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Lamorinda Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein presents the FireWise Community Recognition award to Sleepy Hollow neighborhood representative Deb Stephenson May 8. Looking on, from left: MOFD's Kathy Leonard, fire marshal, and Stephen Healy, fire chief; Cal Fire division chief David Shew; and state fire marshal Tonya Hoover. Photo Ohlen Alexander

A Wise Neighborhood

By Nick Marnell

Charles Green attended a briefing in 2011 held by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, which urged citizens to take responsibility to protect their property so that it will not burn. "There was a denial, or a disregard, of a potential threat to

our area," said Green of the Orinda community. So he organized his Sleepy Hollow neighbors to conduct a wildfire hazard assessment of their properties and develop a plan to address safety concerns.

The group attended training classes in Sacramento and at Saint Mary's College and completed evaluations of 80 yards and areas surrounding Sleepy Hollow homes. "Things we pointed out cost very little money," said Green. ... continued on page A12

Advertising

Quote of the Week:

"Don't be afraid to write down the words that are in your head." - Read Springhill Students Artwork Displayed in SF, page B4.



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Rally in Plaza Park

By Cathy Tyson

Organizer Jean Follmer is not kidding around, with eye-catching orange and white hats, loads of orange balloons and snacks, she and a group of supporters gathered at Plaza Park in Lafayette last Friday afternoon to express their frustration with the current funding of the educational system. Honking from passing motorists signaled support to kids and grown-ups waving signs around the park at the corner of Mt. Diablo and Moraga Road, but unfortunately not many others turned out for the low key rally.

The idea behind the statewide campaign is to show state leaders the level of anger among parents and students about "the increasing and unreported diversion of schools' share of property taxes to pay state debts that have nothing to do with education," said Follmer, and allow voting to stop the diversion of school allocated property taxes.

"We are asking our legislators and our Governor to work together to allow California voters to decide if using the poorest school districts in California as the interest-free lender of first resort to the state is the way we want to finance our schools," said Cushon Bell of Altadena, a former teacher and a board member of Educate Our State, a parent led non-profit organization.

"The Lafayette community is standing up to give children a voice. California schools have loaned billions to the state, interest free, since 2007 and, compared to every other state in the nation, we are at the bottom of the barrel in per student funding," said Follmer. According to Suzy Pak, Springhill Elementary School parent and board member of Educate Our State, Contra Costa County reports that 49 percent of property taxes go to fund schools, when the actual number is 37 percent; Pak calls this a complete violation of the public trust.



A small group of supporters donned in orange and white gathered at Plaza Park in Lafayette last Friday to vent frustration over education funding. Photo Gint Federas

Life in Lamorinda B1-B12 Sports C1-C4 Camps D1-D4 Our Homes E1-E20

Little Free Libraries



Take a book, return a book; charming trend arrives in Lamorinda - page B1.

Going For It

Dons, Mats lacrosse play in NCS semifinals tonight - page C2.



Summer Camps and Classes

55 listings to sign your child up - page D1.

The Rain Has Gone

Don't miss the final installment of Cynthia Brian's series on drought gardening - page E16.

