

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 05 Issue 20 Wednesday, December 7, 2011



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New Transitional Home Awaits Tenants

By Sophie Braccini

as Trampas Incorporated, the non-profit supporting people with developmental disabilities in Lafayette since 1958, is putting the

final touches on a completely remodeled home located in downtown Lafayette. It was designed and specially outfitted to allow some of the young adults who are served by the organization to achieve independence. Building to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) specifications



Dan Hogue demonstrates the shower in Las Trampas' newly remodeled home.

Photo Sophie Braccini

and employing elements of what is now called Universal Design – creating environments that are usable by all people – gives a feel of spaciousness and normality to the home.

"This project was made possible by a Community Development Block Grant from the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development," says Bonnie Peacock, the Development Director at Las Trampas. The non-profit got \$165,000 to remodel the property they owned but that was completely inadequate for disabled adults to live in independently. The entire inside space was redone within their budget and features four bedrooms and two baths.

"Some of the counters are lower than is the custom," says Las Trampas Associate Executive Director Ron Kilgore, "and that height is quite convenient for anyone prepping food, independent of their posture. Some of the drawer block units are on wheels and can be removed to either allow someone in a wheelchair to get closer, or to create a separate island." There is also space under the sink that allows for easy wheelchair access.

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THE BEAUBELLE GROUP

WALK TO SCHOOLS, PARK AND TRAILS



This classic Moraga home is ideally located at the end of the court offering a .91 acre lot complete with stunning wooded views. The approx. 2,650sq. ft. of living space features 5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms and a den/study. Offered at \$825,000

MORAGA COUNTRY CLUB



This former model home features 3,424 sq. ft., new appliances, high ceilings, 3 fireplaces, new paint and carpet, and a corner lot location. Golf, tennis, swim and new clubhouse included. Sold for \$830,000



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	5	\$480,000	\$2,200,000
MORAGA	7	\$340,000	\$885,000
ORINDA	6	\$200,000	\$1,825,000

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

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- 1840 Del Rio Drive, \$480,000, 4 Bdrms, 1706 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 11-3-11
- 1017 Dyer Drive, \$768,000, 4 Bdrms, 1887 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 11-8-11; Previous Sale: \$625,000, 02-03-04
- 3245 La Canada, \$1,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 2215 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 11-1-11
- 3970 North Peardale Drive, \$2,200,000, 5 Bdrms, 4775 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-28-11; Previous Sale: \$2,385,000, 05-30-06
- 831 Tanglewood Drive, \$1,510,000, 5 Bdrms, 6120 SqFt, 1925 YrBlt, 10-27-11; Previous Sale: \$560,000, 10-08-98-

MORAGA

- 6 Baltusrol Street, \$450,000, 2 Bdrms, 1743 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 11-7-11; Previous Sale: \$705,000, 06-21-05
- 8 Camelford Court, \$885,000, 4 Bdrms, 2116 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 11-3-11; Previous Sale: \$656,000, 09-09-03
- 1438 Camino Peral, \$340,000, 3 Bdrms, 1348 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 11-2-11; Previous Sale: \$46,000, 05-12-78
- 5 Idlewood Court, \$550,000, 4 Bdrms, 2135 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-31-11
- 2 La Quinta Street, \$847,500, 4 Bdrms, 2680 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 10-31-11; Previous Sale: \$190,000, 06-23-78
- 14 Miramonte Drive, \$215,000, 2 Bdrms, 1152 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-31-11; Previous Sale: \$452,500, 08-09-06
- 139 Walford Drive, \$745,000, 3 Bdrms, 1624 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 11-1-11; Previous Sale: \$835,000, 03-28-08

ORINDA

- 73 Brookwood Road #52, \$200,000, 1 Bdrms, 673 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 10-28-11; Previous Sale: \$142,000, 04-15-99
- 134 Canon Drive, \$799,000, 3 Bdrms, 1999 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 11-3-11; Previous Sale: \$8,000, 06-02-75
- 230 Courtney Lane, \$920,000, 3 Bdrms, 2282 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 10-28-11
- 71 Evergreen Drive, \$875,000, 4 Bdrms, 2786 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 11-4-11; Previous Sale: \$293,500, 08-01-83
- 10 Las Palomas, \$1,825,000, 5 Bdrms, 3832 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 11-7-11; Previous Sale: \$1,725,000, 03-04-03
- 77 Underhill Road, \$421,500, 2 Bdrms, 1251 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 11-8-11; Previous Sale: \$379,000, 06-01-01

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

LAFAYETTE Hedaro Court, 94549, US Bank, 11-14-11, \$575,000, 1955 sf, 4 bd

New Transitional Home

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All of the electrical plugs are higher on the walls, while the light switches are placed lower than usual. "This design is in fact very convenient for anyone," says Dan Hogue, the organization's new Executive Director. He notes that several cities, including Fremont, Sacramento, Albuquerque, and Winnipeg, encourage Universal Design standards for all types of new developments.

Other elements of Universal Design found in the Lafayette home include wide doorways and hallways (a three-foot minimum width), no step entries, and lever door handles. "This kind of design just gives a more open feel to the house," adds Hogue, "it is one of the things we will all learn from people with disabilities."

The main bathroom also underwent practical and aesthetic improvements. The space that was once two small bathrooms is now a large area that includes a separate toilet and shower. "Beyond the grab bars, what is needed in a bathroom for people with a disability is a five-foot radius in which to maneuver a wheelchair," explains Kilgore. The shower room closes with a door and there is no lip to be negotiated in order to access the shower itself. The walls are completely tiled since there is no shower curtain, and all of the shower heads and faucets are placed at a good height for anyone to reach whether seated or standing.

"This house is a model of our strategy for the future," explains Hogue, "we want to provide solutions that help young adults with learning or developmental disabilities to evolve toward independence. This house where low income young adults can live will be a step for them, like we took when we left our parents' homes to go to college. Here they



Unassuming on the outside, the interior of the home has been designed to be usable by everyone.

Photo Doug Kohen

will learn the skills they will need to be independent, they will be integrated into the community and no different than anyone else on the block."

The house includes a room and bathroom for a staff person. "Depending on the needs of our tenants, the staff person will be there full- or part-time," explains Kilgore.

The organization does not know if it will be able to develop more such homes. "We are very thankful that Bonnie (Peacock) was able to secure this grant for us," says Hogue, "in this economy, our sources of funding are under a lot of stress."

Las Trampas will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony in January of 2012; adults with disabilities between the age of 18 and 24 who want to transition to a more independent life are welcomed to contact the Lafayette non-profit.

For more information email ltiexec@pacbell.net or call Dan Hogue at 284-1462.





Your friendly neighborhood arborists Darren and Lew Edwards

Winter brings cold and rainy weather. "While many trees will be dormant in the winder, exposure to the tough conditions can cause them major stress," says Darren Edwards, Certified Arborist with Advance Tree Service. "Minimize that stress by helping your trees through the cold months. If you take care of your trees in the winter, you will be rewarded in the spring."

Winter can be a good time for pruning most trees, while they are dormant, and pines should only be pruned in the winter months. Removal of large, dead, broken, poorly positioned limbs and corrective pruning can minimize winter storm damage, and maximize optimal spring growth.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you with your winter pruning.

Advance Tree Service Your Authority on Trees and Landscape.

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Home Grown Holiday! Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

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"Christmas gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect." - Oren Arnold

-----he season for holiday gift gathering began for our family in the summer. It was then that we picked the peaches, pears, apricots, berries, and a cornucopia of vegetables to can and give to friends and relatives for Christmas. My sisters and I gathered wild flowers and colorful leaves which we pressed between wax paper creating our own version of stained glass windows. In November we would decorate the jars, adding hand drawn labels, and in December the baking would begin. Wooden boxes would be filled with candied and savory walnuts from our trees, wine from our grapes, preserves from our orchards, eggs from our chickens, garlicky tomato sauce from our gardens, and spiced cookies from our imagination. After collecting miniature pinecones from around the yard to mold into reusable ornaments, the packages were festooned with fanciful yarns, colorful ribbons, and a hearty greeting to be delivered with a smile. Every recipient received a present specifically designed with items we knew they'd enjoy. We all felt as jolly as St. Nick himself.

Over the years commercialism has taken over the season of giving. It's easy to zip into a store to purchase presents and have them wrapped and shipped. It's even less hassle to go on-line to order something for everyone on Santa's list. Yet, somehow, I am still drawn to the love, thought, and sweet individuality that handcrafted gifts exude. I enjoy meandering through my garden contemplating the gifts that are hidden within its boundaries and branches. Who will be the fortunate beneficiary of these heavenly delights? With the return to the earth movement in full swing, this December is the right time for you to employ a personalized home grown holiday.

Instead of cutting down a tree, start by purchasing a living evergreen that you can save in the pot for next year or if you have the space, plant for posterity. Let nature's winter wardrobe of berries and boughs inspire your holiday decorating. Evergreen trees with colorful berries include Chinese holly with yellow berries; English holly with red berries, North American native red cedar with fragrant foliage and frosty blue berries; and Brazilian peppertree with red pep-



Holiday centerpiece

percorns that are piquant in savory dishes. A deciduous merry berry tree that bears pink and aqua colored fruits is the pistache, a favorite food of squirrels, birds, and turkeys. If you have pines, redwoods, or other conifers in your yard, cut branches to weave into wreaths, centerpieces, and garlands, along with

pinecones, dried flowers, mushrooms, or other natural reeds. Decorate outdoor trees with strings of popcorn, cranberries, and rose hips that the birds will enjoy.

While poinsettias, paper whites, jams, jellies, and kitchen treats are always welcome, a few trouble-free gift-giving ideas inspired by the garden include:

- Holiday Napkin Rings made from bendable twigs •
- Fragrant Potpourri
- **Bay Leaf Garlands**
- **Rose Petal Sachets** •
- Lavender Bath Salts
- **Aromatherapy Oils**
- **Apple-Clove Pomanders**
- Herbed Olive Oil •
- **Pinecone Fire Starters**
- Pressed Flower Greeting Cards

- Seed Catalog Journals
- **Grapevine Wreaths**
- Herbal Teas
- Infused Vinegars
- **Potted Candles**
- Terrariums
- Forced Bulbs in Glass Vases
- Seeds from your Favorite Specimens
- **Birdseed Balls**

OUR HOMES

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Wreath with hydrangea blossoms

How-to lessons are ubiquitous on the internet. Other great garden offerings available at your favorite garden center are high quality tools, aprons, solar lights, pots, indoor plants, wind chimes, botanical art, gazing balls, and garden books. (My book, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, is still a best seller for all those who love nature with autographed copies available from my office, 925-377-STAR.) Besides the hand made riches from my children, my favorite gifts over the years have included hay, soil, shovels, plants, pruning shears, gloves, buckets, fertilizers, hats, chain saws, birdbaths, fountains, and other gardening necessities. Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruits would be as delighted as I am with the bonus of home made pastries, jams, pie filling, and condiments from the fields of friends and family.

For a hoe, hoe, hoe holiday sparkle, plant memories and grow green with aesthetically arresting home grown gifts from your garden that really show you care and share.



Cyclamen with Christmas Cactus in the back

Photo Cynthia Brian



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Top 4 Opportunities in 2011

- 1) Buy foreclosures in select neighborhoods and cities in Contra Costa County, for strong rental income returns, with future appreciation.
- Buy a home in Lafayette, Moraga, or Orinda, in a rare buyer's market.
 Sell in the under \$1,000,000 range in Lamorinda, where sales are now
- improving, and move up to your dream house in a higher price range where the best negotiating opportunities exist.
- 4) Downsize, and sell in Lamorinda, where the market has not dropped as much, then buy a great one-story home at a bargain price in a nice neighborhood where homes have dropped more. Keep a low property tax by transferring it to the new house within Contra Costa County.

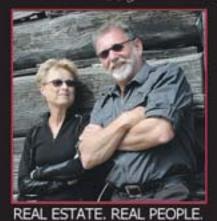
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CYNTHIA BRIAN'S GARDENING GUIDE FOR DECEMBER

"Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul." Henry Ward Beecher

With Thanksgiving behind us, we now move on to the season of grace, gratitude, and glory with Christmas, Hannukah, and Kwanza. As we drive through neighborhoods, gardens are illuminated, bedecked and bedazzled ushering in the most favorite time of year for children around the globe. December is a time for reflection, rest, and regrouping with loved ones. Take the time to treasure the short days and long nights by bringing a bit of nature indoors with branches of evergreens, berries, persimmons, and pomegranates. Make a pot of herbal tea, curl up by the fire with a good book, and savor the season of giving.

- BE green and buy a living Christmas tree that can grow in splendor. Artificial trees are non-recyclable or biodegradable.
- KEEP your tree fresh longer by placing a freshly cut trunk in a bucket of water before placing in a tree stand. Water daily without floral preservatives.
- BRIGHTEN the holidays with breathtaking blooms of amaryllis. Available in many colors, they'll bloom in 6-8 weeks after planting in any light.
- **DRESS** your plants for the holidays with red berries and glossy leaves gleaned from the garden.
- **INCREASE** concentration by placing leafing and flowering greenery around your house.
- HARVEST prickly pear when the skins are red. Wear gloves and use tongs to peel before adding to salads.
- HARNESS inner peace by exercising or meditating outdoors in your yard or a park on a sunny day. Being in nature relieves stress and the fresh air revitalizes you.
- FORAGE for wild watercress in creeks. Cut stems, leaving the roots, wash thoroughly and enjoy with meals.
- LEAVE fallen leaves on your lawn. Mow the grass without a grass catcher to help mulch your lawn over winter.
- **BUILD** a bat house for our endangered insect eaters. Visit www.batcon.org for approved bat house building instructions. Bats have received a bad reputation over the years but they are friends to humans. Next summer each bat will eat 1000 mosquitoes in an hour!
- MIGRATING birds, hummingbirds, and butterflies benefit from feeder feasts. Make sure to keep a few drifts of perennials such as fuchsia, honeysuckle, and asters available as landing dinner pads.
- **BUGS** bothering your plants? Click on the free on-line tool called "Putting the Detective on the Case" at www.gardeners.com. A list of plant-specific suspects will be generated with detailed images to match with more than eighty close-up, color photographers to help gardeners determine the disease or the pest.
- **REJUVENATE** your soil by planting cover crops of fava beans, vetch, alfalfa, clover, or mustard to add nutrients for next season with this special green manure.
- **SHELTER** frost tender plants by wrapping with burlap. Dog pillow covers do a great job for containers.
- ADD color spots of cyclamen, cinerarias, dianthus, and primroses available in quantity at your garden center to fill in the blank spots of your winter garden.
- **REUSE** large plastic buckets or cardboard boxes as composting bins. Add your table scraps for home made compostable riches.
- **INVITE** butterflies and hummingbirds to your garden by planting the bright colors of Buddleia (butterfly bush), Rose of Sharon, and Weigelas now. The butterfly magnet "Lo and Behold Blue Chip" non-invasive buddleia stays under three feet without pruning and blooms non stop from summer to winter.
- FORCE bulbs indoors. Use a narrow necked vase, poke a few holes in a bulb with toothpicks, fill with water to the base of the bulb, and wait for the roots to form by storing in a dark, cool place for ten to twelve weeks.
- SAVE rainwater with barrels. Use for indoor plants. For the more adventurous water conscious environmentalists, consider installing a cistern.
- BRIGHTEN your holiday walls with American botanical art. Before there were plant patents, there were plant portraits.
- **PROLONG** the freshness of trimmings indoors by keeping pots out of direct sunlight and away from heat sources.
- MARVEL at the wild turkeys trotting through your property. Wild turkeys are capable of instant take off and can fly as swiftly as 50 miles per hour. They don't fly for long, but they accelerate quickly. They seem to love my pistache berries.
- DONATE time, resources, and money to a local charity making a difference in our neighborhoods. You'll feel great while contributing to the spirit of paying it forward.
- CELEBRATE local viticulture with a bottle of wine from grape growers in the Lamorinda Wine Growers Association, www.lamorindawinegrowers.com
- **GIVE** gifts from the garden and watch the love grow.
- **PLANT** seeds of gratitude for the gift of life.

Reuse, refresh, recycle, rejuvenate, and rejoice. Wishing everyone a splendid home grown holiday of celebration and gratitude for all our blessings. We'll reconnect next year! Happy Gardening to You.

©2011 Cynthia Brian The Goddess Gardener Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com 925-377-7827 My virtual door is always open. I am available as a speaker and consultant. Feel free to contact me.



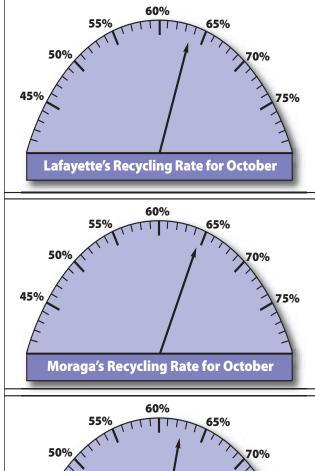
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OUR HOMES

Recycling in Lamorinda

The numbers below are provided by the Central Costa County Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA) and will be included in the Lamorinda Weekly on an ongoing basis when available.

October 2011





To register with Recycle Bank:

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21 North Lane

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Offered at \$745,000



101 Brookline Street

Detached spacious 2bd/2ba + ofc in MCC. Wimbledon model, lg bedrooms, vaulted ceilings. Great views from top of the hill. Flat yd in back, brand new redwood decks

Offered at \$695,000



3376 Ridge Road

Affordable charming 4bd home in popular trail neighborhood surrounded by heritage oaks - truly a beautiful, natural setting. Tons of recent improvements. Walk to town/trail/ **Offered at \$649.000** schools



2950 Windtree Court A treat for the Holidays! Come see this charming remodeled traditional home w/gorgeous light-filled kitchen opening up to magical flat backyard! www.2950WindtreeCt.com.

Offered at \$990,000



106 Scenic Drive

Special rancher w/charming appeal.Hdwd flrs, beamed LR ceiling, big windows & sliders to outdoors. 3bd/2ba main house w/bonus in-law w/kit/bath. Mature landscape, garden cottage. Mt Diablo views

Offered at \$859,000 MORAGA $\mathbf{\hat{N}}$



675 Carroll Drive

Walk to town, schools, trails, parks & more, Pvt .31 ac lot w/attractive landscaping, grass play area, veggie gardens. 3bd/2ba updated thruout, hdwd flrs, dual panes, crown moldings, lighting, more.

Offered at \$699,000 LAFAYETTE



960 Hawthorne Drive

Trad 3bd/2ba hm in trail neighborhood. Hdwd flrs, Fr doors, wood windows, lovely deck for entertaining. Flat yard w/lawn & views. Nr K-8 schls, trail, shopping, restaurants and library **Offered at \$719.000**



1847 Reliez Valley Road Newly renovated w/high style & fully updated amenities. Lg new chef's kitchen with adjoining fam rm & formal living/dining rms + stylish master suite. Lots of bedrooms, new baths

Offered at \$1,095,000



345 Camino Sobrante Updated 4bd/3ba 3301 sf contemp on .55 ac in primo country club loc w/spacious great rm,

updated kit, hdwd flrs, guest apt w/pvt entrance, ofc, lg master suite, lawn/play area **Offered at \$998,000**

 \mathbf{M}

MORAGA

41 Greenfield Drive

Spacious Harold Smith 3bd/3ba rancher, lg kitchen/fam rm combo. Gorgeous backvard w/lvl lawn & patio. Convenient location close to schools, shopping, trails, park & transportation. **Offered at \$899.000**

LAFAYETTE



3398 Ridge Road

Special Lafayette Trail 4bd/3ba home nestled among oaks with views of hills on .29 acre. Easy walk to downtown, restaurants, shopping & 9 years of schools. Backs to bike trail.

Call agent for price



1258 Panorama

Totally charming trad ranch home on most coveted street in Lafayette! Quiet cul de sac 1 blk to Happy Valley Elem. Updated thruout w/vaulted ceiling, granite kitchen & baths. Wonderful pvt. .4 ac., lvl Offered at \$1,189,000 lawns

ORINDA

Wine country inspired traditional 5bd/3.5ba complete with vineyard! Gated and fenced estate - remodeled sprawling lawns! www.5SunriseHillCt.com.

Offered at \$1,475,000



945 Mountain View Drive The cutest home on the block! Charm abounds in this exceptionally cozy full of 1940's style bungalow w/ambiance & style. Lawn & garden all very pvt and ideal location near everything!

Offered at \$480,000 LAFAYETTE



3286 Sweet Drive Lovely 3150 sf home, flexible floor plan, updated throughout, granite kitchen. Sweeping views, 2 master bedrooms plus 2 more bedrooms & 4 baths in Burton Valley. Guest set-up w/separate entry.

Offered at \$890.000 AFAYE



8 Hawks Hill Court Absolutely stunning pano views of Mt. Diablo, hills & Carquinez. Built in 2006 w/master suite, LR/DR/FR/kitchen on main lvl, 3 more bdrms & 2nd fam rm downstairs. Wine room too! Offered at \$1,458,000 Linda Ehrich **Ioan Evans** Linda S Friedman Marianne Greene Pamela Halloran **Dexter Honens II Debbie** Johnston Hal Kaufman Margot Kaufman Susan Zeh Layng Art Lehman **Charles** Levine **April Matthews** Karen Murphy Ben Olsen Sue Olsen **Kurt Piper** Tara Rochlin **Iudv Schoenrock** Ann Sharf Steve Smith Jeff Snell Lynda Snell **Clark Thompson** Ignacio Vega Terri Bates Walker Ann Ward Dan Weil Margaret Zucker

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