration and expansion in 1941 Photo courtesy of Orinda Historical Society.



Moraga Adobe



Exterior view of the Moraga Adobe, October 2008

Photo Kent Long



Exterior view of the Moraga Adobe, January 2009

Photo Teresa Long

The Joaquin Moraga Adobe: A Local Historic Treasure

By Andrea A. Firth

If Joaquin Moraga's influence was measured by the presence of his name around Lamorinda, one could not deny that Joaquin, an early settler of the ranch lands that now comprise parts of Moraga and Orinda, had a significant impact on the area. Moraga's name graces a town, a valley, two main arteries—Moraga Way and Moraga Road, a school district, a middle school, a library and a hardware store, to name just a few. Yet, the most historically

significant application of Moraga's name may be on a small ranch-style home set on knoll above Del Rey Elementary School—the Joaquin Moraga Adobe.

Following receipt of a land grant in 1841, Joaquin Moraga built the three-room home which still sits on its perch in Orinda overlooking its neighbor Moraga to the south. "It's the oldest adobe in the entire East Bay area. It may even be the oldest residence," states Kent Long, archivist for the Orinda

Historical Society. Growing up in the El Toyonal neighborhood of Orinda, Long knew of the adobe's existence but had never seen the property. He recently had the opportunity to view the adobe inside and out as part of a group of locals invited to tour the residence by the new owner of the 20-acre parcel of land on which the (approximately) 165-year old home is located.

... continued on page 7

LAMORINDA WEEKLY this week

Orinda Task Force Unveils Plan to Streamline Planning Page 4

Lamorinda Schools - on the Budget Chopping Block Page 16

DFAL Basketball Wrap-up Page 21

Town News	2,3,4,6,7
Downtown Strategy Workshop	2
Planning Discusses Palos	3
Orinda Roads 'Shovel Ready'	4
MOFD Budget Deficit	5
Happy Ending	6
Walk Moraga First	7
Letters to the Editor	8,9
Bert Monroy at Hearst Gallery	11
Lamorinda Real Estate	12
Business	13
Not to be Missed	14
NEW Lamorinda Service Directory	14
SMC Happenings	15
Schools	16,17,18
Lamorinda Dining	20
Sports	21,22,23
Classifieds	22
HOW TO CONTACT US	22
Shop Orinda	24

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Taxes in California's State Budget Hit Hard

(Editor's note: At press time on Monday the California state legislature had not voted on the proposed budget.)

By Jennifer Wake

There are few winners in California's state budget, which seeks to wipe a more than \$40 billion deficit from its books. While some speculate that sweeping cuts in education, healthcare, and other services might be offset by money from the federal stimulus plan, a variety of new taxes will likely touch everyone.

The taxes affecting vehicle licensing and taxes at the pump are causing worry among local independent business owners – especially those who rely on vehicles to conduct their business.

Moraga resident Mike Kelley, owner of Kelley Construction, says the increased gas excise tax of 12 cents per gallon will be tough in this economy.

"We use a lot of money on fuel," Kelley said. "The timing is very difficult, especially with independent business owners. People are tightening belts. Additional costs make it difficult for independent business owners to survive. It's a difficult situation."

Governor's Schwarzenegger's budget proposal last week included the extension of sales tax to services including veterinarian visits, appliance repair, and auto repair. This caused an outcry from professional organizations and local business owners, including Orinda Motors owner Allen Pennebaker, who is the former president of the Automotive Service Councils of California (ASCCA).

Pennebaker believes regressive taxes like those in the budget unfairly burden lower- and middle-income citizens.

... continued on page 11

In Case of Emergency, Dial ???

The best course of action in any type of emergency is to dial 911 from a land line; but what if you only have a cell phone? Orinda: 925-284-5010; Lafayette: 925-284-5010; Moraga: 925-228-8282 (284-5010 also works from Moraga); alternate number for all Lamorinda communities: 925-646-2441; alternate number for a fire or medical emergency: 925-933-1313. Please see article for details.

By Lee Borrowman

Two weeks ago, we received a disturbing email from a reader, Ashley Coates: "Last night, a man in my exercise class at the Lafayette Community Center suffered a life-threatening medical crisis. We tried to call 911 on cell phones but could not get through. Out of all the people in class, no one knew the quickest way to reach our local dispatchers rather than the CHP dispatch that gets 911 calls from cell phones. I hope you will research the issue of how to contact emergency services when you have a choice between land line vs. cell phone, and how to contact our local emergency services when all you have is a cell phone." Coates says she contacted us "in the hope of getting information to as many people as possible."

Sadly the victim, a 56-year old husband and father of two young boys, who was described as an avid fisherman and exercise fanatic who always had a friendly smile and greeting, died that night.

As it turned out, the answer to the question "Who Do You Call?" is not as simple as one might hope.

All of Lamorinda's emergency responders agree: The best course of action in any type of emergency is to dial 911 from a land line. Moraga's Interim Chief of Police Bob Priebe explains why: "A land line is the preferred method of communication in an emergency because it automatically displays where the call is originated and allows help to be sent to that location, even if the caller is unable to speak."

Dialing 911 from a cell phone is strongly discouraged by all of Lamorinda's emergency responders. Priebe lays it out: "When a cell phone is the only available device, calling 9-1-1 can (cause a delay of) several minutes because it is received by a California Highway Patrol (CHP) office, then the call has to be transferred to the correct responding agency."

... continued on page 9

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