

Community Service

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 may be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Moraga Women's Society Tours Beneficial Garden at JM

Submitted by Susan Sperry



Elaine Gottman and Dawn Lezak

Photo provided

Moraga Women's Society donates funds every year to each school in the Moraga School District as part of its donation policy. For the last few years the funds donated to Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School were dedicated to the school's Earth Stewardship class, taught by Dawn Lezak. The class was first started by Elaine Gottman, now retired, to teach students hands-on outdoor activities connecting the sixth-grade curriculum presented in her class. Activities include spending time working in their vegetable and herb garden, digging, planting, composting, conducting experiments, learning about sustainable systems, climate zones, erosion, insects, solar energy, and much more.

Moraga Women's Society members were given a tour of the garden on April 20 where Lezak and students explained their mission. The members were then served refreshments of cucumber sandwiches and tea.

Third-Graders Visit the Moraga Historical Society History Center

Submitted by Susan Sperry



From left, back row: Colleen Lund, Kathy Zuber, Sam Sperry, Susan Sperry, Elsie Mastick; seated: Margaret DePriester; not pictured: Rosemary Coburn

Photo provided

Begun as a sixth-grade project approximately 30 years ago by Susan Sperry, then teaching at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, the annual History of Moraga unit took shape. In those days Maggie Skinner, dressed in period costume, and Brother Dennis Goodman of Saint Mary's College brought their slide show to the JM auditorium to tell all sixth-graders about prehistoric animal footprints on the Bluffs, the Saklan Indians hunting and gathering techniques, the importance of the railroad, James Irvine and the pear trees, and early ranching days.

As time passed, the unit was moved to the third grade, Skinner moved and Brother Dennis passed away. Resurrected by Elsie Mastick and the third-grade teachers of Moraga, this annual event moved to the History Center after its completion in 2000. Manned by Society volunteers, the third-graders arrive at the Center every April

ready to learn local history lessons.

Kathy Zuber illustrates the prehistoric life that once existed in Moraga; Rosemary Coburn and Margaret DePriester describe how the Saklan Indians survived in our valley. Elsie Mastick picks up the story as Anza brings Jose Joaquin Moraga with him from Sonora, Mexico to oversee the building of the San Francisco Presidio. In his train overalls and hat, Sam Sperry elaborates on the importance of the early railroads. At the last station Susan Sperry relates how Joaquin Moraga ranched his 13,000 acres, raising cattle. Taken over by squatters and troubled by debt, Moraga lost his land. Colleen Lund relates the activities of a typical day on a squatter or sharecropper farm.

The students and their parents leave the History Center with a new appreciation of our tiny town with a history filled with interesting facts from prehistoric times to the present.

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

Submit stories and story ideas to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

Celebrations

Benny Toudic Joins Marine Corps

Submitted by Joanne Tan



Benny Toudic at his June Campolindo High School graduation, with his mother Joanne Tan and Sergeant Ken Rick, wearing a purple heart, who recruited him.

Photo provided

Venturing Crew 243. He was recognized by the United Nations Foundation for his work as the team leader raising funds to reduce the number of people who contract and die from malaria in Africa. In the process of achieving Eagle Rank, Toudic applied deeply held values of trustworthiness, hard work, and perseverance, which will be the cornerstone for all his future endeavors.

For 13 years Toudic won numerous awards in Contra Costa County music competitions and at the United States Open Music Competition in various piano performance and composition categories. Toudic also played trumpet for eight years, performing with the Acalanes Brass Ensemble, Acalanes Jazz En-

semble and the City of Walnut Creek Jazz Band. He is also a talented artist. Benjamin "Benny" Toudic, a recent graduate from Campolindo High School, an Eagle Scout, a second-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do, and an award-winning pianist and classical music composer, will start his 13-week boot camp for the Marines on July 26. Toudic first wanted to become an Eagle Scout in fourth grade while he was a Cub Scout. Benny went through National Youth Leadership Training, and was the Activity Chair for

Toudic has been attending regular trainings twice a week since deciding to join the Marines a year ago, and he is grateful to all those who have contributed to his growth in the Lamorinda community over the past 18 years. He is looking forward to the new challenges in the next chapters of his journey.

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Moraga Native Earns Master's in Special Ed

Submitted by Ron Tarica



Dominica Joanne Tarica was awarded a Master of Arts degree in Special Education from San Francisco State University on May 22 at AT&T Park. She is a 2004 graduate of Miramonte High School. Dominica received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Richmond, the American International University in London in 2008. She continues her work as an Inclusion Specialist in the Oakland Unified School District. Her parents are Ron Tarica and Sandi Andersen-Tarica of Templeton, Calif. The family formerly lived in Moraga for 20 years.

Photo provided

Orinda Native Motar Board Fellowship Recipient

Submitted by Jenni Birch Szolwinski

Every year, the Motar Board National Foundation awards fellowships to assist members in financing their graduate studies, and it recently awarded \$30,000 to eight exceptional Motar Board members to support their graduate education during the 2015-16 academic year. One award recipient, Orinda native Daniel Citron, was inspired by philanthropic work with the homeless population and a study abroad experience in Costa Rica to pursue a career in dentistry. Citron says that these experiences "shaped my views on international health and inspired me to make a commitment to providing accessible dental and oral health care to the most marginalized members of society." A 2009 graduate of Miramonte High School, Citron is a 2014 summa cum laude graduate of San Diego State University, where he earned his baccalaureate degree in international security and conflict resolution, and served as a member of the award-winning Jane K. Smith Cap & Gown chapter of Motar Board. A passionate musician and avid fitness enthusiast, Citron will attend the UCLA School of Dentistry in the fall as a Motar Board Fellowship recipient. To learn more about Motar Board, visit www.mortarboard.org.



Orinda native and Motar Board award recipient Daniel Citron

Photo provided