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 Veterans Memorial Building  
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 www.HomeExpoEvents.com



State Senator and Orinda resident Steve Glazer inspects the sinkhole on Miner Road.

Photo Tod Fierner

## Orinda Sinkhole Fix To Take Weeks

By Sora O'Doherty

Now it's Orinda's turn. Severe storms caused a large sinkhole on Miner Road at Camino Lanada, disrupting traffic on the busy thoroughfare. In fact, the damage was so bad that City Manager Janet Keeter recommended a local state of emergency on Jan. 12, and the city is looking at about four weeks for repairs.

The large sinkhole was the worst of the damage inflicted

on Orinda by a strong winter storm that also resulted in downed trees and utility poles, mudslides, power outages, and flooding. Further winter storms may worsen the condition of the sinkhole, and interfere with the progress of repair. While Moraga opted to wait out the rainy season before proceeding with repairs on its sinkhole, Orinda's serious situation precludes that option. Orinda hopes that a break in the weather

might allow repairs to be completed in around a month. It is possible that work may continue around-the-clock.

Miner Road, a heavily traveled road, had to be closed to pedestrian and vehicular traffic. In addition, utilities were impacted, including two Central Sanitary District sewer lines, a PG&E gas line, and an EBMUD water line that provides water to all of north-east Orinda. ... continued on page A12

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## Online Purchases Rain on Some Local Merchants During Holiday Shopping

By Victor Ryerson



Sarah McDonnell of McDonnell's Nursery poses with her decorative offerings. Photo Victor Ryerson

With the Bay Area's economy running in high gear, retail businesses made a good showing in Lamorinda during the holiday period, but the allure of online sales nevertheless affected many shoppers. No one is claiming to have had a banner holiday shopping season, and some merchants are annoyed with what might be called bad internet etiquette as a source of lost sales. And they are gently pushing back.

Overall it appears that 2016 was a "pretty good year, better than the previous year, but the holidays were slow," says Jay Lifson, executive director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. A sampling of local business owners generally agrees. They offer many reasons for relatively lackluster holiday sales, ranging from the early holiday adjournment of schools to the gaping sinkhole at the intersection of the Rheem Valley Shopping Center's principal thoroughfares. But one thing most agree about is that internet selling poses a threat to small retailers in the community.

... continued on page A8

## Moraga Parents Rally to Defend Accused Los Perales Teacher

By Sophie Braccini

A Moraga family wanting to file criminal charges against a Los Perales Elementary School teacher for allegedly duct-taping their son last year in the classroom has riled the local community — but not in the way many such cases do.

Parents in the Moraga School District are rallying around teacher Millie Tang, a fifth grade teacher whom many of them call an exemplary educator.

Within two days of the news of a civil suit being brought against the MSD and Tang, over 60 families sent to the superintendent letters of support for the accused teacher. At the most recent MSD board meeting, parents publicly supported the teacher whom they call an extraordinary individual and remarkable educator. They asked the district not to settle the case if it was brought into legal channels, but defend the teacher's honor against what they call a "frivolous lawsuit."

The story that has been circulated in the media first came from the lawyer of the family of a young boy identified as "John Doe" to protect his privacy. He was in fifth grade last year in Tang's classroom.

The lawyer who represents John Doe's family, Larry E. Cook of Casper, Meadows, Schwartz & Cook, did not return repeated requests for interviews on this story. ... continued on page A8

**Civic News A1-A12**

Lafayette OKs roundabout at Deer Hill – page A2.

**Life in Lamorinda B1-B6**

Moraga Education Foundation celebrates 35 years – page B1.

**Sports C1-C4**

Saint Mary's Basketball is headed for a banner year – page C1.



**Our Homes D1-D16**

The Waterman home is inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright – page D1.



**Fire Districts A8**

MOFD approves new equipment – page A8.



# Lafayette

## Public Meetings

**City Council Special Meeting:**  
Monday, Jan. 31, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Regular Meeting:**  
Monday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette City Offices, Conference Room #265, 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

## Planning Commission

Monday, Feb. 6, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

## Design Review

Monday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Arts & Science Discovery Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

## School Board Meetings

**Acalanes Union High School District**  
Wednesday, Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m.  
AUHSD Board Room  
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette  
www.aalanes.k12.ca.us

## Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Feb. 8, 7 p.m.  
Regular Board Meeting  
District Office Board Room  
3477 School St., Lafayette  
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

## City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us  
Phone: (925) 284-1968

## Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org



## Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Dec. 11 - Dec. 24

Alarms	75
911 Calls (incl hang-ups)	18
Noise complaints	5
Traffic stops	144
Suspicious Circumstances	14
Suspicious Subjects	24
Suspicious Vehicles	27
Welfare Check	16

## Abandoned Vehicle

Los Arabis Dr./Upper Happy Valley Rd.  
60 Block Bacon Ct.  
Knox Dr./Hidden Valley Rd.  
900 Block Block Risa Rd.

## Auto Burglary

1000 Block Via Roble  
3400 Block Golden Gate Way  
4000 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Reliez Station Rd./Olympic Blvd.

## Beat Info

4100 Block Canyon Rd.  
Lafayette Reservoir Rec Area  
3900 Block Happy Valley Rd.

## Civil Disturbance

3200 Block Acalanes Ave

## Commercial Burglary

3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

## Counterfeit

900 Block Moraga Rd.  
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

## Disturbing the Peace

3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
Moraga Blvd./Moraga Rd.

## Fire/ems Response Info

1800 Block Reliez Valley Rd.  
St Marys Rd./S. Lucille Ln.  
10 Block Vista Via Rd.  
1000 Block Miller Dr.

## Fireworks

3600 Block Walnut St.  
1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.

## Forgery

1200 Block Panorama Dr.

## Found Property

3500 Block St. Marys Rd.  
Lana Ln./Foye Dr.  
20 Block Lafayette Cr.

## Hailed by Citizen

Mountain View Dr./Mt. Diablo Blvd.

## Harassment

3300 Block Mildred Ln.

## Hit And Run Misdemeanor

1st St./Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
900 Block Moraga Rd.  
1st St./Mt. Diablo Blvd.

## Identity Theft

3300 Block Moraga Blvd.  
3200 Block Marlene Dr.

## Juvenile Disturbance

Martino Rd./Southampton Pl  
500 Block Block Silverado Dr.  
1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.  
Jennie Ct./Sweet Dr.  
3500 Block Golden Gate Way  
3400 Block School St.

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# Outrage over Waiver of Lafayette Development Fee

By Nick Marnell

New Lafayette council members Cameron Burks and Ivor Samson voted against waiving a portion of the city's local transportation development fee for the Lennar Corporation, citing the appearance of a quid pro quo, a lack of transparency and lost revenue for future city transportation projects.

Transportation development fees are negotiated with developers and are used to defray transportation-related costs inherent with a new project, such as the expense of road widening or erecting a traffic signal. These fees are normally negotiated in advance but this time the \$132,000 transportation fee credit proposed by the city was not. "Lennar is considered anomalous in this case," transportation planner James Hinkamp wrote in his report for the Jan. 9 council meeting. City

Manager Steve Falk outlined how the development negotiations deviated from the norm.

Lennar, a Miami-based home-builder, plans to construct on the western end of Lafayette a mixed-use development that includes 66 residential units, 10 of which Lennar will offer at below-market rates. Initially, Falk said, an agreed-upon access to the project was opposed by the neighbors and rather than litigate, Lennar chose to cooperate, moving the entrance to a new location. The city did not approve the location and Lennar proposed another entrance, which produced more negotiations with those neighbors. Then the city demanded a traffic signal, opposed by a nearby property owner, resulting in another year of negotiation. "The most expensive alternative worked

best for the city," Falk said. "We think this refund is due and warranted."

The argument did not convince Burks. "What is our message?" he said. "If you provide a certain number of low-priced housing units, you qualify for a transportation fee credit?"

Samson objected on behalf of Lafayette voters, who rejected a proposed citywide sales tax increase in November. "Now we're walking away from \$132,000 that could have been used for transportation improvements," he said. "We have to hold ourselves accountable."

Samson and Burks voted against granting the waiver. "This process was not transparent and may result in delaying our transportation projects," Burks said.

"I'm not comfortable telling the public that I voted tonight to take money out of their pocket."

Other council members insisted that the city was not treating Lennar any differently than it does other developers, though they agreed the fee waiver should have been negotiated in advance.

The council passed the motion 3 to 2 to waive the \$132,000 portion of the transportation development fee, but Mayor Mike Anderson made clear his unhappiness with the process. He admonished the city staff to wrap up development negotiations earlier and not tack on surprises at the end.

"We've got to do a better job of clarifying what we're doing, and do it at the right time," Anderson said. "This was not our best moment."

# Deer Hill Roundabout Defeats Traffic Signal 3-2

By Nick Marnell

A divided Lafayette City Council rejected calls for a conventional signaled intersection and approved the construction of a roundabout at the proposed entrance to the Homes at Deer Hill development in the eastern end of the city.

Northern California-based O'Brien Homes will develop the 45 single-family home project that includes a 10-acre park, a sports field, a 2.9-acre dog park and a parking lot; the roundabout will lie adjacent to the entrance to the dog park.

The council reviewed documents in November that recommended building a roundabout at the Deer Hill intersection but doubted whether it was a smarter solution than erecting a traffic signal. City engineer Tony Coe presented the council further information Jan. 9 confirming that not only will a roundabout be safer and less expensive, it will more easily comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

While a conventional inter-

section with traffic signals could be built at the Deer Hill development, it could not be designed with an accessible crosswalk without extensive grading of the roadway in order to create a flat connection between two streets. Since crosswalks at a roundabout are not at the intersection but set back along the approach roadway, Coe said they can be built more quickly and inexpensively in the proposed location because less grading of the roadway would be required.

Speakers praised the roundabout as better for the environment since drivers waste fuel idling at a stoplight, which itself uses energy to switch signals, and presented anecdotal evidence that drivers tend to slow down as they approach a roundabout.

A majority of the council members agreed that the roundabout was a reasonable solution for safety and life-saving purposes, and the motion to approve the roundabout for the future Deer Hill intersection passed 3 to 2.

Council members Mark Mitchell and Ivor Samson, while not vehemently opposed to the roundabout, voted against it because they needed more research on exactly how a roundabout functions as opposed to a traffic signal, and more detail on the incremental cost of grading for a conventional signal versus a roundabout.

Vice mayor Don Tatzin summed up the prevailing sense of the council at the Deer Hill entrance: "It's just not a great location for an intersection," he said.



The proposed roundabout on Deer Hill Road is the green circle.

Rednering provided

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## City Council to Decide Future of Leigh Creekside Park

By John T. Miller



Mary Jo Cass visits with neighbor David Rose and his two daughters Arianna and Mattea at the arts and crafts table. Photo John T. Miller

A neighborhood dispute over impending changes to the character of Leigh Creekside Park is still making waves in Lafayette.

At issue is whether or not to change the park's status from passive to active, allowing a proposed play structure to be erected on the grounds.

On one side of the debate, the Coalition to Save Leigh Creekside Park is asking to preserve the original intent of the park and keep it in its natural state for future generations. Another group, the Leigh Creekside Improvement Plan, has worked for over two years to build a play structure and accessibility improvements in a portion of the park.

On Saturday, Jan. 14, local residents in favor of a passive park gathered at the site for an afternoon in the park. The event was organized to demonstrate the park can be used to explore and play without structures, which distract children from nature.

On hand were local residents Gwen Colley, a volunteer with the Gardens at Heather Farms, who provided an array of nature arts and crafts for children; Jil Plummer, a reknowned Lafayette author who read children stories in the "StoryTime" corner of the park with help from Trina and James Audley; and Ben Pettersson, who leads the Lamorinda Senior Nature Walk and Bird Watching Group.

Lafayette resident Deborah Callister said, "We worked hard to put the community on notice and hope those who love this space will let the city council know how important it is to keep this last bit of tranquility in Lafayette as natural as possible."

Proponents of the play structure were allowed to share information about their project.

The park is named after John and Ethel Leigh, former owners of the property and early Lafayette residents. The 0.6-acre lot is situated on Moraga Blvd. near 4th Street, where the Lafayette-Moraga and Briones-Las Trampas Regional Trails meet. The park is adjacent to Las Trampas Creek and its riparian wildlife corridor.

When John passed away in 1998, a grassroots neighborhood campaign raised over \$35,000 to help the city secure a \$375,000 state grant to purchase the land and stave off development.

In a letter to this paper's Public Forum last year, original co-founders Mary Jo and Glen Cass, wrote: "In many ways, this park was a gift from residents who entrusted the City of Lafayette to honor the park's history and preserve it as a natural, open-space park for future generations." Although no original legal document was signed, the

group points to several directives to support maintaining the passive designation.

In 1998, a letter from Lafayette's former Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Russell stated, "An overwhelming majority would like the land preserved in as natural state as possible."

Senator Richard Rainey, in requesting state money (in 1999) for the purchase of the property, wrote, "If Lafayette acquires the land, the neighbors around the land would like to keep it as natural as possible."

After Lafayette obtained the property, a plaque from then-mayor Erling Horn recognized the park's founders, with the assurance that "generations to come will appreciate your work to permanently preserve this land."

On the other side of the issue, proponents of the Improvement Plan claim widespread support and offer arguments to the "Let It Be" faction.

According to the proponents' informational brochure, the structures would take up less than 7 percent of the park with "design elements that look natural and do not obstruct the view of the heritage oak and meadow," adding that the play structures will inspire more people to play and come outdoors to enjoy nature.

The improvement plan includes an active play area where children can spin, rock, bounce, balance, sway, slide and climb. Additional features like handicap accessible pathways, picnic tables and more will take up another 12 percent of the area, and leave the greater part of the park in its natural state.

Grace Dixon, a 17-year resident in the neighborhood, said, "No other park east of Moraga Road is available for children to play, and all the school playgrounds are closed. None of the others are ADA available."

Last year, the city requested that the proposed budget of the project be reduced in half — from \$1 million to \$500,000. Proponents of the improvement plan claim this is a small price to pay considering the price of land elsewhere in the city.

In response, Cass states that Lafayette, in its stated goal to provide five acres of park land for every 1,000 citizens, "should work to find more park land, rather than reconfigure an existing one."

Both sides claim that a majority of the immediate neighbors support their plan. The council may have to channel the Wisdom of Solomon to come to a satisfactory decision.

The council was slated to discuss the park at its Jan. 23 meeting.

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### Moraga

#### Public Meetings

##### City Council

Wednesday, Jan. 25, 7 p.m.  
Goal-Setting Meeting:  
Thursday, Jan. 26, 6 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

#### Planning Commission

Monday, Jan. 30, 7 p.m. (special Meeting)  
Monday, Feb. 6, 7 p.m. (regular Meeting)  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

#### Design Review

Monday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

#### School Board Meetings

**Moraga School District**  
Tuesday, Feb. 14, 7 p.m.  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Library  
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga  
www.moraga.k12.ca.us  
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

#### Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us  
Phone: (925) 888-7022

#### Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

#### Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

## Large Home Finally Approved On Rheem Boulevard

By Sophie Braccini

Two years ago a family living on a small ranch house at 287 Rheem Blvd. filed an application to remodel. After several approvals, appeals, and new designs they finally received a final authorization from the planning commission, after having reduced the size of their home, moved the garage from one side to the other, and removed the second story.

When the family first applied, their project was a two-story over-5,000-square-foot Spanish-style home. Over the course of the two years, the planning commissioners highlighted and refined what rules property owners should follow when proposing a large remodel and new devel-

opment in an existing neighborhood.

The proposed home did not exceed the maximum size determined by the Moraga code, simply because there was no rule at the time for parcels over 20,000 square feet. However, the commissioners considered guidelines in the code that require development to minimize visual impacts on scenic corridors: that Rheem Boulevard is one of these, that the new structure be compatible with neighboring residences, that the project not affect the property values of neighboring residences, and for this specific location that it would limit shading and privacy impacts to the neighboring homes.

The neighborhood of the proposed residence is made of ranch style homes in the 2,000-square-foot-range, all of them one-story. The proposed two stories would have obscured the view of the Campolindo ridge while traveling on the boulevard, and the way the home was designed, its neighbors to the east would have lost their privacy and several hours of afternoon sun with the two stories and garage looming over their property.

The owners of the potential remodel tried different iterations and alterations, but it was not until they got rid of the second story, moved the new garage to the west, and reduced the size of their house to just over 4,000

square feet that they received their approval.

Some neighbors still complained that the Spanish-style and size was out of character with their neighborhood. But the commissioners were pleased with the changes and simply asked that the house be painted in a beige color so as not to stand out.

The most impacted neighbor voiced his satisfaction over the changes, and expressed compassion for the family that had to go through such a long process. He regretted that the rules and guidelines had not been made clear to them from the start.

### Moraga Police Report

Jan. 3 to Jan. 10



#### 01/04 Fraud

A victim notified police of an unauthorized charge of approximately \$60 for women's clothing on an infrequently used bank card. The bank removed the charges, but probably not the clothing...

#### 01/04 Traffic Accident

One car hit another while the first was stopped for foot traffic at an uncontrolled crosswalk. Drivers, passengers and pedestrians were all unhurt.

#### 01/10 Larceny

Shifty thief at work: a sad unchained melody played out when Moraga police took the report of a bicycle theft from Saint Mary's College during the month of December. It was locked in a rack, but unattended, and that spoke volumes...

#### Alarms:

- 01/05 Round Table Pizza
- 01/05 200 block Rheem Blvd.
- 01/05 address not listed
- 01/06 address not listed
- 01/09 address not listed

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## Plans Move Forward on Canyon Bridge Replacement

By Sophie Braccini

### Project Description

• General Alignment Similar to Existing Bridge Due to Natural Site Constraints



The proposed new Canyon Bridge.

Graphic provided

Canyon Bridge is necessary to reach Pinehurst Road and the unincorporated Canyon area. The 1936 piece of infrastructure that crosses the large Moraga Creek (the

west branch of the San Leandro Creek) was found structurally deficient by the California Department of Transportation and eligible for replacement. ... continued on page A9

## MSD Looking for Citizen's Bond Oversight Committee

The Moraga School District board of trustees is establishing a Citizen's Bond Oversight Committee to review expenditures associated with the \$33 million school improvement bond measure which was approved by district voters on Nov. 8, 2016. The committee will be responsible for ensuring that bond revenues are used only as

voters intended and for informing the public of bond expenditures. For more information and an application, visit the MSD website [www.moraga.k12.ca.us](http://www.moraga.k12.ca.us), click on Facilities and Bond Information. Applications are due by 5 p.m. Feb. 9 to the MSD office, 1540 School Street, Moraga.

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2015-2016	6.6%	-1.6%	-2%



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## Onoda Voted in as Mayor After Trotter Resigns

By Sophie Braccini



Teresa Onoda and her horse Fargo. Photo A. Scheck

It is the first time in the history of Moraga that a mayor would have succeeded another one so rapidly: just a few weeks.

The accident that incapacitated Mayor Dave Trotter just after his election led to his resignation as mayor — but not as council member — and to the election of a “new” new-mayor. Teresa Onoda was chosen unanimously, while Roger Wykle took the vice mayor chair.

Onoda's election as mayor was not a surprise to her, as she was already the vice mayor and next in line to be mayor according to Moraga's nonwritten tradition.

The new mayor says that in spite of the rapid change of the timeline for her mayoralship she feels ready for the task.

“I study all of the issues, have kept track of our key committees over the past few years, and worked to build a strong working relationship with the town staff,” she said, “I also have developed my relationships with local and state elected officials, the leadership of Saint Mary's College and many different civic groups in our town.”

Onoda is by passion and profession a plein air painter who has been engaged in protecting open space for years and who was also very active in local schools as a parent. She joined the planning commission at the beginning of 2013 and was elected to the town council two years ago. She has a strong track record of being a hands-on type leader, working hard on issues, and going out and about to learn and engage residents.

... continued on page A11

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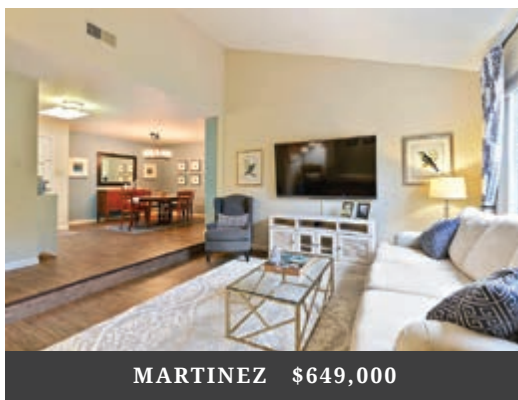
LAFAYETTE \$799,000

14 Moss Lane | 2bd/2ba  
L. Brydon/K. Ives | 925.258.1111



MORAGA \$720,000

0 Bollinger Canyon Road | Lot  
J. Lucasey/L. Ridout | 925.258.1111



MARTINEZ \$649,000

2273 Minaret Drive | 4bd/2ba  
Kristina McCann | 925.258.1111



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# Orinda

## Public Meetings

### City Council

Saturday, Jan. 28, 9 a.m. (special Meeting)  
Community Room City Hall

Tuesday, Feb. 7, 7 p.m. (regular Meeting)  
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library  
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

### Planning Commission

TBA  
Room#7 of the Community Center,  
28 Orinda Way

### Citizens' Infrastructure

#### Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2017, 6:30 p.m.  
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,  
City Hall, 22 Orinda Way, Orinda

### School Board Meetings

#### Orinda Unified School District

Monday, Feb. 13, 6 p.m.  
Regular Board Meeting  
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda  
www.orindaschools.org  
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

#### City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org

Phone (925) 253-4200

#### Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

#### The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



- Alarms 69
- Noise complaints 2
- 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 9
- Traffic stops 46
- Suspicious Circumstances 6
- Suspicious Subjects 9
- Suspicious Vehicles 18
- Abandoned vehicle  
Lavenida/Donna Maria Way
- Burglary, Auto  
Orinda Theater
- Civil  
40 block Oakwood Rd.  
100 block Caro Ln.
- Death, non-criminal  
100 block Melody Ln.  
800 block Ironbark Place  
20 block Los Cerros
- Disturbance  
Wilder Sports Fields  
20 block Stanton Ave.  
40 block Brookwood Rd.
- DUI  
Moraga Way/Brookside Dr.  
50 block Oak Dr.
- ID Theft  
reported to police
- Illegal entry  
300 block Minert Rd.
- Loitering  
Orinda Theater  
Orinda Community Center
- Police/Fire/ EMS  
100 block Ivy Dr.  
Camino Pablo/Sol Brae Way  
500 block Moraga Way
- Promiscuous Shooting  
Miramonte High School
- Public Nuisance  
100 block Village Square  
20 block Scenic Dr
- Reckless Driving  
Miner Rd./Camino Sobrante (2)  
Oak Dr./Moraga Way  
Miramonte High School  
100 block Wilder Rd  
Hwy 24/Camino Pablo  
Camino Pablo/Claremont Ave.  
San Pablo Dam Rd/Bear Creek Rd.  
Camino Pablo/Wildcat Canyon  
Hwy 24/St Stephen's Dr.

# Orinda Appoints Interim City Manager

By Sora O'Doherty



Steve Solomon Photo provided

Steve Solomon, a longtime city manager for several California cities, will take over as interim city manager for Orinda, the Orinda City Council decided Jan. 10. Solomon was hired to replace the departing Janet Keeter, who has served more than 11 years in the position. Because Salomon is not available until Feb. 21, Keeter has postponed her retirement to accommodate his start date. Salomon has had a successful career in local government spanning over 40 years. He has served as city manager and as interim city manager of cities including Hercu-

les, Albany, Watsonville, Visalia, Brentwood and Benicia. In his 17 years as city manager of Visalia, his emphasis was on economic development, capital improvements, downtown revitalization, fiscal stability and staff development.

Salomon has a master's in City and Regional Planning from Ohio State University, with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with an emphasis on transportation and public works from the University of Cincinnati. He has served in leadership positions within the

California Redevelopment Association, Contra Costa County City Managers Group, South San Joaquin Valley Division League of California Cities – City Managers' Department, and is a member of the International City/County Management Association.

The period for recruiting services to submit proposals to recruit a new, permanent city manager closed on Jan. 24. Once the council reviews the proposals and selects a firm, the recruitment process for a permanent city manager will begin.

# Dead Animals, Strays and the Glamorous World of Contra Costa Animal Services in Orinda

By Sora O'Doherty

Steve Burdo, community relations director of Contra Costa Animal Services, gave a presentation to the city council reviewing 2016 at Animal Services and looking toward new developments. For Orinda, Animal Services in 2016 conducted 43 investigations into animal noise or inhumane treatment, picked up 142 stray animals,

and 156 dead animals. Over all, the department provided over 2,000 low cost vaccinations and 5,000 spay/neuter surgeries in 2016. A new volunteer coordinator was hired to oversee the more than 300 volunteers — 100 of whom were new in 2016 — who conduct all manner of tasks. The department has introduced

several new programs, including Book Buddies, where children read to the animals, and a new catfe (cat café) in Martinez where patrons can enjoy the beverage of their choice while playing with cats, and, perhaps, adopting one.

Burdo expressed the department's thanks to outgoing city manager Janet Keeter, and answered council member Amy

Worth's questions, noting that the department provides volunteers and materials for city schools and will be starting a monthly newsletter. Burdo also mentioned that the department provides vouchers for \$6 rabies vaccinations.

# MOFD Crew Celebrates Future Firefighter's 4th Birthday

By Nick Marnell



Seated, from left, Capt. Steve Gehling, engineer-paramedic Jon Ford, birthday boy Vivek Rathod; Standing, from left, firefighter-paramedic Anthony Stephens, Capt. Sean McGee, Chandni Rathod, Sameer Rathod. Photo N. Marnell

Not infrequently, kids receive birthday presents of firefighter helmets, fire engine puzzles or books about the fire service. In the case of 4-year old Vivek Rathod, he received those gifts from Moraga-Orinda Fire District

firefighters at a birthday party they threw for him at Fire Station 45 in Orinda.

On Jan. 13, 2013, Capt. Sean McGee led his crew of MOFD firefighters and paramedics on a childbirth response call to Stanton Avenue

in Orinda. "If you guys were even a minute or two later..." said Sameer Rathod, Vivek's dad. Capt. Steve Gehling, then a firefighter-paramedic, delivered Vivek in the bedroom at 10:17 p.m. and the crew rushed the baby and his mom to the hospital for follow-up care.

"(Vivek) knows the whole story," said Chandni Rathod, Vivek's mother. "He's passionate about firefighters. He thinks of Station 45 as his second home." Vivek constantly talks about coming to the fire station, because he wants to stop and "see my friends," she said.

Vivek received a fire station command performance on Jan. 16, including gifts, cupcakes, a fire engine tour and even a special session with Gehling on how to use the fire hose.

"Most of the time, we pick the moms up and take them to the hospital," said Gehling, who noted the singularity of Rathod's situation. The captain has delivered nine babies in the field throughout his career, so he was the right person on duty the night of the Rathod emergency medical call.

"We are still very grateful," said Sameer Rathod.

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- Attempted Suicide  
50 block Park Lane Dr.
- Surveillance  
50 block Altarinda Dr.
- Theft, Petty  
70 block Claremont Ave.
- Theft, Grand  
40 block Robert Rd. 10 block Meadow Park Ct.  
10 block North Ln.  
10 block El Gavilan
- Theft, Vehicle  
10 block Camino Sobrante
- Trespass  
Theatre Square
- Uncontrollable juvenile  
20 block El Toyonal
- Unwanted Guest  
Taco Bell
- Vandalism  
40 block Sleepy Hollow Ln.  
Theatre Square
- Warrant Service/Arrest/Advise  
10 block Alta Vista

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## Longtime Orinda City Manager Janet Keeter Says Goodbye

By Sora O'Doherty



Janet Keeter inspects the Orinda sinkhole. Photo Tod Fierner

Janet Keeter concludes 33 years of local government service when she retires as Orinda City Manager in February.

Keeter, announced her retirement on

Oct. 31 in order to make it clear that the election results had no influence on her decision. Originally intending to leave Feb. 3, Keeter has extended her time to allow new Interim City Manager Steve Salomon to come on board. (See story page A6)

Orinda was incorporated as a city in 1985; 20 years later Keeter arrived in 2005 as Orinda's third city manager. Keeter has now been with the city for 11-and-a-half years.

When Keeter arrived, the city government was operating out of trailers and a leased parking lot. One of her first and biggest projects was managing the building of the city hall, which involved a three-way land exchange with the city, the Orinda Union School District and Pulte Homes. Pulte built the infill housing project Orinda Grove consisting of 73 homes on the old library site; the new library and the city hall were constructed on their current sites. The city hall construction took two years.

Another major project during Keeter's time has been the Wilder development of 245 homes, which was approximately 20 years in the planning stages. Keeter's involvement has been with the public amenities, such as the three playing fields and the art and garden center, plus the Ranch House, which was given to the city and is used for events such as weddings.

Since Orinda follows the practice of electing a new mayor each year, with the vice mayor stepping up to mayor, Keeter has had experience with working with many mayors over her years with Orinda. All the mayors are volunteers (as is the city council), and each has individual preferences about how to interact with the staff, be it by in person visits, email or telephone calls. The city manager handles the day-to-day operation of the city, including agenda preparation for the twice-monthly city council meetings, in addition to hiring all the city's department directors, except for the city attorney, who is hired by the city council.

Although Orinda is a small city and has a very lean operation — which means that Keeter has had no assistant or deputy city manager — she had enjoyed being “a big fish in a little pond.”

Keeter says that she has appreciated the full support of the city council members. When she first came to Orinda, she was very impressed with the large number of volunteers in the city. She lauds the qualifications of them, who encompass retired attorneys, CEOs, CFOs and other professionals. If Orinda had to pay for such quality and experience it could never afford it, Keeter believes. She also appreciated the garden club's beautification projects, in-

cluding the annual scarecrows, wreaths and landscaping of city property.

The job, for which the city is currently recruiting, is never boring, Keeter says. Handling elections, interacting with the city council and commissions, and managing city employees makes the job very exciting. Who handles the city manager's duties when the manager is absent, like, for example, on vacation? Keeter noted that she had an excellent relationship with former longterm city clerk Michelle Olsen, and has even had the police chief step in from time to time.

So, after all this fun and excitement, what is Keeter looking forward to? Dinners at home and no more night meetings! Keeter enjoys cooking, hiking, golf and spending time with her family. She has been married 29 years and has no children. She wonders aloud what it might be like, skiing during the middle of the week, and looks forward to finding out.

What were the biggest changes Keeter observed during her time in Orinda? Growing support for getting the roads fixed. The city is now well situated for a change of management. The roads project is well underway, staffing levels are good — Keeter is delighted with new city clerk Sheri Spediacci — and a new city manager can start fresh with downtown development.

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## Fire Districts

### Public Meetings

#### Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors  
Wednesday, Feb. 15, 7 p.m.  
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)

#### ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, Feb. 14, 1:30 p.m.  
Board Chamber room 107,  
Administration Building,  
651 Pine St., Martinez  
For meeting times and agendas,  
visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

# MOFD Board OKs Major Apparatus Purchase

By Nick Marnell

A standing-room crowd that included more than a dozen firefighters saw the Moraga-Orinda Fire District board approve a \$2.85 million purchase of two fire engines, one fire truck and two ambulances, though two of the directors questioned the timing of the expenditure.

The district's long-range capital plan called for replacing the three major apparatus in the 2017-18 fiscal year, but in response to a question by Director Craig Jorgens, Fire Chief Stephen Healy said that an early purchase was necessary not only because of the condition of the equipment but due to rising interest rates and the cost savings of buying the vehicles prior to the beginning of February. In addition, mechanical issues with two ambulances have persisted and worsened and the chief said the district needs

to purchase two additional ambulances, replacing one with over 150,000 miles and the other with over 100,000 miles.

Healy explained that the new ladder truck will take 14 months to build, the engines take about nine months and the ambulances six, and once MOFD commits to the purchase the district jumps to its place in line for assembly. Plus, with the 3 percent price increase taking effect Feb. 1, the district would save about \$100,000 if it purchases the vehicles early. "We know we'll need them anyway," the chief said.

Variances in the current year-to-date budget figures that indicate the district may end up short \$1 million in revenue this year concerned Director John Jex, who said he would prefer to have the apparatus expenditures reviewed by the

finance committee first.

But most of the discussion dealt with the purchase of the truck versus a quint, a vehicle that carries an aerial ladder, a ground ladder, a pump, water and a hose. It operates both as a fire truck and a fire engine but according to many firefighters, does neither operation well.

"I know what an engine can do and I know what a truck can do," said Capt. Daryle Balao, one of the original MOFD firefighters. "My responsibility as a truck captain is to open holes and break things so that the engine company can put the fire out."

A ladder truck carries disentanglement equipment and specialized rescue supplies. It carries more tools than an engine but no water. Its aerial ladder is bigger. Its features are more in line with current firefighting needs, said the captain,

whose words were echoed by Fire Marshal Kathy Leonard. "Three-story buildings are being constructed on 20-foot-wide streets," Leonard said, making access by a ladder truck a near necessity.

Nevertheless, Jex and Jorgens voted against the purchase of the truck and the engines, but the motion passed 3 to 2 at the Jan. 18 meeting. The board unanimously agreed to buy the two ambulances.

After the district purchases the equipment it will then bid out lease-purchase contracts for the \$2.85 million. The chief will bring the options back to the board, which hinted against financing the apparatus and paying cash, as the district capital budget sits at \$10 million, restricted only by the \$4 million committed to the construction of Station 43 in Orinda.

# Solar Panels on Their Way to the Lafayette BART Station

By Nick Marnell

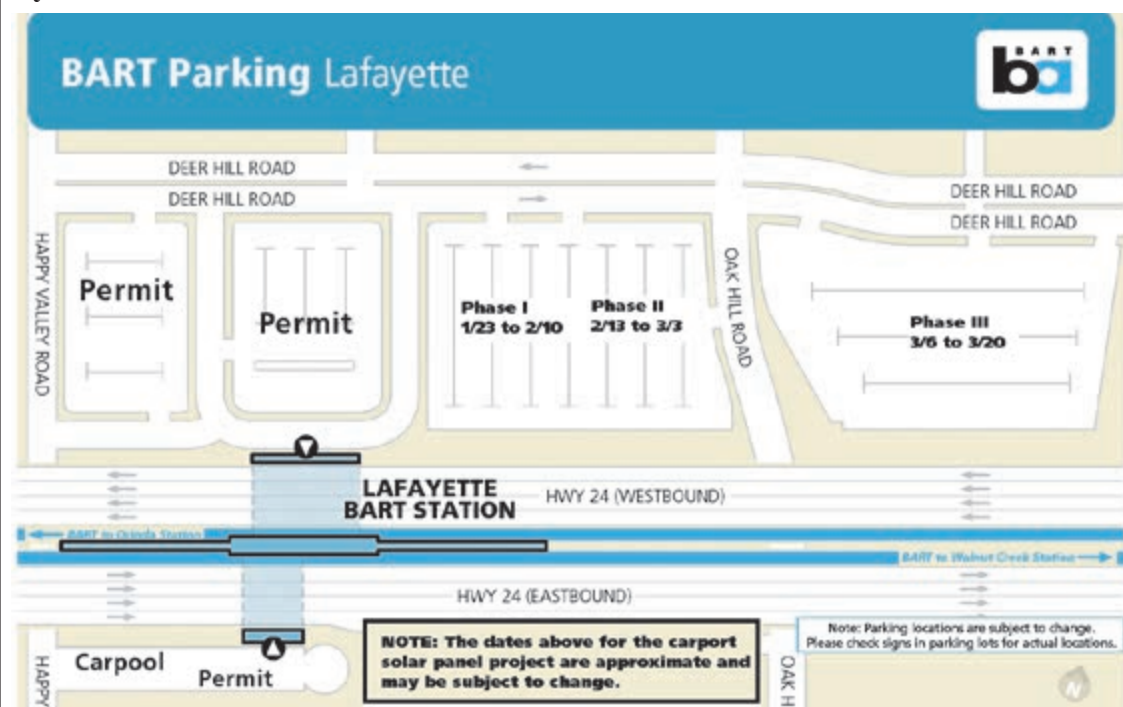


Photo courtesy Bay Area Rapid Transit

Finding a parking spot at the Lafayette BART station becomes even trickier Feb. 6 when construction crews start to fence off areas in the parking lot to allow installation of solar-paneled carports as part of a project the transit agency board authorized in October.

BART entered into a 20-year

power purchase agreement with San Mateo-based SolarCity to design, install, operate and maintain solar panels on the Lafayette station property, with the money to fund the \$3.85 million project coming from the BART energy operating budget. The agency will purchase all of the electricity generated and

use it throughout the system, making the Lafayette installation one of BART's largest solar generation facilities, according to the district.

As additional benefits to customers the panel canopies will feature LED lighting on the underside for safety, and will provide shade from the California sun.

"We apologize for the inconvenience this will cause and are trying to minimize disruption to folks trying to get a ride on BART, thus working on smaller sections of the lot at a time," said BART spokesman Taylor Huckaby. "We encourage riders to carpool together or seek an alternate means of transportation like bicycle or bus to get to the station."

The work will proceed in three phases with approximately 200 parking spaces fenced off at a time over a six-week period. Huckaby said that Lafayette riders can expect no service disruptions as a result of the project because work will be done only in the parking lot.

SolarCity completed a similar installation at the new Warm Springs station, which has yet to begin train service, and plans to install solar panels at the new Antioch eBART station this fall.

BART recommended a solar installation for the Orinda station six years ago but was rebuffed over concerns that the project would conflict with plans for the city's downtown development.

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## Online Purchases ... continued from page A1

In a Dec. 9 memo about its "shop local" campaign, the Lafayette Chamber reported to its members, "One of the comments we hear from merchants is customers coming into your store, asking questions, taking photos of products and then ordering them on line from their smart phones." The solution? "Consider making a little card you can hand your customers that reminds them why it is so important to shop local." The reasons include maintaining the vibrancy of the downtown and keeping the local tax base strong. At its basis, though, the issue of online shopping is usually price, as well as the convenience of ordering items from the comfort of home while dinner is cooking.

Several local business owners agree that customers engage in buying behavior that amounts to using their stores as showrooms. Bill Snider, owner of Moraga Hardware and Lumber, has seen customers scan the UPC codes from his merchandise with their smart phones, then leave the store to order online. The owner of a service-oriented retail business in Lafayette, who asked not to be identified, reports that customers have come in to make a selection, photographed sample merchandise, flipped the items over to photograph the codes, and then departed, never to be seen again. This seems to be a common occurrence in certain types of businesses where the merchandise can be substituted, like hardware.

Some businesses succeed in combating such behavior by cultivating a loyal base of customers who wouldn't dream of abusing the owners. Other businesses have taken an even more successful tack, at least from the competitive standpoint: they offer unique or unusual items that cannot be found online. Moraga Hardware and Lumber, for example, offers items such as pickles from Colorado, high-quality flashlights, and hand and foot warmers to draw customers in. These sold well as stocking stuffers this holiday season, bolstering the store's bot-

tom line. Its associated store, Across the Way, sold gift items such as homemade cutting boards fashioned from distressed Berkshire Mountain hardwoods, flat scented candles and designer place mats and napkins that are simply not available on Amazon. Although sales at the two stores are gradually trending downward according to Snider and general manager Susan Marconi, these specialty items helped rescue this season's sales results.

Sarah McDonell, owner of Orinda's McDonell's Nursery, agrees. She has been expanding the store's offerings by increasing the selection of holiday ornaments, gifts and décor that cannot be ordered online, resulting in a better season this year than last. And Nicole Jarotzky, owner of Whimsy, a children's clothing, toy, and accessory store in Lafayette, attributes her good year to offering many unique items, although her holiday season sales were "somewhat disappointing," she admits. If there is a pattern, it seems to be related to the willingness of shoppers in affluent communities like Lamorinda to overlook price in favor of individuality and uniqueness when shopping for holiday gifts.

Nevertheless, the impact of online sales is undeniable. One local merchant said her vendors confirmed that brick and mortar stores suffered from slow sales this season. Although local UPS Store owner Doug Meyer does not handle many inbound packages because they are delivered directly to customers, his post-holiday package business is running 15 to 20 percent ahead of last year. "Returns," he explains. Those items were not purchased locally.

Although catalog sales have been around since the days of Sears Roebuck without destroying local competition, only time will tell what strategies will be effective for local businesses to meet the more daunting challenge of internet buying in a changing world. Perhaps we will know by the time drones deliver the packages and whisk away the returns.

## Moraga Parents Rally to Defend Accused Los Perales Teacher

... continued from page A1

In other media outlets, his version of the story has been that last year, during a class and in front of all his classmates, Tang put a piece of tape on John Doe's face and stigmatized him in front of the other children.

The family complained to the principal and filed charges with the Moraga Police Department. MSD immediately removed Tang from the classroom and she was suspended during the police and administrative investigations.

Moraga Police Chief Jon King said that last year when the family brought charges his officers investigated the case against the teacher. At the time King says that there was not sufficient evidence against the teacher and the district attorney decided to drop the charges. Tang returned to the classroom after the investigation and has been continuing to teach since.

It is a different version of the incident that is given by parents of other children who were in Tang's class at the time. Several reached out to the Lamorinda Weekly.

Joey Yoder had a daughter in room 22 at the time of the incident. Yoder says that what her child has said is that all the children agree that John Doe put the tape on his mouth himself, that Tang asked him to remove it and to respect class rules. Another parent who would rather not be named said that Tang's roll of duct tape in the classroom was a prop she pointed to when she wanted the children to calm down, but that she never used it against any of them. That parent and at least one other confirmed to this reporter that their children said John Doe put the tape himself on his mouth and clowned around with it, refusing to remove it.

At the school board meeting that followed the breaking of the story in different media outlets, parents came to express their unconditional support of Tang. They said they are sad that the nature of the accusations wrongly impugned the professional character of a beloved teacher.

Testimonies of her caring, skills, extraordinary ability to reach and impact even the most challenging students and to make a positive difference in their lives were described over and

over again in person and in the letters to the district. Parents whose children were in her classes said they held her in very high regard and felt she was honest, forthright, caring, compassionate, bright, loving, innovative and held the children to a highest level. Parents who went on field trip with her said they were blown away by her energy and dedication.

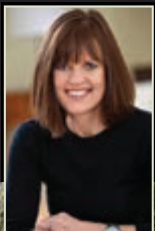
One parent explained to us that the sentence, "What happens in room 22 stays in room 22" used by John Doe's lawyer to hint that Tang threatened the kids, was in fact used by Tang to protect the privacy of what the children would share in the classroom. Many of Tang's current and former parents portray a teacher that would not likely put down a child, and whose passion for teaching has made a difference in her students' lives.

These parents asked the school district during the meeting not to settle the case. "The district has to stand up to defend Mrs. Tang," said the mother of a former student of Tang now in college and who had come back to support his former teacher. "Anything else would be a shame."

In the letters sent to the MSD are also missives from Tang's former students. "She took the time and effort to understand me as an individual, re-engaged me academically," wrote one ex-student, while another wrote "(she) was so welcoming, and she was a great role model and influence to me. My fourth grade year was, undoubtedly, the best year in my life."

This year, as a civil suit was filed against the MSD, King reactivated the case and his officers interviewed John Doe, something his family had not agreed to previously. The case was then brought to the District Attorney's office on Jan. 20. At the time Lamorinda Weekly went to press a decision had not been reached on whether to file charges against Tang. The story will be updated online at [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) as soon as a decision has been made. The D.A.'s decision has no bearing on the civil law suit against the school district.





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## Marching for Equality



Above, a group from Lamorinda head to Washington D.C. for the Women's March.



At left, Longtime Moragan Cathy Harris donned her pink hat to participate in the march, which drew an estimated 500,000 people from across the country.

Photos provided

**We want Your Political Photos**  
If you were at the presidential inauguration or participated in one of the Women's marches the weekend of Jan. 20-22, please send us your name, hometown, and a brief description of the photo. We will try to run it in an upcoming issue.

## Letters to the Editor

### Likes Moraga Police Report

Dear Editor,  
I'm just now catching up with holiday period papers and wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the creative writing in the Dec. 28 Moraga Police Report!

Elisabeth Tuck  
Moraga

Moraga

## Canyon Bridge Replacement

... continued from page A5

The Town of Moraga submitted and was awarded a grant through the Federal Highway Bridge Program to fund a replacement of the 104-foot long structure with a new bridge. The initial study is now approved.

The town council reviewed the initial study and design proposed by town Public Works Director Edric Kwan. The director reminded the council members that the daily traffic on the bridge is approximately 6,000 vehicles. The design of the bridge is constrained by features on both sides, including on one side the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail, a steep hillside, private residences and numerous utilities, and on the other side the banks of the creek itself and Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School property.

The design proposed is for two lanes for vehicular traffic, as it is today, with the addition of pedestrian and bicycle lanes. The bridge is

often used by groups of bicyclists that enjoy riding the hills, and by pedestrians strolling on the Lafayette-Moraga Trail.

David Bruzzone, whose family owns Indian Ridge, a property that could be developed and would have access to downtown Moraga through the bridge, sent a letter to Kwan asking the town to consider building a four-lane bridge. Council members Jeanette Fritzy and Kymberleigh Korpus asked the director if this option could be studied. He responded that Canyon Road itself has only two lanes, and that there was a risk to lose the grant that had been awarded to replace what exists, not create something much larger.

When work starts, one lane of the bridge will stay open as not to completely interrupt traffic. The project might take two years to be completed.

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) for submission guidelines. Email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

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## 7-Eleven Owner Saleh is Moraga Business Person of the Year

By Cathy Dausman



Samir "Sam" Saleh doing what he loves best. Photo Cathy Dausman

Samir "Sam" Saleh is nearly a blur behind the counter; quickly bagging purchases, counting out change, greeting incoming customers with a cheery and personal, "What's going on?" or "How 'ya doing?"

The owner of Moraga's 7-Eleven was recently named Moraga Business Person of the Year, an honor he won "overwhelmingly," said Moraga Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kathe Nelson. "He's so quiet about how he goes about his work," she said, yet he remains personable and very supportive of Moraga. "We (the chamber) have sponsored many events," Nelson continued, "and he is always there."

Saleh returns the compliment

abundantly. "I feel safe (in Moraga)," he said, adding "this (store) is (my) family." He calls himself "outgoing" and says he laughs "a lot". His customers obviously feel similarly; seeing Saleh involved in a conversation, one started to dish up his own hot dog, while others will make the store a fresh pot of coffee when needed. "I've trained them," Saleh smiles.

Saleh also knows his regular customers so well he inquired if a certain reporter was new to town. Of course his franchise offers Slurpees, coffee, candy and lottery tickets, but it also features hot foods, a new trend Saleh says, and one which Nelson says fills a void given the closure of some Moraga fast food outlets.

Saleh has owned his Moraga franchise for more than 16 years. During that time he has seen multiple lottery winners, including an \$89 million winner in 2001 and a \$174,000 winner around the time of the Moraga sinkhole last spring. "I think it might have been a PG&E worker," he confides, saying that none of his regular lottery players admitted owning the winning ticket.

How many hours does the driving force behind the counter actually work at a store which is open around the clock? Saleh replies, "About 50 hours a week. I try to take Saturdays off, and usually end up getting three out of four (off)."

Realizing his latest customer forgot his change, Saleh cut short his conversation to call after the man. "If I kept the change people forgot I'd make more than I do (in salary)," he laughed.

Saleh will be honored Feb. 28 at a dinner held at Moraga Country Club, 1600 St Andrews Drive. Reservations are required and can be made online at [kathe@moragachamber.org](mailto:kathe@moragachamber.org); the cost is \$55 per person.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

## Business Bites

By Paula King



Lindsay Pirkle

Photo Wendy Scheck

**Moving close to home:** As an avid baker and world traveler, Lindsay Pirkle was immediately drawn to Orinda's Republic of Cake while managing the Orinda Theatre. When the opportunity to buy the quaint bakery in Orinda Theatre Square recently presented itself, she jumped at the chance.

"I liked the atmosphere of Republic of Cake immediately because it reminded me of the charming little bakeries that are found all over France," Pirkle said.

After seven successful years in Orinda, Republic of Cake won't change much under the new ownership, according to Pirkle. She noted that regulars will still find their favorite cupcakes and there will be an expanded selection of assorted baked goods in the near future.

"Republic of Cake is so well-known in the Lamorinda area and we use all-natural ingredients," she said. "We bake fresh every day. We don't even own a freezer. It is hard to find bakeries today that bake everything fresh daily."

To reach Republic of Cake, visit [www.republicofcake.com](http://www.republicofcake.com) or call 925-254-3900.

**Coming full circle:** Dr. Richard Filinson returned his family medical practice limited to homeopathy back to Lafayette last fall after starting his career here in the late 1970's. Filinson spent many years working on the East Coast and in Marin and decided to come back for his fondness of the Lamorinda area.

Filinson noted that homeopathic doctors treat all of the same conditions as traditional physicians but use homeopathic medicines only.

"My pleasure comes in finding the remedy," he said. "The real challenge is getting to the underlying root of their problems."

To reach Filinson, call 925-283-6348.

**Tax Rates Down:** As of Jan. 1, shoppers may have seen a tiny relief at the cash register, as the statewide sales and use tax rate decreased one quarter of one percent (0.25 percent) from 7.50 percent to 7.25 percent. The decrease in the statewide rate is effective for all cities and counties in California; however, in many jurisdictions in California the actual sales and use tax rate may still be higher than the statewide rate due to the addition of district taxes.

To find the correct rate in your city or county, visit <https://maps.gis.ca.gov/boe/TaxRates/> and enter the address as prompted. Additionally, a listing of sales and use tax rates for each city and county is available on the California City and County Sales and Use Tax Rates website, <https://maps.gis.ca.gov/boe/TaxRates>.

A retailer who continues to charge and collect the higher statewide sales and use tax rate after Jan. 1, must either refund the excess tax collected to their customer or pay the excess tax to the Board of Equalization. If the excess tax collected has been paid to the BOE, the retailer may request a refund on behalf of their customer by completing form BOE-101, Claim for Refund or Credit, -[www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/boe101.pdf](http://www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/boe101.pdf).

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Mark your calendars: With spring approaching, home improvement and renovations are on the minds of many homeowners. The Lamorinda Home Expo on Jan. 29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. will feature designers, contractors and landscapers who all service this area and want to help guide those projects. The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce is one of the expo's sponsors. It will take place at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Check out [www.homeexpoevents.com](http://www.homeexpoevents.com) for more details.

MaidPro Lamorinda will have a ribbon-cutting event on Feb. 9 at 5 p.m. The professional home cleaning company is located at 3375 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette.

### Moraga Chamber of Commerce

[www.moragachamber.org](http://www.moragachamber.org) (925) 323-6524



From left, Kevin Reneau, Rotary president, Jun Ybanez, Ron Schumacher, Wendy Scheck, Chamber president.

Photo provided

Going the extra mile: Seasoned auto mechanic Crescencio "Jun" Ybanez of Moraga Motors was named Moraga Employee of the Month for December by the Moraga Rotary and Moraga Chamber of Commerce.

"He's worked here for 13 years and has never missed a single day. He's great with our customers and always goes the extra mile to get the car done right and on time," said Moraga Motors owner Ron Schumacher.

Known for his fine diagnostic skills, Ybanez is an Automotive Service Excellence certified mechanic. He will be honored at a Rotary meeting in February with gifts cards to Safeway and Peninni's.

### Orinda Chamber of Commerce

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If you have a business brief to share, please contact [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com).



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### Moraga

## Onoda Voted in as Mayor After Trotter Resigns

... continued from page A5

"I go out to neighborhoods when there are problems, check for myself on developments, and attend all kinds of meetings," she says. She knows that the mayor role carries a heavy workload, and she adds with a smile that she will control her productivity as an artist either by working smaller or simply starting fewer paintings.

She has, of course, a passion for public art and fought to establish an art committee in town that is credited for the first statues now installed in front of the library and the council chambers at 335 Rheem Blvd. She plans to continue to work with that committee and says that it should place several sculptures around town in 2017, at the Commons Park and at town hall. "I have a few sculptures in mind that will put a smile on many faces," she says.

Onoda says that she wants to

encourage civic discourse, invite opinions and differing points of view, and then listen.

"As mayor, I want to be someone who further channels the incredible talent and expertise of our residents into activities that continually improve the quality of life in our town," she says.

The new mayor wants the town's first priority to be making sure the sinkhole near the Rheem Valley Shopping Center will be fixed so that retail activity and traffic return to normal.

Her next priority is the update of the ridgeline and hillside regulation that has been in the works for over two years. "I want to put a clear structure and process in place that gives developers a strong set of rules that will reflect our semi-rural character," she says. "To me, ridgelines are sacred and hillsides need to be preserved as rigorously

as possible. The cumulative impact of new development on our roads and schools needs to be taken into greater account."

During this year, it is also likely that Onoda will have to weigh in the implementation zoning of the Moraga Center Specific Plan. So far the position she has voiced on the committee that is discussing this future zoning leans toward making some changes. Going onsite and exploring, for example, what would become of the pear orchard located at the corner of Moraga Way and Camino Ricardo, she noted that the exact facts are a bit unsettled and that it looks likely that the density set in the MCSP could lead to a housing development more dense and urban in nature than Moragans would want.

She says that above everything else, as an artist she has trained herself to see things deeply and clear-

ly. "My specialty happens to be in regard to landscapes, so I see our town's natural beauty everywhere I go," she explains. She also catches the things that are out of place or that diminish the overall affect, and she is trained to create mental images in her head. "This means when I look at the designs for a development, I see in my mind very clearly what will work and not work with the surroundings," she believes.

On Jan. 26 the council will meet to discuss the goals for the town for 2017. Trotter had prepared a list for his new function but Onoda is now in charge. "My list is not the same as Dave's list," she says, "although they are compatible." She wants 2017 priorities to reflect her vision of Moraga and where efforts should be concentrated. The goal-setting meeting will start at 6 p.m. at 335 Rheem Blvd.



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# Orinda Sinkhole Fix To Take Weeks

... continued from page A1



Photo Gint Federas

The Orinda City Council met in special session on Jan. 17 to adopt a resolution declaring the emergency, and to be updated by staff on the situation. So long as the emergency resolution is in place, staff will have to provide regular updates. The resolution must be addressed at each council meeting until the issue is fully resolved.

Residents near the sinkhole have been very cooperative with the city, and are willing to have work proceed round the clock to effect the repair as quickly as possible. The sinkhole has caused significant difficulties, particularly for safety transportation. The school bus route is affected and County Connection has to run smaller buses. Emergency vehicles have a more difficult time getting through the area. The fact that the gas line bypass is above ground is also concerning.

Director of Public Works Larry Theis presented the current state of the sinkhole. The city moved swiftly: notified of the sinkhole at 8:30 a.m. on Jan. 11, the city closed the road by 8:45 a.m. Central Sanitation was the first utility to respond, bypassing the sewer lines running through the sinkhole. By early afternoon, PG&E ran a 6-inch gas bypass hose, which is running

above ground in the country club golf course. Currently a large pump requires 24-hour-a-day staffing. Cowan & Thompson are onsite with heavy equipment, removing unsupported asphalt and providing detour signs.

The council had to consider whether to perform a temporary fix or try to do the permanent repair right away. The council likes the idea of going for the permanent repair to avoid a second disruption to the community. It is possible that the repair may be done in phases. Although it is not required to do so, the city is seeking bids so that it can get ideas about methods of repair, cost and timelines. It is estimated that the project will cost approximately \$1 to \$1.3 million.

The current culvert contains a 7 to 7-and-a-half-foot corrugated metal pipe, which was inspected in 2014 and recommended for rehabilitation in five years, as a moderate priority. Theis spoke of various possible replacements — corrugated metal, plastic or concrete — but recommended going to a larger, 9-foot pipe to protect against severe storms in the future. Additionally, the head walls at either end of the culvert need to be replaced, which adds a lot of expense and time to the project but is a safety issue. The

exact cause of the failure will not be known until further excavation is done, and may not even be clear then.

The city's goal for the repair is to keep it simple and fast. The immediate next steps include a topographical survey and geotechnical assessment, the installation of a 61-foot steel beam to secure the existing 16-inch EBMUD water main, which will be strapped to the beam at 10-foot intervals from either side, leaving an unstrapped portion of about 30 feet in the center. A pipe will need to be installed in the creek to bypass the sinkhole during upcoming storms and during construction of the new culvert.

## Meanwhile, in Moraga

So far the Moraga sinkhole measures to withstand winter storms have been working well and the Town Manager Bob Priebe confirmed that his teams are monitoring what is happening at the sinkhole near the Rheem Valley Shopping Center. The town is waiting for the rainy season to end before embarking on repairs.

The town was not able to get a confirmation from federal agencies that it would get financial support in time to start bidding the repair project before the rainy season. Therefore, it had to secure the hole and make sure that the creek that flows through the failed culvert at the crossing of Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard would not wreak more havoc in town.

At this time, the town is confident that it will be ultimately reimbursed for the millions it will cost to repair the failed culvert and the intersection that collapsed as a result.

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# Moraga Education Foundation Celebrates 35 Years of Unwavering Community Support

By Sophie Braccini



Original MEF board members pose during a recent event: From left, Sandy Ruliffson, Marna Eyring, Fred Weil, Barby Eppinger, Lee Marona, Peggy Cabaniss, Judith Glickman, Bill Jasper, Stephany Gooch and Sam Sperry. Not pictured: Jack Balousek, Pat Elam, Joan Evans, David Goodman, Carol MacNulty and Bill Osborne. Photo provided

It took some vision and creativity for a group of 15 Moraga residents 35 years ago to form the Moraga Education Foundation. Their goal was to supplement declining funding for schools. MEF started with a modest goal for their first campaign — \$50,000.

Thirty-five years later MEF is on its way to raising \$2.2 million for the Moraga School District and Campolindo High School. A gala on March 11 will celebrate past and future achievements and raise funds for MEF's endowment.

Peggy Cabaniss remembers the growing discontent over schools' funding in the late 1970s when she was serving on the MSD school board. Sam Sperry explains that Proposition 13 had frozen the percentage of property tax that Moraga would ever get to a very low level, and adding to this shortcoming, Moraga was never eligible to get money that was directed to disadvantaged school districts. The desire grew in some Moraga residents to look for a source of revenue that would be independent of the state funding and property taxes revenues.

"We had to constantly cut back programs, teachers were getting frustrated because we could not get them any raises and they were thinking that the board was being mean," remembers Cabaniss. "We were not mean, we had no money!"

The frustrated parents heard about a school district in Marin County and one in Piedmont that had started foundations to supplement state funding. Fred Weil, a Moraga lawyer and father, got information from both. They had competing funding models, one drew from membership dues, and the other on fundraising. The first MEF volunteers decided on the latter, thinking there was more potential for growth there.

The first year 15 people joined the MEF board. Sperry said he put

himself on the board due to his prior involvement at Rheem School and to secure school buses program. Cabaniss represented the school board, Ruth Habbot, a teacher, was invited to be on the board, as well as Judy Glickman, the MSD superintendent at the time who, according to the former board members, was of great help and support. The legal structure was established in December of 1981. The first campaign started in the spring of 1982 with a phone-a-thon and a lofty goal of \$50,000.

"One problem we had was that retired people felt that they had already put their children through school, and they did not have the means or the inclination to contribute to MEF," recalls former board member Joan Evans. Sperry added that it took a while for these people to realize that they were still MSD stakeholders as the value of their homes were tightly related to the value of the schools. Sperry credits the real estate professionals for joining MEF in carrying that message.

Today's MEF president Heather Davis reports that 27 percent of all donors do not have kids in the schools — community members represent 24 percent and business and civic sponsors represent 3.3 percent of donations. The bulk of donors remain the residents who have children in schools with 73 percent of all contributions. She adds that about 58 percent of parents give to MEF.

The group was very pleased and surprised to reach their goal for the first campaign. The objective for the 1982/83 school year grew significantly to \$186,000. Davis adds that MEF today is responding to the same political and economic conditions that motivated the founders 35 years ago, and that communities — like Moraga and Lafayette — are getting together to support the classes and programs

funded by MEF that have become essentials in all the schools.

MEF's goal this year is to raise \$2.2 million. The trend of increase in funding made a significant jump in the early 2000s when MEF funding increased from \$1 to \$2 million between 2007 and 2013. Today MEF funds teaching positions — art, music, PE, and 15 class sections in high school, as well as programs such as writing programs, teacher aids, technology instructors, tutors, counseling and several grants. Davis is adamant that MEF does not decide how the money is used; this decision is made by the school boards (MSD or Acalanes Union High School District). As the foundation tag line says, MEF serves every student, every day.

The celebration gala will be held at the Claremont Hotel. MEF expects 360 residents to join in the dinner, dancing, and live and silent auctions. The proceeds will contribute to the MEF endowment that has recently reached the half a million dollars level. The \$150 tickets for the gala "Under the City Lights" are on sale on the website [www.MEF35th.com](http://www.MEF35th.com).

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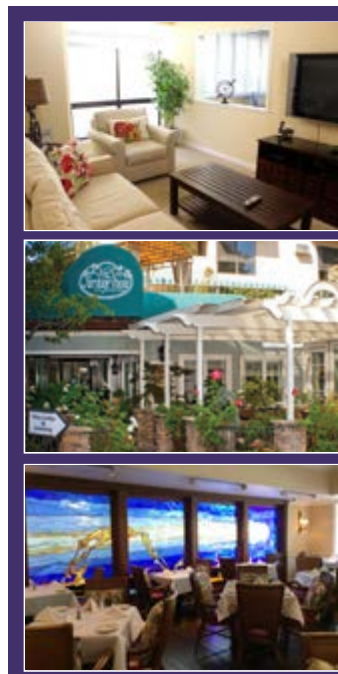
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## Gold Coast Chamber Players Perform 'Intermezzo' in Lafayette

Submitted by Pamela Freund-Striplin



Kindra Scharich Photo provided  
The Gold Coast Chamber Players will ring in the new year at a winter concert Jan. 27 entitled "Intermezzo."

The performance will include

pieces by Gustav Mahler, Max Bruch, Charles Loeffler, Frank Bridge and Francis Poulenc. The musicians are Kindra Scharich, mezzo-soprano, Pamela Freund-Striplin, viola, Tony Striplin, clarinet and Jeffrey LaDeur, piano.

The 7:30 p.m. concert, to be held at the Community Hall at the Lafayette Library, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette, will include a pre-concert talk 30 minutes prior to the show.

Tickets can be purchased and more information is available at [www.gcplayers.org](http://www.gcplayers.org) or by phone at (925) 283-3728.

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## Progressive Groups Organize in Lamorinda

By Sophie Braccini

The outcome of the presidential election has left many progressive Lamorinda residents in a state of apprehension. Many, however, have moved past resentment and looked to regroup for action. From simple conversations to beginning organized actions, Lamorinda is engaging the dialogue about what to do in a post-Obama area.

Maura Wolf remembers the days after the presidential election when she had been watching two conversations on social media that seemed to her very negative and destructive to the community environment. She offered to facilitate a face-to-face exchange, a forum where people would listen to each other. Being on the faculty of the Leadership Department at Saint Mary's College, she contacted her employer to get their permission to house a community dialogue on campus, and called on her friend Edy Schwartz to reach out to as many people as possible. The first meeting took place at the beginning of December and 45 people showed up. This group of people is now meeting monthly.

At the same time in Orinda, Rebecca Verity and her friends created the Orinda Progressive Action Alliance.

At the Thursday Jan. 12 meeting organized by OPAA over 50 people gathered at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Orinda. Everyone was invited to indicate one issue they were interested in discussing. People listed tens of topics including gerrymandering, religious equality, poverty, women issues, health, diversity, homelessness, the Supreme Court, education, the electoral college, justice, environment and many more. The desire in the crowd was to organize to do something positive.

Some members of OPAA will organize "diversity dinners" where people of different opinions and origin will be invited to discuss diverse topics. Letters to the editors will be sent to local and regional media, people will subscribe to independent media, and educate themselves on specific topics of interest and share the results of their research on the group's website or blog.

The group has started to pro-

pose to the participants different action meetings such as a phone banking training session on Jan. 27, or gathering to call representatives on critical issues. Information can be found online at <http://orindaprogressives.wixsite.com/opaa>.

Meanwhile in Moraga, the conversations continued and on Saturday Jan. 14 people gathered at Saint Mary's College. Wolf was pleased to see that the audience was very diverse in age, with about 33 percent of attendees being either high school or Saint Mary's students.

"The objective is not to lead to action," says Wolf, "but to offer a space for people of all ages and opinions to debate and listen to each other."

This group will continue to meet monthly on Saturday morning. The next date is February 4th, location to be announced, registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lamorinda-community-conversation-tickets-31202321985>.

Meanwhile, calls to conservative organizations found no local activities surrounding last week's presidential inauguration.

## How Do Colleges Evaluate Applicants?

By Elizabeth LaScala

There are many factors that play a role in successful college admissions, and sometimes the decisions of admission officers are puzzling. One student with a very strong academic record may be turned down, while a classmate with less impressive grades is accepted. This article sheds light on the important factors that colleges consider as they review applications.

**Academic Record:** The academic record is the heart of the college application; academic courses taken and grades achieved show evidence of the student's ability to handle the demands of college. Going beyond the minimum recommended for admission to a particular school is always viewed favorably.

**AP Exams:** Colleges look to see if the student took advantage of additional challenging coursework offered at their high school, such as Advanced Placement and Honors classes. Strong performance in these classes indicates that a student is prepared to do college-level work. Admissions officers are familiar with the high schools located in the regions to which they are assigned and they know which courses are tougher. They also know some teachers are more generous with grades, while others are less so. That is why I recommend students who are up to the added rigor of AP coursework also be sure to take and do their best on the nationally administered AP exams as well.

**Standardized Testing:** The SAT and ACT play an important role in admissions. These tests are often viewed as objective measures of readiness for college, because they are independent of the grading standards of high schools. But the tests are not without their critics and there are concerns about what the tests are really measuring. The recent revamping of both the ACT and SAT exams this year has not quelled this debate over the predictive power of these exams for college success. Nevertheless, most schools still rely heavily on test scores to make admission decisions, as well as assign merit aid to students. Strong test preparation

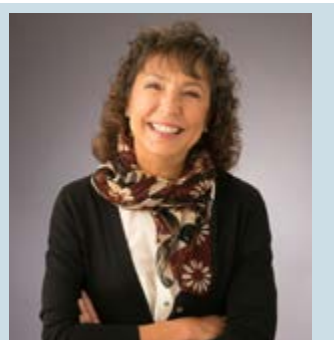
from providers who keep up to date with content and strategies often can help a student elevate scores significantly, but the price tag is usually quite steep. I continue to believe the best test preparation is doing well in high school coursework. When a student has content under control, they can limit test prep to test taking strategies, like building stamina for the long test and careful attention to timing during the exam.

**Extracurricular Record:** Schools today try to admit a well-rounded freshman class, rather than well-rounded students per se. Colleges look for students that are fully engaged in a few significant activities beyond the classroom. Just as an employer is not impressed by an applicant who bounces from one job to the next, acquiring minimal skillsets along the way, most colleges are unimpressed by a student who presents a long list of short-term activities. I suggest you create "depth rather than breadth" in your extracurricular activities. Participating on the school debate team is good. Winning local, regional, and even national competitions is valued even more highly. The same is true for music, sports, the sciences and the arts, as well as employment.

**Leadership:** There is little doubt that selective schools like to see evidence of leadership; this level of participation often signals a student who is intellectually curious, independent and enthusiastic; someone who adds vibrancy to a campus. President of a student club or editor of the school newspaper are high school level leadership positions, while leadership that extends beyond to local, regional and state organizations is even more notable. I have noted a disturbing trend toward students setting up a clubs at high school, and then do little or nothing with them. Both the founder and the members suffer in this case, because the lack of substance in the activity will at some point come out in the admission process. Whether it is through the counselor or teacher letters of recommendation, in the essays students must write about their activities and/or in the interviews

they have, superficial involvement will take its toll. Join clubs that have a proven track record of accomplishment and step up as an officer of the club, if the opportunity presents itself. If you create club, be sure you are fully committed to it and its mission.

**Put Things In Perspective:** There are many good colleges in the US and every high school student who puts in their best effort academically will be offered admission to college. Not every student is cut out for managing several AP classes each term, nor should they try to do so. Many students have not participated in any leadership role. After all, there are far more students than leadership positions! In this case you can highlight your support role in activities, or a record of employment or community service that distinguishes you as an applicant. Students with substantial responsibilities in the home are exhibiting leadership qualities as well. Finally, spend time writing carefully thought out essays that highlight your strengths. Following these guidelines will enhance your chances for admission to any college. And with a well-balanced, well-matched college list, you will get your share of positive responses.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD, brings decades of admissions expertise to personally guide each student through applying to well-matched colleges, making each step more manageable and less stressful. She has placed hundreds of students in the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. Reach her at (925) 385-0562 (office) or (925) 330-8801 (mobile), or online at [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com) or [Elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:Elizabeth@doingcollege.com).

## Orindans Enroll in AmeriCorps NCCC

Submitted by Heather Dirck

Marco Evert and Lindsey Loeper of Orinda recently began 10-month terms of service in the National Civilian Community Corps, an AmeriCorps program. Loeper, based out of the AmeriCorps NCCC regional campus in Sacramento, and Evert, based out of the regional campus in Denver, are currently serving on their first service projects.

Founded in 1994, AmeriCorps NCCC is a residential national service program that supports disaster relief, the environment, infrastructure improvement, energy conservation, and urban and rural development. Over the past 22 years, over one million Americans have served across the family of AmeriCorps programs. Currently, about 80,000 people serve in AmeriCorps programs nationwide

each year, about 2,000 of whom serve with AmeriCorps NCCC.

Evert and Loeper arrived at their respective regional campuses in early October to begin training. This training, which prepared them for 10 months of full-time service with AmeriCorps NCCC, emphasized teamwork, leadership development, communication, service learning, and certification by the American Red Cross.

As Corps Members, Evert and Loeper will be responsible for completing a series of six- to 12-week-long service projects as part of a 10- to 12-person team. Their first service projects finished on Dec. 16, at which time their teams took a break for the winter holidays and begin a new project in a new location in January.

## New Mystery Class Highlights Christie, 'Queen of Crime'

Submitted by Joan Trezek

Wonder why Agatha Christie is called the "Queen of Crime?" She authored 80 crime novels featuring world-renowned detectives like Hercule Poirot and Jane Marple and has been a consistent favorite of readers for over 100 years.

Acalanes Adult Education offers a new mystery class, "Celebrate the Queen of Crime—Christie and Her Favorite Detectives." It began Jan. 18 but organizers are stressing that newcomers are still invited. It runs weekly from 10:30 a.m. to noon through

Feb 22.

Three Christie novels, each one the first to introduce her sleuths Poirot, Marple and Tommy-Tuppence duo, will be featured. Participants read and discuss the works and view video clips that support the novels.

Register at [www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/adulted](http://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/adulted) or call the office (925) 280-3980. Senior rate is \$54. Rate for others is \$60. Acalanes Adult Ed is located at 1963 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek.

## Lamorinda Law Professionals Needed for Mock Trial

Submitted by Jonathan Lance



Miramonte's award-winning 2016 Mock Trial team.

Photo provided

Lamorinda soon-to-be, practicing, and retired law professionals are needed to provide assistance to their future brethren at the upcoming 36th Annual Contra Costa County High School Mock Trial Program, held in the early evenings throughout the month of February, at the Martinez Court Rooms. Last year, 120 Bay Area practicing and retired attorneys and sworn judges, as well as third-year law students volunteered their time with the Mock Trials.

Coordinated by the Contra Costa County Office of Education, Mock Trial is an academic event provided for high school students. The hands-on educational program was created to help students acquire a working knowledge of the judicial system, develop analytical abilities and communication skills, and gain an understanding of their obligations and responsibilities as participating members of our society. This year's grabbed-from-the-local-and-national-headlines case, the *People v. Awbrey*, is a trial about human trafficking and false imprisonment. The pretrial issue involves the Fourth and Fifth Amendments, namely protection against illegal search and seizure and against

self-incrimination.

Teams of high school students work with teachers and volunteer coaches to prepare their version of the criminal case, from both the prosecution and defense perspectives. Students assume the roles of trial attorneys, pretrial motion attorneys, witnesses, clerks, bailiffs, artists, and court journalists. Mock Trial judges and attorneys score their performance and provide immediate feedback. Winning teams advance through seven rounds of competition. The county's champion advances to the State finals. This year, there will be 18 Contra Costa County high school Mock Trial teams competing.

Teams from 17 Contra Costa County high schools will be competing, including Acalanes, Campolindo, and the award-winning Miramonte.

Mock Trial will be headquartered at the A.F. Bray Courthouse, 1020 Ward Street, in Martinez. Interested volunteers can learn more by visiting the CCCOE's Mock Trial web page at <http://www.cccoek12.ca.us/supe/events/tforms.htm>, or contacting Jonathan Lance at (925) 942-3429.

## In Memory

### Gladys Eugenia Siefert

1919-2017



Gladys Eugenia Siefert, née Klingbeil, 97, our beloved mother and friend, passed away early Saturday morning, Jan. 7, at John Muir Hospital in Walnut Creek, California. Born Feb. 23, 1919, in Berkeley, California, to Gladys Eugenia Sutton and Ferdinand (Fred) Clifford Klingbeil (an immigrant from the Ukraine via Ellis Island in 1910), she grew up in Berkeley with her two sisters, Viola and Leta.

Gladys graduated from Berkeley High School in 1936 and, in 1942, embarked on a 58 year marriage to Raymond Joseph Siefert, a mechanical engineer. In 1943, the couple welcomed their first child, Susanne Catherine, and moved to Louisiana, Missouri, with

Ray's job where they lived in company housing during WWII. After the war, they returned to Berkeley and Ray gained employment with Skippy Peanut Butter in Alameda. Gladys and Ray were blessed with three more children, Kathleen Anne (born 1946), Charles Raymond (born 1948), and Steven George (born 1957).

In 1967, they built their dream home, Gladys' "tree house," in Sleepy Hollow, a neighborhood in Orinda, California, where she lived for 48 years. When Ray retired, Gladys returned to school and became an antique dealer, joining an antique collective in Lafayette and Walnut Creek. Later, Gladys was a popular volunteer at the Orinda Library for many years.

Gladys was both "one of a kind" and an emblematic member of the "Greatest Generation." She had too many friends to count and will be missed by all. She once told a grandchild, "I'm not smart enough to be depressed," and she never was.

Gladys is survived by her four children: Sue Keller (Jeff), Kath Balamuth (Barry), Chuck Siefert (Martha) and Steve Siefert (Debbie); brother, Richard Klingbeil; sister, Francis Arnold; 6 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.

She was predeceased by her husband, Ray Siefert; sisters, Viola Stone and Leta Palacin; brother, Frederick Klingbeil; and a grandson, Steven Raymond Siefert.

At her request, there will be no service at this time. A celebration of her life is being planned for the spring. If you would like an invitation, email [ksiefert1946@gmail.com](mailto:ksiefert1946@gmail.com). In lieu of flowers, do something Gladys would do and pay it forward with an act of kindness.

Thanks to the staff of John Muir Hospital for taking such good care of her in her final hours. She died with her youngest son rubbing her feet, something she always loved.

## Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Aids in Housing of Families in Transition

Submitted by Tom Black



A quintet representing Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary poses for a photography while delivering goods donated by the club to a domicile in Pleasant Hill. From left, Tom Guyette, Kathe Mitchell, Spike Speicher, Rich Shearer and Ernie Furtado.

Photo Tom Black

Thanks to a helping hand – literally and figuratively – from Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, a pair of previously chronically homeless families in Contra Costa County now have roofs over their heads.

These and 18 other such families are beneficiaries of a new initiative by Contra Costa Interfaith Housing. Named Families in Supportive Housing and launched last October, it will continue to place families in transition in subsidized domiciles throughout the county as units and funding become available.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, whose partnership with CCIH dates to 2005, decided last fall to "adopt" two units -- a house in Pleasant Hill and a condo in Concord – by providing member-donated starter furnishings, everything from beds and furniture to an assortment of kitchenware. Donations came from elsewhere in the community as well.

Using their own vehicles, members of the club physically delivered the goods to their destinations and set everything up in advance of occupancy by the incoming families. Club member Tom Guyette, a resident of Lafayette, offered his garage as a makeshift warehouse. As project point-person, he worked closely with Gloria Bertolozzi, CCIH staffer who oversees volunteer and outreach programs.

"Both domiciles are now occupied, and I can tell you how thrilled and grateful the families are to have a place they can call home. We hope that further funding will enable us to expand the program," she said.

A grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Development partially underwrote what has been accomplished so far. Playing a major role since the founding of CCIH in 1991 is Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, which remains an active partner.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary has been involved with CCIH for a dozen years as programming partners at Garden Park Apartments in Pleasant Hill. The apartment complex houses families, likewise previously homeless and facing transition challenges.

The Rotary club's inaugural program, which continues to thrive, was to sponsor a Halloween pumpkin-carving day.

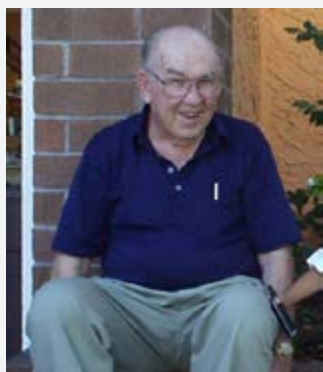
"It has been a huge success," said Brad Davis, architect of the program and CCIH liaison for Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary. In addition, the service organization donates Thanksgiving dinners for all resident families and Valentine's Day festivities for kids.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, meets weekly over breakfast, starting at 7:00, at Lafayette Hotel and Spa on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Guests are always welcome.

## In Memory

### John James McCormick

1919-2016



John James McCormick, 97, died at ManorCare in Walnut Creek on Nov. 25, 2016. The cause was heart failure.

Born Sept. 1, 1919 in Denver, he lived in the Bay Area after being discharged from the Army in 1945. He worked for Chevron for 37 years with a post to Iran during the 1960s and moved to Moraga in 1965 and lived there until retiring in 1986. John was a member of the Moraga Lions, Chevron Retirees Club, and the Moraga Parks and Recreation Foundation, earning a volunteer service award for fundraising for the Moraga Commons Park in 1983. He enjoyed golf, the San Francisco Giants and his two grandsons.

Survivors include daughter Caroline McCormick, and his grandsons Sam and Max Dennoun of Moraga. John was preceded in death by his wife Lola McCormick in 1999.

His family will spread his ashes at sea under the Golden Gate Bridge at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 28, aboard The Naiad, berthed at Pier 39.

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## Not to be missed

### ART

**The Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery presents** "The Peace Chamber—The Crosses of Lafayette Re-counted," a conceptual art installation that will fill the gallery through Jan. 28. This exhibition and all events will be offered free of charge with the goal of promoting peace, community dialogue and individual reflection through Art. www.jenniferperlmuttergallery.com

**The current exhibit at the Moraga Art Gallery** is "Botanica" which derives its name from exquisite floral images by gallery member and photographer Lucy Beck of Lafayette. Her camera freezes moments in time, giving the delicate and complicated beauty of flowers some permanence. For more information, visit the gallery's website: www.moragaartgallery.com, call (925)376-5407 or email moragaartgallery@gmail.com.

**Come to the Orinda Library for a fun,** relaxed evening as patrons reconnect with the creative spirit at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 8. Local artist Felicia Morris will speak about exploring artistic expression as a way to move with greater awareness and love through life's challenges.

### MUSIC

**"Finding Peace at a Crossroads — Music and Guided Reflection"** with Leslie Darwin O'Brien and Julia Shepard Stenzel. Identical one hour programs at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., and 7 pm p.m. on Jan. 26 at the Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery. www.jenniferperlmuttergallery.com, (925) 284-1485 <http://tinyurl.com/jjf3gfv> free registration.

**Gold Coast Chamber Players concert, "Intermezzo"** at 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 27 at the Community Hall, at the Lafayette Library. Pre-concert talk at 7 p.m. www.gcplayers.org

**Tantalizing original music performed** by the Piano Composers chapter of the Contra Costa Performing Arts Society will be featured at 7:30 p.m. on Friday Feb.3 at Grace Presbyterian Church near Rossmoor at 2100 Tice Valley Blvd. in Walnut Creek. Admission is free and parking is plentiful. All donations support student musician scholarships. Visit [www.ccpas.org](http://www.ccpas.org) for more information.

**Enjoy Poetry Music in Concert at 6:30 p.m.** on Tuesday Feb. 7 at the Moraga Library. Join us for a unique performance with this Washington state-based chamber jazz duo as they combine poetry, music, and visuals for an enjoyable multi-media experience. Featuring Chris Lee on vibraphone and Colleen O'Brien on cello.

### THEATER

**Diablo Ballet presents the second program** of its 23rd Season, "Body and Soul," featuring four diverse ballets with choreography by Christopher Wheeldon, Sonya Delwaide and Robert Dekkers, Feb. 3 and 4 at the Del Valle Theatre in Walnut Creek. The show starts at 8 pm. on Friday, Feb. 3 and at 2 and 8 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 4. Each performance is followed by an interactive Q&A with the dancers and choreographers and includes a complimentary dessert reception with an opportunity for audience members to get up close and personal with the artists. Tickets are \$27-47. For tickets, call (925) 943-SHOW (7469) or visit [www.lesherartscenter.org](http://www.lesherartscenter.org) or [www.diabloballet.org](http://www.diabloballet.org).

### KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

**Beloved by parents and children** for generations, "Goodnight Moon" comes joyously to life in the Saint Mary's Performing Arts 2017 Children's Show. At the center are the humorous antics of one very nocturnal bunny, who dances and sings his way to bedtime. The show runs Jan. 31 to Feb. 3 at the LeFevre Theatre, 1928 Saint Mary's Road, Moraga.

**"What Great Parents Do" an evening** with Erica Reischer Ph.D. from 7:30 - 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 15, at Our Savior Lutheran Church

in Lafayette. Dr. Erica Reischer is a renowned psychologist, author and parent educator. The event is presented by the Saklan School Parents' Association free of charge and open to the public. RSVP at saklan.org.

### LECTURES

**"Russia and EU/NATO: A Systemic Conflict"** presented by East Bay World Affairs Council from 7 to 9 p.m. on Thursday Jan. 26 at the Lafayette Library 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. Oscar Jonsson, researcher from Department of War Studies, King's College London, will discuss NATO's current measures aimed at building up its military presence in Europe and the direct impact on Russia's national security. How will Russia respond if NATO establishes a military group in the Black Sea? What will NATO's policies look like now that President Trump is in office? Council Members: \$10, non-members: \$15 Students: Free. Registration and Social: 6:30 p.m. Program begins at 7 p.m. For more information: (415) 293-4601, [www.worldaffairs.org](http://www.worldaffairs.org).

**Learn about "Balancing Hormones,"** a free community lecture from 7-8 p.m. on Jan. 31 at Lafayette Physical Therapy, 3468 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite B110 in Lafayette. Come learn how you can have balance, clear thinking, abundant and steady energy, and be free of hormonal imbalances naturally and easily, with Cynthia Allen, a registered nurse and certified holistic nutritionist. Seating is limited. Please register to attend at [LafayettePT.com/events/](http://LafayettePT.com/events/) or call (925) 284-6150.

**Come to a Breast Cancer Forum: 5:30-8 p.m.** Tuesday, Jan.31 at the Rockridge Branch Oakland Library, 5366 College Avenue, Oakland. Doctors Natalie Marshall Valery Uhl. and Karen Goodwin will share major advances in research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer that were presented at the 39th Annual San Antonio Breast Conference. This is a free, event open to all members of the community. For more information or to register, call (510)204-5656.

**There will be a Breast Cancer Update 6:30-8:30 p.m.** on Feb. 1 at 3276 McNutt Avenue in Walnut Creek. The San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium is the largest annual breast cancer conference in the world. Dr. Tiffany Svahn, a breast cancer specialist will give an overview of new research presented at this symposium. Highlights of the conference will include exciting new data from the latest clinical trials and FDA approved treatments. Refreshments will be served. Space is limited, please register by calling (925) 677-5041 x272.

### CRAB FEEDS

**The Knights of Columbus 22nd annual Crab Feed,** beginning at 6 p.m. is on Saturday, Jan. 28 in St. Monica's Peace Room, Moraga. Dinner will be served at 7:30 p.m. and will include salad, pasta, French bread, fresh cracked crab cad dessert. Chicken is available when ordered in advance. An exciting raffle and Silent Auction of many gifts immediately follows dinner. Tickets are \$60, must be reserved and paid for in advance and are nonrefundable. Please call Stephanie Anderson at (925) 946-9003 ASAP to reserve your place.

**Crab Feed & Dance from 6 to 11 p.m. on Saturday,** Feb. 4. Bring your appetites & dancing shoes. Music provided by popular DJ. Dinner tickets (\$50) must be purchased in advance: call (925) 672-6799 or (925) 890-0918. Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga.

**Soroptimist Crab Feed at 5:30 p.m.** on Saturday, Feb. 11 at the Lafayette Community Center. Includes all-you-can-eat crab, pasta, salad, bread & dessert. Tickets are \$55. For tickets or more info call 925.283.2279.

### OTHER

**Contra Costa Tale Spinners, 7 p.m.** Thursday, Jan.26 in the Orinda Li-

brary Garden Room. Join this lively group at the Orinda Library to tell or listen. This is story telling for adults with a featured teller every month. This month's featured teller is Garth Gilchrist

**Join National Park Service rangers for a free stargazing adventure,** "Road Map to the Night Sky," from 6-7:30 p.m. on Sat. Jan. 28, at the John Muir National Historic Site (NHS) in Martinez. Using constellations as a "road map," we will explore their historical context, the types of stars that comprise them, the positions of various planets, and take a special look at deep-space objects (galaxies, clusters, nebulae) using a high-powered telescope. Reservations are not required. Please call (925) 228-8860 if you have questions. Visitors should meet at the Visitor Center. If it rains heavily, the program will be canceled.

**"May your happiness be without limit" this new year.** Bring a new kitten or cat into your home just in time for the Lunar New Year and for years to come. See the mini-tigers at Community Concern for Cats' adoption event, Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 28-29, from 1 to 4 pm. Locations are Pet Food Express in Lafayette and Pleasant Hill, and Petco in Walnut Creek. For more information, see [www.communityconcernforcats.org](http://www.communityconcernforcats.org).

**Meet leading home improvement vendors,** builders, and design professionals at the 6th Annual Lamorinda Home Expo from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Jan .29 at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building, 3780 Mt Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. Free.

**Free Community Family History Workshop** from 7-9 p.m. on Sunday, Jan .29 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, 3776 Via Granada, Moraga. Come get personalized help to learn more about your family tree. Bring any family information you have to get started. Questions? Contact Sue Severson (925)254-1679.

**Temple Isaiah's annual Dessert Concert 4 p.m.** on Feb. 12 at 945 Risa Road in Lafayette, This year the Ensemble will present popular songs from the 20th century, including "A House Is Not a Home," "That Old Black Magic," "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," "It Had To Be You," "Mona Lisa," "Isn't It Romantic," "I've Got the World on a String," "This Will Be an Everlasting Love," and several others. A silent auction opens at 3:30 p.m. Also enjoy deserts, wine and a raffle. Tickets: \$35 and can be purchased at [www.cantareconvivo.org](http://www.cantareconvivo.org), or by calling (510) 836-0789.

**Join us on Feb. 12 for the first Lamorinda Bridal Social.** Top East Bay wedding professionals Lace and Bustle, Linen and Lilac, Wax A Peel and I Do Dry Style, will help jumpstart your planning with helpful tips and tricks. Participating vendors, including the Claremont Hotel and Spa and the Dailey Method, will be giving away fabulous prizes. Visit the website at, [www.lafayettebridalsocial.com](http://www.lafayettebridalsocial.com) for more information and to purchase tickets.

**Moraga Baseball Association's Opening Day Parade** at 9a.m. is on Saturday, Feb.25 along Camino Pablo Road in Moraga. The parade route runs from Camino Pablo Elementary School to Rimer Drive. The community is invited to enjoy coffee and hot chocolate, view vintage cars, the Moraga Fire and Police departments and cheer on the players.

### SENIORS

The Orinda Library presents an evening with Dr. Lani Simpson. Her PBS show, "Stronger Bones, Longer Life," aired nationwide last summer. Dr. Lani will share excerpts from her bestselling book, "Dr. Lani's No-Nonsense Bone Health Guide," and demonstrate onstage the many factors affecting bone health. Learn how to maintain, prevent or minimize the damage from osteoporosis through diet, exercise, and awareness.

... continued on next page



MOVIE REVIEW

Film Clips

# Love is in the air at Lamorinda Theatres

By Derek Zemrak



Judy Tenuta Photo provided  
**Free Movie Night** -7 p.m. Feb. 9, Orinda Theatre

In keeping with our FREE Classic Movie Night tradition, we will be screening an Audrey Hepburn film. This time it's the 1963 classic comedy, mystery, romance, "Charade," starring Hepburn and Cary Grant and directed by Stanley Donen. And it's just in time for Valentine's Day.

After Regina Lampert (Hepburn) falls for the dashing Peter Joshua (Grant) while on a skiing holiday in the French Alps, she discovers upon her return to Paris that her husband has been murdered. Soon, she and Peter are giving chase to three of her late husband's World War II cronies, Tex (James Coburn), Scobie (George Kennedy) and Gideon (Ned Glass), who are after \$250,000 the quartet stole while behind enemy lines. But why does Peter keep changing his name?

"Charade" received one Oscar nomination for Best Original Song, "Charade" by Henry Mancini and lyrics by Johnny Mercer. "Charade" earned both Hepburn and Grant Golden Globe nominations in 1964. Stop in for a great glass of wine before the movie at Cine Cuvée, located adjacent to the Orinda Theatre.

**Greatest Love Songs from the Movies** - 7 p.m., Feb.11, Rheem Theatre

Pianist Patti Liederker will be performing the great LOVE songs from movies on the beautiful Dom DeLuise baby grand piano. This is the perfect Valentine date night listening to romantic songs from movie favorites, such as "Unchained Melody" ("Ghost"), "I Will Always Love You" ("The Bodyguard"), "It Must Have Been Love" ("Pretty Woman") just to name a few. The evening will include a video presentation and lecture by Derek Zemrak. The Moraga Community Foundation is sponsoring this event. Admission is \$15

**Live Comedy at the Orinda Theatre** - 8 p.m. Feb. 16, Judy Tenuta

Judy Tenuta is an entertainer, actress, author, producer and accordionist. Her comedy is female-centric, specializing in parody and impressions. Her stage persona is the Love Goddess as she encourages her fans to convert to "Judyism." Tenuta's stand-up specials have aired on Showtime, Lifetime and HBO. She has appeared in "The Weird Al Show" and done voiceovers in several animated series as well as producing and starring in "Desperation Boulevard" in 1998. Admission is \$20.

**"It's Time" by Paul Linke** - Feb. 17-19. Rheem Theatre

Even though this one-man play comes after Valentine's Day, it is still a love story about the enormity of life, the power of love and the importance of acknowledging all those who have helped and participated along the way. In his 60-minute tour-de-force, Paul Linke will have you laughing, crying, clutching the hand of your loved one or longing to reach for the phone to make amends. Admission is \$25.

## Not to be missed

### SENIORS ... continued

**Discovering Opera: Kevin Puts' "Silent Night"** presented by Bradford Wade from 1:30 to 3 p.m. on Feb. 9 at the Lafayette Library, Arts & Science Room. Lecturer Bradford Wade will give a guided tour of "Silent Night," with a description of the plot interspersed with musical examples. This lecture is given in conjunction with Opera San Jose's production of "Silent Night," Feb. 11-26. Members Free, Non-Members \$10

**"The Value of Community and Choice as We Grow Older,"** a live-streamed event hosted by Beacon Village in Boston and locally by Lamorinda Village features best-selling author of "Being Mortal," Dr. Atul Gawande at 2 p.m. on Feb. 13 at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church at 49 Knox Drive. For more information or to register (seats limited) call (925) 2543-2300 or RSVP@lamorindaVillage.org.

### GARDEN

**The Winter Rose Pruning workshop at 10 a.m.** Saturday, Jan. 28 is a must for rose lovers. Rejuvenate your rose bushes and encourage beautiful new canes to produce the best blooms. Workshops are held in a covered outdoor area. Dress warmly and be prepared to learn a lot. Call (925) 254-3713 or email

info@mcdonnellnursery.com to reserve a seat.

**The Lafayette Garden Club's General Meeting** is from 9:45 a.m. to noon on Feb. 9 at the Lafayette Veteran's Building at 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. The speaker will be Bruce Rodgers, the "orchid whisperer" who will speak about the many charms of orchids and how to grow them. Bruce has been growing, hybridizing, and decorating with orchids for over 30 years and offers a wide range of orchid growing and decorating services. His books will be available. Visitors are welcome! Please email Carolyn Poetzsch cpoetzsch@gmail.com.

**The Walnut Creek Garden Club monthly meetings** are held at the Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr., Walnut Creek. The Feb.13 program is "Designing Beautiful, Edible Gardens" with Mike Irvine, Lead Gardener and project director of Homestead Design Collection, who designed Test Gardens for Sunset Magazine. A social time runs 10:30-11 a.m. and the program runs 11 a.m.-noon. All are invited to attend and consider becoming a member.

**The Moraga Garden Club Monthly Meeting** will be held at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Feb.16 at the Holy Trinity Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga. Guest speaker will be Laurie Callaway, of Laurie Cal-

laway Garden Design. Her topic will be, "Secrets of a Four Season Garden." Interested parties are welcome to attend the 9:30 a.m. social hour, the 10 a.m. meeting, as well as the presentation by Laurie Callaway, immediately following the meeting.

**The Montelindo Garden Club meets** at 9 a.m. Friday February17 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive, in Orinda. Everyone is welcome. Presentation: Plant Hunting at the "Edge of the World" with William McNamara, Executive Director of Quarryhill Botanical Garden of Glen Ellen, CA, and plant hunter extraordinaire, who has been instrumental in building this botanical garden, which "Advances the Conservation, Study and Cultivation of the Flora of Asia."

**Come to the Kokedama String Garden Workshop** from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 25. String gardens are the latest trend for displaying houseplants. Also called Kokedama, string gardens wrap a plant's root system in moss and string, creating a piece of living art. In this hands-on, make and take class, you'll learn wrapping techniques, as well as how to care for your string garden. Cost: \$40 class fee includes all supplies needed. Reservations: Call (925) 284-4474 and make your reservation today.

## Lamorinda Weekly

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**Contact us:**

Letters to the editor (max 350 words): letters@lamorindaweekly.com  
 Delivery issues: homedelivery@lamorindaweekly.com  
 Event listings: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com  
 Business press releases: storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com  
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 School stories/events: storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com  
 Sport events/stories/pictures: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com  
**Publishers/Owners:** Andy and Wendy Schack; andy@lamorindaweekly.com, wendy@lamorindaweekly.com  
**Editor:** Peggy Spear; peggy@lamorindaweekly.com  
**Copy Editor:** Nick Marnell; nick@lamorindaweekly.com  
**Sports Editor:** sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com  
**Advertising:** 925-377-0977, Wendy Schack; wendy@lamorindaweekly.com  
**Staff Writers:** Sophie Braccini; sophie@lamorindaweekly.com  
 Cathy Dausman; cathy.d@lamorindaweekly.com  
 Pippa Fisher; pippa@lamorindaweekly.com

Nick Marnell; nick@lamorindaweekly.com  
 Sora O'Doherty; Sora@lamorindaweekly.com  
 Victor Ryerson; victor@lamorindaweekly.com

Digging Deep: Cynthia Brian; cynthia@lamorindaweekly.com  
 Thoughtful Food: Susie Iventosch; suziventosch@gmail.com

**Contributing Writers:** Conrad Bassett, Karl Buscheck, Amanda Kuehn Carroll, Diane Clayton, Michele Duffy, Paula King, Ariel Keys, Michael Luppiccino, Ann McDonald, Fran Miller, John T. Miller, Kara Navolio, Alexandra Reineke, Moya Stone, Uma Unni, Jennifer Wake, Derek Zemrak

**Calendar Editor:** Jaya Griggs; calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

**Photos:** Tod Fierner, Gint Federas

**Layout/Graphics:** Andy Schack. Printed in CA.

Mailing address: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O. Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570-6133  
 Phone: 925-377-0977; Fax: 1-800-690-8136  
 email: info@lamorindaweekly.com  
 website: www.lamorindaweekly.com

## Service Clubs Announcements



We meet Friday mornings at 7:00 am at The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. For more info, please email us at lamorindasunrise@gmail.com

January 27

**Uncommon Ron Brown tells stories**

February 3

**Mike Green comes directly from the Antioch Rotary Club**

Watch for a brand new Rotary International Project on Virtual Reality

## Lafayette Rotary Club

Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting. Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

**January 26: Rachal Zinn Superintendent Lafayette School District**

**February 2: Steven Cross Conflict Resolution**

www.rotarylafayette.org  
 www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-Ca-197392963631366

### SOROPTIMIST OF 24/680



"Improving the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment"

Please join us for our next meeting:

**WHEN:** Wednesday, February 1st  
 Social 5:30-6:00 p.m.  
 Meeting 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** The Buttercup Grill  
 660 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek.

Contact us about our Crab Feed Feb. 11th at Lafayette Community Center

For more information, contact:  
 Regina Englehart @925-876-9076  
 or go to: soroptimist24-680.org

## Discover 'A Brand New Testament' During the International Film Showcase

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

You may not have known it, but God has been living in Bruxelles, Belgium, since... well... forever! This is at least according to this new irreverent movie, "A Brand New Testament," and he is not the benevolent fatherly figure you might have imagined. In this funny, sarcastic, and caustic film, he is mean, sexist, certainly well-organized, and with something of a sadistic bent.

For a week, the Orinda Theater will present this crazy comedy full of surprises as part of the International Film Showcase. This is a not-to-be-missed opportunity for some good laughs.

It is pretty clear that Jaco van Dormael, the director-writer-producer of the movie, had a great deal of fun creating this surreal and jubilant tale of rebellion. The most movie buffs will remember van Dormael for his first acclaimed delightful movie "Toto the Hero" in 1991.

The film starts with pure imaginative craziness with Benoît Poelvoorde, who really pushes the envelope, portraying God as an authoritarian maniac who drives his wife and daughter crazy, not to mention the whole of humanity. Poelvoorde is one of French-speaking-Europe's favorite comedians, always bordering on absurd humor with traits of poetry. He makes no effort here to improve his unprepossessing appearance and adds no redeeming quality to God. It is no wonder that his daughter — yes,

God has a 10 years old daughter — rebels. And then, all hell breaks loose.

Yolande Moreau, another remarkable and well-known European actress, is God's wife. The poor clueless creature seems to have given up completely, but one should not underestimate Mrs. God.

In the second part of the movie, the daughter strays from the family's nest to look for apostles of her own; she meets all kinds of different characters, some of them quite surprising. Those who like classic French actress Catherine Deneuve will certainly appreciate her transformation in this movie.

The second half of the movie is less radical and more poetic, mitigating the first part's caustic vision of religion. Some critics in Europe regretted that van Dormael did not push more the subversive quality of his movie, but the optimism and niceness of the discourse should appeal to an American audience. No worries though, even when he becomes nice, van Dormael continues to be humorous and surprising.

If you have not seen the trailer for this movie, do not look for it. The preview gives out too many of the surprises of the film. It's a good idea to allow for the unexpected. Ultimately, the laughs caused by the movie give a feeling of well being, so why not take advantage of it?

"The Brand New Testament" will open at the Orinda Theatre on Jan. 27 for a week. More information at Lamorindatheatres.com

## Chicken "Bouillabaisse"

(Serves 4)



Chicken Bouillabaisse sliced onions and fennel Photo Susie Iventosch

Recipes Courtesy of Rosa Jackson, Les Petits Farcis, Nice France  
Notes from cooking instructor Rosa Jackson: "I first tasted this dish at a restaurant up in the hills of Nice. It has the flavours of the Provençal fish stew bouillabaisse, but with chicken replacing the fish. The chef wouldn't give me the recipe but with a little research and tinkering I came up with this version, which is possibly better than his!  
Susie's notes: I wondered about a chicken bouillabaisse when we always think of this dish incorporating fish and seafood, but the flavors worked perfectly with chicken and I found it to be delicious. I also opted to make the homemade tomato coulis, which was really easy and fun."

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 free-range chicken, cut into pieces, or 4 free-range chicken legs, each cut in half
- 2 big pinches saffron threads
- 1/3 cup pastis (or other anise-flavored alcohol) (80 ml)
- 1/3 cup white wine (80 ml)
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. fennel seeds, crushed
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 red onion
- 1 fennel bulb
- 1 3/4 cups tomato coulis, homemade\* or store bought
- Bouquet garni of fresh fennel leaves (optional), a few sprigs flat-leaf parsley and a strip of orange peel, tied together
- Rouille (see recipe below)

### DIRECTIONS

Skin the chicken if you like, or score the skin so that the flesh absorbs the marinade. In a separate bowl, stir together the saffron, pastis, white wine, fennel seeds, salt and pepper. Set aside for a few minutes (or longer) so that the saffron releases its color. Pour the marinade over the chicken. Turn the chicken with your hands to thoroughly coat, cover with plastic wrap, and put in the refrigerator to marinate for 12 – 24 hours. Turn the chicken at least once as it marinates. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Dry the chicken pieces on paper towels, reserving the marinade. Heat the olive oil in a heavy skillet. When the oil is hot but not smoking, add the drained chicken pieces and brown carefully on all sides, about 10 minutes total. Meanwhile, cut the peeled onion and fennel in half, removing the core of the fennel, and slice thinly. Remove the chicken to a Dutch oven and reduce heat under the skillet. Pour away any excess fat, keeping about 2 tablespoons. Add the onion and fennel slices to the frying pan along with a large pinch of salt. Sauté until softened and pale gold. Pour the reserve marinade over the onion and fennel, turning the heat to high. Once it has reduced until almost syrupy, add the tomato coulis and cook for a few minutes. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. Bury the bouquet garni among the chicken pieces and carefully pour the tomato sauce over the chicken. Season to taste and cover with the lid. Bake (or simmer on the stove) for about 45 minutes, until the chicken is just cooked through. Avoid cooking too long as this makes for dry chicken. Serve with rouille, a spicy garlic mayonnaise (see recipe).

\* To make your own tomato coulis, cut ripe, fresh tomatoes into quarters and place in a saucepan with a pinch each of salt and sugar. Bring to a boil, lower the heat to a gentle bubble and reduce until thickened. Strain through a food mill.

### Rouille

(Makes about 1 cup)

Recipe Courtesy of Rosa Jackson, Les Petits Farcis, Nice France  
This spicy garlic mayonnaise is traditionally served with fish soup, but it also accompanies Rosa's chicken "bouillabaisse." Rosa says to spread it on toasted slices of baguette, sprinkled with grated gruyere and float in the soup. I spooned it over the chicken bouillabaisse, and also used it as the dipping sauce for the artichokes I served with the bouillabaisse.

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 garlic cloves
- Coarse sea salt
- 1 fresh chili pepper, 1 teaspoon chili paste or 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 slice dry bread soaked in milk or water
- 3/4 cup olive oil (200 ml)
- 1/2 lemon
- 1 pinch saffron, crushed and soaked in a little warm water
- Freshly ground pepper

### DIRECTIONS

Crush the garlic with the sea salt and chili pepper in a mortar. Add the egg yolk and the bread after squeezing out the excess milk. Add the olive oil drop by drop, always turning the pestle in the same direction. The mixture should thicken like mayonnaise. Squeeze in a little lemon juice to taste, add the saffron and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper.

Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com). If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



## Thoughtful Food

# Orinda's Travelling Epicurean

By Susie Iventosch



Tuscany, Italy, April 2016: Group photo taken in Greve in Chianti, Italy, at Panzano and the butcher shop of Dario Cecchini. From left, Wendy Cecchini (wife of shop owner – actually from Walnut Creek), Catherine Soso (Orinda), Karen Billeci (Brentwood), Dario Cecchini (shop owner), Judi Nishimine (Orinda), Dawn Dailey, Erin Setzer (Greensboro, North Carolina), Willy Brown (San Jose), Ron Peters (Tigard, Oregon), Charlie Vollmar (tour leader, Orinda)  
Photos provided by Charlie Vollmar



Chicken Bouillabaisse with Rouille

Imagine a vacation where you bask in the sights, scents and colors of a foreign farmers' market, visit the local butcher or cheese maker, taste regional wines, hunt for truffles with dogs in tow and learn the secrets of cooking local fare, all in a faraway destination, like Tuscany, Provence or even New Orleans.

Perhaps you might visit Julia Child's home, "La Pitchoune" in Provence, or Dario Cecchini, the famous butcher from Panzano, Italy. What could be more fun than traveling with the pure goal of learning new cuisines and new recipes from around the globe? I am pretty sure, nothing beats this idea for me. And, this is exactly what Charlie Vollmar of Orinda is doing with his Epicurean Exchange Culinary School.

For the past 20 years, Vollmar has taught cooking classes at his Orinda kitchen, from Thai and Spanish cuisine to Winter Risotto and Essential Knife Skills and Techniques, but it's just been the last couple of years since he started his culinary adventure tours. He plans these trips for six to 10 people and customizes the journey for each group by setting up tours, cooking classes, both restaurant and home cooked meals, excursions and cultural sidelights with local chefs and merchants. The table is beautifully set for a true foodie adventure!

"These trips are designed to be entertaining, while providing both a learning and relaxing experience," Vollmar said. "It's an all-inclusive vacation, except each traveler books their own airfare, so they can add on to the trip, or arrive early, if they choose, but everything else is planned and provided as part of the trip. I like to make it all affordable and well-balanced, but not exhausting. We want it to be cultural and a culinary education, with plenty of free time to visit museums or to take bike tours and such."

The accommodations may be a charming hotel or perhaps a villa, where the group shops in town and then cooks meals at home for themselves as well as local characters.

Dave Kravitz of Lafayette began his Epicurean Exchange experience by taking many of Vollmar's local cooking classes. He jumped at the chance to sign up for the culinary vacations and has since been on several of these Epicurean Exchange adventures.

"Charlie is a real charmer and his classes are so much fun," Kravitz championed. "And, you get to eat what you make. Charlie has great connections with locals on the ground, so the food experience is a terrific combination of the top restaurants as well as our own hands-on cooking. It's like running our own restaurant on these trips, which is so much fun!"

He said that these trips are the perfect blend of geography, culture, history and food. A real "360-type" experience.

In addition to European excursions, Kravitz also participated in a New Orleans culinary trip. He said that was the most fun trip he'd been on in 100 years. (He did not sound that old when I spoke with him, but you get the gist.) On this trip, the group participated in a crawfish race on the sidewalk, before their jambalaya lesson. You pick your crawfish, put a number on it, and watch it go.

Kravitz, in addition to being a foodie, has been a longtime wine collector. He recalls two very memorable excursions involving tours of the epic wine cellars at two famous restaurants, Commander's Palace in the New Orleans French Quarter and La Ciau del Tornavento in Treiso, Italy, in the Piemonte region.

"It's so much fun to see and touch bottles that are otherwise untouchable, since some of them



Wine Cellar of Restaurant La Ciau del Tornavento Treiso, Italy

cost more than \$20,000!" Kravitz exclaimed.

Another indelible moment was the sneak peek into Julia Child's world when visiting her home and kitchen in Provence.

"I had goosebumps in there," Kravitz said. "That's the kind of thing you get when you go on one of Charlie's trips. You see places you could never imagine!"

Willy Brown, a resident of San Jose and an avid cook, toured with Epicurean Exchange to Tuscany. She loved everything about the trip which was made all the more fun, because she went with her younger brother, whom she doesn't get to see too often.

"The entire trip was incredible, but the thing that stands out the most was making pasta dough with the famous Anna Bini, an 84-year old restaurateur, who has recently started her own cooking school," Brown said.

They made raviolis and fettuccini, all by hand – no machines!

Learning the technique of olive oil tasting was a brand new experience for Brown, as was the trip to visit Dario Cecchini's butcher shop in Panzano, Italy. After the tour, they enjoyed a meal which was entirely focused on meat and were all surprised when the waitress started singing opera for them.

"What I really love about Epicurean Exchange is how Charlie promotes community and sharing food together," Brown said.

Dawn Daily of had taken quite a few Epicurean Exchange classes prior to joining any of the international excursions. She's now been on trips to Spain, France and Italy and is already signed up for another trip this year.

She said that one of the most unusual ingredients she's encountered was in Spain when they made a dish with eels, which seemed to wiggle a lot both before and after cutting them into pieces!

Even for Vollmar, there is always a new experience to be entertained. When I asked him what his most amazing experience has been so far, he said that it was the tour of the Caterpillar Contrada, with its 600 years of costume and pageantry surrounding the annual Palio Horse Race in Siena. Each summer the 17 remaining contrade (there were more than 50 of these quarters or districts at one time) gear up for a victory. The race is held in the Piazza del Campo on July 2 and Aug. 16, and though the actual race lasts but a minute, the results are emblazoned in the hearts and souls of the contrade members for the entire year.

Epicurean Exchange has several trips planned for 2017 and 2018, including New Orleans, Tuscany, Provence, Goa and New Dehli, India and more. For more information on Epicurean Exchange excursions or local classes, visit [www.epicureanexchange.com](http://www.epicureanexchange.com). To Reach Charlie Vollmar and Epicurean Exchange by email or phone: [info@epicureanexchange.com](mailto:info@epicureanexchange.com), (925) 368-4181

# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Saint Mary's Basketball Storming Through Schedule at WCC Midpoint

By Karl Buscheck



Jock Landale (34) and Emmett Naar (3) Photos Tod Fierner

Last March, Randy Bennett, the head coach of the Saint Mary's men's basketball team, found out that his squad had been left out of the NCAA tournament before the bracket had even been announced.

While he was watching the official selection show, a staffer informed Bennett that a bracket had been leaked online and that his 29-6 Gaels were not among the teams invited to the Big Dance.

"I think the players would have liked to be in the tournament. I would have too," Bennett admitted, some 10 months later. "But last year we rolled. We threw almost a perfect game. So, it was outside of our control and the only way you can control it is to win the conference tournament."

Bennett, whose 17-2 Gaels are well on their way to a 10th consecutive 20-win season, insists that the snub didn't put a chip on the team's shoulder.

"I just felt like we left everything out there and our guys did a great job and we got left out," Bennett said. "That's kind of how the system's set up a little bit, but somebody good is going to be left out. It happened to be us."

As the team hits the midway point in the West Coast Confer-

ence schedule, Saint Mary's is doing everything it can to make sure it avoids a similar fate this time around.

Ranked No. 23 in the Associated Press Top 25 Poll, the Gaels have lost just twice. The first defeat came at home against the University of Texas at Arlington back on Dec. 8. The second came on Jan. 14 in a road game against WCC giant Gonzaga – the same team that wrecked the Gaels' NCAA hopes last spring by beating them in the conference tournament title game.

From junior guard Emmett Naar, to senior forward Dane Pineau, to junior forward Calvin Hermanson to freshman guard Tanner Krebs to senior guard Joe Rahon, Bennett rattled off a long list of names when asked to single out the team's key contributors.

"We have a tight team," Bennett explained. "We have a team where everybody is trying to carry their load, so some guys more than others. But Rahon, you wouldn't see it in the numbers maybe scoring-wise, but he's as key as anybody to this team. He's very good defensively. His assist-to-turnover ratio is almost 5-1. He's just a great, (a) tremendous leader – as good as we've had."



Dane Pineau

The list wouldn't be complete without mentioning junior center Jock Landale.

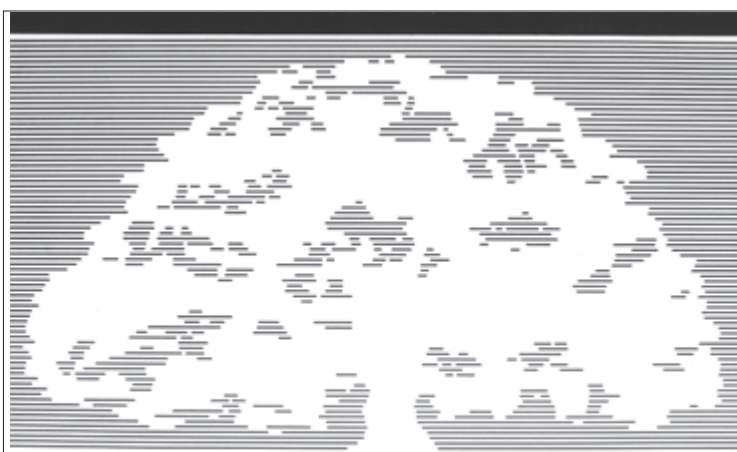
"He's been really good," Bennett said. "We play off him a lot. He's getting better all the time. I think he's gained a lot of confidence as the season's gone on. I think, now that we have as many games under our belt as we do, he sees a pretty heavy scout all the time and he's a willing passer. (He's) unselfish, yet he's our leading scorer and leading rebounder."

The 6-foot-11 Australian, who is averaging 16.9 points and 9.5 rebounds per game, has been a one-man wrecking crew in the paint. His interior presence opens up the floor for a Gaels team that has hoisted the third-most 3-pointers in the conference.

As Saint Mary's makes its second trip through the WCC schedule, Bennett isn't stressing about whether the Gaels are on their way to the program's first NCCA appearance since the 2012-13 season. Instead, the veteran coach is focused on getting the most out of each day he spends with his talented team.

"They're just a great really unselfish group of guys that care about being a team and that's what makes it special," Bennett said.

"I go to work everyday just enjoying the moment because it's not always like this," Bennett added. "The byproduct of that is that they've been good enough to win a lot of games, but it's because of that. They show up and they're going to give you the best shot every practice, every game and it just makes it very enjoyable."



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## Campolindo Girls Basketball Team Hosts Lamorinda Classic

By Karl Buscheck



Haley Van Dyke

Photos Gint Federas

For local high school hoops fans, the gym at Campolindo was the place to be on Saturday Jan. 21. That was the setting for the Lamorinda Classic – a one-day showcase of wall-to-wall action, featuring prestigious high school girls basketball programs from across Northern California.

“It’s a really big event with a lot of people there and we try to get a good mix of teams,” said Art

Thoms, the head coach of the Campolindo girls squad. “Some (teams) from like up near Sacramento, like Antelope and Chico, (like) to kind of get some different matchups you normally wouldn’t see in league play or when people play locally.”

Campolindo had put on the tournament jointly with Bentley for the past six years before solo hosting this time around.

“This is the first year we’re

completely doing it on our own, so it does take a lot of work,” said Thoms. “But it also gets our JV and varsity (teams to come together) – everybody works together to put it together. But we have done it in the past, so we do have some experience running it.”

The 12-team lineup included local schools like Acalanes and Piedmont in addition to regional powerhouses like Heritage and

Carondelet.

The Dons played Pleasant Valley from Chico, falling 59-58. The narrow defeat leaves Acalanes record at 12-6 overall and 1-1 in league play.

With six games tipping off in the same gym in the same day, the Classic presented the ideal recruiting opportunity for scouts. Thoms said he had been contacted by multiple schools, and expected five to 10 colleges to scout the tournament.

The Classic also provided a unique opportunity for more casual observers.

“For the young kids and local people, to be able to see some really good players and really good teams all stacked in one day is kind of a rare opportunity,” Thoms said.

Playing in the penultimate game on the schedule, the Cougars took care of Antelope from Sacramento County 79-46.

“I feel like we’re close to where we want to be,” said Thoms, whose team sits at 13-5 overall (1-1 in

league). “We’ve played a tough schedule. We’re still working out some rotations and dealing with some injuries.”

Thoms called junior Haley Van Dyke, who went for a team-high 28 points and 23 rebounds against Antelope, one of the Cougars’ most integral players, along with juniors Ashley Thoms, Aubrey Wagner and Grace McGuire. In the Classic, Thoms chipped in 18 points and Wagner added in 13.

With the Classic now complete, the Cougars can shift their focus back to DAL play. The team has upcoming matchups at College Park on Jan. 27, at home against Las Lomas on Feb. 1 and at Miramonte on Feb. 3.

Campolindo will be facing a Mats team, which has run off a 15-2 record overall and a 2-0 mark in league play. Miramonte hasn’t dropped a game in over a month since losing to Highlands Ranch in the Nike Tournament of Champions in Phoenix, Arizona, on Dec. 21.



Clair Steele (C)



Brooke Panfili



Aubrey Wagner

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# Local Wrestling Programs Enjoying Success as DAL Draws to Close

By Karl Buscheck

For Miramonte wrestling head coach Jose Herrera, it's difficult to explain just how important seniors Max Fleming and Skyler Wright have been to the school's program.

"I think they're very deserving of a special shoutout or (some special) recognition," Herrera said of the pair of stars.

Both seniors were NCS place winners in their respective weight classes last year - Fleming at 170 pounds and Wright at 152 - and both have continued to perform at a high level in the opening months of the current season. At the Doc Buchanan Invitational in Clovis - one of the premier events on the weekend-tournament circuit - Fleming produced a top-12 finish for the Mats.

"Max Fleming is known as one of the best in the state," Herrera explained. "I just wish I could publicize that more because he and Skyler the last two years have represented the school, (and) Orinda at large, very well at a regional and state level."

Fleming and Wright anchor what has become a deep and talented lineup for Miramonte.

"Oh, absolutely," Herrera said when asked if his team harbors lofty postseason ambitions. "I would say that we truly have about eight varsity wrestlers and I expect to take all eight to the North Coast section tournament."

"Of those eight, I would say three or four have the potential to earn a medal at the North Coast section tournament," Herrera added. "And of those four, two have the potential to be in the state finals or at least get a medal in the state tournament."

Like the Mats, the Dons have assembled a crew of wrestlers aiming to make their mark at next month's DAL championship and the NCS and state tournaments that follow. Also like the Mats, the Dons have been busy competing in the area's top weekend tournaments, such as the Doc Buchanan Invitational.

Middle weights junior Jeremy Ridge is ranked 2nd in NCS and 20th in the state, while senior and fellow captain Tai White continues to excel after becoming the school's first state qualifier last spring. Head coach David Ridge also highlighted the contributions of senior Axel Jurgens who is the

fourth-ranked 152-pound wrestler in NCS and senior Kyle Hulsey a converted power lifter who now wrestles as a heavy weight.

Even though the Dons have yet to drop any DAL dual meets, the team's head coach knows it's too soon to draw any grand conclusions about the team's success.

"We're undefeated in league, but we won't really be able to tell anything until we get to the championships when we get to see Las Lomas, who used to be with us (in the same league conference)," Ridge said.

Before Acalanes can turn its attention to the postseason, the Dons close out the dual meet schedule by visiting Campolindo on Feb. 1.

"It's a whole different thing with wrestling - as opposed to a lot of the other sports," Ridge said when asked about the rivalry with the Cougars. "It's really fun."

"I really, really like their program and there's a real fraternity in wrestling," Ridge said. "So, it's not so much about schools as much as it is about promotion of the sport."

Campolindo, who along with the Mats and the Dons competed in the Foothill Conference of the DAL, is looking forward to hosting Acalanes in the final dual meet of the year.

"It's always exciting to dual a local rival school," Cougars head coach Sam Sotelo said. "Especially when both schools are still undefeated this late in the season."

The Cougars are also well aware of the challenge they'll face when the Dons arrive at their gym.

"Unfortunately, as excited as I am, I am also just as nervous," Sotelo said. "We have had a lot of injuries this year and Acalanes has some great wrestlers, we will have to wrestle our best on Feb. 1 to beat them."

The Cougars will have to battle through those health problems if the team's best wrestlers hope to face off with their counterparts at Miramonte and Acalanes in the post-season.

"Seniors Avery Novick and Savva Vyatkin, (along with) junior Rex Chen and sophomore Keichi Serrano have really stepped up their game this season," Sotelo said. "I think they all have a chance to place in NCS."

# St. Perpetua 5th Grade Boys Win the 2016 MVP Flight Holiday Classic Tournament

Submitted by Tara Marusich



Back row, from left: Rich Zirkel (head coach), Jackson Hink, Aidan Haslam, Trevor Carrillo, Will Dreyer; front row from left, Mason Zirkel, Henry Hagel, William Marusich, John Weaver, Terry Dreyer (asst. coach); Not pictured: Aiden Yates and Chase Regan Photo provided

St. Perpetua fifth-grade boys, under Coach Rich Zirkel, participated in the MVP Flight Holiday Classic basketball tournament. The team had three straight wins competing against Christ the King, another St. Perpetua team and the Warriors. The team rallied hard in the final game and came out on top with a 35-32 win in the Championship game.

# Santa Maria CYO Girl's 8th Grade Basketball Team Wins



Back row from left, Anna Logan, coach Eversole, Natalie Swanson, Grace Barmmer, Katie Bakonyvari, Reese Whipple, Ava Moran, coach Whipple, coach Bakonyvari; front row from left, Annie Eversole, Alexandra Eversole, Julia Miller, Kate Gross, Kiera O'Toole; not pictured: Claudia Gravano, Leighla Hodges, Lindsey Bliss, Sarah Svahn, Mia Cohen Photo provided

Santa Maria CYO Girl's Eighth-grade Holiday Tournament, beating Christ the King in a nail-biting final game.

# St. Monica Boys Win Holiday Classic

Submitted by Rudy Ortiz



Back row from left, Ayan Patel, Charlie Stafford and Matthew Jabbour; front row from left, Daniel Louie, Jake Spencer, Isaiah Ortiz and Benjamin Tallon Photo provided

The St. Monica fifth-grade boys' basketball team won the 2016 MVP Flight Holiday Classic in Walnut Creek in a come-from-behind game on Dec.23. The tournament took place over two successive weeks and the boys demonstrated teamwork, hustle and determination as they erased a 14-point deficit to earn the come from behind victory.

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# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 10 Issue 24 Wednesday, January 25, 2016



February Gardening Guide with Cynthia Brian. ...read on page D12

## The Waterman House: A Mid-century Piece of Family History

By Sophie Braccini



Bill and Maria Waterman in their home.

Photo Sophie Braccini

The simple and sharp design of Bill and Maria Watermans' house hugs the natural terrain of its Orinda hill. It could be a very recent creation, but in fact came out of the imagination of Sim Bruce Richards a renowned 20th century artist and architect who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright. For the Watermans who live in the house, it is not only their home, it is the house designed by Waterman's own uncle for his sister and where he grew up.

Waterman knew Richards well — Richards is now deceased — and he remembers his uncle as a

very witty man. The Watermans still interacts with Janet, Richards' 100-year-old wife who still lives in the San Diego area home that Richards designed for his own family. The Watermans' house was completed in 1958, and Waterman says that the footprint of the house has stayed the same. The couple remodeled the kitchen and bathrooms, working with architect Gary Parsons to preserve the home's character, and they had it retrofitted for seismic risks.

Richards was born in Oklahoma in 1908, the son of a farmer. He had a brother and two sisters,

including Waterman's mother. The family moved to Phoenix where Richards developed the interest in art and architecture he had had since his early years. He went on to study architecture and art at UC Berkeley and particularly polished his weaving of abstract rug designs that he had learned while still in Phoenix. Frank Lloyd Wright caught sight of one of his rugs in an exhibition in San Francisco and asked that the weaver contact him. Following correspondence with Wright, Richards joined the Taliesin Fellowship at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture. All his life he stayed in friendly contact with Wright.

At his death in 1983, the San Diego Natural History Museum produced an exhibition of Richards' work called Nature in Architecture. There some of his 200 architectural projects were featured, as well as his work in weaving, painting and furniture design.

The Waterman's house is typical of Richards' style and offers similarities with Wright's style. But Richards' uniqueness is also there at play. The man was a quarter Cherokee — for him art and architecture were inseparable and had to resonate with the land and the sky. "It looks good on the drawing board, but how does it look out there on the hill?" Richards used to ask.

From the outside, the house presents itself as an angular and unique modern construction paneled with rough-hewn cedar siding that let the texture of the wood visible. It is a one-story construction, built as two wings set at an angle to hug the topography of the hill and take advantage of natural light.

Visitors enter the house through the apex of the angle formed by the building's aisles.

... continued on page D4



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LAFAYETTE	6	\$625,000	\$2,600,000
MORAGA	6	\$412,000	\$1,450,000
ORINDA	5	\$450,000	\$2,925,000

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### LAFAYETTE

- 3 Dollis Park Road, \$1,445,000, 5 Bdrms, 4090 SqFt, 2000 YrBlt, 12-22-16;  
Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 07-19-01
- 710 Los Palos Drive, \$2,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 2847 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 12-22-16;  
Previous Sale: \$648,000, 09-29-00
- 3279 Mt. Diablo Court #4, \$625,000, 2 Bdrms, 1697 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 12-20-16;  
Previous Sale: \$480,000, 06-27-11
- 1418 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,410,000, 5 Bdrms, 2765 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-20-16;  
Previous Sale: \$1,000,000, 12-21-15
- 3320 Springhill Road, \$1,158,000, 3 Bdrms, 1858 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 12-30-16;  
Previous Sale: \$325,000, 04-18-02
- 1003 Woodbury Road #108, \$875,000, 2 Bdrms, 1110 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt, 12-28-16

### MORAGA

- 117 Ascot Court #B, \$412,000, 2 Bdrms, 1191 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-22-16;  
Previous Sale: \$305,000, 10-25-13
- 196 Corliss Drive, \$1,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 2592 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-30-16;  
Previous Sale: \$782,000, 08-17-00
- 2 Donald Place, \$1,019,500, 3 Bdrms, 2720 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 12-28-16;  
Previous Sale: \$125,000, 09-29-78
- 18 Hetfield Place, \$1,195,000, 4 Bdrms, 1980 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-23-16;  
Previous Sale: \$332,500, 04-28-89
- 174 Miramonte Drive, \$695,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-29-16;  
Previous Sale: \$230,000, 06-01-93
- 115 Walford Drive, \$945,000, 3 Bdrms, 1874 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-28-16

### ORINDA

- 11 Albo Court, \$1,250,000, 6 Bdrms, 3185 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-22-16;  
Previous Sale: \$1,025,000, 09-30-10
- 11 Bigleaf Road, \$2,925,000, 5 Bdrms, 4728 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt, 12-22-16;  
Previous Sale: \$635,000, 10-16-13
- 19 Bigleaf Road, \$2,350,000, 4 Bdrms, 3972 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt, 12-30-16;  
Previous Sale: \$2,402,500, 10-12-15
- 155 Camino Pablo, \$1,444,000, 4 Bdrms, 3185 SqFt, 2008 YrBlt, 12-20-16;  
Previous Sale: \$194,000, 01-31-90
- 91 Coral Drive, \$1,176,000, 4 Bdrms, 1739 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-23-16;  
Previous Sale: \$103,500, 10-28-77
- 19 La Campana Road, \$450,000, 2 Bdrms, 1825 SqFt, 1935 YrBlt, 12-21-16;  
Previous Sale: \$1,350,000, 11-10-15
- 3 Los Conejos, \$1,340,000, 4 Bdrms, 2386 SqFt, 1940 YrBlt, 12-27-16;  
Previous Sale: \$390,000, 12-30-88
- 5 Oak Arbor Road, \$2,574,000, 4 Bdrms, 4101 SqFt, 2000 YrBlt, 12-30-16
- 120 Ravenhill Road, \$1,025,000, 3 Bdrms, 2231 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 12-20-16;  
Previous Sale: \$738,000, 07-14-11
- 25 Wilder Road, \$1,899,000, 4 Bdrms, 3380 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt, 12-21-16







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## The Ebb and the Flow

By Andi Peterson Brown

While most people are aware that our housing market is part of broader economic cycles, many people do not realize that there is also a seasonal influence affecting market activity throughout the year. And when it comes to this annual cycle, all months are not created equal. Sleepy August cannot hold a candle to lively March, spirited April, and bubbly May. And poor January. It tends to get lost in the shuffle.

Why is this? The answer is quite logical. The spring and early summer weather is the perfect backdrop for selling a home. Gardens are blooming, the sun is shining, and it's easy for buyers to get out and see what's available. Many of those buyers also pay attention to kindergarten and school registration dates. Thus, market activity is almost always at its highest during April, May, and June. We tend to see activity drop off towards the end of July as both buyers and sellers take their vacations and enjoy their summer days. Here in Lamorinda, once the school year kicks in and routines are established, there tends to be a second surge in market activity. This "mini-spring" lasts through the beginning of November, but once Thanksgiving hits, market activity usually drops off. Most people are in holiday mode, and buying or selling real estate slides onto the backburner if it is not a necessity.

Lamorinda inventory remains tight. If you've been thinking about selling your home this spring, now is the time to call a Realtor and get the ball rolling.



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## The Waterman House

... continued from page D1

Upon entering, one is immediately struck by the uniqueness and harmony of the place that does not surrender all of its mystery and elegance at once, but guides the visitor from the public to the more private areas of the home. Richards used to describe his work as "gates opening into new spaces, walls folding away to reveal more and more."

Up a small flight of stairs is a landing in the form of a gallery entirely made of windows on one side, opened on the privacy of the back garden. A meditative nook has been designed at the top of the stairs, including built-in bookshelves, an ideal place to read a book and contemplate nature.

Every room inside is wood paneled, Philippine mahogany for the family living area and red ash in the bedroom aisle. The Watermans are displaying on the walls some of Richards' painting, that Marie Waterman describes as in the style of Georgia O'Keeffe.

"When my uncle created this house, he discussed the plan with my mother so it would be functional for her family," says Waterman. In his original idea, the kitchen and family room would have been a one big room, as is seen in his other plans, but Waterman's mother wanted to be able to close the door if she needed to. The living room and family room are connected through large openings, reflecting Richards' design of one big space where people flow and gather along the day.

The family room has windows on two opposite sides, getting views and light from the back garden on one side, and from the beautiful view on the Orinda hills on the other side. The fireplace is set at an angle, entirely made of bricks, and seems to be only a decorative element since its backing is completely flat and cannot contain an exhaust duct. "He created a very complex system with the exhaust turned at an angle and into the wall to the left of the fireplace," explains Marie Waterman, who appreciates the elegance and simplicity of the lines and perspectives throughout the house.

Richards' other creations are preserved all over the house, including the encased light features that he designed. "Like Wright, he created some of the furniture and features for his homes," says Waterman. A lot of the built-in original cabinetry is still used today since it is both functional and made with quality natural material.

The only aspect the Watermans struggle with is the lack of insulation of the house that was conceived as a San Diego home. "When you look at the wood ceiling, this is just below the tar and gravel roof," says Marie Waterman. They think that if the siding has to be replaced, then it would be a good time to rethink the insulation of the house. But the quality is such that it might not be anytime soon.



There is wood throughout the home.



Some of the home's light features.



A modern outside statement.

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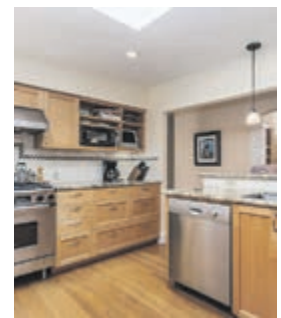


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## Feng Shui

# Don't Ruffle Feathers During Year of the Rooster

By Michele Duffy

The Chinese calendar is magnificent in its festive Lunar start to the New Year of the Female (Yin) FIRE Rooster on Jan. 28, and the important detail of the solar start on Feb. 3, which is the basis for the beginning for those born in this 2017, year of Yin FIRE Rooster sign.

This annual celebration is observed in places as remote as Tibet and cosmopolitan as Tokyo. Many Asian cultures have their own versions of what is largely associated with the Chinese culture, but which includes many other Asian cultural variations too.

New Years Day is the absolutely most important day of the year in any Asian culture. Top of the New Years "to do" list is deep cleaning the house, annual ceremonial home space clearings and blessings and annual astrology analysis to plan timing, decisions and important occasions. It's also a time for painting the front door, paying off debts, buying new red and gold clothes, which are the traditional colors of happiness and prosperity, wearing new clothes on New Years Day, presenting crisp new money in red envelopes to

all the children in the household, and preparing sweet and savory dishes for a New Years feast.

So while most people did not escape 2016's Male (Yang) FIRE Monkey's surprisingly raucous business pace and with so many of the twists, turns and surprises that came quite literally, out of the blue, business chi/energy will continue to bring strong benefits in the upcoming 2017 Female (Yin) FIRE Rooster.

A Chinese Proverb says, "First Avoid the Negative... then Enhance the Positive." It is important to know that we all have a say in how we handle the fortunes of every year, and applying the timeless wisdom of feng shui is a proven tool for navigating greater success in the ever-changing landscape of time. So even if it's challenging "out there" we have time-tested tools to help us, in any year, to reap wealth, health and harmonious relationships. The Rooster promises to be equally as hard working as 2016 but perhaps a more highly prosperous year for many IF we mind our business or hold our beaks!

... continued on page D10



Authentic annual Ceremonies traditionally kick off the festivities for a positive New Year  
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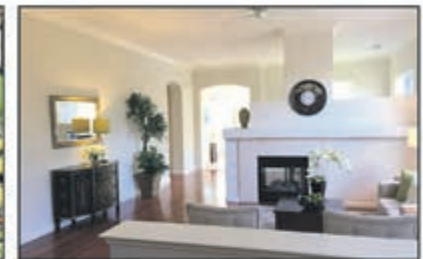


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# Feng Shui



Activate the WATER Element at your home in 2017 like this Orinda home.

In a Rooster Year, all of the 12 Chinese animals can reap great rewards by tapping into the more auspicious Rooster traits. Loyalty, passion, commitment, hard work, family values, the excellence in money management, and top-notch appearances are just a few of the Rooster's energetic signatures or characteristics that will mark this 2017 year.

Feng shui practices teach us keen awareness of going with the flow (The TAO) and deft application of the wisdom based and time tested tools for changing times (I CHING). In FIRE years it's wise to make sure we activate some water in our environments, especially for Career/Life Path/Money protective flow but also for carefully indulging in personal care. Conservation-minded rejuvenating water spa activities, or hiking a beach are also very healthful balances to this yearly heat. Adapting wellness strategies that will allow us to be truly living in balance by the summer (ruled also by FIRE element) will help ensure greater personal wellness into the fall and into next winter.

Keep in mind, that the less auspicious Rooster traits will also be energetically present in 2017 and so avoiding them at all costs paves the way for greater success for us all.

The 2017 FIRE Rooster will bring many lessons in focused motivation and multi-talents in the workplace, and for many people, their careers and relationships will

hold many new opportunities as Roosters are very fertile and hardworking creatures. In 2017 humble, conservative, joyful, careful, and consistent hard work reaps the harvest as does holding back one's criticisms, not judging others hastily, letting go of the impulse to control others and always needing to be in the right. Equanimity and diplomacy rule supreme.

The Rooster calls for us to remain observant and alert to the immediate opportunities and those we also see on the horizon. Rooster supports careful, conservative, practical growth in the workplace and especially when combined with organization skills, careful strategic planning and truly practical thinking, many career gains will be enjoyed. Going off on risky ventures or wild goose chases are not advised or supported.

The Rooster is colorful, likes to strut its stuff, is confident and dramatic, and your most work-related goals will be well served by avoiding petty disputes, flaunting authority or getting your way using a domineering attitude. The biggest wins this year will be for those that also remember to mind their manners, share others talents, control egos and tempers and work well with the team. 2017 is the year to be truly collaborative and to no longer simply pay lip service to working together to achieve mutual goals. It will require flexibility, grace and generosity of all parties and the rewards of this truly timely course of action will certainly produce results worth crowing about in the end!

Harnessing Rooster's keen observation, we will gain great clarity on business opportunities, who to partner with and how to create new partnerships. Most of our career goals are also going to be better served this year by doing more with less, taking on slightly less but doing perfectly what we commit to in business. Stick to practical and well-proven paths to ensure success, rather than risky ventures. Triumph and success is achieved through hard work, persistence, patience and clear and fair communications. The Rooster is confident but being over confident can create nonsensical plans so try in 2017 to be more grounded in practical matters on all fronts.

The 2017 FIRE Rooster will be a powerful year with no middle of the road when it comes to moving forward since Rooster wastes no time and likes to get on with it. This year you will also want to look your best and be especially clear on your intentions concerning love, money and business.

The Rooster loves the limelight and so we must also make effort to appear ready for the spotlight or a new love and go with the flow of another year dominated by the FIRE element, so that which inspires passion can produce

real magic.

In love and relationships too many fruitful loyalties and romance can be formed as long as there is also a heavy dose of practicality. Rooster is a fertile bird so many children are born in Rooster years and Rooster is also a very communal bird, so partnerships and the group activities are also a dominant theme. The festive Rooster year is a great year to celebrate the accomplishments of the group and your circle of friends can certainly expand but family will always come first. Rooster year energy will also encourage many happy events like children being born and weddings to attend or host. Relationships should be nurtured and Rooster also asks us to kindly communicate directly with confidence and humble pie, and with the leadership strength of true flexibility to transform any relationship challenge into the potential alliances. Cutting criticisms and contentiousness will only create ruffled feathers so best to hold your beak, speak positively about others accomplishments and be a peace-making member of your community.

Rooster's strong powers of observation will certainly not turn a blind eye this year if we are found to be breaking the rules, creating a scandal or allowing matters to progress towards court, so instead proactively avoid illegal activities, and negotiate compromises that allow you to remain free to create the practical positivity you will need for a good 2017 harvest.

Harvesting comes in many forms and the Rooster also has a keen sense to relax, entertain and host with loving family and friends after a long hardworking day, so also remember to enjoy the fruits of your labor with family and friends. Use your keen Rooster powers of observation in all areas of your life this year and first, skillfully tend to your own business even as you also help others achieve their goals as well.

... continued on next page



Activating water element protects our health and money sectors in 2017



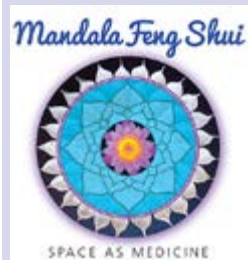
The Rooster is certainly also known as the Phoenix or a transformational, cheerful bird, brave and dauntless heroes, who nevertheless, if out of balance, can be vain, stubborn, prone to not backing down or being unreasonable if they do not get their way! True transformation is achieved by self-reflection and impulse control, and leaving the more self-serving strategies for another year. This is a great year to jump-start your meditation or contemplative practice, start a yoga class or visit your place of worship more frequently.

Staying healthy in 2017 includes a heart healthy and moderate physical exercise regimen, eating healthy food, and developing spiritual connections. Meditation and contemplative practices work effectively to counter any inauspicious emotional states like aggression, greed or self absorption this year, and will help guide us from within to slow down, listen quietly, and mindfully choose positive courses of action. Even a very basic journaling or gratitude practice can transform aggressive, self-concerned thinking and behavior into skillful mindfulness, abundance, compassion for self and others and the flexibility we will need to achieve our goals.

Communicate clearly, be kind, keep your promises, be devoted to others as much as self, and spend more time illuminating the strengths and talents of others. You will excel by limiting bragging about your own accomplishments and creating a true spaciousness for others, in order to cultivate an inspired community to grow.

So as Jan. 28 approaches with the New Year of the Female FIRE Rooster, remember that the conservative Rooster asks us to stay focused on the practical, mind our own business and negotiate peace along the way by sharing the limelight with our community. It's a yearly plan for reaping a strong harvest from joyful hard work and remaining balanced between family and work, which are truly the ingredients for happiness and abundance in most years but definitely when the Rooster crows!

Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating "Space as Medicine" Feng Shui one space at a time,



as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2017 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to spaceharmony@gmail.com.



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## Gardening Guide for February

# The Wonder of a Winter Wardrobe

By Cynthia Brian

“Do all you can for as long as you can and when you can’t, do the next best thing!” —Chuck Yeager



A David Austin Gertrude Jekyll rose continues to bloom.

Photos Cynthia Brian

It was pouring rain and I found myself in my gardening clothes sitting on the soggy hill scooting from bush to bush pruning the stray fronds. A smile crossed my face as I recalled a chapter from the New York Times best selling book that I co-authored, “Chicken Soup for the Gardeners Soul,” called “Overcoming Obstacles.” The particular story is “The Next Best Thing” by Ann Pehl Thomson about her elderly parents who in their youth gardened with ease, but in their 70s had weakened muscular systems that caused legs to give way without warning. One morning her mom spied her dad lying flat on his stomach under an apple tree. Alarmed she scurried out to help him but then saw he had a trowel in his hand, weeding. When she asked him what he was doing, he replied, “The next best thing.”

At the time, with over 5,000 entries to be whittled down to 101 stories to sow seeds of love, hope, and laughter, I wasn’t convinced that this story merited a coveted page in our book. Today as I recover from spinal surgery with strict instructions of no BLT (bending, lifting, or twisting), I realize this story is an important lesson in conquering challenges. Being in nature and working in the garden is part of my essence and if it means I will sit, scuttle and scoot to get the job done, that’s exactly what I’ll do.

I haven’t pruned my roses yet. For some reason, my rose bushes are blooming beautifully, despite the storms, winds and flooding. The petals haven’t rotted as they usually do with the moisture and instead stems are bursting with perfect buds. My vases are filled with the fragrance and elegance of my rose garden. A hard prune is necessary to guarantee another season of bounty, yet, for now, that task will wait a week or two.

The rest of my garden has donned its winter wardrobe and there is plenty of other snipping, clipping and cutting to be done. My grapevines, fruit trees, and berry bushes beg to be sheared. I’ll get to them this week. The sculptured look of the bark of my pruned crape myrtles glows against the backdrop of a cloudless cobalt sky. The naked branches of my Japanese maple glow a deep red in the afternoon sunlight. There is something so spectacularly striking about the architecture of deciduous trees with their bare branches swirling towards the heavens. My pear trees are already flowering, and the bees are busy collecting nectar from the loquat blossoms. Under the redwood trees, walking ferns have begun their parade towards the next grove while forget-me-nots cover the ground with their pretty lime green foliage. Soon blue flowers will sprout from their centers and the terrain will be a sea of sapphire. The narcissi have brightened my days throughout the frosty days with their cheery attire of yellow and white petals while perfuming the icy air with their hypnotic fragrance.

With the downpours, the creeks are flowing and the sounds of rushing brooks fill the atmosphere. As long as my house isn’t flooding, I adore the roar of the waterfalls.

Grab your coat, hat, gloves and boots. Wander around your garden to admire the wonder of the winter garments nature has provided. And if you, like me, are momentarily physically incapacitated in any way, get your yard chores accomplished by doing the next best thing.

... continued on page D14



A rubber tree with kalanchoe planted beneath is bright and cheery.



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# Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for February

- BRIGHTEN the dark days of winter with indoor tropical plants. A rubber tree under planted with bright pink or red kalanchoe will do the trick.
- FORCE paperwhites, lily of the valley, or amaryllis by putting the bulb in a jar with water by a sunny window.
- PRUNE crape myrtles, roses, berries, grapes and fruit trees now. If your roses are still blooming, cut the blossoms to bring indoors, then prune. Apples, pears, peaches, apricots, plum, and prune trees need their branches pruned now to allow for more sunlight penetration, air circulation, and bigger fruit production. Cut out all dead wood.
- REFRAIN from dressing broken limbs or injuries on trees. Wound wood will develop on trees to protect them. By putting a commercial salve on the damaged tissue, you may be inviting infections and pests.
- SAVE teabags to put on cuts you will incur after pruning roses. Place a cool teabag to encourage swift healing.
- POWER your palate by planting heart smart greens including kale, collard and mustard for super sources of fiber, phytonutrients, electrolytes and antioxidants.
- FEED houseplants when you notice new leaves developing.
- CLEAR debris from creek beds if you are fortunate enough to have a creek on your property to avoid overflows, erosion, and damage.
- TRANSPLANT deciduous shrubs before buds begin to swell.
- USE a rooting hormone to plant canes of roses and grapes from your personal cuttings.
- PERUSE seed catalogues for springtime ideas.
- CURL up with a copy of "Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul" for a dose of laughter and inspiration this winter. First edition autographed copies available at [www.starstyleradio.com/store](http://www.starstyleradio.com/store).
- SAVOR the thunder, lightening and rains. Let's pray we are getting our reservoirs filled to eliminate another drought year.
- DON'T count on the ground hogs to signal an early spring. Males aren't seeking shadows when they emerge from hibernation. They are looking for love.
- REMEMBER your love on Valentine's Day with a colorful live plant or a bouquet of posies. It's true that flowers and amour are bedmates!

Happy Cupid Day! Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



*A Fuji apple tree with a lone rotten apple awaits pruning.*



*The winter wardrobe of a tangle of grapevines.*



*Bees feast on the nectar from the loquat blossoms.*



*Forget-Me-Nots blanket the ground.*



Bold walking ferns in the shaded redwood grove.



Doing "the next best thing", Cynthia Brian scoots through the garden.

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Cynthia Brian

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## ORINDA



New Listing

**88 Sunnyside Lane** Incredible opportunity to lease private estate on apx. 5 acres w/360 degree views in heart of Orinda. Apx. 6000sf home, 5 oversized beds + ofc. Great entertaining w/ oversized pool & lawns. 4 car garage. **\$10,000/month**

## ORINDA



New Listing

**67 Brookwood Road #3** Rarely available 2bd/1ba first floor condo in charming 22-unit Orinda Oaks, walk to BART, shops, theater. Open floor plan, updated carpets, inside laundry, oversized deck with serene views. **\$450,000**

## ORINDA



New Listing

**7 Hartford Road** Meticulously renovated 4bd/3ba mid-century modern on 1.6 acres w/ new kitchen, incredible family rm, laundry rm, dual pane windows thruout, level lawn, 2 new decks w/pano views of Mt. Diablo. **\$1,495,000**

## MORAGA



New Listing

**780 Country Club Drive** One of a kind custom MCC townhome featuring 4 beds/3.5 baths in 2390 sq. ft. w/ 2 master suites, indoor laundry, large level private front patio & adjacent to satellite pool. **\$925,000**

## MORAGA



Coming Soon

**806 Augusta Drive** Plan 11 in Moraga Country Club. 1842 sq. ft., 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, new kitchen, small golf course view.

Call for Price

## MORAGA



New Listing

**1753 Spyglass Lane** 3 bed, 2.5 bath 2828 sq.ft. home on 4th fairway of Moraga CC. Views & Forest Hills floor plan with master on main. Bonus rm could be 4th BR. Soaring ceilings, hardwoods, lots of light!

**\$1,265,000**

## MORAGA



New Listing

**789 Augusta Drive** Spacious & updated Plan 13 in Moraga Country Club. 2992 sq. ft., 5 bedrooms, 3 baths, updated kitchen, spacious rooms, updated master suite.

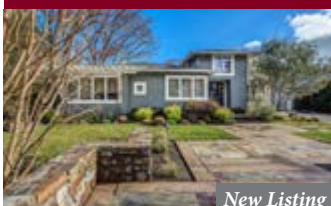
**\$1,395,000**

## MORAGA



**122 Danefield Place** Spacious & updated 5+ bedroom home in 'close-in' Moraga. Gorgeous views! Updated kitchen & baths, new floors, fresh paint, dual-pane windows, & new roof. Large .4 acre lot offers space & privacy. **\$1,450,000**

## LAFAYETTE



New Listing

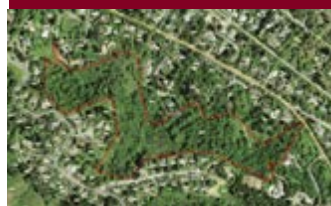
**860 Broadmoor Court** Lafayette Trail cul-de-sac location! This 5bd/3.5ba custom home w/3435 sqft offers comfortable spaces for family living. Patios, stone fireplace & grassy lawn ideally close to trail, schools & town. **\$2,398,000**

## LAFAYETTE



**1556 Rancho View Road** Wonderful estate home completely remodeled. Custom kitchen, formal dining & living rms, guest suite or bonus play rm w/bath. Stone terrace, Trex deck, pergola, 3 separate lawn spaces. Salt water pool & spa. **\$2,399,000**

## LAFAYETTE



**3333 Hamlin Road** Super opportunity on almost 20 acres. One of the last big parcels of land in Lafayette to develop. Truly a rare find of magnificent allure of beauty & close-in trail are appeal.

**\$2,500,000**

## PLEASANT HILL



**20 Whitfield Court** Great parcel at top of knoll with views of Mount Diablo and ideal privacy. Truly special setting sites for development zoned R-10 & R-15. Wonderful opportunity for investment.

**\$1,495,000**



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