



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors Wednesday, Sept. 7, 7 p.m. Go to website for meeting location For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors Tuesday, Sept. 13, 1:30 p.m. Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

Emergency response information and training: Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) www.lamorindacert.org.

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community. Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorinda-weekly.com

- ◆ HARDWOODS
- ◆ CARPETS
- ◆ RUGS
- ◆ LINOLEUM
- ◆ TILE
- ◆ LAMINATE

FAMILY-OWNED
30 YEARS!

3344 Mt Diablo Blvd
in Lafayette
925-284-4440
lamorindafloors.com



Fire Season is Flaming to Full Strength

By Nick Marnell

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Chief Jeff Carman made a whirlwind tour of his district in early August, delivering a somber message to residents and officials about the dangers of the wildfire season.

From his commissioners meeting to his board of directors meeting to his speech at the Lafayette Rotary Club, the chief's message was on point: now is not the time to let down your guard.

"The longer we go without consistent precipitation, the drier the fuels get, which is why many of the most devastating fires are seen in the late summer and fall," the chief said.

"People think it's cooler, the fog is starting to come in, it's time to keep the windows open at night because fire season is coming to a close. I urge our residents not to be fooled into thinking fire danger is waning because the opposite is actually occurring," Carman said. "The fuels we see in Lafayette, Walnut Creek, Moraga and Orinda are heavier, and have been drying out all summer."

The chief said he is always concerned about major devastation in Lafayette because the Lafayette area is most prone to those heavy fuel fires, and because of the amount of wildland

area so close to the expensive homes.

"It takes longer to start those fires, but also longer to put them out," Carman said.

Carman said that the district is better prepared to handle wildfires this year because of two components added to district operations. ConFire uses the sheriff's department helicopter to dump water on wildfires in areas difficult to access with ground crews. Plus, the district staffs a bulldozer during the peak activity period, rather than calling in an operator to run the bulldozer when needed.

"It cuts the line very quickly,"

the chief said. "It does what a team of firefighters can do cheaper and more quickly, so we can put the firefighters back into service."

This year's early fire season has been responsible for the destruction of several homes in the district, Carman said. He asks for the public's vigilance, because his crews have told him that they have seen more property loss this year than they can ever remember.

Surely that is a record the chief does not want to set in 2016.

Alex Evans Won't Run Again for MOFD Board

By Nick Marnell



Alex Evans made his decision the day before the deadline to file candidacy papers with the county. That Thursday, Aug. 11, the Division 5 director of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District opted to not run for reelection.

"I don't have the time required to commit going forward," Evans said. "I loved the job and felt we made real progress on financial sustainability. It was just time for me to move on."

Evans is the president and co-founder of EMC Research, a firm that specializes in polling, focus groups and public opinion research consulting for a wide range of clients across the country, including Sutter Health and Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. Evans' heavy workload, especially in major election years, had been taking away from his time to serve on the MOFD board.

A good labor contract, hiring a great fire chief and the prefunding of district health care costs Evans ranks as top accomplishments during his four-year tenure with the district. He added that the reduction of district staffing from 19 daily on-duty firefighters to 17 was an important step toward the financial sustainability of MOFD, though

the sentiment to reduce staffing was not shared by the entire board.

"I've been accused of caring about nothing but money," Evans said. "But the bottom line, it saves us money."

Not closing the deal with the county on the fire station 46 joint venture with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District was Evans' biggest frustration. Indeed, at every vote taken by the MOFD board on either the merger or the property purchase for the proposed station site, Evans voted yes.

"We could have done fine with just that one station," he said, as the proposed station was expected to save MOFD \$1 million a year in operating costs.

Some Orindans are frustrated by a perceived tax inequity in the

district, and Evans, whose division includes part of Orinda, agrees that if Orindans think they shoulder an unfair financial burden, it needs to be considered and dealt with for the long-term viability of the district.

But Evans insisted that the biggest threat to the long-term viability of the district is its unfunded pension liability, which totaled \$28 million as of December 2014. The district awaits an updated figure from its retirement fund manager, and officials fear the liability may increase.

That financial headache tops the list of challenges for either Craig Jorgens or Victoria Smith, candidates to replace Evans on the MOFD Division 5 seat this November.

DeSaulnier Condemns Super PACs at Orinda Town Hall

By Nick Marnell



From left, Mark DeSaulnier jokes with his fall intern Anthony Ray and Supervisor Candace Andersen's Orinda liaison Jill Ray at the Aug. 6 Orinda Town Hall meeting. Photo Provided

U.S. Rep. Mark DeSaulnier to the list of those bewildered by the vicious personal attacks that have defined the 2016 presidential election campaign.

"It's unlike any election that

I have ever seen," he told an audience of around 100 at his Aug. 6 Orinda town hall meeting. DeSaulnier, a Democrat from California's 11th Congressional district, is running for reelection against Republican Roger Petersen in November.

The congressman, whose district includes Lamorinda, chastised the recalcitrant House

members who are preventing the passage of a federal budget. "We're stuck. They won't spend any money," he said.

DeSaulnier said that he does not believe in the "all or nothing" approach to government; rather, he favors negotiation and compromise. And after the negotiations, voting should be based upon whatever is best for the common good.

"Compromise is more reflective of the total population," he said.

One of the questions from the Orinda audience concerned the Citizens United Supreme Court decision. The 2010 ruling said that political advertising is protected under the First Amendment, allowing corporations and unions to spend an unlimited amount of money calling for the election or defeat of individual political candidates, as long as the spending is done independently of the candidate or party. As a result, cash has poured into

special political action committees, labeled Super PACs.

"It was a horrible decision," DeSaulnier said, explaining that it is now impossible to identify who is actually paying for much of the political advertising. Though Hillary Clinton said in her acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention that she would press for a constitutional amendment to overturn the Citizens United ruling, DeSaulnier said that there is no such movement in the legislature.

"Congress doesn't want to change it," he said.

According to the Federal Election Commission, DeSaulnier's campaign received more than \$237,000 in contributions from traditional political action committees, which accounted for over 51 percent of his total fundraising through June. Petersen's total campaign contributions barely exceeded \$3,000.

MOFD and BART Highlight Lamorinda Special District Races

On the Moraga-Orinda Fire District governing board, John Jex, a retired accountant, has been appointed in lieu of election to the Division 2 seat vacated by Fred Weil. The race for the Division 5 seat held by Alex Evans features a battle between Orinda Mayor Victoria Smith and retired business executive Craig Jorgens.

Two districts of the Bay Area Rapid Transit system fall in Lamorinda, and both directors' seats are up for grabs in November. District 1 pits incumbent Gail Murray versus Debora Allen, a board trustee of the Contra Costa County Employees' Retirement Association. One-time Moraga Mayor Ken Chew runs against District 3 incumbent Rebecca Saltzman, business consultant Varun Paul and web programmer Worth Freeman.

Candace Andersen continues as director of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District as a result of her June victory for Supervisor of Contra Costa County District 2.

Bay Area Drainage, Inc.

Are You Ready For El Niño?

- French Drains
- Underfloor Drains
- Downspout Systems
- Subdrain Systems
- Sump Pumps
- Retaining Walls
- Pavestone Driveway & Walkways

**A General Engineering Contractor
Locally owned and Operated
Contractor LIC # 762208**

925•377•9209

visit our website
www.bayareadrainage.com

HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING Installation, Service & Repair

cleanAIR HVAC

www.cahvac.com
(877) 482-2496
HVAC-4-YOU
moraga: 925-270-5232
orinda: 925-270-5232

YOUR COMFORT SPECIALIST

Heating • Air Conditioning • Installation and Repair
Maintenance Agreements • Free Estimates
Serving Contra Costa County • CA Licensed & Insured

925-689-7017