

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 09 Issue 7 Wednesday, June 3, 2015



*Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for June ...read on page D13*

## Drip by Drip

*Water-saving efforts are becoming commonplace*

By Chris Lavin



*Stephen "Steamer" Stanley demonstrates how his shower diversion invention can be disconnected or engaged in one step.*

*Photo Chris Lavin*

Just before the late great comedic writer Erma Bombeck died in 1996, she made a list of the things she would have done differently in her life. One of the things she listed, besides not worrying about whether she wore make-up before she went out: she would have run her dishwasher more often before it was full, making life a little bit easier.

That was obviously thinking in pre-drought, pre-water-conscious California. In Lamorinda, most

people – besides cramming their dishwashers full before hitting the “on” switch – are thinking instead about how they can conserve water in their homes. Conversations about rain barrels, gray water systems, and drip irrigation are becoming commonplace. Some are even putting buckets into their showers to catch the cold water before it gets warm and then using it to flush their toilets. And that got former Orinda Chamber of Commerce president

Stephen “Steamer” Stanley and his business partner, Mike Gompertz, thinking.

“We were hearing about some people putting five-gallon buckets in the shower, then hauling them out,” Stanley said. With water weighing eight pounds a gallon, that’s no easy task. “So that’s how we came up with this.”

Stanley stepped into a shower (note: fully clothed) and with a simple close of a valve, demonstrated what the two former Orindans have invented. It’s the “shower water saver kit,” which diverts water from the shower pipe into a small reservoir. When the person who wants a shower feels the pipe begin to warm, he or she flips the valve off again and can shower instantly. “Then watch,” Stanley said as he stepped over to remove the ceramic top of the toilet tank and flushed the toilet. Water began to pour through a plastic hose snaking into the top of the tank and ran until the tank was, again, full, and then shut off. The water had come from the reservoir of cold shower water. “It’s that simple,” Stanley said.

At a time when many homeowners are starting to get embarrassed by their lush lawns or thirsty ornamental gardens, inventions like Stanley and Gompertz’s are becoming more popular. “We waste so much water in this country,” he said. “So, so much.” With the current water shortage, regulatory agencies have become involved, making conservation mandatory. Homeowners are finding out where their water meters are located, and monitoring their use of gallons.

... continued on page D4