

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

Independent, locally owned and operated!

925-377-0977

www.lamorindaweekly.com

26,000 copies delivered biweekly to Lamorinda homes & businesses

FREE

Bridal Boutique
 Now Open in Lafayette
 Legends by Romona Keveza
 Trunk Show Sept. 25-27th
lace & bustle
 BRIDAL
 www.laceandbustle.com
 925.298.4100



Marianne Mckay on Zane (the dark horse) and Zette Thierra on Ruby Slippers wait for a group of Orinda hikers to pass on a Moraga EBMUD trail. Photo Chris Lavin

Head to Head: Bikers Vs. Horses (and Hikers)

EBMUD considers opening Lamorinda watershed trails to bicyclists

By Chris Lavin

Few things raise hackles more than when people who are passionate about their interests disagree. That is why the East Bay Municipal Utility District is gearing up for more public hearings on a hot topic: whether to allow mountain bikers on horse trails in the Lamorinda watershed.

“I think it’s a really terrible idea,” said Marianne Mckay, who keeps her Missouri trotting horse Zane at the Moraga Horsemen’s Association barn at the Valle Vista Staging Area. “Some bikers are responsible, but others just are not. We have a lot of blind curves on these trails and if a biker came around one of them, it could be really scary.”

The first public hearing on the issue was held in August at EBMUD headquarters in Oakland. Dozens of bikers and horsemen signed up to speak to board members and staff regarding the proposal, which probably won’t be voted on until after the first of the year, said Abby Figueroa, the agency spokeswoman.

... continued on page A10

Advertising

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

News	A2 - A10
Life in Lamorinda	B1 - B12
Not to be Missed	B10-B11
HOW TO CONTACT US	B11
Food	B12
Service Directory	B12
Sports	C1 - C3
Classified	C2
Shop Moraga	C4
Our Homes	D1 -D16

This Week Read About:

Lawsuit against Lafayette	A3
Potential sales tax hike	A2
Lafayette Creeks Plan	A2
Moraga Public Art Policy	A5
Bikeability in Moraga	A5
Orinda water usage	A6
Pear & Wine Festival	B5
SMC men’s soccer	C2

BESTLAMORINDAHOMES.COM	VLATKA BATHGATE		(925) 597-1573
5 Owl Hill Ct. Orinda Offered at \$3,295,000	4056 Fiora Pl, Lafayette Price Upon Request	97 Bunce Meadows Dr, Alamo Price Upon Request	

Former MOFD Chief Stripped of \$1.2 Million

By Nick Marnell

The Contra Costa County Employees’ Retirement Association board Sept. 9 lowered former fire chief Peter Nowicki’s pension by \$1.2 million after it established that his retirement benefit was improperly increased by his own actions. The board determined that the former chief of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District engineered retroactive changes to his contract that resulted in improper retirement benefits and the district board, knowing Nowicki was soon going out the door, went along with the changes.

and according to CCCERA, the cashed-out perks granted in 2008 improperly inflated – “spiked” – his retirement benefit. “That was not the intent,” said Nowicki, who spoke to and answered questions from the CCCERA board members for nearly three hours. “It was not my decision to grab and run out the door. It looks bad from your side, but from my side, I needed to get out.”

Harvey Leiderman, fiduciary attorney for CCCERA, saw it otherwise. “We have the authority to correct errors if the member improperly caused the benefit to be increased or overstated at the time of retirement,” he said. “There is no question the member actively engineered these retroactive benefits.”

... continued on page A8

Nowicki: I Followed the Rules

By Nick Marnell



Pete Nowicki in 2007 Photo A. Scheck
 For a man who five days earlier had his pension reduced by over \$1 million, Pete Nowicki did not appear angry or bitter. Rather, the former Moraga-Orinda Fire District chief said that he felt disrespected and hurt. Disrespected, after the work that he did for 26 years at MOFD, and that he was punished for doing what he was told to do by the Contra Costa County

Employees’ Retirement Association. And hurt, over how he has been portrayed.

“Absolutely, I feel disrespected,” said Nowicki during a Sept. 14 interview. “CCCERA counseled me on what to do, on how to get what I was entitled to. I followed the rules. Then, ‘No, we changed our mind, and we’re going to take back the deal.’ How can they do this?”

Nowicki said he was surprised to receive the Aug. 5 letter from CCCERA, summoning him to a Sept. 9 hearing at which the retirement board was to consider adjusting his retirement allowance. “No, I did not see it coming at all,” said Nowicki. “Now I’ve got four weeks to find a lawyer and develop an appropriate response. I didn’t know I could have asked for a delay.” ... continued on page A8

Civic News A1-A10

New oversight position created following development debacle – page A4.

Fire Districts A8

MOFD and ConFire part ways – page A8.

Life in Lamorinda B1-B12

Artist tackles challenges caused by MS – page B2.



Sports C1-C3

Miramonte cross country runner finishes on top – page C1.



Our Homes D1-D16

Holiday decorating strategies for now through New Year’s – page D8.

Good ways to use your Fall Favorite Colors!
 Ribbon, Bows, Wood, Pillows & Simple Graphics
 Fall Holiday New Year
 See ALL the ways to DECORATE become your FALL favorite!
 www.lamorindaweekly.com