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Wednesday, March 17, 2010



Photo Doug Kohen, see photo caption below

It's a 3!

Quote of the Week:

It's unconscionable that California, the eighth largest economy in the world, cannot adequately fund education. -- See Letters to the Editor, page L6 and L7

It's a 3; as in, your friendly neighborhood newspaper celebrates its 3rd birthday this month. Or, as Associate Publisher Wendy Scheck joked, "It's an E, for Every Other Week." That's publisher Andy Scheck holding the 3 (Wendy is behind him to the left); next year, someone else

is going to be in charge of styling the photo shoot, although it's somehow appropriate that the ridgeline behind us is the same one that graces our logo (above).

Friends and neighbors, if we could have taken a photo of everyone in Lamorinda, then you would really

see who we are and what we do. We are you, and you are us. We offer our heartfelt thanks to all of you, for sending us your stories, letters, photos and article ideas.

Read our cover story, "The Lamorinda Weekly, Looking Back and Forward," on page L3.

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Saint Mary's Finds Providence in Las Vegas

By Justine Sgalio



Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's made the Gael Nation proud at the West Coast Conference Tournament. The Gaels beat the #1 seed and WCC Champions the Gonzaga Bulldogs by 18 in Las Vegas on March 9th. The win marks the first time Saint Mary's has triumphed over the Zags since 2008, and its first WCC Conference Tournament victory since 1997. With the win, the Gaels received an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament.

"It was a breakthrough... something our program needed to accomplish," said Saint Mary's Head Coach Randy Bennett. ... continued on page S2

Caption, photo above

"It was a dark and stormy night... morning," suggested photographer Doug Kohen of Lafayette, for the first line of this report. True, the day we picked to take our annual staff picture was last Friday, the one rainy day of an otherwise glorious spring week. Kohen called out, "Umbrellas down!" as his camera began to click (he's on the far right, remote in hand); we had all our bases covered since photographer Tod Fierner (back right) made the drive from his day job with the City of Orinda to join us. Orinda photographer Ohlen Alexander (far back, in blue) completed the triumvirate.

It's also true that senior staff writer Andrea Firth, the best analytical mind among us, was overheard whispering to contributing writer and crack MOFD reporter Lucy Amaral, "The 3 is backwards;" yet the warning went unheeded (Andrea is standing in front of Doug, Lucy is behind her on your left). As our group quickly dispersed to dryer venues, a thoughtful smile played across the lips of our newest creative genius, cartoonist Barry Hunau (back row, in a cap; the resulting cartoon is on page L3).

We are trying to age gracefully. It helps to have fresh young faces and talent, such as contributing writer Cristina Kim (next to Andy on the right), and the next generation - graphic artist Amanda Griggs (center, kneeling) and sports reporter Alex Crook (in white, behind Amanda).
On hiatus is our dear friend, staff writer and sec-

tion editor Jennifer Wake (to the left behind Alex), who we hope will grace our pages again soon.

Next to Jennifer is senior staff writer Cathy Tyson, whose sense of humor constantly reminds us not to take ourselves too seriously. Next to Cathy, going left, are contributing writers Linda Foley and Jean Follmer, who bring both wisdom and perspective to the table.

This year we also wanted to include in the photo some of our long-time columnists, such as Lynn Ballou (middle row, far left), Cynthia Brian (appropriately bearing a bouquet of flowers from her garden), Theresa Tsingis and Elizabeth LaScala (front row from left, kneeling next to senior staff writer Sophie Braccini, in blue, who is possibly the busiest and most well-known reporter in Lamorinda and who has the uncanny ability to be in three places at the same time), and Conrad Bassett (the tall gentleman in the back row, who is also an ace sports writer).

And that's the Editor-in-Chief, Lee Borrowman, behind Andy (to the right), naturally having a bad hair day, because that's the way it goes.

Unfortunately not pictured: Sports section editor Caitlin Graveson; photographer Jordan Fong; contributing writers Dean Okamura, Kevin Shallat, Mikaela Cowles, Glenn Nosse, Roslyn Stenzel, Lou Fancher, Justine Sgalio, Angela LaScala-Grue-newald; columnists Margie Ryerson, Mona Miller, Jonathan Winter, Harold Hoyle; Jonas Scheck and food columnist/feature writer Susie Iventosch.
L. Borrowman

City, Town, and Fire Board Take a Closer Look at F.A.I.R.'s Proposal



By Lucy Amaral and Andrea A. Firth

At the conclusion of the marathon five-hour meeting of the Orinda City and Moraga Towns Councils and the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Board of Directors, there was one point that the fourteen elected officials and seventy attendees seemed to agree upon: No one wants to reduce the high-quality fire and emergency... read on page L1

Celebrating Lamorinda's High School Artists



By Cristina Kim

The Orinda Arts Council's 7th Annual Student Visual Arts Competition announced its winners on March 10th at the Orinda Library Gallery. Packed with student artists, friends, family, and community members the gallery, which exhibited over 200 works of student art, was alive with positive energy and loud cheers for the winners. ...read on page S5

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Civic News

Lafayette



Public Meetings

NEW Meeting Locations
Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd
City Council: Community Hall
Planning Commission: Community Hall
Design Review: Arts & Science Discovery Center

City Council Monday, March 22, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Planning Commission Monday, March 29, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Design Review Monday, March 22, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center in the Arts & Science Discovery Center at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Circulation Commission Monday, April 5, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center in the Arts & Science Discovery Center at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
City of Lafayette: www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
Chamber of Commerce: www.lafayettechamber.org

Police Report



Take Your Purse With You, 3/5/10
An unknown suspect smashed the window of a Ford Expedition that was parked in front of the choral room at Acalanes High School and stole the owner's purse. Police are attempting to retrieve possible video footage. No suspects, witnesses or leads at this time.

A brazen Concord resident entered the Lafayette Safeway, pried open a cash register and made away with the cash. Needing a little more cash for his habit, the thief headed to the Alamo Safeway and pulled the same stunt. The suspect was caught on video in both stores and was identified, arrested and charged with two counts of commercial burglary and possession of narcotics.

Lock your Locker, 3/7/10
An unknown suspect entered the break room at Boswell's on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. He removed one employee's purse and a second employee's ATM and California ID cards from unlocked lockers. The purse was found in a garbage can outside the break room with nothing of value missing. The second employee canceled her ATM card. Be on the lookout for non-employees in employee-only areas.

Take the Money and Run, 3/7/10

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Council Unanimously Approves Unique Open Space Deal

By Cathy Tyson



Photo by Photo Hutch for the Muir Heritage Land Trust

In an unprecedented collaboration, the City of Lafayette, the City of Walnut Creek, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) and key player the Muir Heritage Land Trust (MHLT) put together an agreement to purchase over 22 acres of open space east of Acalanes High School.

A sales price of \$1,305,500 was agreed upon – the cities of Lafayette and Walnut Creek along with the EBRPD will chip in 30% of the price - \$391,650. The final 10%, \$130,550 will be paid by the MHLT. They will also be responsible for closing costs, title and escrow fees and most importantly ongoing stewardship of the property.

The timing could not have been better. Measure WW, approved by voters in 2008, provided funding for cities in Contra Costa and Alameda counties that can only be spent on acquiring and im-

proving regional parks, trails and recreation facilities. Lafayette received \$1,082, 501; half of that amount is slated for open space acquisition, according to Jennifer Russell, Director of Lafayette Parks, Trails and Recreation Department.

The City of Walnut Creek also received its share of WW funds and was willing to spend some of the money outside of their city limits. "It reflects the remarkable maturity, regional leadership and a commitment to community caretaking," said City Manager Steven Falk in a statement.

The Haji family was a willing seller, and with the help of MHLT Executive Director Linus Eukel, along with the Lafayette Open Space Committee and the City Council, it all came together.

"Sometimes achieving an acceptable outcome for a complicated project such as this can be

elusive, as it was for years in this case," said Eukel. "The Land Trust is uniquely positioned and able to bring willing partners together to find solutions. This acquisition will benefit the wider community, even those who enjoy the profound beauty of the Acalanes Ridge as a faraway vista. By reaching out to create new partnerships, and by fulfilling its capacity as a land trust, MHLT helped provide the leadership needed to affect a solution that was unachievable for more than a decade."

The City of Lafayette has been interested in the parcel for many years. "The MHLT will own the property in fee and will transfer a conservation easement to Lafayette, Walnut Creek and the East Bay Regional Park District," said Falk.

City Council members unanimously approved the funding

agreement. After giving thanks to the EBRPD and the City of Walnut Creek, Council Member Carl Anduri said, "This is what makes it worthwhile to be on the Council. We're very fortunate to have this happen."

There was a palpable feeling of enthusiasm at the March 8th City Council meeting. "Yes, please!" said Eliot Hudson. "Thank you to the MHLT, they have been absolutely phenomenal. I have a deep respect and gratitude for what they've done. It's truly a marvelous piece of property."

"The next step is fundraising," said Eukel. "The campaign's goal is to raise the \$427,600.00 needed to purchase Acalanes Ridge, provide funds to steward the acquired property in perpetuity and support the organization's work. So many people have worked so long to preserve the natural beauty of this land. We're expecting the same community support we've seen for so many years."

He continued, "This is the opportunity so many have hoped for—to at last protect this open space as a home for wildlife and a refuge for people from the stresses in our busy lives."

Donations to the Muir Heritage Land Trust to support the Acalanes Ridge purchase and the Keep It Wild Campaign can be made online at www.muirheritagelandtrust.org, or can be sent to: Muir Heritage Land Trust, P.O. Box 2452, Martinez, CA 94553. For more information, call the office at (925) 228-5460 or e-mail info@muirheritagelandtrust.org

Giving Back for her Birthday

By Cathy Tyson



Maile Broad in center with green antenna poses on a trampoline with friends. Photo Jennifer Aaker

Maile Broad wanted to do something special for her eighth birthday. As part of her "Super Secret Mystery Birthday Party," she asked that her guests make a donation to support the schools, instead of giving her gifts. Maile comes from a family of teachers, and on her own wanted to do what she could to help out.

Inspired by the scavenger hunts her own mother put together, Maile's mom, Jan Broad and husband Rich planned a task

filled extravaganza at a number of locations that included popping balloons to find clues, blowing bubble gum bubbles, making a poster and more, culminating at Yogurt Shack.

In all, \$400 was donated which will be given to the LASF. "I feel good about 'Maile's magical money' my friends and I raised for the schools," said the birthday girl, "I feel bad for the schools and the teachers right now and I just wanted to try to help."

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Many Complain About Downtown Plan

By Cathy Tyson

The next step in the Downtown Specific Plan (the Plan) process is a public hearing of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Because of the document's complexity it is scheduled to be discussed at two public hearings with the Planning Commission - the first was on March 1, and the second on March 15 (past publication deadline for this newspaper.)

The DEIR is an important component of the Plan - which seeks to provide a framework for the future of the downtown core for the next twenty years. The Draft EIR assesses potential environmental consequences and identifies mitigation measures and alternatives that lessen impacts. Three alternatives were considered in the DEIR: a No Project Alternative, a Lower Intensity Alternative with modified height and density requirements, and finally a High Intensity Alternative. The Higher Intensity version has prompted the most concern among residents. It should be noted that the City Council will not make a decision on the Plan until the fall of 2010.

Early on the Plan was described as "developing a comprehensive vision for our downtown that would allow Lafayette to remain true to its past and still progress forward." Easier said than done. If the Higher Intensity Alternative is adopted, at full build out by 2030, up to 1,765

additional housing units could be built in the downtown, adding 4,589 new residents. Opponents of the Plan argue that the General Plan is working just fine - and if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

After the Planning Commission hearings on the Draft EIR, the next step in the process is for all of the comments and questions regarding that document to be addressed in the two-part Final EIR - comprised of the revised Draft EIR and responses by groups and residents alike.

The City has dedicated itself to transparency throughout the Downtown Specific Plan process. As a result, many residents have provided loud and clear negative comments - a tsunami of complaints.

In preparation of the March 15 Planning Commission meeting, Maeve Pessis, the President of the Lafayette Homeowners Council, which represents a number of homeowner's associations, wrote a letter to the Planning Commission that said in part, "We will continue to follow the review process, even though it appears at this time that the DEIR and the poll of our residents are both pointing to the 'No Project Alternative/Revert to the General Plan' as the proper way for the City to proceed."

Included with the letter is a 29-page chart prepared by resident experts that goes over the DEIR with a fine tooth comb - providing specific comments on every section from, "Explain the use of Trips Projections based upon a 1% per year growth rate vs. the more typical 2% per year that Lafayette has known in past studies," to "Given the many constraints on infrastructure, such as traffic congestion, police protection, limited circulation network, how can a 72% downtown increase in population be mitigated. Revise to explain."

A long list of concerned residents felt compelled to voice their opinion. "Reading the DEIR and now learning that these impacts have been held to just 80% of build out - might just make Lafayette residents' hair stand on end," said Lynn Hiden. "The Draft EIR is fundamentally inadequate because its analysis of the impact on the schools omits the evaluation of significant impacts, and its evaluation of mitigations is equally deficient," notes a letter from Mark and Karen Zemelman.

Going forward there will be continued opportunities for public input. A public hearing of the Final EIR is scheduled to be held May 17 and June 7, followed by a public hearing on the Draft Specific Plan on July 12. Meetings by the City Council will continue through mid-summer then adoption or non-adoption of Final Specific Plan by the City Council is set for October 18.

Read Across America Comes to Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson



From left Saint Mary's College student athletes Christian Skuce and Rob Howard read to Lafayette Elementary first graders.

Photo Doug Kohen

A handful of Saint Mary's College (SMC) lacrosse players took part in Read Across America Day at Lafayette Elementary School, reading Dr. Seuss books to attentive students. In addition to celebrity readers, the PTA served a special breakfast before school of green eggs and ham - along with bagels and fruit to 460 students, parents and grandparents. "It's a fun community tradition," said Pam Severson, President of the PTA. Mrs. Noel, the statuesque second grade teacher, dresses up as a very convincing "Cat in the Hat" and entertains those waiting for their breakfast.

Selecting Dr. Seuss was not by accident, March 2nd happens to be Theodore Geisel's birthday; Geisel is more commonly known as Dr. Seuss. Every year the National Education Association sponsors this reading motivation and awareness program. All across the country educators, librarians and even college lacrosse players seek to celebrate reading.

The White House issued a Presidential Proclamation: "As the foundation that makes all other learning possible, literacy

is the key to unlocking every child's full potential. From riding a bus to opening a bank account, our everyday tasks and decisions require comprehension of the written word. On Read Across America Day, we reaffirm our commitment to investing in our children and giving them an essential tool for success in school and in life: the ability to read."

Saint Mary's junior Rob Howard and former Acalanes student, SMC freshman Christian Skuce read to Ms. Skuce's charming and very polite first graders. "I read the Lorax in one of my classes - and so I thought I'd share it with you," Howard said.

The players emphasized that you have to read even more in college than you do in elementary school. They reminded the little ones that the more you read the better you're reading skills will be.

Senior Matt Dini, junior Jim Castilone and freshman Matt Jaber read a trio of Dr. Seuss books to a fourth grade class. These older kids focused on getting autographs post-story. Some of the young ladies were pondering which fellow was the cutest.

Jennifer, a young lacrosse fan, said, "It's exciting to meet real lacrosse players."

The students in both classrooms were fascinated by the game of lacrosse and had lots of questions. One young man asked what happens when the ball goes out of bounds, "It depends," said Howard, drawing a picture on the white board. "Imagine this is me - I'm that really cool dot...."

The SMC gentlemen got to be rock stars for the day - they made quite an impression on the younger students. Men's Lacrosse is a Club Sport at Saint Mary's, their season runs through May. "We have improved vastly since last year, largely due to head coach Colin Knightly. We are 4-3 with two losses by one goal and all three teams ranked in the top 25 of the Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association - Division 2. We look forward to the rest of the season, winning a WCLL (their league) championship, and hopefully making a run towards the national tournament in Denver," said Dini. Their last two home games are on March 21 and April 17.

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TRIVIA QUESTION:
How many bones did Steve break in his near-fatal motorcycle accident?
ANSWER on page 8

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Civic News Moraga



Public Meetings	
Town Council	Wednesday, March 24, 7:30 pm Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, 1010 Camino Pablo
Planning Commission	Monday, April 5, 7:30 pm Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd
Design Review	Monday, March 22, 7:00 pm Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd
Liaison	Friday, April 9, 8:00 am Fire Station, 1280 Moraga Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
 Town of Moraga online: www.moraga.ca.us
 Chamber of Commerce: www.moragachamber.org
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Police Report



truck a few days after he parked it, someone has removed the driver's side door mirror. Nothing else was taken. Estimated value \$200.

Pot possession, 3/04/10 Moraga police stopped a grey Honda Odyssey that was speeding near the Skate Park. The 16-year-old driver from Walnut Creek had six juvenile passengers in the van. Alert officer noticed the smell of non-burnt marijuana that happened to be in a 15-year-old passenger's backpack. She received a ticket for possession of less than an ounce, but the driver got three tickets: speeding, driving outside the restrictions of his provisional license, and California driver's license not in his possession. Looks like someone is losing his driving privileges.

License plate stolen, 3/04/10 A Shuey Drive resident came to the police department to report that her rear license plate was missing from her Ford Taurus. The car owner believes the theft occurred in the driveway of her home. Unfortunately no suspects or leads. The plate number was entered in the police system as stolen. Possible art project or something more sinister?

Attempted burglary, 03/05/10 Sometime between 11:00 a.m. on 3/05 and 3:00 p.m. on 3/07 an unknown person attempted to force entry into a Larch Avenue residence. There were pry marks in several locations and slight damage to the window and doors. The homeowner estimates damage at \$1000. Neighbors didn't see or hear anything unusual during that period of time. Someone really wanted to get in.

Petty theft, 3/02/10 An officer went to Saint Mary's College to contact the owner of a 2000 Ford F150 pick-up truck that was parked near the baseball fields. When the truck's owner came back to the

A Fresh Look at Lamorinda Real Estate

Spring is in the air, and that means increased activity in our Lamorinda real estate market. If a move is in your near future please give me a call. As a Lafayette resident and area specialist, I can give you expert advice and help guide you through a successful real estate transaction.

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Will Frisbees Collide With Dogs and/or Bocce Ball?

Moraga struggles to accommodate all outdoor activities on limited public land

By Sophie Braccini



Anthony Jaussand, Meat Manager at the Orinda Safeway, practices disc golf at the Moraga Commons Photo Sophie Braccini

On a beautiful weekend day one can spot as many as 90 people playing disc golf at the back of the Moraga Commons Park, at the corner of Moraga Road and Saint Mary's Road. Most players carry a small bag filled with 15-25 Frisbees of different characteristics, and they follow the nine-hole course (actually 9-basket course), trying to reach each target with three throws or less.

Year 'round, players of all ages practice on what is a rare commodity in the Bay Area: a 9-hole course set in a beautiful, peaceful and semi-wild setting. For 27 years the players have grown in number, coming from as close as Saint Mary's Col-

lege and as far as Benicia. But recently the players got wind of the possible installation of a new bocce ball court where one of their holes is set, and of the discussion of moving the Rancho Laguna de facto dog park to a portion of the Commons where two of their holes are located. Concern led them to the February 25th Council meeting, where they pleaded for the protection of what they consider a gem.

"The course was founded in 1982 by the Moraga Women's Club (which later split into the Moraga Junior Women's Club and the Moraga Women's Society)," says Jon Beermink, an advocate for the play-

ers. "At the time, there were only 100 courses in the US, most of them target courses (with a simple pole to aim at), and Moraga was one of the 10 baskets courses in the country." Since then, Beermink says that the number of courses grew to 1596 in 2003 and more than 3000 in 2010. Outside of Moraga, the nearest courses are located in San Francisco, Berkeley, San Leandro and San Ramon.

At the council meeting the players took turn pleading during the public comment period. Residents from Oakland, Sonoma, Canyon and Lafayette took the stand, explaining that the low impact sport is great for all ages and abilities, is inexpensive and has become a destination for many. Finally, Brian Henderson of Moraga took the stand. "I am one of those players who are out there with their families," said Henderson, "I have six kids and the game is one of the only things that I can get all of them to do together at the park, from the youngest (twins) who are five-years old to my oldest who are practicing their skills with their friends."

Since the topic was not on the agenda, the Council could not comment on the matter. But when contacted after the meeting Town Manager Mike Segrest confirmed that the town had no intention of

eliminating the disc golf course. "There is an understanding between the players and the Town, but the land belongs to Moraga," said Segrest, "over time the course has been changed and reconfigured and it could happen again as we try to accommodate all activities for our residents." Jay Ingram, Moraga's Parks and Recreation Director, would like the resources to conduct a comprehensive Moraga Commons plan. "We haven't been able to get a 'go' from the Town because we do not have the budget to do the study," says the Director, "but this is clearly something that is a requirement of our Parks and Recreation master plan." The Director has met more than once with the disc golf players to discuss recreation opportunities. His goal includes beginner disc golf classes for residents of all ages.

Beermink said that his group is ready to volunteer to provide classes or even organize a tournament that would benefit the Town's choice of charities. He remains concerned about the future of his favorite sport in Moraga. "Removing some holes would mean that the course would disappear," says Beermink, "this has become a significant part of so many people's lives for so many years; we would be very disappointed to see it disappear."

Mayor Chew Addresses the "Green" Community

By Sophie Braccini

At the last "Green Rheem" movie night, on March 11th, Moraga Mayor Ken Chew came to address the crowd of some 100 people who were about to view the movie "Chemical Reaction." The documentary movie tells the story of Dr. June Irwin, a dermatologist, who noticed a connection between her patients' health conditions and their exposure to chemical pesticides that included herbicides. The film follows her journey to town meetings where she expressed her concerns. Dr. Irwin's persuasive arguments and data to back her findings eventually led the town of Hudson to enact a by-law that banned the use of all chemical pesticides and herbicides. The showing was a perfect setting for Mayor Chew to remind the crowd that the Town of Moraga was a pioneer in implementing an integrated pest management program on its pub-

lic land. He continued by encouraging residents to come to public meetings to voice their concerns. "I'd like to see you come to meetings and express your ideas," he said, "this is your town, we are your Council and

we will listen." One of the ideas that Chew put forward was the formation of an Environmental Task Force that would draw from the talents of residents volunteering their time.

*Green Rheem is a monthly

film showing at the Rheem Theater in Moraga organized by a collection of Lamorinda community organizations including: Generation Green, Sustainable Moraga, Sustainable Lafayette, and Parents for a Safer Environment.

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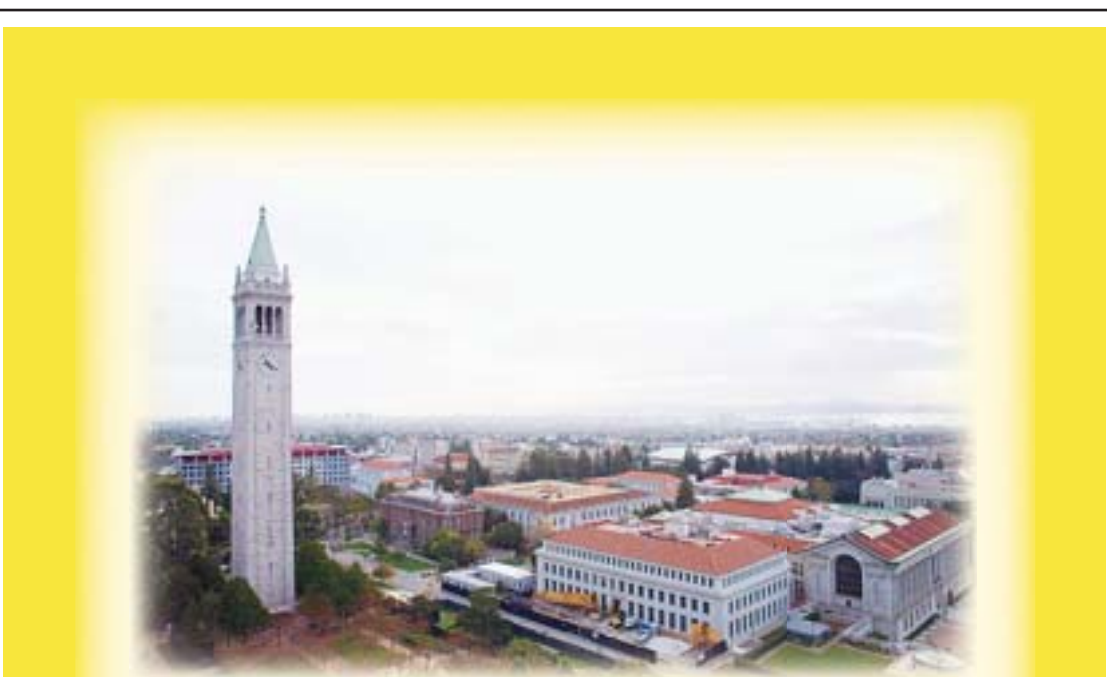
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Moraga's Mid-Year Budget: A Delicate Balance

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga's Administrative Services Director Joan Streit is always cautious when she presents facts and figures to the Town Council; in the uncertain climate California agencies are working under, caution seems a reasonable approach. At the March 10th Council meeting, she presented a mid-year updated budget on track with previous projections, though prospective revenues have slightly decreased. Streit also offered a sneak-peek at the 2010/2011-budget cycle. All things considered the situation does not

look too catastrophic for Moraga, but according to Streit the Town will have to find additional sources of revenue to compensate for anticipated increases in expenses and decreases in on-going revenues.

"We are experiencing a slightly reduced revenue stream," said Streit, "but our end balance should stay positive." The revised projected general fund revenue for 2009-2010 is now at \$6,225,278 instead of the over \$6,377,000 initially projected, taking the positive balance to \$168,294 for the year. Streit explained that the reduction in revenue

came from declining interest rates as well as less than expected sales tax and vehicle license fee revenue.

"For next year, we anticipate that sales tax revenue may decrease even further, we think that our workers' compensation, health care and PERS expenses will increase, but we do not project any increase in staff salary," said Streit, who recommended that next year the Town will need to continue to manage expenditures and will have to find new sources of revenue.

As the Council examined its different funds, Mayor Ken Chew

was surprised at the very small yield of the Palos Colorados fund, the one time developer fee paid by the company that is developing the Palos Colorados property, which returned only 1% interest for this year. "Could we agree to authorize a more aggressive investment policy?" asked Council Member Mike Metcalf. The Council decided to ask the Audit and Finance Committee to look into this question and propose alternative, safe, but more productive investments. Proposals to increase revenue will be made by staff in the coming months.

Moraga Road's New Slurry Seal Failing

By Sophie Braccini

The new rubber seal, which was applied on Moraga Road to resurface the town's main artery, started chipping and eroding very shortly after it was laid down. This sorry state prompted Town Public Works Director Jill Mercurio to block the acceptance of the project by the Town and urge the contractor, International Surfacing Sys-

tems (ISS), to find a solution. "The product is not what we anticipated," commented a disappointed Mercurio, "and CalTrans informed us that other jurisdictions in the area have had the same problem with the slurry seal." The Director added that staff does not know at this time what caused the problem; either poor material was pro-

vided to ISS or it was not well prepared for application.

The Town's staff is actively working with the contractor to find a solution, but what that might look like has not yet been decided. "Different options include repairs, stripping off the road and resurfacing, or applying another layer of slurry seal," says Mer-

curio, "we need to work with the contractor and the insurance to find a solution that will satisfy the town." Work will have to wait for warmer and dryer weather. In the meantime, the contractor is coming in every couple of weeks to sweep the street to remove the aggregate that has become loose and stripped from the roadway.

Rheem Senior Matinee Hanging by a Thread

By Sophie Braccini

On Wednesday, March 3rd, the first ever classic movie matinee attracted only 30 customers to the Rheem Theatre in Moraga. Disappointed by the turn out, theater owners Jim Sheehan and Tom Peterson decided to cancel the plan to hold such projections every Wednesday. "Tom (Peterson) told me that if 100 people did

not show up at the next presentation, they would not be able to afford to continue," said Chamber of Commerce President Edy Schwartz. So for the second showing, all of Moraga seniors rallied and the theater sold 80 tickets. "We even had people going to the Convalescent Hospital and wheel in patients!" says Schwartz, who also

wanted to acknowledge the campaigning done by the Moraga Movers. "At that level of attendance, they will keep the matinee going," concluded a hopeful Schwartz. The matinees are held at the Rheem Theatre, 350 Park St, Moraga, every Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. in the main theater. Call 988-3411 for more information.

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Public Meetings

City Council Tuesday, April 13, 7:00 pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way

City Council Special Meeting: Capital Improvement Plan Workshop
Thursday, April 1, 1:00 pm
Check city website [www.cityoforinda.org] for location

Planning Commission Tuesday, March 23, 8:00 pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way

Historical Landmarks Committee Tuesday, March 23, 3:00 pm
Gallery Room, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
City of Orinda: www.cityoforinda.org
Chamber of Commerce: www.orindachamber.org

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CCC Supervisors Deny Bayseng Spice Appeals

By Andrea A. Firth



Tamara Attard

Photo Ohlen Alexander

In 2005, Orinda residents Tamara and Paul Attard set out to expand their family-owned and operated organic spice business, the Bayseng Spice Company (see sidebar). Their bay leaf dehydration plant at 21 Old Tunnel Road had exhausted its usefulness and needed to be rebuilt. Demand for their product, California bay leaves, far exceeded their production capacity, so they wanted to add a second drying facility across the street at 1000 Fish Ranch Road to double capacity. And, they wanted to build a family home at the site, what they call the farmhouse, to enable them to be close to the operations and enjoy the picturesque views of the Oakland hills beyond the Caldecott Tunnel.

The Attards' process for wholesale bay leaf production is quite linear: pick the leaves, clean the leaves, dry the leaves, and package the leaves for wholesale distribution. But the process of realizing their business expansion and new home has been anything but straight forward and marked by appeals, denials, and the involvement of an alphabet soup of public agencies.

On March 9th, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to deny the Attards' more than year-long appeals of a stop work order on their new home and denial of the building permit for a new dehydration plant. Three of the five supervisors were in

attendance, Chairman John Gioia, Mary Piepho, and Gayle Uilkema, the supervisor for District 2 that includes Orinda.

"We could be facing bankruptcy and going out of business in six months," stated Paul Attard in response to the outcome of the hearings. In addition to the \$25,000 monthly interest expense they have incurred over the protracted appeal process, Attard states they have already spent \$550,000 on the home's foundation and invested over \$3 million on the stalled project.

Jason Crapo, Deputy Director of the Contra Costa Building Inspection Division, testified that the building permit issued for the Attards' home in April of 2008 had been "issued in error" due to the lack of an appropriate water supply and sewage disposal system. When the error was discovered several months later, a stop work order was issued on December 30th of 2008.

The Attards and their lawyer emphatically contend that they have both a water supply and sewage system that were approved by the County when they initiated the project in 2005. They argue that the County has already approved the well on the Fish Ranch Road parcel for a water source and sewage disposal through a line that ties into a CalTrans sewer, and that the County conducted multiple inspections of the site between 2005 and 2008. [These "approvals" are at the crux of both the home building stop work order and the dehydration plant building permit denial.]

Finding an acceptable sewage system for the Attards' properties has not been easy. Earlier proposals for septic and holding tank systems were denied by the County. However, in 2005, the Attards found a solution to their sewage disposal problem by tying into the CalTrans sewer line that runs through the Caldecott Tunnel and connects to the City of Oakland system on the west side. The

Attards paid CalTrans \$800,000 to tap into the sewer line and repair what was then a failing system.

"This new sewer line is great for CalTrans," testified Raymond Mailhot, CalTrans' principal representative for the tunnel in 2005. Mailhot explained that prior to the deal with the Attards, the CalTrans sewer system, which serves bathrooms on each side of the tunnel, was inadequate and might have posed health problems.

At issue is the several hundred feet of lateral sewer line that links the Attards' properties to the CalTrans sewer. According to the Attards, the County was aware of the sewer connection and the necessary approvals had been obtained when the foundation-only permit for their home was granted in 2005. Per Deputy Director Crapo, the County Health Officer and the City of Oakland never approved the service, and further, the line necessitates review and approval from the Contra Costa County and Alameda County LAFCOs, because the Attards' property lies outside the urban limit line. (Local Agency Formation Commissions [LAFCOs] are state agencies that regulate boundary issues.)

Carlos Baltodano, an Orinda resident who was the Deputy Director of the Building Inspection Department at the County when this first permit was issued, challenged the County's position. "Everyone

was happy that there was solution [to the Attard's sewer problem]," testified Baltodano. "The County has always supported a one-stop permit center... These permits are routed physically and discussed thoroughly. I submit that everyone looked at it."

But the Supervisors saw the situation differently. Supervisor Gioia found the Attards' arrangement with CalTrans highly unusual and without precedent, and one that may have bypassed approving bodies. "The County made an error issuing a permit," acknowledged Gioia, but he added that CalTrans was in error in entering into the contract with the Attards without proper land use permits. Supervisors Piepho and Uilkema concurred that CalTrans has no land use authority, and that approvals from LAFCO must be pursued.

"It's mind boggling... The type of procedural manipulation that is being used is horrendous," stated Attard at the hearing. While he and his wife plan to resubmit their applications, he believes their chances of getting the LAFCO approvals are remote, and he estimates the damages they have suffered in lost revenue and investment costs are in excess of \$10 million. "We relied on the County," emphasized Attard, "They told us what to do. We did it. They inspected it, and now they have reneged."

The Bayseng Spice Company

In the mid-1970's Tamara Attard and her brothers James and Michael Lewis were attending college at UC Berkeley. On the drive back from campus to the family home in Orinda, they eyed property along Fish Ranch Road that the entrepreneurial siblings felt would make the perfect site for a family business. Joan Lewis, their mother, agreed to put up the funds to purchase the land if her children could make it economically viable. They solicited a Cal professor to walk the property with them, and he observed that the area was covered with bay trees. The Lewis' researched California bay leaves and learned that the aromatic herb is indigenous to the Mediterranean-like climate of parts of northern California. They investigated the supply chain, made a connection with a distributor, and in 1978 the Bayseng Spice Company was formed. [The original plans were to also cultivate and sell ginseng in addition to bay leaves, thus the name Bayseng.] Because California bay leaves are rich in volatile oils, the drying process presented a challenge. Freeze drying equipment was expensive, and they were reluctant to seek outside capital or loans. The Lewis' were able to procure an older, less expensive drying machine, which they adapted to meet their needs with the ingenuity of one brother's design and the elbow grease of the other two. With the dehydration plant outfitted, the Lewis family was distributing bay leaves wholesale by 1981. In 1991, Tamara's husband Paul Attard joined the business, adding his experience in technology and finance to the growing family business. Now the largest producer of California bay leaves in the world, Bayseng Spice Company has acquired over 1,000 acres of land in Napa, Solano, and Lake Counties on which they cultivate bay trees. With over twenty employees, Bayseng harvests the prolific leaf year round. According to Paul Attard, the demand for the product far exceeds their current production capacity, and he believes they could double their number of employees once able to expand.

A. Firth

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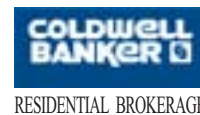
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City Council and Planning Commission Review the Year's Work

By Andrea A. Firth

When Orinda's City Council, Planning Commission, and Planning Department met jointly on March 9th, the feeling among the five elected officials, the seven appointed city volunteers, and six staff members seated around the large rectangular table was very collegial. Although business was down—the Planning Commission acted on only 37 projects in 2009 as compared to 61 projects in 2008—business was getting done better and faster.

"Smooth sailing" was the term Vice Mayor Victoria Smith used to describe the work of the City's Planning Department over the past year. "We are doing things right and more quickly," stated Smith. According to Orinda's Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu, the median time between submitting an application for a building permit to receiving a decision shortened from over 100 days in 2008 to 83 days in 2009. Smith was also im-

pressed that since November of 2008 only two projects had been appealed to the City Council.

Several Planning commissioners commented positively on the impact of the Conceptual Development Review that has been implemented by the Planning Department. Prior to formally submitting for a building permit, applicants are encouraged to submit conceptual designs for review. The concept designs are reviewed in-house, a Planning Department staff member visits the site, and feedback to facilitate the application process is typically provided to the applicant within a few days. Applicants are charged a \$115 fee, which is applied to the formal permit application fee if filed within 90 days. "The conceptual design review provides a giant payoff for both the City and applicant," stated Planning Commissioner Chris Kniel. "The City has to be very pleased with the wonderful work done

by our Planning Department," added Planning Commissioner Carlos Baltodano. "The staff goes out and looks at the site. They show a lot of integrity in their work and are very professional. You don't hear horror stories about our staff."

Ursu also reported on the status of the Planning Process Review Task Force (PPRTF) Recommendations. The City Council has completed its review of the Process and Residential sections of the PPRTF report and changes to the code, to implement the recommendations, will be in effect in May of this year. The Planning Commission has started to review the PPRTF's recommendations regarding downtown land use and development and will continue its review at regular meetings over the next three months. The Planning Commission next meets on Tuesday, March 23rd at 7:00 p.m. in the Library Auditorium.

Orinda's New Police Chief—Jeff Jennings

By Andrea A. Firth



Orinda's new Police Chief Jeff Jennings.

Photo provided

the Day in the Office of Emergency Services for four years, and working as a Patrol Sergeant for the City of Danville and for the County.

Jennings says his ideas for community policing align closely with those of Chief French and that the issue of underage alcohol use will continue to be a high priority for the Orinda police. "Along with continued enforcement, my focus is to build partnerships with parents, teachers, and educators," says Jennings.

Raised in Fairfield, Jennings graduated from San Francisco State University with a degree in psychology. He has coached youth sports for many years and has dealt with hundreds of kids from third grade through high-school age along the way. He is married and has three daughters ranging in age from grammar school to college.

The hiring process involved a Community Panel, Professional/Technical Panel, a written exercise, and one-on-one interviews with the City Manager.

Lieutenant Jeff Jennings from the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office has been hired as the City of Orinda's new Police Chief upon the retirement of current Chief Bill French. Jennings' first day is tentatively Monday, March 22nd.

Jennings has been with the Sheriff's Office for 18 years and currently serves as the Director of the Communications Center running the operations of the largest dispatch service in the county. He has held several posts with the Sheriff's Office, which include working in the Martinez Detention Facility, serving as the Officer of

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body makeovers
by Sheena

I am stronger than I can ever remember...

I have been very athletic all my life but also struggled to keep my weight in check. A 'perfect storm' of happenings – becoming home-based for work and a milestone birthday – both aided in a pretty significant drop in my metabolism. I just could not eat any less than I already was so I knew it meant the hard work of increasing my activity to lose the weight. I also know myself and knew that I was probably not going to be able to push myself to that next level. So... enter Sheena and Living Lean! Like a lot of others in the program, I contacted Sheena after seeing some of the other success stories in the local paper. Unlike the glossy sell jobs for some of the other national weight loss programs, these were real people in my neighborhood who were successful on the program. I was so surprised at how quickly my body changed! I have lost nearly half of my body fat since I started (over 20 pounds of fat) and am stronger than I can ever remember. The trainers make the workouts fun and I found that I love spinning – who would have thought! It has also provided a very nice social outlet for me now that all my coworkers are so far away (my job moved to Boston). Nice people, good workouts, and a new found body.

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Lisa Bedell

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One Game You Won't Want to Miss: Lafayette-Opoly

By Sophie Braccini



The LASF committee working on Lafayette-opoly (L to R): Gina Dawson, Mary Bakos and Barbara Serwin
Photo Sophie Braccini

The idea came, one day, to Mary Bakos as she was looking for something special for the Lafayette Arts and Science Foundation's (LASF) annual event: a special edition Monopoly game, to be sold as a fund raiser, on which actual Lafayette businesses would be featured. Since the end of last year, the small committee formed by Bakos, LASF President Barbara Serwin, and Gina Dawson has been contacting businesses to make this happen. "We wanted to give businesses more of an opportunity to advertise their presence and their

support of our schools," says Serwin, "and we have been overwhelmed by their support."

The first task of the group was to find more than 40 sponsors. "What was fun was to brainstorm which businesses would best fit in each category," says Bakos. For Tony Eichers, General Manager of the Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa, the most natural square to sponsor was 'The Park.' "This is one of the most expensive pieces of real estate on the board," says Eichers, an LASF supporter, "nothing would

have been a better fit for our beautiful hotel."

"We wanted to be the 'Start' point on the game," says Diablo Foods' Connie Collier, "because our store is where your day should start." The daughter of founder Ed Stokes, who has put her kids through the Lafayette schools and is also a supporter of LASF, Collier says she plans to sell the game in the store.

The Lafayette Park Hotel and Diablo Foods were among the first businesses contacted by LASF, who knew they could count on their most faithful supporters. "Mike Reardon at Oakwood Athletic Club was also an enthusiastic early supporter," says Serwin. Besides purchasing a square, the Club's General Manager proposed organizing a "game-day" at the Club to kick-

off the game sales and inform people of what LASF accomplishes.

But large and established businesses are not the only ones to contribute to the game (look for a square featuring your friendly neighborhood newspaper). Colleen McCormick of Lamorinda Music decided, with her husband John, to put her new business on the board. "It allows local small businesses to help LASF in a way that increases awareness for their business and serves as a reminder for people to shop locally," says McCormick, "Lafayette-opoly will be a wonderful keepsake for our children as they play the game in years to come with their own children and share stories about growing up in this charming community."

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lif-

son thinks that the board game will become a collector's item one day. "The Lafayette Chamber bought square number one," says Lifson, "LASF has found a unique, fun way to fundraise. The businesses buying a square will pay for the production costs and most of the money paid to buy the games will be resources going straight to our schools."

That concept fuels the energy of LASF's committee as they work hard to make this happen. "The company that will manufacture the game, Pride Distributors, Inc., developed the 'Your Town-opoly' program as a fundraiser for community organizations more than ten years ago," says Bakos, "the concept is that we order a fixed number of games which they will produce, then we sell them for the amount we want." The group is

thinking about ordering 1,500 to 2000 games that will be sold at \$30 apiece. Selling of the squares to businesses should be complete by the end of March; then production will start and the actual games should arrive over the summer, "In time for back-to-school," says Dawson. LASF anticipates distributing the games through the five Lafayette public schools, as well as at some local businesses and on its website, www.lasf.org.

One big item has not been purchased yet; the cover of the game. Dawson, Bakos and Serwin plan to contact prominent community entities that have the desire and the means to support the Foundation at a significant level. Businesses interested in sponsorship should contact Dawson at gdawson@gmail.com or Bakos at mlbakos@yahoo.com.

business briefs

'Live at the Orinda' a Great Success

On the evening of March 5th, the Orinda Chamber of Commerce invited the community to a champagne-filled night of comedy at the Orinda Theatre. It was a first, and the force behind the event, Chamber Board Member Rick Kattenburg, was a bit anxious that evening. "We had a fantastic night," reported a very satisfied Kattenburg, "we had 650 in attendance and all the people I talked to thought that it was fantastic." Some of your neighbors from the Lamorinda Weekly who attended the event had nothing but praise to share. "We both haven't laughed that much in ages. We especially loved the jokes teasing Orinda," said staff writer Cathy Tyson, who went with her husband, "the Chamber must be thrilled." Staff writer Andrea Firth added, "My husband and I had a great time. It was great fun to laugh so much." Kattenburg admits that the evening was a lot of work to put together. "The idea came up because my son is close to the child of Tommy T. (owner of the Tommy T's Comedy Clubs)," says Kattenburg, "we looked for humor that would relate to the crowd and were delighted when the comedians poked fun at us." Kattenburg believes that the evening was a success thanks to the dedication of the Chamber Board who never counted their hours working on the project. "We made about \$7,000," said Kattenburg, "and we'll be pleased to give a part of it to EFO (the Educational Foundation of Orinda)." Kattenburg promises that the March 5th show will be followed by many others: "Next year it's going to be even better," he promised.



Dan St. Paul on stage

New Realtors

Alain Pinel Realtors is proud to announce the addition of Amy Rose Smith, Rochelle Williams and Erin McCoin to its team in the Orinda Office. Amy joins APR with a wealth of practical knowledge of the East Bay. Having worked as a Registered Client Analyst for Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. in London, New York and Los Angeles, Amy learned to appreciate the simplicity and beauty of her home town of Orinda. In 2007, Amy returned to Orinda where she now lives with her husband and three daughters. Williams and McCoin joins APR as a team from the prestigious firms of McGuire R.E. and Pacific Union R.E. where they represented buyers and sellers in San Francisco. After moving their families to Lafayette, they joined the local APR office and have launched the Lamorinda Living Team, specializing in representing buyers and sellers in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. McCoin and Williams have over a decade of Real Estate experience between them. Amy Rose Smith can be reached at 438.2020 or AmyRoseSmith@apr.com. McCoin and Williams can be reached at 258.1111 or emccoin@apr.com.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Tri-City Chamber Night at the Town Hall Theater Saturday, March 20 at 7:15 p.m.

Town Hall Theatre, one of newest members of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, would like to invite the members of the Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda Chambers and their guests to a performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a romantic comedy by Oscar Wilde. As an added treat, Parkmon Vineyards will be offering a premium wine tasting with a \$15 donation to Town Hall. Parkmon wines are grown right in Moraga by Dave Parker, founding member of the Lamorinda Winegrowers Association. Chamber members and their guests will receive the special rate of \$25/ticket - call the box office at 283-1557 to reserve your seats.

Lafayette

- Ribbon Cutting on Thursday, March 25 at 5:00 p.m. for Stone Creek Insurance Agency, 3738 Mt. Diablo Blvd., #304
- The Pleasant Hill Chamber is having its Business Showcase on March 25th and booth space is now available to the members of the Lafayette Chamber at the Pleasant Hill Chamber Member Rate. Be part of this business experience as it enters its fourth decade. For more information contact the Pleasant Hill Chamber at 925-687-0700 and ask for Celina or check the web site at <http://www.pleasanthillchamber.com/>.

Moraga

- Chamber Meeting Fri., March 26, from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores. The report of the Chamber 2010 goals will be presented.
- Registration forms for the May 8 Community Faire are now online at moragachamber.org. Registration deadline is April 24th, 2010. The Faire will include a classic car show; the Chamber would like to encourage owners of restored classic cars that live in Lamorinda to contact Andrew at lilducci@aol.com.
- For the first time the Faire will produce banners that will advertise the faire throughout town. The Chamber is offering banner sponsorship to businesses that would like to see their names on it. The cost is \$175 and the deadline for registration is April 9. Interested parties should contact Gloria at 247-4473 or glorianoggle@yahoo.com

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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Turn to the Experts

Life in LAMORINDA

City, Town, and Fire Board Take a Closer Look at F.A.I.R.'s Proposal

By Lucy Amaral and Andrea A. Firth



Photo Andy Scheck

At the conclusion of the marathon five-hour meeting of the Orinda City and Moraga Towns Councils and the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Board of Directors, there was one point that the fourteen elected officials and seventy attendees seemed to agree upon: No one wants to reduce the high-quality fire and emergency service residents currently receive from the MOFD. Several other issues covered in the course of the long evening remained unresolved.

F.A.I.R. An organized and vocal group of Orinda residents known as F.A.I.R. presented its plan to recoup tax revenue currently directed to the MOFD to help to address Orinda's \$100 million plus roads and water pipe problems. F.A.I.R. believes its proposal will maintain service levels at a reduced cost, rectify the imbalanced contribution it believes Orinda pays, and recapture tax revenues that will exceed the true cost of fire and emergency services over time.

F.A.I.R. proposes to dissolve

the MOFD (or have Orinda break away) and contract for fire service and EMS with Con Fire and American Medical Response (AMR). Reducing overhead costs through the economies of scale realized working with these larger organizations, F.A.I.R. believes, will generate \$65 million for the City of Orinda over the next 12 years. "FAIR does not want annexation [to Con Fire] but consolidation," F.A.I.R. organizer Art Haigh stressed.

OrindaCARES Responds.

Another group of concerned Orinda citizens, known as OrindaCARES, presented its response to the F.A.I.R. proposal. They believe that Orinda's tax contribution to MOFD is appropriate to ensure the quality fire and emergency medical service needed for Orinda's unique terrain. That presentation emphasized the high risk of wild land fires, limited fire service support from adjacent communities, and the importance of maintaining local control. "We agree that money needs to be found to fix Orinda's roads, but it should not

come from our emergency services dollars," stated Ellen Dale, a member of OrindaCARES.

MOFD's Response. MOFD Fire Chief Randy Bradley began his presentation by stating that in his last position as Fire Chief for the Lawrence Livermore Fire Department, he supported the idea of his smaller department contracting with the larger Alameda Fire District as it offered that community better service with lower costs. Bradley emphasized that he could not support F.A.I.R.'s recommendation for Orinda to leave the MOFD, saying service would suffer if Orinda chose to contract with Con Fire and AMR, and costs would probably not be reduced. He also added that Con Fire currently does not offer the contractual model that is used in the Alameda District and felt that F.A.I.R.'s model would fall apart.

During his time at the dais, Bradley refuted a number of F.A.I.R.'s cost and service assumptions, and noted that if implemented, the proposal would cause lower

service levels, loss of governance, Orinda would become mired in Con Fire's own financial distress, LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission) could intervene, and they would lose "201" EMS rights.

(See sidebar Who's Who: MOFD, FAIR and OrindaCares and 201 Rights)

Public Comment. For the next hour and a half, 25 people stepped forward to voice their opinion. A majority of the comments were split evenly between F.A.I.R. and OrindaCARES supporters, although several speakers took no side but asked for stewardship and fiscal responsibility from the Orinda Council. Speakers in favor of breaking away from MOFD emphasized that they believed the high level of service could be maintained at a lower overall cost. Those who wished to maintain the MOFD believed a lower level of service would occur, was unacceptable, and felt it could be the difference between life and death. Some speakers asked for an independent consultant to review the information and help the three groups move forward. The recent



presented by the three sides, and Vice Mayor Victoria Smith steadfastly opposed to the idea. After sitting silently for most of the evening, Moraga's Town Council clearly stated that they prefer the status quo.

The Next Step. A subcommittee comprised of Ken Chew and Mike Metcalf from the Moraga Town Council, Frank Sperling and John Wyro from the MOFD Board of Directors, and Tom McCormick and Amy Worth from the Orinda City Council will meet to sort through the issues.

Who's Who: MOFD, FAIR, and OrindaCARES

MOFD. The Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) was formed in 1997 to provide more efficient fire and emergency medical services to Moraga and Orinda. The MOFD has a five-member Board of Directors, each elected by the residents of his geographic division of the District. The MOFD Board members are Frank Sperling, Frank Weil, John Wyro, and Brook Mancinelli. The Director's post for Division 3 is currently vacant, and the Board is working with a Citizen's Advisory Panel to appoint a replacement until an election for the position is held in November.

F.A.I.R. Formed in early 2009 following the final report of Orinda's Revenue Enhancement Task Force, which identified the MOFD's tax revenues as a potential source of funding to address the City's significant infrastructure needs, Fire and Infrastructure Renewal (F.A.I.R.) is a group of 70 or more (according to F.A.I.R.) Orinda and Moraga residents working to get the Orinda City Council to conduct an investigation of MOFD to redirect property tax dollars to address Orinda's crumbling roads, storm drains, and water delivery system. [www.fairfororinda.org]

OrindaCARES. Formed in response to F.A.I.R.'s proposal to dissolve the MOFD, OrindaCARES (Citizens Against Reducing Emergency Services) supports the District's existing physical and financial structure and rejects F.A.I.R.'s proposal. [www.orindacares.org] *A. Firth*

201 Rights

Service levels, especially emergency medical service (EMS) levels, were a flash point during the March 3rd Tri-Agency meeting with numerous references to EMS 201 rights and the threat of its loss. California's Health and Safety Code section 1797.201, more commonly known as 201 rights, gives cities and fire districts that were providing pre-hospital emergency medical services to their communities as of June 1, 1980, the right to continue to oversee those services. Currently Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) holds control of its EMS, how it is staffed, and where it is stationed.

Prior to the formation of the MOFD, the Moraga Fire Protection District had 201 rights. In 1997, when the City of Orinda broke from Con Fire and joined with Moraga to form the MOFD, those rights were extended to Orinda. Some argued at the Tri-Agency meeting that if Orinda broke away from MOFD, this 'grandfathered-in' right of maintaining local control would be lost and the County EMS agency would be responsible for determining what level of service Orinda would have.

While there was agreement that maintaining current EMS levels was paramount, the disagreement hinged upon whether the current high-quality EMS could be retained if Orinda broke from MOFD. MOFD Fire Chief Randy Bradley said that a contracted EMS would take current firefighters out of ambulances, lower service levels, and lengthen response times.

Art Haigh, a member of FAIR, said he felt that an equal level of service could be maintained, and that if the City of Orinda negotiates a contract with American Medical Response (AMR), service levels will be the same or better. "F.A.I.R.'s position has always been that any ambulance contract with AMR or any other provider must [be of a premium level and] include at least two dedicated 24/7 ambulances," stated Haigh.

MOFD Board Member Brook Mancinelli, a firefighter who has worked for AMR, disagreed. "I can speak authoritatively; AMR cannot bring the level of service [that the MOFD currently provides]," he said. "Without a doubt, we will see a reduction of service." *L. Amaral*

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Rescue One

Dedicated to the support of MOFD paramedics

By Lucy Amaral

The concern over emergency medical services and response times may be a hot-button issue right now in Lamorinda, but it's not a new issue.

Founded in 1978, the Moraga-based Rescue One Foundation grew out of the community's desire for quality, effective, local emergency medical service.

In the early 1970's, the Town of Moraga's fire department had several firefighters cross-trained as emergency medical technicians (EMTs), but ambulance transport was provided by outside services.

According to Linda Borelli, board member for the Rescue One

Foundation, having ambulances travel various distances to reach Moraga was always a concern, but it took a near fatality to effect change.

"The husband of a Moraga Service League member suffered an accident at his home. His femoral artery was lacerated," said Borelli. "The response time for an ambulance to arrive from Walnut Creek was 25 minutes, and the travel time to Alta Bates Hospital, another 20 minutes. By the time he arrived at the hospital, he was not breathing and had no pulse. His life was saved only after he received 23 pints of blood."

The Service League members saw the importance of response time in saving a life, added Borelli. Therefore, it was simple: The Town of Moraga needed its own ambulance. After a meeting with (and blessing from) Moraga's then Fire Chief, Don Skinner, the Service League got to work.

"The community came together in fundraising for the ambulance," said Borelli. "A door-to-door campaign by League members was launched and they asked for one dollar from each household. The League raised \$8,000, enough to purchase the ambulance, a new 1972 Dodge van."



The first ambulance for the Moraga Fire District, a 1972 Dodge van, donated by Moraga Service League. L to R: Service League members Carol Porterfield and Jean Scott, two members of the Moraga Fire Commission, League member Jean Kirsch. The two uniformed members of the Moraga Fire District are John Cooper on the left, and Chief Don Skinner on the right. Photo provided

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With the van donated to the Fire District, the League took on the new challenge of raising money to help the District purchase the equipment and supplies for the ambulance. Several fundraisers later and the first Moraga Rescue Ambulance was ready to roll.

Watching this was Marian Devin, widow of fire commissioner Ray Devin. Borelli said that with money available from her late husband's memorial fund, Devin approached the fire district and the Service League to see if a separate foundation could be formed to continue the support the rescue services. "She spearheaded the Foundation's formation," said Borelli. In 1978, with Devin's original donation, all the official paperwork complete, and a seven-member board made up of Service League members and community leaders, the Rescue One Foundation was born, becoming California's first foundation dedicated entirely to supporting its local fire district and paramedic program.

Support of the Foundation was immediate. "People started contributing (right away)," said Borelli. "We have never had to fundraise. Service organizations continue to donate, and there have been gifts of appreciation as well as in memoriam."

Over the past 30 years, the Foundation has received more than \$300,000 in donations, allowing Rescue One to donate items including CPR training equipment, paramedic training scholarships, cardiac monitors, defibrillators,

and emergency equipment such as the "Jaws of Life."

Today, Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) ambulances may be state-of-the-art rather than retrofitted vans, but the dedication from Rescue One remains the same: Support MOFD paramedics.

"The Rescue One Foundation's support of MOFD over the past 33 years has been tremendous," said Randy Bradley, MOFD Fire Chief. "The Foundation understands the importance of providing superior paramedic and ambulance services to the communities of Moraga, Orinda and Canyon. The donations have allowed the District to go above and beyond basic service levels that are offered elsewhere."

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The Lamorinda Weekly—Looking Back and Forward

By Andrea A. Firth



March 14 - 16, 2007: 25,000 copies of issue #1 were thrown on driveways by about 25 people

March 14th marked the three-year anniversary of the launch of the *Lamorinda Weekly*, and this is the 81st issue. By many measures, this biweekly newspaper, which serves our three-borough community, has been a successful venture.

Our first issue was 16 pages long and had 35 articles, 5 staff writers, three photographers and 50 ads. Our last issue, at 32 pages, had 53 articles, 13 staff and contributing writers, five photographers, three columnists, 11 submissions from the community (now that's what we call a success story), and 150 ads. Our internet use has grown by 313% over the last 12 months; we now have about 1,000 visitors a day with 2,500 daily page views.

Given the economic downturn and the collapse of many mainstream media outlets, to experience business growth in this environment, especially with a print newspaper (which we also publish online), might be considered remarkable. While we are feeling pretty good about the viability of our little community paper, we ask ourselves why it works and what more we can do to ensure it continues on this path.

Recently Richard Hernandez, an award winning photojournalist

and Fellow with the UC Berkeley School of Journalism, came to the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church to give a presentation about the future of print journalism. Could he predict what lies ahead or help us on our journey? Hernandez left the San Jose Mercury News after a 20-year stint, because he felt that the innovation at the paper had stalled. Hernandez's presentation came without a crystal ball. He admitted, "I don't know what lies ahead for print journalism."

However, Hernandez remained cautiously hopeful, "There is a lot of hype around the 'print is dead' story," he stated. And as the crisis in the newspaper industry has unfolded, he has seen a move toward the smaller, monthly and bi-monthly community papers.

"In 2006 I started a company for database design and marketing services," states the *Lamorinda Weekly's* publisher Andy Scheck. "At the time, local businesses did not have many opportunities to connect with the community. I heard many people discuss Lamorinda's need for a good local newspaper."

From the outset, the *Lamorinda Weekly's* model has differed from the traditional newsroom cluttered with a sea of desks, computers, and phones and buzzing with the din

of a large staff. Ours is a virtual newsroom. The sales, marketing, production, and management for the newspaper are conducted from Andy and Wendy Scheck's home office—two desks in the family room that looks out to the backyard. Andy's son, Jonas, helps with the layout of the paper from his home in Germany, and Wendy's daughter, Amanda, contributes graphics working from the laptop in her bedroom. Other than a weekly editorial meeting of six core staff held around the Schecks' dining room table, all of the paper's business is carried out in the virtual world. The writers, photographers, and editors have their own spaces and communicate over the web and by phone. Some of us have never met face to face.

"All of our work is done using digital technology," explains Andy. "Email is our main form of communication." Wendy elaborates, "The virtual nature of the paper is one of the main reasons it works so well. We are able to live two or three lives at one time by reporting, writing, photographing, editing or selling while doing other things. I think everyone who is involved with the paper is fairly altruistic by nature and they also hold themselves to very high standards. We share a sense of pride and accomplishment within the team that is really very satisfying on a personal level."

One of the key elements essential to creating a newspaper that brings value to the reader is providing content that is important to the reader, Hernandez explained: "The future depends on the needs of the community, the involvement of the community, and the voice of the community."

"Almost all of our staff and contributors live or work in Lamorinda. Our writers are reporting on events that take place within the scope of their daily lives. They have connections that naturally bring them close to stories that other people in the community also care about," says Wendy. "To make it all work, we have an editor who demands that they keep a neutral voice and sets a high bar for editorial integrity. Even though they might write about things close to their hearts, they also reach outside their own experience and put a lot of time and effort into researching, interviewing and listening in meetings," explains Wendy.

"We select team members based on their involvement within the community," Andy adds. "And because we live here, we listen to our readers daily. I hope I will not insult our advertising customers, but in fact, our most important customers are our readers."

The hope for print journalism lies in our ability to be innovative and responsive to the community, according to Hernandez. Andy believes, "Innovation comes from our readership. We're open to sugges-

tions and our 'newsroom' is more all over Lamorinda than in our office." Wendy adds, "I think that our readers value the paper because it helps people feel connected and gives them a real sense of community."

Meet the Publishers—Andy and Wendy Scheck



Photo Doug Kohen

When Andy and Wendy Scheck left the high-tech industry in 2005, they wanted to start a local business, so they looked around for a niche that needed filling. Andy recalls having a conversation with a friend who suggested a newspaper and the concept clicked. "I knew enough about desktop publishing, database publishing, web and graphic design to get started," says Scheck who set to work on a business plan the next day. A critical component of his original model was the framework for community participation in the paper.

"During the last week of December in 2006, Andy

produced a prototype with our first printer and we met with representatives from each of Lamorinda's communities to get feedback," says Wendy. "The response was very positive. I used the prototype to sell ads, and we published our first issue a few weeks later." The Schecks originally planned on a weekly publication, but moved to a biweekly format after the first month. "That change saved the paper," notes Wendy.

The Schecks believe that community involvement is fundamental to what makes the newspaper thrive. They are active members of all three Chambers of Commerce in Lamorinda, and offer discounted advertising rates to charitable organizations. Andy, a Rotarian, recently launched our Community Service section after a conversation with a local community organization, offering a space for submissions from those involved in service projects. For the Schecks, the community's voice is paramount. They make every effort to publish all letters to the editor and article submissions that they receive (which meet the paper's guidelines).

Although not exactly a democracy, the paper is horizontally structured—among the senior staff, everyone gives input and has a voice. Both Andy and Wendy are very good listeners. In addition to his role as publisher, Andy developed the proprietary database for the paper's website that archives all of the content online, and he lays out the paper himself. Every other weekend, the couple rarely leaves their Moraga home. Andy works day and night to prepare the week's issue with Wendy's help; Wendy also handles advertising sales and marketing operations for the paper.

L.Borrowman, A.Firth



Three Lamorinda Women Honored

By Sophie Braccini



(L to R) Ellen Beans (Moraga), Carrie Dern (Orinda), Assemblymember Nancy Skinner, Anne Grodin (Lafayette) Photo Sophie Braccini

Ellen Beans, Carrie Dern and Anne Grodin brought their unique shades to the tapestry of different women who were recognized by Assemblymember Nancy Skinner for the 2010 14th Assembly District's Annual Women of the Year award. Although they expressed surprise at being selected, these women from Moraga, Orinda and Lafayette, respectively, represent our communities at their best; displaying the spirit of volunteerism, selflessness and community service.

"Traditionally, the Assemblymember recognizes one woman every year," said Nancy Skinner during her address at the celebration luncheon in Berkeley on March 6th, "but how could I honor only one woman? There are so many unsung women heroes in our communities that I wanted to celebrate one woman in each of the entities of my

district." District 14 encompasses Lamorinda along with ten other cities including Oakland, Berkeley, Pleasant Hill, and Richmond.

"Nancy Skinner's office contacted local non-profits and community leaders, and asked for outstanding volunteers," said Jill Ellis, Executive Director of the Center for Early Intervention on Deafness, who nominated Orinda resident Carrie Dern. It took months for Skinner's staff to contact hundreds of community members to solicit nominations and choose 14 recipients among the 120 nominations received. "When I received the call, I knew I had to nominate Carrie (Dern)," added Ellis, "she has been an exceptional volunteer for our group, always performing beyond expectation and giving back to communities far and near, looking to help beyond her own needs."

"I am one of several people who nominated Anne (Grodin)," said Lafayette Council Member Don Tatzin, "and I am delighted that she was chosen." Both Tatzin and City Manager Steve Falk came to the luncheon to support the woman who was so instrumental in raising funds for the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

Moraga Vice-Mayor Karen Mendonca was among those who nominated Ellen Beans. "Ellen Beans' coordination of the Moraga Citizen's Network is an example of community service at its finest," said Mendonca, "she is committed to providing factual and objective information to town residents so that they, in turn, can more effectively participate in local discussions and deliberations."

Honorees from other east bay cities came from all avenues of life, reflecting the diversity of our region. For example, Susie Medak, the Managing Director of the Berkeley Repertory Theater, was recognized for her educational outreach. Eileen Hadidian of Albany was acknowledged for founding the Healing Muses, an organization that uses music to create a peaceful sound environment to support patients in hospitals. Rosa Acosta, the Executive Director of 'Morada de Mujeres del Milenio', an association that provides support for bicultural women affected by domestic violence, was also recognized.

"Assemblymember Nancy Skinner has created a memorable way to honor women of the district," commented Grodin. "It is wonderful to participate in such an inspiring event," added Beans. "it consolidates my belief that we can bring about positive change."

Ask Dr. Harold

Positive Psychology

By Dr. Harold Hoyle, Ph.D.

My column in January on mindfulness received a record amount of positive feedback. Simply put, people enjoyed hearing about positive psychological practice. One person I talked to at a Saint Mary's game (congrats for winning the tourney by the way) asked me if there were more things she could do to keep herself psychologically healthy.

There is an entire field of study in psychology now called positive psychology. In my practice I often find people dealing with the question, "What is wrong with me?" Positive psychology is more interested in answering the question, "What is right with me?"

So, in real life what does positive psychology look like?

Positive psychology is the study of what is going on in our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors when we are at our best. What is happening when we create something? What is happening when we find meaning in something? What aspects of our psychic world are impacted when we feel connected to another human being? How can friendship or a walk on the beach with our shoes off make us feel better?

It is the study of what goes right in life from the beginning to the end. Think about how often have considered what was going on in your life when you did your very best work or had your best relationships. Psychologists have traditionally worked with people and the

disorder in their lives. Psychologists who work in this do not ignore or dismiss the low times, but they do believe that the connected and creative times in our lives deserve as much research focus as the low times.

A psychologist who uses the techniques of positive psychology will have you focus on your strengths. If you have had a yearly review or been to a team building training you have been exposed to the positive psychology principals. You might be thinking, "Ok Dr. Harold, you want me to just think positive thoughts and my life will get better? Really! Really?"

Yeah I know, so here are three researched-based techniques for you to look at for this year:

- 1) Review your experience and locate those times when you were the most creative, had the most passion, felt the most intelligent and identify the values you had that were associated with those experiences. This is often the first step in an executive coaching plan at work or a life plan in your personal life.
- 2) Create a plan that seeks to increase the possibility that those types of experiences will happen more often. If you loved to sing in college then take a look into joining a group or choir or volunteer to teach choir at an elementary school that doesn't have a music program. An artist I am working with recently told me I should write poetry; so I did. The poetry was horrible, but it changed the way I

looked at the world a bit. It brought me a perspective that I hadn't visited since my college creative writing class. And you know what? It was kinda fun.

3) Get some support. I work with a very successful client who, at age 15, decided he needed a Board of Directors for his life. (I personally was deciding between Coke and Pepsi at 15.) Having a mentor is a lost art in our society. Get a mentor or get together with friends more often. Human connection is vital and often a place where we can find meaning or clarity about our lives.



www.drharoldhoyle.com
Harold can be contacted by phone or email: 510-219-8660, jhoyle@mac.com

Harold is licensed clinical psychologist and a lecturer and in the School of Counseling Psychology, Education, and Pastoral Ministries Santa Clara University. With his wife and two children he is a 14-year long resident of the Lamorinda area. He is a sought after speaker in the areas of parenting, education, behavior with adolescents and children. He has a local small private practice.

◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not

ART

Wenda Pyman, photographer, and Terry Hunt, potter and sculptor, will be featured in a new show at Moraga Art Gallery, 570 Center St, Rheem Center. The show begins March 23, with an opening reception from 3:00-5:00 p.m. on March 28. The reception is free and open to the public. Wenda Pyman is a landscape, travel and nature photographer; her body of work shows a heavy emphasis on Mount Diablo and images of other East Bay environs. Terry is attached to Japanese potter ideals, especially shino and temoku glazes, but also embraces a larger palette that includes ash-glazes and copper-reds.

Acalanes High School student artwork and photography is on display at Fastframe of Lafayette during March. Come and enjoy the artistic expressions of over 50 students from Acalanes High School's digital photography and art programs. There will be pastels, watercolors, photography, oils, pen-and-ink, charcoals, and a variety of mixed-media. Fastframe is located at 3571 Mt. Diablo Blvd., next to Postino's, and is open Monday-Saturday from 10:00-6:00. Tel: 925-283-7620.

Though March, see the variety of works of the artists friends and students of Dorothy Cutright Davis's studio at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Marys Rd., Moraga. Open Tues & Thurs 12-8, Wed 10-6, Fri 1-5, Sat 10-5. Closed Sun & Mon.

The artists of Lafayette Gallery are pleased to present "Fresh and Beautiful," a show that extols spring in paintings, collage, prints, ceramics, photography, jewelry and much more. After a cold and wet winter, spring promises warmer and drier days, the bold colors of the season's first wildflowers, hikes in the verdant hills, the sweet taste of new strawberries. Lafayette Gallery is located at 50 Lafayette Circle in Lafayette. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Saturday 11am - 5pm.

MUSIC

WomenSing, a 55-member auditioned chorus is holding a concert on Sunday, March 28, 4 pm, St. Mary's Chapel, 1928 Saint Mary's Road, Moraga. Be inspired by music that will illuminate familiar and unfamiliar places and emotions. The program will include the premiere of Jack Henry's *Sombra del Mar* (part of the Youth Inspiring Youth project), Eric Whitacre's sensual *She Weeps Over Ragoon*, lush double choir sonories, and works by Schubert, Paulus, and Okamura. Tickets: www.womensing.org or call (925) 974-9169.

On Sunday March 28 hear the Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra's Music that Stands the Test of Time, presenting major works by beloved composers. Featuring Mozart's delightful "Overture from the Magic Flute", Bach's energetic "Brandenburg Concerto No. 3", Mendelssohn's stirring "Reformation" Symphony, and Handel's barge party favorite, "Water Music". 7:30 p.m. Leshar Center for the Arts, Tickets: \$15 - \$18, at the door, by phone (925) 943-SHOW, or online at www.LesharArtsCenter.org.

Gold Coast Chamber Players concert, Bach-Bachin-anes on Sunday, April 25 at 2pm at The Community Hall located at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. General tickets are \$30, Seniors \$25, Students \$10. Season packages of 3 concerts are available. Order tickets by phone through the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce (925)284-7404 or online http://geplayers.tix.com. For more information call (925) 283-3728 or visit our website at www.gcplayers.org.

Swing to top notch Big Band jazz with the Michael Vax Big Jazz Orchestra at the Rheem Theatre on Sunday April 25, 2-4:30 pm. Sponsored by the Friends of Big Band Jazz and the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. Tickets for the event will be available at the Rheem Theatre Box office or on line at www.bigbandjazz.net. Adult tickets : \$15, Students with ID: \$10.

THEATRE

Saint Mary's College will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador with two film screenings at Saint Mary's Chapel: Monday, March 22, 2010, 7-9 p.m. Innocent Voices (2004). A young boy, in an effort to have a normal childhood in 1980's El Salvador, is caught up in a dramatic fight for his life as he desperately tries to avoid

the war which is raging all around him. Tuesday, March 23, 2010, 7-8:30 p.m. ROMERO Film Screening & Panel Discussion. Excerpts from the 1989 film ROMERO followed by a panel of individuals sharing their lived experience of the Salvadoran civil war and reflecting on Archbishop Oscar Romero. Panelists include students, staff, professors, and other members of the community.

Town Hall Theatre is presenting Oscar Wilde's Victorian satire "The Importance of Being Earnest" through March 27. For tickets, contact the Town Hall Theatre Box Office at (925) 283-1557, or purchase online at www.TownHallTheatre.com.

Town Hall Welcomes the East Bay Children's Theatre's Presentation of Pinocchio - April 11 at 1pm & 3pm. The beloved tale of the little wooden puppet who becomes a real, live boy is magically brought to life on-stage in a world-premiere musical theatre event. Award-winning playwright and composer Ron Lytle's version of the timeless classic features an all-new score of tuneful songs, delivered by a cast of unforgettably funny characters. Info and tickets: www.townhalltheatre.com.

"Sera" a world premiere play by SMC alum Angela Santillo, directed by Rebecca Engle. April 22 and 23 at 8 pm; April 24 at 2 pm and 8 pm; and April 25 at 2 pm. LeFevre Theatre, Saint Mary's College, 1928 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga. For ticketing information, call Sharon Cahill, (925) 631-4670, or email scahill@stmarys-ca.edu.

LECTURES & LITERATURE

Weekly Wednesday evening program features prominent speakers on environmental stewardship and sustainability issues. Program begins at 6:00 p.m. with dinner followed by the speaker's presentation from 6:45 - 7:45. Admission is free, but donations for dinner are welcome. Please RSVP (925) 254-3770. Location: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephen's Drive, Orinda Dates/speakers: March 24, Debbie Mytels, who has been called an "environmental entrepreneur" for her skills in working with start-up projects and involving community volunteers.

St. Mary's College's Kalmanovitz School of Educa-tion will have keynote speaker Rick Morris, author, educator and specialist in the field of student management, motivation and involvement, at its Distinguished Speaker Event on Saturday, March 27, from 8:30am-1:00pm. Register online at www.stmarys-ca.edu/saturdayseminars or contact Lydia Wiley at lwiley@stmmarys-ca.edu for more information.

Book Sale: Friends of the Orinda Library sale is Thurs April 1, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. The book sale offers gently used books and many just-like-new ones for book lovers of all ages and interests. Money is used to fund new books, computers, speakers and other materials of interest to library users. Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda.Tel: (925) 254-1358.

First Friday Forum : Professor Maximillian Auffhammer will speak on The Economics of Climate Change April 9 at 1:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary of the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. An assistant professor of Agricultural Resource Economics and International and Area Studies, Auffhammer will discuss how they can predict and comprehend the impacts of climate change. Refreshments will be served at 1:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Come with your questions. This is a free event. Please note the change to the second Friday in April. For further information call (925) 283-8722 or click on lopc.org.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Need Money for College? Contra Costa Association of Realtors Scholarship Foundation is offering scholarships to residents of Central Contra Costa County that have completed one year of full-time college, completed courses with emphasis on real estate, finance and/or business and have a GPA of 3.0 or higher. If you qualify, scholarship awards can range from \$1,500 to \$2,500. Further information and applications may be found on line at www.ccaarscholarship.com. Deadline is April 30th.

Panel discussion: Helping Teens Learn in an Era of Digital Overload. The discussion will provide tools for

parents to help them negotiate and set parameters for teens' use of technology. Tips and strategies for parents to help teens manage school and media. Orinda Academy, 19 Altarinda Road, Orinda, on Saturday, March 20, 10 am - Noon. Fee:\$10. To register go to: www.sos4students.com. Seating is limited.

OTHER

Dinner to honor "Team Library" as Lafayette's 2010 Citizens of the Year is scheduled for Friday night, March 19th at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. Tickets are available at www.lafayettechamber.org .

Pub Trivia will be held again on Wednesday, March 31st. Trivia begins promptly at 6:30 p.m. and lasts approximately two-hours. The event will be held at Petar's, located at 32 Lafayette Circle in Lafayette. Get



Moraga's annual Spring Egg Hunt will be held, rain or shine, on Saturday, March 27 at the Moraga Commons Park located at the corner of Moraga Road and St. Mary's Road. The event is co-sponsored by the Moraga Junior Women's Club and the Moraga Parks and Recreation Department. Games will be open from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Two egg hunts are scheduled: one beginning at 10:00 a.m. and the other at 11:00 a.m. Egg hunt tickets (\$5) and wristbands (\$5) are only available for purchase in advance online at www.moragajuniors.org or at the Moraga Parks and Rec located at 2100 Donald Drive in Moraga. Phone: (925) 888-7045. Adult admission is free. Tickets for the egg hunt must be purchased in advance. Only game tickets can be purchased at the event.

The Lafayette Rotary Club is pleased to announce the date for the "Annual Egg Hunt." Open to all children ages 2-through 3rd grade. The event takes place at Plaza Park (corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Moraga Rd) in Lafayette, at 10:00am, Saturday, April 3, 2010. The park lawn will be covered with candy for the kids to put in their baskets. The youngest are always given extra time to get their share. The Bunny will be there to take pictures with the kids. Please arrive on time. We start promptly at 10:00am.

Sunday March 28 1:00- 2:30 p.m. California Shakespeare Theater - a consortium partner presents: "Kids Interactive Shakespeare...Hero or villain? Listen to and then act our stories from many of the Bard's famous plays at the LLLC Community Hall - Grades 3 - 7 free. Contact consortium@lafayettelib.com.

Chinese - Mandarin for children is now available through Orinda Recreation Dept. Storytelling method will be used in teaching. Students will be able to master Chinese Pinyin (pronunciation system), fundamental vocabulary and structure, simple and practical daily conversations, storytelling, and simple character writing. Students interested in taking SAT II or AP test in the future can start from these foundational courses. Classes start April 15th. Contact: Orinda Parks & Recreation (925) 254-2445.

Wednesday April 7 10:00 - 11:30 Oakland Zoo presents "ZooMobile" Learn about habits, habitats and survival challenges of rescued and exotic animals from the Oakland Zoo @ the Arts and Discovery Center at the LLLC - for families free. The Lafayette Library & Learning Center is at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd in Lafayette. Contact consortium@lafayettelib.com.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District is hosting our Annual Spring Open House on Saturday, April 10th, from 10am-2pm, at Station 45 - 33 Orinda Way, Orinda. Bring the kids to meet our local firefighters and see all the firefighting equipment. Kids and adults can learn about how to be safe around water, bicycle safety, and how to do a home safety hazard hunt. Adults can learn how to use a fire extinguisher using our live simulator. Families can also learn about how to keep their homes safer from wildfires. Smokey the Bear has been sighted in the area and will be there to greet and pose for photos. There will be a bounce house, free popcorn and raffle prizes for the kids.

AAUW OML invites you to meet our newest Tech Trek and Scholarship recipients from the Lamorinda middle schools, Acalanes District high schools and St. Mary's College community. "What do Scientists do Students' Evolving Conceptions" will be the keynote talk by Susan Marston, PhD for the Scholarship and Tech Trek Awards program on Tuesday evening April 20, 7:00pm at the Holy Trinity Serbian Cultural Center, Moraga.

Lamorinda's Religious Services

THE ORINDA COMMUNITY CHURCH
10 Irwin Way, Orinda, CA 925.254.4906
www.orindachurch.org

Celebrate Easter with us!
The Orinda Community Church
An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Easter Sunday April 4
Sunrise Service 7 a.m. in the Olive Grove
Easter Celebration 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary
Easter Egg Hunt: 11:15 a.m.

Refuge COMMUNITY CHURCH

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www.refugecommunity.org
925-942-1000

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A Loving Community

Sunday Services: 8 and 10 AM
Active Youth Program, Sunday School, Nursery Childcare, 10 AM
682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, 284-7420, www.stanselms.ws

Rest for the Weary

Sundays at 9 & 10:30am
Childrens Programming
Available at Both Services

(925) 376-4800
www.mvpc.today.org
10 Moraga Valley Ln., Moraga

Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church

St. Giles Episcopal Church of Moraga

Worshipping at St. Mary's College Chapel. All are welcome at our services.
9 a.m. Sunday Service: Holy Communion - with St. Giles' Choir.
Child care is available all year.
1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. 925-376-5770

Willow Spring Church

1675-1689 School Street, Moraga
www.willowspringchurch.org
(925) 376-3550
Sunday Service Times:

Prayer @ 8am, Traditional @ 9am, Contemporary @ 10:30am,
Services for youth and children after worship during the 10:30am service

"Coming Sunday, March 28th @ 10:30am:
Guest speaker Steve Horner, co-founder of the Rancho De Sus Ninos orphanage in Mexico!"

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH
24 Orinda Way, Orinda (next to the Library) - 254-4212

Sunday Service and Sunday School 10 - 11 am
Informal Wednesday Meeting 7:30 - 8:30 pm
Reading Room/Bookstore M-F: 11 am- 5 pm

(across from the Orinda Theater)
www.christianscienceorinda.org

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way Orinda

8:15 a.m. Traditions Worship Service
9:15 a.m. Coffee Fellowship
9:40 a.m. Education for all ages
10:45 a.m. Celebrations Worship Service
925-254-3422 Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

Our Savior's Lutheran (ELCA)
1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette
283-3722 • www.oslc.net

Sunday Morning Schedule:
Classic Worship, 8:30 am
Education Hour, 9:45 am
Contemporary Worship, 10:45 am

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to be missed



your friends, family, or co-workers together and form a team of two to five players. It's free to participate! Must be 21 years or older. Prizes awarded to winning teams. Pub food and drinks are available. Email questions to pubtrivia@live.com for additional information.

Orinda in Action. Clean up our City on Saturday, April 17 from 9am-1pm. Volunteer Check in: 8:30 – 9:00 am at Orinda Library Plaza. Volunteer to Help and/or suggest a project. Contact: OrindaInAction@gmail.com. Co-Sponsored by City of Orinda and Orinda Association.

The 3rd Annual Fore Our Schools Golf Tournament is held at the Moraga Country Club on Monday, May 3, 2010. The four-person scramble format will begin at 11AM with a shotgun start. Check-in begins at 9am and the day concludes with a buffet reception at the pool. Prizes will be awarded to the top Net and Gross teams, including other distinctions such as closest to the pin, longest drive, and more. On-Line registration is now open: www.foreourschools.org. Golf Tournament benefits the schools of Camino Pablo, Los Perales, and Rheem Elementary Schools.

The Northern California chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society will hold its annual Walk MS at Walnut Creek Heather Farm Park on Sunday, April 18. Registration is now open at walk.msconnection.org. Over 600 walkers are anticipated this year at Heather Farm Park. This year's festivities include live music, entertainment and family fun at Heather Farm Park. Dogs are welcome and the walk will even have a doggy rest-stop. Walk MS also needs volunteers and groups are welcome. For more information about Walk MS, to register or volunteer, visit walk.msconnection.org or call 1-800-344-4867 or email walk@msconnection.org.

Come to Acalanes high school electronic e-waste drive. This March 27th and 28th from 9:00am-3:00 pm at Acalanes High School's front parking lot 1200, Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette. Drop off your old monitors, computers and electronics, and get your tax write off. For more information go to unwaste.com or call (888) 832-9839.

Blood Drive: Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, working with the American Red Cross, is sponsoring a blood drive to help save lives in our local communities. Saturday, March 27, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at MVPC, 10 Moraga Valley Lane, Moraga. It's a chance to be a hero, and to give someone another birthday. Sign up online at helpsavealife.org (Sponsor Code: Moraga925) or call Les Deane at 283-5648. Drop by and share a pint!

Lafayette Service League presents the Annual Tossed Treasures Sale at the Community Center on Sat., April 24 (9 to 3) and Sun., April 25 (11 to 2). Proceeds benefit the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties and the Lafayette Community Center. The group is seeking donations, such as jewelry, glassware, special knick-knacks, collectibles, silver, china, crystal, kitchenware, linens and tableware, fabrics, small furniture, art work and decorative pieces, CD's and DVD's, books, baskets, children's items, tools and garden items. If you have donations or questions, please call Diane at 283-8790 or Jackie at 284-4131.

POLITICALLY MINDED

"Health Care Reform: What's Next in California," is the title of a public forum on Health Care Reform, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley, to be held on Thursday, March 18, from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the Lafayette Public Library, 3491 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette. Everyone is invited. No charge for admission.

Lafayette Homeowners Council is sponsoring its annual meeting on March 25th at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Marys Road, in Lafayette beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Sequoia Room. All Lafayette residents are invited to attend. Mayor Brandt Andersson will speak on the "State of the City," after which the audience will be invited to participate in a question and answer period on any City or homeowner issue of interest. This is your best opportunity to speak to your elected City officials. Come join us March 25.

CLUBS

The Suburban Woman's Club of Lafayette meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Lafayette Community Center in the Elderberry Room at 11:30am. We invite all women over the age of 55 to join us. Lunch is provided by the members and an interesting speaker is scheduled. For more information on the club and our activities contact Jean Cappa at Jeanc43821@aol.com.

Montelindo Garden Club general meeting and speakers, third Friday of the month, September through May. Meeting place for this meeting only is at Heather Farm Gardens, 15 Marchbanks, Dr., Walnut Creek. www.gardenshf.org. Refreshments and plant sale at 9 a.m., meeting at 9:30, docent tour of the gardens at 10:30. The meeting is free and welcomes guests and new members. Web Site: www.montelindogarden.com. email contact: montelindogarden@aol.com.

Sons in Retirement Lamorinda Branch 171 meets first Wednesday monthly at Holy Trinity Culture Center 1700 School St. Moraga. Social hour 11 am, lunch 12 pm. The after lunch speaker will be Steve Butler, President of Pension Dynamics Corp. in Pleasant Hill. Butler is a weekly financial columnist for the Contra Costa Times and has authored two books and had articles published in several financial magazines. Butler will share his advice on Staying Sane in this Insane World and putting this unruly economy in perspective. For details and membership information, call Tom Lenz at 376-7724.

Thomas Lifson, publisher and editor of American Thinker magazine is the featured speaker at the Thursday, March 18th luncheon meeting of the Lamorinda Republican Women's club. Lifson's topic is "The New Media and Today's Political Landscape." This program is open to the public with advance reservations available through Monday, March 15th by calling (925) 682-3727; program details are available at the club's website at: lamorindarepublicanwomen.org.

Epicurean Exchange

By Susie Iventosch



Chef Charlie Vollmar in action in the kitchen Photo Susie Iventosch

What we eat matters, and this is clearly the motto of Chef Charlie Vollmar of Orinda. As the founder of Epicurean Exchange, an organization that focuses on topics related to cooking— nutrition, food appreciation, "kitchen fitness", wellness and healthy food habits, Vollmar's goal is to encourage positive lifestyle choices. His medium is food and his methods are proper selection, preparation and enjoyment for everyone from seniors to children and all ages in between. He offers private and group cooking classes, dynamic cooking and team

building events for companies, corporate wellness workshops and home kitchen overhauls – personal training for those who need a little help getting their eating habits in order.

Trained at the Culinary Academy in San Francisco, Vollmar emphasizes wellness and prevention through cooking, nutrition, fitness and food exploration. He was instrumental in effecting positive change in the school nutrition program at Orinda's Wagner Ranch Elementary School and has helped many families turn the corner from shoveling in fast food, to

creating healthy and fun family dinners using colorful, seasonal foods, rich in nutrients, vitamins and flavonoids.

"Many people know what they should be eating, but they don't know how to go about executing it," Vollmar says. "They may have a basic understanding that they should eat wholesome foods, but don't know exactly what those foods are or what foods and/or food combinations are properly metabolized by the human body. Awareness is half the battle, and also why it is so important to develop good eating habits early in life."

Epicurean Exchange "kitchen fitness" programs are designed to help families do exactly that. Every program is customized for the specific client and includes recipe development, a kitchen overhaul (i.e. getting rid of junk to make way for healthy ingredients), and personal grocery shopping to learn how to buy the right foods.

"It's all about the food elements we use to recreate the same ideas as popular packaged foods," Vollmar noted. "My mantra—to shop the perimeter of the store where all of the real food is presented. Processed foods are found in the center aisles and in the freezer section."

One suggestion he offers is

to replace that processed frozen burrito with a whole grain tortilla, goat cheese and a good quality salsa. Voila! Simple, whole food and far healthier.

Vollmar prefers foods that reduce Omega 6, which can cause metabolic disorders, and encourages foods with high levels of Omega 3s, those essential fatty acids that have been known to lower triglycerides and reduce the risk of coronary disease. He's a big fan of certain elements in organic fruits and veggies and also of hormone-free dairy.

According to Vollmar, the best cheeses are the California artisanal cheeses. Goat or sheep cheeses are the healthiest, but for those who don't like their tangy flavors, there are also excellent blends of cow and sheep or goat's milk cheeses that mellow the sharpness.

For several years, Vollmar worked at a metabolic wellness clinic in Los Gatos where he learned a great deal about proper eating habits from one of the physicians there. Vollmar's job was to develop recipes to sustain a healthier lifestyle for people who were dealing with chronic disease.

His approach is less about caloric intake and more about metabolic conditioning and a rational approach to eating. He em-

Dining

phasizes whole grains and less processed foods, and a lower intake of highly refined sugars, which turn into fat calories. Synthetic elements of processed foods that are not metabolized properly end up being what our bodies carry in the form of fat and plaque in the arteries.

"Cooking for me is not just a pleasure, but has also become my life's work, and I have always strived to find purpose in it," Vollmar said. "My goal is to help the mainstream eat better and healthier. There is a cultural and historical element that I also enjoy. Each of us carries a food history, often based upon our heritage and upbringing, which is why it is sometimes difficult to effect change when it comes to choices in foods. I love teaching people how to enjoy the whole process of healthy cooking, from planning and shopping to food preparation and dining."

Charles Vollmar
 Chef Instructor / Wellness and Lifestyle Consultant
 Epicurean Exchange - Wellness and Lifestyle Education
 2 Vallecito Lane, Orinda, 94563
 Phone: 925.368.4181
 Email: charlie@epicureanexchange.com
 For more information on Orinda classes and family of corporate programs please visit: www.epicureanexchange.com

Asparagus-Pistachio Nut Pesto

Charles Vollmar

Pesto is traditionally an uncooked sauce made with fresh basil, garlic, pine nuts, Parmesan cheese and olive oil. It is not uncommon today to find pesto made from a myriad of ingredients from cilantro, arugula or mint to other green vegetables, such as this variation using fresh spring asparagus. This mixture is great tossed with cold pasta, as a crostini topping or as a condiment to grilled fish and spring vegetables. Use care to not over-process this mixture. It should remain crumbly or coarsely chopped.

Ingredients

- 1 pound asparagus, trimmed and cut diagonally into 1" pieces
- 1/4 cup toasted pistachio nuts, coarsely chopped
- 8 medium fresh basil leaves, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup Pecorino Romano cheese, crumbled into pea-sized pieces
- Zest of one lemon
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Directions

- To blanch the asparagus, bring a small pot of water to a boil. Once the water is boiling, add the asparagus pieces all at once and blanch until bright green and tender-crisp, approximately 1 minute. Remove asparagus with a mesh strainer and place the pieces in the bowl of cold water. Rinse the asparagus pieces a couple of times with cold water to thoroughly cool. Once cool, drain well and dry on paper towels. Set aside.
 - To a food processor, add the pistachio nuts, asparagus pieces, basil and cheese. Pulse the processor several times until the mixture is coarsely chopped.
 - Remove mixture from the processor to a bowl. Add the extra-virgin olive oil and fold to combine. Using a microplane zester, zest the lemon directly into the bowl and fold in until just combined. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste.
 - Pesto can be stored in refrigerator for up to 10 days or frozen for future use.
- Makes about 3 cups.

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Spring Asparagus Soup with Curry and Coconut

Charles Vollmar

This is an opportunity to enjoy the first of the young California spring asparagus. Choose medium-sized asparagus (not pencil or large) and look for tips that are tight and free from flowering. Coconut milk and oils, are considered healthy fats and in moderation, are recommended. The Thai coconut milk brands I recommended are Chao Koh or Mae Ploy. Also, this soup is a favorite of kids, but remember to watch the curry spice. I suggest a mild brand or curry seasoning that has flavor, but less heat.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium leek, cleaned and finely minced
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder (or more to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- Zest and juice of one lemon, divided
- 2 cups peeled and diced red potatoes
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 pound (1 bunch) asparagus, trimmed and cut diagonally into 2-inch pieces
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup crème fraîche
- 1/4 cup scallion greens, minced

Directions

- Melt the butter and olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the diced leek and sauté until soft. Add the curry powder, ginger, lemon zest and potatoes and simmer, stirring occasionally for 5 minutes.
 - Add the chicken broth, coconut milk and asparagus pieces. Stir to combine. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, cover, and continue to cook until the potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes.
 - Purée the soup with an immersion blender, or in batches in a bar blender, until smooth. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.
 - Combine the crème fraîche with the lemon juice. Serve soup garnished with a swirl of lemon crème fraîche and a sprinkle of the scallion greens.
- Serves 4

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This recipes is available on our web site. Go to: www.lamorindaweekly.com

Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com

Many of our readers like Susie's recipes. Our website now features a link to our recipe page where you can read, print or download all of the recipes we have published. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at 925-377-0977



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Letters to the Editor



Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writers and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

All published letters will include the writer's name and town (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only), and should be 350 words or less.

email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

I have noticed your article about a group of people trying to ban leaf blowers. I suggest they do not use leaf blowers if they do not like them, but do not presume to dictate to others we cannot use them. Leaf blowers, chain saws, wood chippers, and weed eaters are necessary in Orinda. Most of Orinda is a forest, which drops leaves on all flat surfaces. Trees need to be pruned, and grass needs to be cut. It is not practical to do this by hand. This

fascist attempt to ban leaf blowers, if successful will lead to attempts to ban other necessary power tools. It would immediately lead to great hardship and extra expense to hundreds of people in Orinda. Furthermore, the proposition that leaf blowers is a health hazard is nonsense! Leaf blowers are only used when there is no wind. They do not work in the wind. However much particulate matter is put into air by leaf blowers, is completely insignificant compared to wind blowing dust and pollen. This is

especially true in Orinda where we have a lot of wind and trees. In still air, leaf blowers only move the particulate matter a few feet before it settles to the ground again. Banning leaf blowers is wrong! These people should try persuading their neighbors to do their leaf blowing at one particular space of time. This impulse to ban those activities of other people that can be annoying, but are harmless, leads to tyranny.

Henry R. Pinney
Orinda

sac just off Moraga Way, for example, there is an outside gardener who arrives early in a pick-up truck and tends a few of the yards by firing up his gasoline blower at 7:30 a.m. almost every day. This is annoying, noisy, unhealthy, and irritating of my and my wife's allergies but he doesn't seem to care despite requests to cease. In a small and more confined area such as ours, it's much worse than on the larger estates in Orinda Village. Those who want to bike or jog or walk their dog have to put up with this almost every day. I say, no more!

John Windle
Orinda

To the Editor:

Girl Scout troops in Moraga and Orinda took possession of almost 3800 cases of cookies on Sunday, February 21st. That's over 45,000 boxes of cookies! Many helped to make this "Distribution Day" run smoothly.

We want to publicly thank the crew at the Moraga Fire Station 42 at 555 Moraga Road, who has been kind enough to let us use the station house as the distribution point of our Girl Scout cookies for a number of years. Due to the size of the garage, we are able to have the cookies delivered, divided into orders, and loaded into cars inside, keeping the cookies and volunteers dry in the rainy weather.

A huge thank you to the Sunday morning crews of Moraga Stations 42 and 41 for helping early in the day. The cases of cookies were delivered in 8-10 foot stacks, which made it quite difficult to get to the top cases. The delivery arrived about an hour later than last year, creating a time crunch for the volunteers to get orders assembled. As the firefighters from Station 42 began dismantling the stacks, Acting Captain Anthony Perry called for additional help from Moraga Station 41 across town. Within an hour, firefighters from both stations had the stacks reduced into piles that were reachable by our volunteers. Meanwhile, our volunteers were able to start organizing orders for pick ups, keeping us on schedule.

We'd also like to thank the Lafayette locations of Peets Coffee and Noah's Bagels for their donations of coffee and bagels, respectively. The annual cookie sale is the biggest fundraiser for the Girl Scout organization and we appreciate all the support we get from the Lamorinda Community.

Cookie sales continue until March 21. For a booth near you, visit the convenient online Cookie Locator at ilovecookies.org.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Fritzy and MaryEllen Gustafson
(Co-Managers Cookie Sales Orinda/Moraga Service Unit)
Moraga

Dear Editor -

Now that the Town of Moraga Town Council has come up with their list of priorities, I would like to share with your readers my list of priorities for the Town of Moraga. So here goes -

1. Focus on safety, roads, and infrastructure ONLY for the near term future
2. Reduce staff overhead (salaries, benefits) by at least 20% either by attrition or by layoffs or both
3. Eliminate all trips effective immediately by council members or town staff unless funds by personal and non-reimbursed funds
4. Eliminate all current and proposed real estate purchases authorized by the Moraga Town Council
5. Declare a moratorium on any proposed modifications to the Moraga General Plan
6. Sell the Moraga Country Club

golf course to the Moraga Country Club and use the proceeds for infrastructure maintenance

7. Plan and budget on state revenue for the next fiscal year (2010-2011) to fall another 20%

8. Re-vamp the membership and goals and re-name the Revenue Enhancement Committee to the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee and focus on both revenue and Expenditures

9. Approve the Hetfield and Rancho Laguna projects to improve town revenues

10. Make a concerted and meaningful effort to improve communications and relations with the Moraga School District Governing Board

11. Set a 10:00 P.M. deadline for all future Moraga Town Council meetings

12. Accept the will and vote of the people with respect to development issues such as Measure K and cease the efforts to enhance municipal ordinances without the approval of the general public.

I hope others submit their list of priorities to the Moraga Town Council for discussion and debate. Always keep in mind...the Moraga Town Council works for us and not us for them.

Dennis Wanken
Moraga

Measure A

(Editor's note: We are providing extra space in this issue so that we can publish as many letters as possible; although we have received and published, in prior issues, letters from residents opposed to Measure A, none were sent to us in the last two weeks.)

Editor:

As a fiscally conservative voter, I often shake my head as the state legislature dreams up new ways to spend our tax dollars. As the state careers towards insolvency, many voters now watch as vital programs such as education face serious cuts. Generally, I am not in favor of tax increases, especially in light of our current economic situation and since tax dollars seem to dissolve instantly upon contact with our legislature. But I also have two school age children, including one who will be entering high school next year and I support Measure A.

Some letter writers have suggested that the Acalanes Union High School District could easily reduce expenses, without suggesting specific areas where the "fat" is. A closer look at the budget for the AUHSD would reveal that the district is, in fact, very well run.

So while I don't support increases in the state income or sales tax, I do favor a tax such as Measure A that bypasses the sticky fingers of the state legislature and goes directly to our schools. Every homeowner in the area will benefit from this modest investment of \$112 per year in our schools.

Sincerely,
Julie E. Carlson
Moraga

To the editor:

I urge your readers to take the time to get the facts on the fiscal pressures facing the Acalanes High School District and to learn how we can help save our excellent local high schools. Campolindo, Acalanes, Miramonte, and Los Lomas are routinely among the top performing schools in the state. Yet, today, our schools are being forced to cut classes and teachers in order to make up over \$8 million in state funding shortfalls.

News of the impending cuts has hit our family particularly hard since it means that our son, who is now a freshman at Campolindo, and our 6th grade daughter at Joaquin Moraga will not have access to many of the classes they will need in order to compete with their counterparts from other states and other countries. It's unconscionable that California, the eighth largest economy in the world, cannot adequately fund education.

Measure A may not solve all of the financial challenges facing our schools, but it will help preserve core classes and give our kids a fighting chance for their future.

David and Sabine Hathaway
Moraga

Editor:

Miramonte High School offers a unique educational experience. While it has the freedom of a public school, it also offers a superb academic curriculum. Currently, I am a sophomore at Princeton University. Without the outstanding teachers I've had the privilege to learn from and the wide selection of classes, I would not be attending this prestigious school, nor would I have discovered my passion for engineering. I strongly encourage you and all readers to pass the parcel tax, as this will allow Miramonte to continue to uphold its outstanding academic standard. The students of the Lamorinda area deserve the chance to pursue the courses they're interested in. Please don't take that opportunity away from them: support the parcel tax.

Alexa Krakaris
Orinda

Editor:

When my eldest daughter graduated from Campolindo in 2001, our local high schools were a source of community pride for the strength and breadth of their academic programs. Today, I fear that my twins, who are in the Class of 2014, will not have access to the same academic opportunities that their older sister enjoyed.

Absent local action, the Acalanes High School District will have to lay-off over 50 teachers. Cuts of this magnitude will severely hamper our schools' ability to meet the needs of our students. A loss of 50 teachers means cuts in core programs such as science, English, and social studies as well as art and foreign language classes. Such cuts will gut the very programs that we have worked so hard to maintain.

Thankfully, we have an opportunity to blunt the effect of the state's funding cuts by raising funds locally to keep teachers in the classrooms and help our students acquire the knowledge they need to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Measure A, a five-year emergency tax, will provide these funds. Please join me in voting yes for our schools, yes for our teachers, and yes for our students, by voting Yes on Measure A.

Jeanette Fritzy
Moraga

Editor:

As the mother of two children now in fifth and seventh grades, it's disheartening to see what the state's fiscal crisis is doing to our schools. California schools have been falling further and further behind the national average, but I have always taken pride in the fact that Orinda's schools have maintained a standard of excellence. Just this December, Miramonte was identified as one of America's best high schools by U.S. News & World Reports. How troubling it is now to learn of impending teacher lay-offs and cuts to classes that will severely impact the educational opportunities available to our youth.

We can blame the state's fiscal woes on the economic downturn, our legislators, or the voters who sent them to Sacramento. But, we cannot blame our youth. Unfortunately, unless we can pull together to save our schools, it is our youth who will suffer.

This fiscal crisis undoubtedly will pass, but I fear not before my children and their classmates move on to high school. Please help preserve the quality education our community is known for by voting Yes on Measure A. It is a temporary measure that gives our high school a much-needed fiscal lifeline.

Susan Rockwood
Orinda



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If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda or one of its cities that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum.



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We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions can be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Letters to the Editor continued

Editor:
Food, education, clothing, shelter. When was it that education got dropped as one of our basic necessities?

My husband and I moved seven years ago seeking the education for our two daughters that so many in our state can only dream to experience. Through those years we've come to realize the trophy we landed ourselves and to witness the sacrifices the families in this community have made for the sake of learning and village camaraderie. The dedication of the countless fathers, mothers, teachers and administrators is a poignant testament to how deeply ingrained education is to this area.

I am writing this from the heart of a community and asking for your help. A parcel tax of \$112/parcel or .31/day will help maintain programs that currently give our students the competitive edge when applying to colleges. It will allow teachers to maintain manageable class sizes, allow students to receive the attention they deserve and let current school hours to remain undisturbed. It will prevent our award winning music programs from being cut and enable us to maintain strong sports venues. It will allow us to keep and continue to achieve National Blue Ribbon Awards and in turn allow this to all reflect in our high property values.

In a state where budget deficits and layoffs will surely impact everyone, we have the power to overcome the statistics and remain no.1. Please vote yes on Measure A.

Tina Tankka
Lafayette

Dear Editor:

I remember when California was rated in the top 3 for education amongst the states. Now it is rated in the bottom 3. Those high rated times were before Proposition 13. On top of that, California is only one of 4 states that requires a 2/3 vote to raise taxes. Neither of these is good for democracy. Justice Holmes remarked that taxes are the price that we pay for civilization.

The Measure A Tax is \$112/year or less than 3 lattes per month. Those in dire straits might well vote against this tax, but most Lamorinda citizens can afford this. The measure has an exemption clause for those over 65, which I think for me, is a mistake. My property taxes are over \$10,000/year less than my neighbor's taxes, because I am covered by Proposition 13. Other long term residents should consider this windfall before deciding against a \$112/year tax increase. I will vote for the tax and I will pay the tax.

My house's value has increased 20X in 40 years. House values have decreased for some, but many of us, like myself, have had high appreciation in the value of our homes. Good schools and teachers are responsible for a good part of this appreciation. Please vote for this tax.

Sincerely,

Hubert Russell
Orinda

Editor:

California underfunds its schools - we rank 46th in the nation on spending per pupil. Acalanes Union School District's response for many years has been to invest locally controlled funds from a school parcel tax. These funds

allow Acalanes, the top ranked high school district in California, to remain competitive in spite of consecutive years of state budget reductions.

Our children graduated from Miramonte and have gone on to top notch University of California programs. We are happy to pay an additional \$112 annually to ensure that the students of the future have the same opportunities that our kids had. Core curriculum, staffing, AP classes, foreign language, journalism, public speaking and other vital programs are all at stake.

Please join us in supporting Measure A.

Robin and Paul Ludmer
Orinda

Dear Editor,

We moved to Orinda because of the reputation of the schools. In the nine years since, my children have thrived from classes and teachers that engaged and challenged them to reach their potential. My daughter, now a college freshman back East, was able to pursue varied interests in history, public speaking, creative writing, psychology and advanced math. She got more than just a basic education and is able to succeed in a very competitive environment. I want the same lasting foundation for my 9th grader and for all our children in the district. Without Measure A passing, 50 plus teachers will be laid off, affecting programs and classes that enrich our children's lives and help them be successful in the future. I believe as a community we need to rally around our children. \$112 a year for five years seems a small price to pay to give them the tools to succeed. Please join me in voting Yes for Measure A.

Susie Epstein
Orinda

To the Editor:

In these tough economic times, our Acalanes District high schools are facing a fiscal crisis despite sound management practices. The persistent reductions in funding for education from the State of California are now so significant that our District will spend less than half of what similar schools in New York State spend per student annually. Next year, our District will receive \$8 million less in state funding than two years ago. Yet our students are expected to compete at a national level for increasingly demanding college admissions. Through no fault of their own, the Acalanes District high school students stand to lose important science, math, English, arts and AP classes. These critical classes have helped rank our District amongst the best in the state and the nation for over 55 years! While new taxes can be painful, not passing a \$112 short-term emergency parcel tax to protect our schools would be worse. A weakened school system will have a lasting negative impact on our community and our property values. Strong schools and strong communities go hand in hand. Please join me in voting Yes on Measure A.

Sandra Breber
Orinda

To the Editor:

A recently published letter questioned what type of message we would be sending our children by voting in favor of the Acalanes High School District's parcel tax given these challenging economic times. That message, I believe, is

that education matters. By voting in favor of Measure A, we'll be showing our children that education is a priority that deserves our attention in good times and in bad. Surely, there's no better investment in the future than investing in our youth today. And for my money, there's no better investment in education than in our local schools, which continue to rank among the top schools in the state.

Our high schools are not asking for extras. The \$112 parcel tax will simply help protect students and teachers from the state's continuing budget cuts. Considering that California's schools already are among the lowest funded, with some of the largest class sizes in the nation, further cuts to schools will seriously erode the quality of education our schools can provide. Please don't let this happen. Vote Yes on Measure A.

Margarita Woodbury
Lafayette

Editor:

We write to urge our fellow Lamorindans to vote Yes on Measure A. Acalanes Union High School District is facing a \$4.8 million budget cut. Over 50 full time teaching positions are facing elimination! Firing these teachers will cut deep into the core curriculum, including eliminating our students' seventh periods. We are blessed with some of the top public schools in California and the country. These schools have been our area's crown jewel for generations. Remember when you bought property in Lamorinda? We knew by buying and living in our community our children were guaranteed an academically-top education, at public school "prices." Who among us didn't weigh the huge savings and peace of mind we would experience during our children's K-12 years because some of the best schools in the country were in our home town?

Public education in Lamorinda is an amazing bargain; friends in San Francisco, Marin and other communities routinely pay \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year for their children's K-12 education. But top public schools are not free. Parents volunteer long hours in our schools and all of us contribute financially. Payment of our parcel taxes is a crucial part of our economic support. These payments are not only a tremendous investment in our children's future, they literally ensure the continued viability of our schools and property value. Passage of Measure A demonstrates to Lamorinda citizens and prospective citizens alike that our community is still among the best places to live and raise a family.

Over and over, when our students return from college they talk about how well prepared they were by our local schools and how college is often "easier" than their high school experience. For our children's future and for our economic well being, we must continue to support our schools without reservation. In these tough economic times, we all are getting by on less. But Measure A's \$112 per parcel annual investment in our schools - allowing us to preserve our core curriculum and teacher positions -- is something we cannot afford to do without. Vote Yes on Measure A!

Ben and Janet Riley
Orinda

Community Service
Orinda Academy Raises Funds for Chile

Submitted by Miriam Schaffer



(L-R): Hillary Calef, Katherine Saxby, Anissa Laval Kiyemba, Cindy Gifford Palermo, Lino Sanchez Siegel, Elizabeth Jurado, Joe Romak, Beau Hall, Crystal Cardona, and Ben Ishibashi.

The Orinda Academy community raised over \$2,300 to aid in Chilean earthquake relief efforts. The students responded to a heartfelt plea from Spanish teacher Elizabeth Jurado, a native Chilean, who showed the students pictures of the severe damage in Chile as a result of the 8.8 magnitude earthquake. Elizabeth also described her very emotional story of how she was unable to connect with her family for three

long and worrisome days, before confirming Monday morning that they were all safe. Her sister, who was in the epicenter city of Concepcion, arrived safely at the parents home while Elizabeth was on the initial phone call from her parents. It was a very positive and emotional ending to three trying days.

The students were inspired to help their teacher and the country of Chile. The students, especially sen-

iors like Ben Ishibashi and Crystal Cardona, mobilized to have a luncheon with donated and home cooked Chilean and ethnic food. Along with other donations from the Orinda Academy community the students raised over \$2,300 to donate to Un Tech Para Chile (A Roof for Chile), an organization that builds small, temporary homes for \$1,000 each. OA students raised enough for two homes to be built, which surpassed their goal of only one home. Many OA students and families pitched in to prepare authentic Chilean dishes, or dishes from their culture, which reflected the diverse population of Orinda Academy. The community service aspect was then additionally a learning experience as the students learned about the destruction of earthquakes and tsunamis, as well as the culture and geography of Chile. Most importantly, the students felt good about giving and the faculty were impressed about their mobilization, organization, and giving attitude.

Saint Mary's College Honors International Women's Day with Wo/men's Leadership Forum

Submitted by Sharon Sobotta,
Women's Resource Center Director - Saint Mary's College



Moraga Mayor Ken Chew participates on the panel
Photo courtesy Saint Mary's College

Men and women from far and near, from Moraga to Portugal, came together on Monday for the Wo/men's Leadership Forum in honor of International Women's Day. True to this year's theme, building bridges, women and men, young and old, community and campus, came together to participate in workshops such as The Rhythm of Leadership, during which time Yamaha Fellow Musician Eduardo Lopes from the University of Evora collaborated with SMC staff members Sharon Sobotta and Tammy Appling-Cabading to get participants to think outside of the box about leadership, balance and group awareness; Changing the World with a Tabla and Changing the World with your story. The day also featured a lunchtime panel on male students

who are allies to women and a popular session called Following Your Inner Compass, during which Moraga Mayor Ken Chew shared his story about how his life journey led him from Malaysia to Moraga. To bring the day to a close, the Women's Interfaith Circle of Service collaborated with the Women's Resource Center to offer an Inter-generational Bridges of Peace Ceremony. "The event was open to the Public and it will be in the future as well," says Sobotta, "We intend to keep it as a tradition of building bridges between men and women from all backgrounds year after year with the continuing title Wo/men's Forum. For information about how to get involved next year, contact Sharon Sobotta, Director of the Women's Resource Center, at 925-631-4171.

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

**Also inside:
Schools
pages S4-6**

Lamorinda High School Basketball Season Ends

Three Teams Compete in State Tournament

By Conrad Bassett



Senior Spenser McDonald of Miramonte goes up against two Bishop O'Dowd defenders. Photo Jordan Fong

The three Lamorinda high schools produced some exciting moments and a lot of success during the recently concluded basketball season.

On the boys' side, Campolindo won the Diablo Foothill Athletic League championship going undefeated (12-0) on their way to a season record of 23-5. They were upset at home by rival Miramonte 57-45 in their final game—a North Coast Section quarterfinal.

Acalanes finished second in the DFAL with a 9-3 record (16-11 overall) and also advanced to the NCS playoffs where their season ended in a 55-40 loss at El Cerrito.

Miramonte finished third in the DFAL with an 8-4 record but advanced the furthest in post-season play.

Following the upset of Campolindo, they traveled to Sebastopol and avenged their 2009 NCS title game loss by beating Analy 70 to 67 in overtime. Senior Chris Hatfield led all scorers with 26 and senior Spenser McDonald and sophomore Ross Anderson added 12 apiece. In the overtime, senior Davis Louie scored eight of his 11 points to put the Mats over the top.

In the NCS Division III championship game on March 5th at Saint Mary's College, the Matadors

played close against top seed Bishop O'Dowd for the entire game before falling 60-50. The Mats played tenacious defense with nearly every starter picking up at least one block on the taller Dragons. They held their opponents scoreless for nearly three and a half minutes and scored the first three points of the game. The game stayed close with neither team leading by more than four points throughout the first three periods.

In the fourth period, the Dragons got some unlikely scoring help from their guards and opened up a 13 point lead, but the Mats did not quit. Louie hit a three and two free throws while McDonald added off-balance three, all in less than a minute. The effort reduced the lead to six with 36 seconds to go. The Mats had to foul and the Dragons made their last four free throws on their way to the final ten point advantage. Louie led all scorers with 14 while Anderson added 12 and McDonald and Hatfield each had ten.

By virtue of their strong NCS runner-up showing, the Matadors were selected to host a first round Northern California CIF game against Burlingame of the Central Coast Section. The game held on March 19 was another nip and tuck affair—with another overtime finish—something Miramonte has been used to. This time, the Panthers scored the last two points in regulation and they headed to extra time tied at 49. McDonald hit a baseline jumper for the Mats to put them ahead with the first score in overtime and they hung on for the 57-51 victory.

On Thursday, the Mats took their game on the road to visit Sacramento High. This was another barn burner but the Mats were on the short end of an 87-84 nail-biter. Hatfield finished with 28 points and Anderson added 20 to lead Miramonte who finished at 18-14 on the year.

The Lamorinda girls' teams

also fared very well in the regular season and in post season play. All three participated in the NCS playoffs with Campolindo and Miramonte advancing to the semi-finals and to the Northern California playoffs. Acalanes finished at 15-12.

Over at Campolindo, the Lady Cougars won their first two NCS games. The Cougars' NCS run ended in the semi-finals when they lost to top-seeded Bishop O'Dowd. Finishing in the semi-finals of the NCS tournament qualified the Cougars for the Northern California CIF championships. Campolindo headed across the bay to face St. Ignatius. The Wildcats prevailed 67-53 and the Cougars finished a very successful year with a record of 20-10.

Miramonte's NCS run ended when they were edged by Dougherty Valley in the semi-finals 57-54. Junior Alyssa Johanson led the team with 13 points while senior Stephanie Golden added 12. And, along with making it to the semi-finals of the NCS, the Lady Matadors were rewarded with a long trip up to face Enterprise in Redding on Tuesday where they beat the Hornets 60 to 48.

This was a streaky game as Miramonte took an early 14 point lead and Enterprise came right back to take the halftime lead. In the second half, the Lady Mats picked up the pace outscoring them 38 to 25. Golden led the Mats with 15 points and Johanson added ten rebounds. And their prize for winning was another road trip to play St. Mary's of Stockton, a team that defeated them 82-42 in February.

St. Mary's came into the game ranked as the number one girls team in the United States. In the rematch it was much closer as Miramonte fought back from an early 11 point deficit and actually led by 34-33 early in the second half, but St. Mary's went on a 13-0 run and eventually won 75-53. Golden again led the Mats with 16 points. The Lady Mats finished at 22-8.

Orinda Spartans Win Two

Submitted by Tom McConnell



Photo Ohlen Alexander

The Orinda Spartans got in the win column on Saturday, twice, taking both ends of a doubleheader against the San Ramon Slammers on Saturday afternoon. In game one, the Spartans won a see-saw battle by the final score of 9-6. In the nightcap, the Spartans dominated their opponents and glided to a relatively easy 9-3 win. With the two victories, Orinda evened its league record at 2-2.

The Spartans' bats came alive on Saturday with the team pounding out a total of 25 hits in the two games, 13 in game one and 12 in game two. Danny Ritelli was one of the hitting stars, accounting for five hits. Ritelli went 3-for-3 in game one with two doubles and a single. He knocked in two runs and scored another. In game two, Ritelli went two for three with another double and one more RBI and run. The Slammers finally retired Ritelli in his last at-bat of the day, when he popped out to first base. Clayton Stehr also went 3-for-3 in game one and recorded a fourth hit in game two. Stehr scored all four times he reached base. Andrew Deaver had three total hits on the day with two RBIs and three runs scored. Ryan Anderson also had three hits, in-

cluding an RBI double and a run scored.

The pitching was also outstanding, led by starter Ben Hoxie's strongest outing of the young season. Hoxie pitched three incredible innings, limiting San Ramon to just one run on two hits in the process. Ritelli finished the fourth inning for Hoxie and then pitched a strong

fifth before yielding to closer Dylan Kronenberg who took the squad the rest of the way, pitching two shutout innings, without allowing a hit. He walked two batters. Clayton Haskell and Clayton Stehr made a number of strong plays from the left side of the infield and Will McConnell threw out a would-be base stealer in the sixth inning.

In the nightcap, Eric Nyman got the start and he did not disappoint. Nyman threw two shutout innings before tiring in the third and giving up two runs. McConnell came in to relieve Nyman and struck out the only batter he faced in that frame to end the further scoring threat. McConnell then went on to throw two more strong innings. Connor Jackson then earned the save, pitching the sixth and seventh innings and allowing only one run in the process. Tyler Larsen threw out a would-be base stealer of his own in the seventh inning to give Jackson and his teammates the lift they needed to finish the game strong.

Opening Day Community Service

Submitted by Laura Traxler



Photo Laura Traxler

Orinda Baseball Association (OBA) families came to Opening Day ceremonies with gently-used sporting equipment, board games, and arts and crafts supplies. These items were donated to the young families at the Kawaihae Transitional Housing Project on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Two Orinda families, the

Shepards and the Richardsons, organized the event and will bring the collected equipment and games to Hawaii with them over Spring Break.

Steven and Kevin Shepard and Kady and Will Richardson also manned the bake sale table to raise money for additional purchases in Hawaii.

Lamorinda All-League Award Winners

BOYS Co-MVP: Kellen Ito (Campolindo) Sr.; Adam Mancebo (Campolindo) Sr.
First Team: Chris Hatfield (Miramonte) Sr.; Corey Collins (Acalanes) Sr.; Spenser McDonald (Miramonte) Sr., Jay Fowler (Acalanes) Sr.
Second Team: Pat Wirth (Campolindo) Sr.; Brian Sanders (Campolindo) Sr.; Zach Bloom (Acalanes) Sr.
Honorable Mention: Davis Louie (Miramonte) Sr.; Tyler Caldwell (Acalanes) Sr.; Carl King (Campolindo) Jr.;
GIRLS Co-MVP: Stephanie Golden (Miramonte) Sr.
First Team: Liza Katz (Miramonte) Jr.; Emani Harrison (Acalanes) Jr.; Meghan Ringer (Campolindo) Sr.
Second Team: Kiara Harewood (Acalanes) Jr.; Annie Ward (Campolindo) Jr.; Amanda Forshay (Campolindo) Jr.; Alyssa Johanson (Miramonte) Sr.
Honorable Mention: Kristine Miller (Miramonte) Sr.; Taylor Kizzie (Miramonte) So.; Janine Loutzenhiser (Miramonte) So.

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Saint Mary's Finds Providence in Las Vegas

...continued from page 1



Omar Samhan #50 Photo Tod Fierner

"We needed to win this [WCC Conference Tournament] to raise the level of our program, and we did. We got it done."

Leading up to the Championships, the Gaels faced off against the #3 seeded Portland Pilots in the semifinals on March 7th and came away with the 69-55 victory. Freshman guard Matthew Dellavedova, junior guard Mickey McConnell and senior center Omar Samhan all finished the game with 16, and freshman guard Jordan Page scored his Saint Mary's career-high with 14.

The win advanced the Gaels to the WCC tournament championship game.

The Gaels held the Zags scoreless until just under the 17 minute mark thanks to a three pointer and two layups by McConnell, who finished the half with

14 points for the Gaels. Saint Mary's didn't let the Zags take the lead the entire half, and heading into halftime had a 30-29 lead over the Bulldogs.

Gonzaga took two brief one point leads at the beginning of the second half and tied it up 35-35 with 14:26 to go in the game but the Gaels weren't giving in. Saint Mary's took back the lead after a three pointer by Dellavedova and never looked back.

"A lot of people said we couldn't do it," said senior center Omar Samhan. "At the beginning of the year nobody had us in the NCAA tournament, especially as an automatic bid...but here we are."

Saint Mary's Head Coach Randy Bennett started taking out his starters with 1:23 left to play and, along with the rest of the coaching staff and players on the bench, took a minute to realize what was happening.

"At that moment I was just so proud," Bennett said. "Proud of our guys, proud of what this team had accomplished."

His "my team is going to the NCAA tournament smile" was matched with a roaring crowd of Saint Mary's fans rushing the court to celebrate as the clock hit zero. The Gaels' 81-62 win over Gonzaga was followed by the announcement of WCC Tournament MVP Mickey McConnell, who had a career high 26 points for the Gaels, and all-tour-

namment team members senior forward Ben Allen, who also had a career high of 20 points in the game, and senior center Omar Samhan.

Selection Sunday named Saint Mary's a #10 seed in the Southern Regional of the NCAA tournament, scheduled to take on #7 seeded Richmond on Thursday in Providence, Rhode Island, at 11:50 a.m.

"Hopefully they're prepared," said Bennett. "There's nothing you can do, tournament experience is tournament experience. Mickey [McConnell] has it. Ben Allen has it. Omar Samhan has it. They have an understanding of what it means to be in the tournament and play. Our other guys don't have that, but hopefully the season has prepared them."

The Richmond Spiders enter the game with a 26-8 overall record, coming off a loss to #17 Temple in the Atlantic-10 Tournament Championship. The Spiders have won 12 of their last 14 games and finished the Atlantic-10 season with a 13-3 record. Richmond is led by junior guard Kevin Anderson, the Atlantic-10 Player of the Year who averages 17.8 points per game, followed by David Gonzalez, who averages 14.5.

The winner of Thursday's game will meet the winner of #2 seed Villanova and #15 seed Robert Morris in the second round on Saturday, March 20.

Positive Coaching Earns Reward

Campolindo Water Polo Coach Honored

Submitted by Linda Lim



Kim Everist coaching from the sidelines last year (cap #8 Emily Gerst) Photo Lyle Nishimi

Kim Everist, coach of the Campolindo High School Water Polo Team and USA Junior National Water Polo Team, has won Positive Coaching Alliance's coveted Double-Goal Coach Award Presented by Liberty Mutual Insurance for her positive impact on youth athletes.

The award is for coaches whose first goal is winning, and whose second, more important goal is teaching life lessons through sports. Everist will receive her award at Positive Coaching Alliance's 2010 Na-

tional Youth Sports Awards Dinner and Auction sponsored by Deloitte, April 17, at Stanford University's Maples Pavilion.

"Kim wins on the scoreboard, and more importantly, she wins by creating a positive, character-building sports experience for youth athletes," said Jim Thompson, PCA's founder and executive director. "Ultimately, the youth athletes Kim coaches are the real winners, and as those athletes become tomorrow's leaders our society as a whole wins."

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MBA Box Scores for March 6-8, 2010

Submitted by Donald DePaolo

Moraga Baseball Association
Bronco Division
March 8, 2010

Moraga LA Dodgers 7,
Piedmont Bombers 10
Dodger Highlights: Jack Lawrence 2 2/3 IP, 4K's, 5ER's, 0BB, 6H, 1RS; Kevin Hoffinger 2 1/3 IP, 3K's, 5ER's, 0BB, 8H, 1-for-3, 2SB's, 1R; Matt Koelzer 3-for-4, 2SB's, 1R; Nick Bishop 1-for-3, 2B, 2RBI's; Jake Oxendine 1-for-3, 2BB's, 2SB's; Jake Rolfe 1-for-4, 1SB.

Moraga Baseball Association
Bronco Division
March 7, 2010

Moraga A's 16, Orinda Predators 9
Predators Highlights: Elijah Hodges, 2 IP, 5K's, 1-for-2, 1RS; Kevin Henson, 3-for-3, 2 doubles, 2RBI, 3RS; Will Lyons, RBI; Quinn Thomas, 2RS.
A's Highlights: Richard Gong, 3-for-3, 2B, 4RBI, 3RS; Dom Edwall, 1-2, RBI, 3RS; Scott Hillhouse, 1-for-2, RBI, 2RS; Quinn Lyon struck out 4 of 5 batters faced; Jason Rodriguez, 2 2/3 IP, 2 hits.

Moraga LA Dodgers 4,
Piedmont Titans 14
Dodgers Highlights: David Cushing 2 IP, 4K's, 1ER, 0BB, 1H, 1-for-3, 2RS, 2RBI's; Jack Lawrence 2 IP, 1K, 3ER, 0BB, 3H; Tommy Vega 1 1/3 IP, 1K, 6ER, 2BB, 2H, 2-for-3, 1RS; Jake Rolfe 1 2/3 IP, 2K's, 4ER, 1BB, 1H; Matt Koelzer 1-for-4, 2B, 1RS; Gabe Dusauzay 1-for-2; Solomon Dusauzay 1-for-2; Kevin Hoffinger 1-for-1, 2SB's.

Piedmont Bombers 9,
Moraga Cardinals 2
Cardinals Highlights: Tristan Westernoff 2 1/3rd IP, 2K's, 2BB, 1-for-3; Perry Walker 2 IP, 5K's, 1BB, 1-for-3, 1RS; Calvin Gee 1-for-3, BB, SB.

Moraga Baseball Association
Pony Division
March 7, 2010

Moraga Cougars 12,
Danville Diablos 0
Cougars Highlights: Hunter Rosenbaum 4 IP, 3K's, 0ER 2H, 1-for-1, 1RS, 1RBI; Scott Singh 3-for-3, 2B, 1RS, 3RBI; David Ortega 2-for-3, 2B, 1BB, 2RS, 3RBI, Kurt Vergara 1-for-2, 2B, 1BB, 2RS, 1RBI.

Pleasant Hill Rip City 12,
Moraga Tigers 8
Tigers Highlights: Sean Pappa 3 for 5, 2B, 3SB, 3R; Sam Phillips 2 for 4, SB, R, RBI; Eric Dunning 1 for 3, SB, 2RBI, 2IP, 0R; Andrew Willmore 2 for 4, SB, 2R, RBI, 4IP.

San Ramon 15, Moraga A's 0
San Ramon Highlights: R Soderman 2-for-4; A Tsurda 2-for-3, 2RBI's; J Nejedly 3-for-4, 3RBI's, M Pangelinian 2-for-4, 4RBI's.
Moraga A's Highlights: Mark Santaguida 1-for-3; Rohit Verma 1-for-2; Damian Stoner 1-for-2.

Moraga Baseball Association
Pony Division
March 6, 2010

Moraga Cougars 1,
Pleasant Hill Hawks 0
Cougars Highlights: Phillip Rei 3 IP, 3K's, 0ER 1H, 2-for-3, 1B, 1RS; Matthew Tuan 4 IP, 0ER, 1H; Scott Singh 1-for-3, 1RBI; Kevin Lehman 1-for-2.
Pittsburg Pirates 10, Moraga Tigers 0

Tigers Highlights: Sean Pappa 1 for 2, SB; Peter Golesorki 1 for 2; Manny Manzone 3 IP, 6K.

San Ramon 16, Moraga A's 0
San Ramon Highlights: Cam G 3-for-3, 5RBI's; Garrett L 2-for-3, 3RBI's; Michael R 2-for-2, 2RBI's, Riley S 1-for-2, 2RBI's
Moraga A's Highlights: Rohit Verma 1-for-2; Evan Lawrence 1-for-2

Moraga Baseball Association
Mustang Division
March 6, 2010

A's 4, Mariners 3
As Highlights: Carter Whiting 3-for-3, 1RS, 1RBI; Aaron DePaolo 1-for-2, 2B, 1RBI.
Mariners Highlights: Harry Curtiss 2 IP, 4Ks, 1ER; Kyle Leuteneker 1-for-2, 2B, 1RS.

Moraga Baseball Association
Pinto Division
March 6, 2010

New York Yankees 20, Orioles 9
Yankees Highlights: Rex Curtiss 4-for-4, 2B; Jake Crumbaugh 3-for-3, 2B; Chase Peterson and Sean Donovan 3-for-3.
Orioles Highlights: Braden Maher 3-for-3; Aidan Lyon 3-for-4 2B; Sam Morasch 3-for-4.

SMC Women Fall in WCC Tournament but Qualify for NIT

By Caitlin Graveson



Jasmine Smith (32) hit a lay-up late in the game to bring the Gaels within two points 58-56. The Waves held on to win 62-56. Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's women's basketball finished the regular season 12-2, the second best record in the West Coast Conference (WCC) and the school's best record since 1989-1990. Their record secured them a number two seed and a two-round bye in the WCC tournament. New changes to the National Invitation Tournament qualification requirements also guarantees Saint Mary's post season play if they do not qualify for the NCAA tournament.

The Gaels traveled to Las

Vegas on Sunday, March 6th for the WCC tournament where they faced #3 Pepperdine University. Just two weeks prior to the playoff match-up, Saint Mary's defeated the Waves 52-38 in Malibu. Unfortunately, Lady Luck was on Pepperdine's side in Sin City and the Gael's fell 62-56.

"Last year we planned to not be in this position again. We played hard...but it wasn't good enough and unfortunately, we can't take that back for the older girls," said junior forward Louella Tomlinson,



Louella Tomlinson (2) notched a double-double in the loss. Photo Tod Fierner

who recorded a double-double for the Gaels with 18 points and 14 rebounds. Tomlinson, the WCC Defensive Player of the Year, also notched six blocks.

The Gaels came out strong against the Waves in the first half, building a 26-18 lead with five minutes to go in the half. Pepperdine increased their defensive pressure, forcing 11 turnovers from the Gaels in the final 11:30 to play. With 1:25 to go in the half the Waves tied it at 26 all, and it remained so heading into the locker

room.

To open the second half Saint Mary's reclaimed a nine point lead. However, the Waves again upped the defensive pressure and incited a run which gave them the lead. With about a minute to play, red-shirt sophomore Jasmine Smith hit a lay-up to cut the lead to two, 58-56. The Gaels were forced into the fouling game and could not overcome the deficit.

MBA Hits a Homer With Used Equipment Drive

Submitted by Phil Hoffman

On Saturday, March 6, the Moraga Baseball Association (MBA) held its Opening Day Ceremony with refreshments, music, the traditional first pitch, and introduction of the Campolindo Cougar varsity baseball team. Not only was it a fun day with great weather, but it was also the last day of a six-week long Used Baseball Equipment Drive that resulted in the collection of over \$30,000 of equipment, valued as if new.

This equipment drive was led by MBA veteran Ryan Hoffman, now a Campolindo freshman baseball player, and Scott Hillhouse, a current MBA Bronco player and Rheem Elementary School fifth grade student. Hoffman and Hillhouse were assisted by

friend Ryan Hooper and little sisters Annie and Olivia Hillhouse.

Over the past six weeks, Hoffman coordinated with the organization "Used Baseball Equipment for Inner City Kids" to determine needs in the Bay Area. He then published advertisements in the MBA and Campolindo High School newsletters. Thanks to the generosity of MBA, LMYA, Campolindo Baseball, and many families in both Moraga and Lafayette, Ryan and Scott collected nearly 1,500 items including bags, balls, bats, catchers equipment, cleats, gloves, mitts, first aid kits, helmets, tees, field equipment, training aids, home plates, bases, and clothing. This equipment will be donated to underfunded baseball programs throughout the East Bay.



Ryan Hoffman (left), Scott Hillhouse (right) Photo Phil Hoffman

Olympics Not Quite Over

Orinda Girl Races in the USSA Western Region Junior Olympics

Submitted by Leslie Ryder



Sierra Ryder laying down a Giant Slalom run at Alpine Meadows

Photo Zev Gur

Sierra Ryder, an eighth grader at Orinda Intermediate School, is a member of the Squaw Valley Ski team and has been on the team since she was four years old. Ryder was selected to represent the Far West division at the 2010 Western Region J3 (13-14 age group) Junior Olympics which will be held at Mt. Bachelor, Oregon, March 18-21, 2010. The Far West division

(California and Nevada) sends representatives based on the results of qualifying competitions in Slalom, Giant Slalom, and Super G. J3 athletes from all over the Western Region including Utah, Montana, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington will compete.

Three Slaloms at Sugar Bowl, three Giant Slalom events at Alpine Meadows and three

Super G's at Northstar at Tahoe bring us to a selection list for this year's J3 Junior Olympics. The selections are based on the best five-of-nine results of these qualifying races. Winners qualify to compete in the J3 International Race held in Whistler, Canada in April known as "The Whistler Cup." To see race results in a live format, you can click onto www.live-timing.com/races.php.

Lafayette's St. Perpetua Panther Pride - CYO Champions

Submitted by Monica Chappell

St. Perpetua parish sponsors a Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) as one dimension of its total ministry to youth. Athletic programs through CYO provide

opportunities for young people to develop strong moral character, self-esteem and leadership qualities.



West Diablo & Oakland Diocese Basketball Champions Fourth Grade Boys American League - Oakland Diocese Champions

Back: Coaches J Torchio and Tim Regan
Middle: Justin Pratt, Caden Moses, Seppi Ortman, Ty Whelehan, Robby Rowell,
Front: John Torchio, Ryan Regan, Gabe Middleton and Isaac Plotkin (not pictured Nick Price)

Photo Wendy Pratt



Fourth Grade Girls National League - West Diablo Champions

Front Row - Kneeling (L to R): Kaitlin Herzer, Schuyler Rosson, Savannah Mone, Claire Swan, Kaitlin Enrici, Hannah Ruane, Natalie Keefer
Back Row - Standing (L to R) Sam Swan (head coach), Grace Carlson, Emily Rasmussen, Jenna Kisner, Lauren Van Stralen, Abby Morris, Andrea Ruane and Mollie Van Stralen (Asst. Coaches) Photo Kelly Carlson



Fifth Grade Girls National League - Oakland Diocese Champions - undefeated

Back: Coach Bob Phipps and John Kirke
Left to Right: Isabel Kirke, Allie Figueredo, Juliana Van Laanen, Jacqueline Nichols, Molly Davis, Asiana Tam, Saskia Lamb, Gwen Kessenich, Morgan Rogers, Alexis Frumentti Photo Teresa Jimenez



Seventh Grade Boys American League - West Diablo Champions

Submitted by: Robin Fox
Row 1: Joey Hewitt, Casey Harrington, Scotty Fox, Sam DeRogue, Calvin Saribay, Kevin Hull
Row 2: Coach Ed Saribay, Tyler Petite, Matt O'Reilly, Chris Hansen, Head Coach Rob O'Reilly
Congratulations to St. Perpetua's seventh Grade Boys' basketball A team. The Panthers defended last year's title to win the Diocese of Oakland CYO Basketball Championship again. On March 7th, they beat St. Bonaventure, 70-57, in the championship finals, bringing St. P's season record to 29-3.

Photo Teresa Saribay



Sixth Grade Boys American League - West Diablo Champions - Undefeated in season play

Back: Coaches Mike Cassidy, Mark Flower and Greg Young
Left to Right: Tyler Henderson, Grant Young, Sutter Lindberg, Jake Rowely, Max Flower, Jake Berry, Jack Cassidy, Devin Regan, Gabe Middleton and Ryan Cardiff.



Eighth Grade Boys American League - Oakland Diocese Champions - Third Straight Championship

The CYO American Boys team beat All Saints from Hayward to win the Diocese Championship for the third year in a row. The special part of this victory is that this team plays in honor of their former coach, Ken Nelson. They won last year in his honor (he passed away before the season ended), and the boys decided to play together again to fight for another championship for their coach.

The coaching of the team was taken on by Mike Cassidy and Steve Lauth, but there was always a seat left on the bench for Ken.

Back: Coach Steve Lauth, Andrew Cassidy, John Lauth, Zack Kisner, Andrew Zolintakis, Coach Mike Cassidy
Middle: Justin Dunn, Issac Christian, Matt, Thomas
Front: Grant Sivesind Photo Kristin Krisner



Sixth Grade Girls National League - Oakland Diocese Champions

Back: Amy Sabbadini, Sophia Ross, Martha Morse, Asha Alagappan, Amanda Strang, Grace Deskin
Front: Coach Gary Sabbadini, Diana Duque, Emily Collins, Alexis Grant-Hudd, Coach Dino Duque
Not pictured: Amanda Warbritton Photo Ruth Dugue

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SLEEPY HOLLOW LEGENDS

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Acalanes Union
High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Wednesday, Mar 17, 2010 at 7:30pm
Wednesday, Mar 31, 2010 at 7:30pm

Moraga School District
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
Tuesday, April 13, 2010 at 7:30 pm

Lafayette School District
LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Wednesday, Mar. 18, 2010 at 4 pm (Time change)

Orinda Union School District
OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, Apr 12, 2010 at 4:00pm

Orinda Boy Scout Troop 237 Inducts Two Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Anna Duncan



David Esquivel



Matthew Duncan

Orinda's Boy Scout Troop 237 honored its two newest Eagle Scouts at a Court of Honor on Sunday, March 6th at the Orinda Community Church. David Es-

quivel and Matthew Duncan achieved Boy Scouting's highest award after completing their individual community service projects, which included creating a wheel-

chair accessible trail at Wagner Ranch Nature Area and landscaping an area at Sleepy Hollow Elementary School. They both volunteered to work on each other's projects.

David Esquivel's Eagle project benefited the Wagner Ranch Nature Area. David created a 1000 foot trail that is accessible to the handicapped and people in wheelchairs for the first time. David, a sophomore at Miramonte, is on the junior varsity tennis team and has played USTA tennis for six years. He is the son of Gabriel and Jill Esquivel. David would like to acknowledge the incredible support and expertise of Toris Jaeger, Naturalist for Wagner Ranch Nature Area.

Matthew Duncan's Eagle project benefited Sleepy Hollow Elementary School. Matt raised funds to landscape a weed filled area near the entrance to the school. Matt is a sophomore at DeLaSalle High School where he plays baseball. He is the son of Jeff and Anna Duncan. Matt extends special thanks to Kay Aaker, his third grade teacher at Sleepy Hollow, for the idea for this project, and Susan Andersen-Berger for her landscaping expertise!

Troop 237, which has served Orinda for 57 years, has seen 176 of its young men achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. The troop is led by Scoutmaster Eric Jorgensen and Troop Committee Chair Gary Witherell. For information on joining the troop please contact evjorgensen@comcast.net.

Lamorinda Schools Miramonte High School, Mock Trial Champions

Submitted by Jonathan B. Lance



The Miramonte Mock Trial team

Photo Diane Morrell, CCCOE

On March 4, Miramonte High School was named Contra Costa County's Mock Trial Champion. Held at the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE), the crowded room gave hearty congratulations to the team, and plenty of encouragement for their upcoming matches in the California State Mock Trials. This was Miramonte's 4th Mock Trial County Championship in a row.

For the past seven Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 10 Contra Costa County high school teams have been battling it out in the courtrooms of Martinez with a hypothetical murder trial. The final two matches Miramonte vs. Campolindo (Championship Round) and Acalanes vs. California (Consolation Round) were held last Tuesday (3/2/10) in the courtrooms of the Wakefield Taylor Courthouse, in Martinez.

Along with the Miramonte team, the following three teams in their respective rankings were also awarded: Campolindo (2nd place), California (3rd place), and Acalanes (4th place). In addition, there were a number of individual awards for outstanding achievement presented to students who represented all of the participating teams.

Contra Costa County Presiding Superior Court Judge Mary Ann O'Malley gave her overwhelmingly positive thoughts and observations about how impressive all the students performed during Mock Trials. "I look forward to seeing you all serving as attorneys in my courtroom in the very near future. And, I know some of you will be joining me at the Judge's Bench, as well."

Miramonte will represent Contra Costa County in the California State Mock Trial Competition, held in San Jose, March 19-21.

(The California state finalist team will then compete in the National Mock Trial Competition, held in Philadelphia, Penn., May 6-8.)

Mock Trial is an academic activity for high school students coordinated by the Contra Costa County Office of Education, and sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation www.crf-usa.org. The purpose of this program is to teach students about the law and the workings of the legal system. Each participant portrays the part of a courtroom character such as an attorney, witness, court clerk, or bailiff. To prepare, the students conduct legal research and receive guidance on courtroom procedures from their school teachers and volunteer attorney coaches, where they acquire a working knowledge of the judicial system, develop analytic abilities and presentation skills.

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All about Annie

Submitted by Catherine Soso



Julia Meckes (left) and Maritza Grillo

Photo provided

The Bulldog Theater Company at the Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) has been in rehearsal since January, for its Leapin' Lizards spring musical, Annie. With two complete casts (actors and technical crew) the production involves 105 students. The process requires quite a commitment from the students as they rehearse after school two to three days per week. All parents of cast members volunteer for the many facets of the production, in order to successfully bring the musical to the stage April 21st - 24th.

Beyond putting on a good show and gaining theater skills, there are other benefits to becoming involved in the Company. Core values of respect, work ethic and "heart" are stressed throughout the process. There is also an arm of education involved to enhance life skills. With Annie kids explore the depression era as they work on character identification, which gives them empathy to that time in our nation's history. Given the state of our current economy, parallels are likely to be drawn. Teamwork is reinforced during the rehearsals and a real sense of community is established. Performing and participating in the theater often mixes middle school kids in a different way, as they pursue a common interest outside the classroom.

A veteran leadership team is in place to help the students to the stage. This will be Director Clive

Worsley's seventh production with the OIS Bulldog Theater Company. He is also the Artistic Director of the Town Hall Theatre in Lafayette, and an Associate Artist with the California Shakespeare Theater. He has been teaching "Shakespeare in the Classroom" to OIS 7th graders, for the past 8 years. All students strongly benefit from Clive's experience as an award winning actor and director, who has worked in theatres throughout the Bay Area. Show producer Kathy Simon is responsible for supporting the cast and crew for her 6th play at OIS. She oversees sets, props, costumes, make-up, backstage, tickets, publicity and house operations. Her

ability to match parent volunteers with the production duties and her organizational skills are extraordinary. Music Director Yvonne Fuh-riman, Technical Manager Aubyn Severson and Choreographer Emily Morrison round out the leadership team.

There will be no better ticket in town when ANNIE takes center stage at OIS. The Bulldog Theater Company is sponsored by the OIS Parents' Club, the Orinda Arts Council and Cal Shakes (California Shakespeare Theater.) Treat yourself to an afternoon or evening of musical theater and support our community's developing young artists.

SHOWTIMES
Wednesday, April 21 at 4:30pm
Thursday, April 22 at 4:30pm
Friday, April 23 at 5:00pm and 8:00pm
Saturday, April 24th at 3:00pm and 7:00pm

LOCATION
Orinda Intermediate School Multipurpose Room
80 Ivy Drive, Orinda
925-258-3090

TICKETS
Wednesday and Thursday Matinee Show (open seating, no reserved tickets) \$6.00
All other shows are reserved seating:
Premier Seating \$10.00
Standard Seating \$8.00

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AUHSD Teachers Seek to be Part of the Solution

By Jean Follmer

Starting down a \$4.8 million deficit for the 2010/11 school year has been no easy task for the top-rated high school district in California. AUHSD Superintendent John Stockton recently applauded the Acalanes district teachers for being part of the solution. "The exemplary quality of the Acalanes Union High School District has recently been demonstrated by its teachers.

These professionals joined together last week to show a strong commitment to their students, community, and peers," Stockton said in a May 5 memorandum.

The district recently reached a 3-year contractual agreement with the Acalanes Education Association

teachers. "This agreement exemplifies a sincere desire by our teachers to do their part, and much more, to buffer our students from the full brunt of state funding cutbacks," continued Stockton.

Acalanes Education Association President and Las Lomas teacher, Jennifer Nickl, said the teachers are dedicated to their students. "Eighty-five percent of our members have chosen to sacrifice for our students - we've 'come to the party', as it is," said Nickl. In addition to the devastating, pending teacher lay-offs, compensation concessions on the part of teachers will include:

- 5 unpaid furlough days for the next 2 school years
- Increased class sizes

- Reduction in health benefits
- Cost containment measures on retiree benefits

Non-credentialed and administrative employees will make similar compensation sacrifices.

Nickl said the AEA has stressed to teachers that, although there will be pink slips issued, "don't bring that message back to the classroom." Contract negotiations were very difficult, according to Nickl, because the furlough days will result in \$2.7 million in salary cuts and the health benefits reductions were hard to digest. "People who had a particular doctor for many years or had gotten particular services have to make changes. As education professionals, we always

knew we were paid less than other professionals but we felt somehow compensated because of the benefits," said Nickl.

Although she holds hope regarding the State projections that the school budget dilemma will start turning around by 2014, Nickl said parents, teachers and communities have to operate as though it won't. "I'm beginning to lose faith in any data analysis or collection of any kind. I'm glad we've settled our contracts so we can focus on passing Measure A," said Nickl, adding that the AEA will be visibly supporting the passage of Measure A and are giving out car signs that say "Another AEA member for Measure A."

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MAGIC JUGGLING PUPPETS

Celebrating Lamorinda's High School Artists

By Cristina Kim

"What art offers is space - a certain breathing room for the spirit." ~John Updike



Best in Show and 2D third place winner, Tina Curriel, smiles in front of her winning piece Photo Ohlen Alexander

The Orinda Arts Council's 7th Annual Student Visual Arts Competition announced its winners on March 10th at the Orinda Library Gallery. Packed with stu-

dent artists, friends, family, and community members the gallery, which exhibited over 200 works of student art, was alive with positive energy and loud cheers for the win-

ners. Miramonte, Campolindo, Bentley, College Prep, Head Royce, Holden High, and the Orinda Academy all had student representatives who competed in the three major categories; 2D, 3D, and Photography. The competition was funded and supported by the Orinda Arts Council; in each category there were first, second and third prizes as well as a number of honorable mentions, all of which garnered monetary rewards. Local artists with expertise in these categories acted as bipartisan judges who ranked and critiqued the students' works.

In addition to the traditional categories, this year marked the first ever "Best in Show" award which, unlike the other categories, was voted on by the public. Using their cell phones, people who entered the gallery were encouraged to text in a vote for their favorite piece of artwork. The voting period opened on March 5, 2010, and closed at 5:00 p.m. on March 10th. Tina Curriel, a

Campolindo senior, won the Best in Show Award as well as a shared third place in the 2D category. An avid fan and protector of wildlife, her winning piece, titled "Vulnerable," depicts a rhinoceros painted over collaged dictionary pages.

Curriel explains, "'Vulnerable' was inspired by a trip to the San Francisco Zoo, like most of my oil paintings. It was inspired by the fact that the rhinoceros is a powerful and ancient creature, which has no real predators in the wild yet is nearly extinct." She attributes her love of animals and art to her grandmother and puts a great deal of thought into her artwork. She was very happy with both her third place and "Best in Show" awards. Curriel elaborates, "I am delighted and honored to be the viewer's choice winner. After pouring hours into my art, it is gratifying to see other people enjoying my work." She will continue pursuing her love of art this coming fall at Oakland's California College of the Arts.

The 7th Annual Student Visual Arts Competition Winners

- 2D**
- 1) Evka Whaley-Mayda (12th Grade, Bentley)
 - 2) Marina Kawata (11th Grade, Miramonte)
 - 3) Cassandra Cronin (11th Grade, Miramonte) & Tina Curriel (12th Grade, Campolindo)
- Honorable Mentions**
- Daniel Coleman (12th Grade, Miramonte), Jessica Leimone (12th Grade, Miramonte), Caitlin MacAdam (12th Grade, Campolindo)
- 3D**
- 1) Daniel Coleman (12th Grade Miramonte)
 - 2) Deeqa Mohamed (12th Grade, Bentley)
 - 3) Andrew Girardi (11th Grade, Acalanes)
- Honorable Mentions**
- Kate Sciamanna (12th Grade, Miramonte), Remy Miller (12th Grade, Miramonte), Bailey Tumas (12th Grade, Miramonte), Jaques Avalos (12th Grade, Miramonte), Peter Nork (12th Grade, Acalanes)
- Photography**
- 1) Macy Miller (12th Grade, Miramonte)
 - 2) Ruthie Shapiro (11th Grade, Campolindo)
 - 3) John Kennedy (12th Grade, Acalanes)
 - 3) Sam Crossley (10th Grade, Campolindo)

Scouts Meet Garbage

Submitted by Kana Ryan



Photo provided

The Wolf Scout den from Pack 505 recently toured the Contra Costa Transfer Station in Martinez. The tour was a part of learning about their living world. The scouts got to see how the

garbage trucks dump the garbage inside the transfer station and how the bulldozers push the garbage into holes where it is piled into semi trucks for transfer to the landfill. Our tour guides, Jennifer Brennan

and R.C. Ferris, explained how much garbage is brought in each day (over 2000 lbs) and how often there are recyclable items in the garbage. The transfer station doesn't do any sorting so those recy-

cles end up in the landfill along with the other garbage. The mounds of garbage and of course the smell made a big impact on the scouts. The scouts committed to double their efforts at home to help their families reduce, reuse and recycle.

At the end of the tour the scouts were rewarded with a real treat. One of the drivers, Mr. Manuel Martinez, graciously answered some of the scouts' questions and even invited the boys to look under the hood of his semi-truck. He let each one of them climb into the seat of his truck and honk the horn. At the end, in response to our thank you's, Mr. Martinez told the boys the one thing they could do for him in return was to do a good deed for someone else, as that was the only thanks that he needed.



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Teachers in the Red



On March 4th, teachers from the Moraga School District wore red in protest of the State budget cuts that threaten the schools. In the picture, 23 teachers and staff from Camino Pablo Elementary were joined by ten teachers from Rheem Elementary, five from Los Perales and five from Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. Photo Sophie Braccini

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Springhill 5th Grade Gets "Greased"

Submitted by Debbie Fugate



The Springhill Fifth Grade class presented Grease Junior on March 1st and 2nd. The show was directed by Leslie Noel of the Peter Pan Foundation. Photo provided

St. Perpetua School Celebrates Dr. Seuss

Submitted by Monica Chappell



Photo Joanne Easton

The National Education Association's Read Across America was celebrated at St. Perpetua school in Lafayette with a week-long schedule of activities which included a

"Read-In," favorite author dress-up day and a young author contest. This NEA sponsored program is now in its 8th year. NEA's Read Across America Day--celebrated annually on Dr. Seuss's birthday, March 2--generates enthusiasm for reading nationwide and focuses the country's attention on how important it is to motivate children to read. "Reading opens the doors to achievement, and are crucial building blocks toward making the joys of reading an integral part of every child's life," stated Karen Goodshaw, Principal of St. Perpetua school. To learn more about this National event or St. Perpetua school visit www.stperpetua.org

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Into the Woods

Submitted by Natalie Wheeler



Miramonte High School's Spring Musical, Into the Woods opens this week; for tickets go to <http://miramonte.acalanes.k12.ca.us>. Performances: March 18-20 at 7:30pm - Thurs, Fri, Sat evenings; March 21 at 2:00pm - Sun Matinee; March 25-27 at 7:30 pm - Thurs, Fri, Sat evenings; March 27 at 2:00pm - Sat Matinee. Photo provided

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Happy Valley Girls Scouts

Submitted by Sandra Patterson



The 2nd grade Happy Valley Girl Scout Troop 30659 chose for its service project this year to visit and bring cheer to those residents at the Lafayette Woodland Nursing Inn. On February 18, 2010, the Girl Scouts visited the patrons. The Girl Scouts distributed bookmarks they had made and decorated at their January troop meeting. They also served cookies and punch. They began the visit by singing several Girl Scout songs they learned over the past few months and shared the Girl Scout Promise. They carried out the part of the promise that day to "help people at all times." Photo provided

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Pack 459 Arrow of Light Ceremony

Submitted by Sandra McGonigle



Photo provided

Congratulations to these 2nd year Webelos who participated in the Arrow of Light Ceremony on March 2nd. They crossed the Blue and Gold bridge and are all joining a local Boy Scout Troop. New Scouts (Back row L-R) Hank Catron, Drew Barber, Tim Tague, Will Lyons, Tyler Abramson, Nicky Millham, Emerson Smith, Stephen Schmidt, Griffin Ansel, Cole Wolfe, Carter Wirtz, (Front row, L-R) Casey McGonigle, Sam Sernett, Marky Presten, John Berg, Christopher Warthen, Billy Howard, Jesse Wilkinson. Thanks to Den Leader Greg Ansel, who guided these eighteen boys over the past five years while fulfilling their Cub Scout requirements in Orinda's Pack 459.

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 04 Issue 1 Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Bringing Back the Natives

Annual Garden Tour on May 2nd

By Sophie Braccini



Home Inspection for Sellers, page 8



The Mead-Reynolds garden features an antique lithograph press; in the foreground is California Gooseberry (*Ribes californicum*), behind the press grows a native grass, California Fescue (*Festuca californica*)
Photo Sophie Braccini

In 2006, Lois Reynolds and Terry Mead went on the “Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour.” The Orinda couple had always wanted to transform their side and back gardens from concrete and dirt to something more appealing and sustainable; it was not until they visited the garden of landscape architect Rick Alatorre during the tour that they decided to act. This season, the couple’s property will be fea-

tured in the 2010 tour which will take place on Sunday, May 2nd. This year’s tour will include two other Lamorinda gardens; Al Kyte’s native garden in Moraga, which has been growing for over 30 years making it one of the oldest in the area, and Barbara Leitner’s garden in Orinda, planted only with natives local to the San Pablo Creek watershed.

Reynolds and Mead asked Alatorre to help them

create their own native garden, and they are thrilled with the result. Reynolds (known to Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School students as art teacher Mrs. Mead, who retired last year), says that her garden is part of her inspiration to develop her art in new directions.

... continued on page 4

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LAFAYETTE	Last reported: 7
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$560,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,350,000
MORAGA	Last reported: 4
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$200,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$925,000
ORINDA	Last reported: 3
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$718,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,125,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

LAFAYETTE

- 3223 Alta Lane, \$600,000, 3 Bdrms, 1410 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 2-11-10
- 24 Crest Road, \$1,350,000, 5 Bdrms, 3832 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 2-19-10
- 310 Denise Lane, \$625,000, 4 Bdrms, 2319 SqFt, 2000 YrBlt, 2-25-10
- 3415 Moraga Boulevard, \$822,000, 3 Bdrms, 1763 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 2-25-10
- 855 Mountain View Drive, \$560,000, 4 Bdrms, 1675 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 2-17-10
- 3286 Springhill Road, \$1,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 3691 SqFt, 2006 YrBlt, 2-18-10
- 3385 West Terrace, \$700,000, 3 Bdrms, 1301 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 2-19-10

MORAGA

- 1838 Joseph Drive, \$875,000, 4 Bdrms, 2371 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 2-19-10
- 4 Ketelsen Court, \$200,000, 4 Bdrms, 1988 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 2-17-10
- 98 Miramonte Drive, \$383,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 2-19-10
- 45 Warfield Drive, \$925,000, 4 Bdrms, 2412 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 2-18-10

ORINDA

- 10 Albo Court, \$770,000, 3 Bdrms, 1690 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 2-22-10
- 31 Ivy Drive, \$718,000, 3 Bdrms, 1803 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 2-11-10
- 61 Bates Boulevard, \$1,125,000, 3 Bdrms, 2480 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 2-23-10

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

MORAGA

- 1965 Ascot Drive #12, 94556, American Home Mortgage, 02-24-10, \$332,445, 1130 sf, 2 bd
- 2 Via Barcelona, 94556, Citimortgage, 02-22-10, \$652,902, 1273 sf, 3 bd

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- 105 Rheem Boulevard, 94563, Indymac Mortgage, 02-17-10, \$725,655, 1788 sf, 3 bd

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Bringing Back the Natives

... continued from page 1

“When we decided to completely re-do our garden I started making my first mosaic stepping stones in anticipation,” she says, “and I had them ready when he (Alatorre) started moving the dirt.” One of the things Reynolds appreciates about Alatorre is that he proposed a solution to integrate the old lithograph press, which her grandfather used for his own art, into the garden. “We designed the garden together, so you could walk down a path and discover a piece of art at a time.”

The garden needed the addition of copious quantities of dirt to create mounds for the plants, a new drainage system, and the installation of a drip irrigation structure that was used, especially during the first two years, to establish the natives. “After this first period we only have to water a bit at the peak of the dry season,” says Reynolds. Since she was never a gardener, Reynolds also appreciates the low maintenance needed to keep her garden beautiful. “The way native flowers reseed themselves is fantastic,” she says, “we just have to do a bit of weeding and the rest takes care of itself.”



San Francisco Wallflower

Photos Andy Scheck



Farewell-to-Spring 'Aurora'

Reynolds' next artistic project will be a mosaic table for the garden. “Each year I am inspired to do more,” she says, “somehow the garden and the art are symbiotic. The garden has also changed what I like and appreciate in flowers and plants. I used to like long-stemmed roses to make bouquets. Now, with my native flowers, I create very different flower arrangements that I like just as much, if not more.”

For Al Kyte, native gardening is a matter of vision and philosophy. A native gardener for 35 years, the Moraga resident is a local icon when it comes to native plant gardening. “To create a landscape exclusively of native plants is forward-looking in terms of water conservation,” explains Kyte, “it integrates with the surrounding areas, maintains the semi-rural feel, and can be beautiful and distinctive as well.” His garden is an absolute must-see with over 100 species of California natives, displaying an amazing array of colors and landscaping styles from a manzanita-based chaparral in front to a varied, open woodland with a twenty-five foot long stream in the back. Most of the established plants receive no summer water.

The gardens are excellent habitats for local wild life, an additional benefit of planting a native plant garden. Barbara Leitner, whose Orinda garden will be open to visitors this year, is very motivated by this aspect of native plants; or to be true to her pursuit, of local plants indigenous to our watersheds. “I have worked with the City of Orinda as a consultant about creek-friendly plants and stream-side planting that would provide wild life habitat,” says Leitner, “one of the recommendations was to use local plants because they fit better with the environment, and they will have no negative impact on the wild population in and outside



Lois Reynolds and a “Tranquilon Ridge” Pink Flowering Currant

the planting area.” To plant her garden, Leitner gave seeds she collected at salvage sites to a local nursery to grow. The garden is now three years old and has not required watering since its second year.

To register for the 2010 Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour, go to www.bringingbackthenatives.net.



Clarkia flower bouquet

Photo provided



Chalk Dudleya

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Catching the Rain

By Sophie Braccini



Gutter door Photo Andy Scheck

It is one of Deva Rajan's simple pleasures to collect rainwater from the gutters that have been cleaned by the winter showers, and to make tea with it. "What better use of the rain water can one make?" asks the Canyon resident. At the other end of the scale of rain catchment, Canyon Construction, the developer that restored the Moraga Barn, collects 15,000 gallons of rain water every winter in three concrete tanks buried on its premises, "that's enough to sustain 100% of our landscaping over the whole season," says Chris Avant, the company's president. And in the middle of the scale, residents like Andy Scheck, the publisher of the Lamorinda

Weekly, use home-made systems to make the best possible use of the water that falls from our skies.

"When I came here from Germany, I was very surprised to notice that no one was collecting water from their gutters," says Scheck, "there, it is standard to have an outlet where the gutter comes down. Not everybody uses it, but the possibility is always there." Scheck decided to construct his own gutter-door in order to catch the winter rain. He first made a paper model for the door and cut an opening in the gutter; he then built a door, which is now attached to the gutter, from a sheet of metal. "I have a piece of pipe that I attach to the door to fill a large can located on the side of the house," he says, "once the first can is full, another pipe conducts the water to the next can."

Scheck's system does not have the storage capacity to fully meet his landscape watering needs, but the collected water is used from September to April and it somewhat reduces his water bill for the whole year.

Suzanne Jones, on the other hand, has a 10,000 gallon storage tank that catches enough water to maintain her native plant garden year round. When we remodeled our house, we buried a stainless steel tank under the deck," says the Bollinger Canyon resident, "it is connected to half of our gutters." Jones was able to locate a Santa Rosa company that was ready to sell her the



Concrete tanks were buried by "The Barn" at the time of its renovation.

Photo courtesy Canyon Construction

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stainless steel tank, usually destined for wine storage, at a good price. "I wanted something recyclable and was glad to find this beautiful tank for only 10-20% more than a plastic tank." Jones plans to add a second tank in the future to sustain a vegetable garden. "When we re-did our plumbing system we made sure that it would be grey-water-recycling ready," adds Jones, "it will be easy to divert the water from our laundry to water our trees when we are ready to do so."

A do-it-yourself enthusiast, Scheck has also set in place a home-made grey-water recycling system. "It helps that the bathtub is set by a window," he says, "when the bath is over, we put the hose that sits outside the window in the tub and start a small pump." It takes five minutes to recover the water that is later used in the garden. "When the drought started last year it felt wrong to take baths," says Scheck's wife, Wendy, "this system is perfect and I enjoy my bath guilt-free."



Andy Scheck with his bathtub pump system Photo Sophie Braccini



Rain and grey water stored in barrels provide all the water for the Scheck's vegetable garden



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The Good Psychology of Inspections – For Sellers!

By Ken Ryerson

For both buyers and sellers, inspections rank as one of the cheapest kinds of insurance a housing consumer can purchase.

Inspections provide protection for both parties when participating in the largest financial transaction that most will ever make in their lifetime. Buyers receive assurance in knowing what they are getting BEFORE they commit to years of monetary responsibility. Likewise, sellers are safeguarded down the road against lawsuits about undisclosed problems in their former home.

The cost for this sound, piece of mind assurance, is modest. If you are buying a single-family detached home in the Lamorinda area, a thorough inspection of the home and property generally costs around \$1,500.

What are you getting for this expenditure? What should be tested as part of the inspection process? In my opinion, the answer is Everything. A complete general inspection should include an examination of the foundation, plumbing, roof, chimney and fireplace, windows and doors, electrical and heating systems, and drainage and soil condition. I also recommend that the inspection include a close look at anything unique or specific to the property.

There are many types of inspections that span across various forms of specialization and expertise. In the Lamorinda area, a pest inspection is at the top of the list. A pest report should always be completed by a licensed pest inspector, and will only cover the areas of the home that are readily accessible for inspecting.

In Northern California, a pest report primarily serves to identify what type of dry rot and fungus damage are present in a home. It is common for even the most immaculate home to have some amount of repair that is needed. For older properties, repair costs can run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

Pest reports generally discover some deficiencies in Bay Area homes therefore; they are customarily provided up front by the seller and at the



Dry rot on a roof beam

seller's expense. However, this is not always the case, and if for some reason a pest report has not been provided, I highly recommend that any buyer purchase one at their own expense. In the Lamorinda area, a typical pest report by a licensed inspector costs around \$300.

Other inspection services available include structural and engineering analysis, mold inspection, drainage, feng chi study, and landscaping or tree examination, but the list is endless and the choices need be commensurate with the house and the environment.

Why do I claim inspections rep-

resent good psychology? Couldn't an inspection reveal problems for a seller and scare off potential buyers? Today's real estate market is challenging enough when a home is void of problems; the last thing any seller needs in today's market are reports stating several problems with their home.

Contrary to the belief that buyer's will back away from purchasing a home due to issues brought to light from inspections, is the reality that buyers typically back out of a deal because of financing issues or psychological fears.

... continued on page 10

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This warm and distinctive 3900 sq. ft. traditional is situated on a half acre lot with a soccer size backyard. The residence features 4 bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths with an office and has been beautifully updated. The kitchen and family room have access to the yard, deck and a charming brick patio. The home is surrounded by sensational gardens and large grassy lawns outlined with a variety of fruit and oak trees. A short walk to Sleepy Hollow Elementary.

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41 Lambeth Square, Moraga



Mediterranean Gem

This home oozes character and charm. Private courtyard, custom iron gates & arched front doors. Hardwood floors, vaulted, beamed ceilings and views of hills. Updated kitchen with cherry cabinets, granite, stainless appliances, and breakfast bar opening to family room. Luxurious master suite w/ retreat, two walk-in closets, sitting area, & bath w/jetted tub & shower. Two other bedrooms, office and bonus room. Three yard settings – pool/spa, view sitting areas, and garden /play yard. Private setting on cul-de-sac.

Listed for \$1,229,500

59 Lambeth Square, Moraga



Charming Traditional with St. Mary's Views

4 bed, 2 bath on cul-de-sac with beautiful views of St Mary's. Formal dining, large, sunny family room, updated granite baths, kitchen w/possibility for expansion, pool & grassy areas. Dual-pane windows, hardwood floors, new carpet and paint.

Listed for \$949,950

16 Corte Monterey, Moraga



Campolindo Home on Huge Lot

This private home sits on 1.4 acres of gardens, backing to a trail to the Lafayette Reservoir. Upon entering this single-story home on a cul-de-sac you're greeted by a combined living/formal dining room with views of hills. The kitchen and dinette are open to the family room and have raised beamed ceilings. There are three bedrooms and two baths, new carpet, dual-paned windows and a laundry room. The lot includes a patio and extensive gardens. This home needs some cosmetic updates, but what a fabulous opportunity!

Listed for \$779,500



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The Good Psychology of Inspections – For Sellers!

... continued from page 8

An inspection report, promotes trust and comfort which helps buyers overcome their fears.

When I sell my home—which I won't be for some time—I will document current problems, past problems, potential problems and especially issues that I don't see as a problem, but someone else may find to be a huge problem. I have found that the more information that is provided by the seller, the less concerned a buyer tends to be.

It is more often the case that a seller provides limited information and the buyer becomes fixated on

one or two items. And if it is the Buyer that uncovers the problem, psychology dictates that the undisclosed matter becomes the central issue. I've seen many deals collapse as a result of non-disclosure.

What about sellers? In the early 2000's some sellers provided a general home inspection report up front, knowing that eager buyers in that hot market would forego any inspections in an effort to secure a particular property. Today the tables are turned and it's the seller who may forego providing an inspection. This is a risky move and here is what I advise my Sellers:

"I am a firm believer that the best thing you can do in today's market is to encourage a Buyer to have any and all inspections of the home. From a liability perspective, the more complete due diligence performed by the Buyer, the less likely it is that an unknown problem will surface later. When a Buyer discovers problems after they have moved into the property, the recourse is more costly and time consuming."

Most sellers are very honest when disclosing known problems in their house. But problems can exist that a seller may not know about, especially for distressed properties that have not been maintained.

The most common suit stemming from a home purchase is when a Buyer sues the Seller for issues discovered after the close of escrow. This includes issues that the Seller was not aware of, and this is why inspections offer valuable liability protection.

As markets change, this protection is more important than ever. A Buyer who bought in a rush during the bull market may now be unhappy in this El Nino year to find that their garage fills with water during every heavy rain or that the roof leaks.

While most will consider the problem a lesson learned and engage a drainage specialist or roofer to fix the problem, some elect to sue the Seller. It's not surprising to learn that the number of such lawsuits increase when the market is sliding downward and home prices are falling.

In closing, my advice to a Seller is to disclose everything. As for Buyers, you should 'Inspect, Inspect, Inspect' (especially if you're looking at a bank-owned foreclosure property).

Whether a Seller or a Buyer, these policies are good psychology. Whether you are leaving the keys for the new owners or you are the new owners in possession of the keys, the condition of the home sold and bought is exactly what it was reported to be.

Ken Ryerson's Inspection Team

Home Inspectors:

Crampton Inspection Services – (925) 376-7707

Western Home Inspections – (925) 837-7363

Chimney Inspections:

Sal Russo – (925) 673-0546

Structural Engineering:

Dan Szumski – (510) 418-7155

Roof Inspections:

Delta Roofing – (925) 513-8759

Drainage / Retaining Walls:

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Ken Ryerson lives in Moraga with his wife, Linda and their two children.

Ken is a Lamorinda Residential Real Estate Specialist with Pacific Union in Orinda. If you have any questions or comments, he can be reached at 925-878-9685 or via email at Ken@RyersonRealty.com

Isolated Moraga Needs to Get Organized for Effective Emergency Response

Submitted by Julie Lindemann, MNEP Steering Committee



Bruce Berman and Herb Lederman (green shirts) demonstrate the proper response to a gas line leak while Gary Borrelli, Frans Hoffman and Linda Borrelli observe. Photo provided

The recent catastrophes in Haiti and Chile are grim reminders of the dangers we face from earthquakes while living in the Bay Area. Our rational minds know we must prepare for the inevitable, but do we? Is your family ready for a disaster such as an earthquake or wildfire?

Moraga is especially vulnerable. The town is geographically isolated and there are few law enforcement and fire personnel on duty at any one time. Because Moraga residents could be isolated from outside aid agencies from 3 days to 2 weeks following a disaster, we must know how to take care of ourselves until help arrives. We must know how to rescue and give effective first aid to the injured, provide food and shelter to the homeless, and communicate our needs by radio, assuming there will be neither power nor cell phone coverage.

In the event of a disaster, a coordinated group response is more effective than disorganized individual efforts. Thus, good communications and cohesiveness within neighborhoods are vital tools for survival. The Moraga Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness (MNEP) committee is a group of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) graduates, who have organized to meet the challenge of educating and organizing as many residents as possible. MNEP has received the endorsement of

the Moraga Police Department, the Moraga/Orinda Fire District and Lamorinda CERT.

During the second half of 2009, 10 neighborhood groups in Moraga began their organizing activities with the help of MNEP. To date 29 CERT graduates have volunteered to serve as trainers and facilitators. During 2010, MNEP's goal is to assist at least another 15 neighborhood groups to organize and receive basic training. Should you offer to host a meeting in your neighborhood, a MNEP facilitator will bring the necessary equipment and documentation to present a 45-minute program. The only responsibility of the host is to provide a meeting place and to invite approximately 20 consecutive homeowners. Twenty is the ideal number of households to make a cohesive neighborhood. At the end of the presentation, volunteers will be called upon to take the responsibility of Neighborhood Captain. MNEP is an on-going free resource for the neighborhood groups.

MNEP is also reaching out to community service organizations, homeowners associations and church groups to increase awareness of their goals and programs. Interested organizations can contact MNEP and request a free presentation for their next gathering.

The members of the MNEP Steering Committee are: Co-chairs Gary & Linda Borrelli, Bruce Berman, Frans Hoffman, Herb Lederman, Julie Lindemann, Cindy Petrini, Barbara Renz and Lonnie Treat.

You can get involved today by emailing the Steering Committee at MoragaNEP@gmail.com.

Neighborhood Hosts are needed as well as Neighborhood Captains. Donations are welcome.

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New Listing

49 Longridge Road

Fabulous refurbished home ready to go! Great open floor plan, 4bd + office, 3.5ba. Gourmet kitchen, lux mstr retreat. Lg decks, lawn area, peaceful views, close to town.

Offered at \$949,000

ORINDA



New Listing

70 Lost Valley Drive

Totally remodeled contemporary design w/open floor plan & top-of-the-line finishes. Gourmet "Cooks" kitchen & designer bathrooms. Near 12 yrs top Orinda schools!

Offered at \$985,000

ORINDA



New Price

25 Risa Court

Sweeping views of Orinda hills & privacy from almost 1 ac yard - walk to school & swim club. Attractive 4 bd beautifully remod w/hdwd flrs, new kitchen & baths.

Offered at \$999,000

ORINDA



New Listing

650 Kite Hill Road

Fabulous Orindawoods 2940 sf 4bd/3ba sgl family home on lovely .4 ac w/deck, patio, gardens. Updated granite kitchen, hdwd floors, soaring ceilings, wonderful views!

Offered at \$1,328,000

ORINDA



411 Camino Sobrante

One of Orinda's most distinctive Country Club homes w/2875 sf of charm & exceptional character for ideal living/entertaining. Lovely outdoor areas.

Offered at \$1,595,000

ORINDA



New Listing

137 Rheem Boulevard

Newly constructed/remodeled 4300+ sf 5bd/4.5ba includes 1bd/1ba guest house, chef's kitchen, walnut flrs, 11' ceilings, wine room, 4 fireplaces, gated entry, beautiful views.

Offered at \$1,899,000

ORINDA



New Listing

17 Normandy Lane

New listing in Sleepy Hollow! Wonderful 3900 sf trad on 1/2 ac. Sensational lawns & gardens, soccer size bckyd. Fabulous mstr suite, updated kit. Walk to elem.

Offered at \$1,995,000

ORINDA



New Listing

239 Sundown Terrace

Beautiful trad 5bd/3ba 3498 sf on prem cul-de-sac lot w/cust details thruout. Lux mstr suite w/frplc; guest suite; chef's kit, fenced lvl back yd, patio & play areas.

Offered at \$2,100,000

MORAGA



136 Walford Drive

4 bedroom/2 bath, great floor plan, kitchen/family room opens to large private yard. Quiet street. Great bones, location.

Offered at \$899,000

MORAGA



Pending

54 Shuey Drive

Executive rancher w/amazing backyard & views. 4bd/2.5ba 2304 sf w/hdwd floors throughout. Terrific entertainer's home - the pool even has a slide! Top schools.

Offered at \$995,000

MORAGA



New Listing

160 Valley Hill Drive

Fabulously remod 4bd/4ba 2926 sf exec ranch home on over 5 ac of beautiful horse property. 3-stall barn & 4 pastures. Only 1.7 mi off St. Mary's Rd but a world away!

Offered at \$1,550,000

LAFAYETTE



New Price

911 Oak Street

Downtown location yet in a private, park-like setting w/spectacular views of Mt. Diablo. Updated 3bd/2ba single level home on over 1/3 acre.

Offered at \$789,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

616 Huntleigh Drive

Exquisite Burton Valley 3bd/2ba hm w/gorgeous view lot. Designer touches, crown molding & hardwood floors. Remod baths, lg backyard patio & sprawling lush lawns.

Offered at \$949,000

LAFAYETTE



1199 Monticello Road

Happy Valley Glen custom hm on beaut pvt .8 ac lot. Lrge fam rm w/kit. Has wall of glass doors that open to yard. Grt floorplan, grt neighborhood, close to bart

Offered at \$1,195,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3498 Springhill Court

Charming 3000+ sf 4bd/3ba + 1bd/1ba/ kitchenette sep cottage on delightful pvt court walking distance to schools. Lush .5 ac lvl lot w/perfect entertaining areas.

Offered at \$1,498,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3425 Shangri La Road

Unique, stunning property w/gated entry on lvl 1-ac lot. 5bd/3.5ba, hardwood floors, 4 fireplaces, panoramic views from every room. Lovely pool, full barn & riding arena.

Offered at \$2,198,000

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