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# LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Photo Doug Kohen

## Classic Americana: Reenactment of 50-year Old Prank

By Linda U. Foley

Nostalgia and great weather brought several hundred alums and current students together on the Chapel lawn at Saint Mary's on March 25. The guest of honor—a phone booth. The buzz? The 50-year commemoration of the phone booth-stuffing which created national exposure. Free-lancing Bay Area photographer Joe Munroe immortalized the 22 contorted but happy Gaels for LIFE Magazine who later included it in its collection of 100 greatest pictures. Munroe and his artist wife Virginia—who still

live in Orinda—enjoyed the festivities as much as some of the men he had caught on film: director of the Integral Program Ted Tsukahara, the original man in the booth; Ray Motta seen in the middle of the pile; and Ronald and Don Diritos whose faces are clearly visible at the bottom of the booth.

Some others enjoying memory exchanges and fun at hand, were '59, '60 and '61 alums: Denis Kelly, Richard Giambastini, Jim Neylan, Larry Coleman, Lou Meyer, Joe Barry, Francisco Lopes, Cole Buxton

and Thomas Uniack. Vice Provost Francis Sweeney and Robert Solari '88 were recalling their experience in the first “co-ed” stuffing—one booth per gender—at the Silver resting of the famous event in 1984.

Senior Amber Oosman, student body alumni president, had no trouble getting volunteers for this novel stunt particularly since most students probably never had prior hands-on dealings with a phone booth. On the other hand, during mid-terms, this was a great way to let off steam and regroup.

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### Proper Pricing Key Factor in Quicker Home Sales

By Jennifer Wake

In Lamorinda, the average time a home stays on the market is 46 days – 50 percent higher than what some local realtors are used to seeing, but still a short period of time compared to other Bay Area cities.

But which houses are selling? Kurt Piper, Real Estate Broker/Associate Partner at Village Associates in Orinda, says most of the sales activity he sees is for homes priced between \$700,000 and \$1 million. “It all comes down to price.”

“If a property is priced to reflect the current market conditions, these homes can sell within 10 days of coming to the multiple listing service (MLS),” he says. “Homes that are overpriced are receiving one or more price reductions before they go pending.”

Some, Piper says, are just not selling. Orinda Prudential California Realty agent John Fazel, who collects data for the

Lamorinda Real Estate Networking Group, says that while 50 percent of Lamorinda homes sell within the first month, homes can stay on the market for 75 days or longer if they're not priced right.

“It's almost a given; for a house to be sold, it has to be staged,” Fazel says. “People who are reluctant to set up their house nicely, are setting up to sell at a discount.”

Jim Colhoun, a top real estate agent from Prudential California Realty's Lafayette office, sees dozens of price reductions every week. “This is the time of year we typically get the bulk of our listings,” he says. “I'm seeing a number of homes that were on the market last year coming back at a reduced price.”

Colhoun says confidence in the financial markets and in job security is affecting sales.

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### Morinda and MOFD Meet

*The Tri-Agency Funding Discussion Continues*

By Andrea A. Firth

The Tri-Agency Funding Discussion Committee, consisting of Council Members from Moraga and Orinda and two Board Members from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD), has tentatively concluded their fact-finding mission. After meeting for almost three hours last week and listening and responding to a second lengthy, detailed report from MOFD Chief Pete Nowicki, the Committee members will report back to their respective Councils and Board before further meetings, if any, are planned. The Tri-Agency Committee was formed to evaluate the MOFD's property tax allocation following the

recommendation of Orinda's Revenue Enhancement Task Force (RETF).

At the start of the meeting, Nowicki reflected on the formation of the MOFD. Noting that in 1997 he was part of the Moraga Fire District, Nowicki recalled that something unique happened on the day the MOFD was formed. Resources were immediately redistributed; an ambulance, people, and inventory were moved; and a single District was created. “There is no more they or us. There is no boundary, no lines of demarcation. We are one District and we respond as one,” stated Nowicki.

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### Orinda Rotary Celebrates 60 Years



By Andrea A. Firth

Doing good works and having a good time in the process are two of the key elements to the success and longevity of the Orinda Rotary Club.

On March 18th, 2009, sixty years to the day from the date the Club established its charter in 1949, Orinda's Rotarians celebrated...

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### Saint Mary's Cuts Faculty, Staff, Programs



By Jennifer Wake

Colleges and universities across the country have been squeezed by the recent economic downturn, and are being forced to make some tough decisions. Saint Mary's College is no exception, with its president, Brother Ronald Gallagher, FSC, recently announcing cuts to faculty, staff, and a few ...

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