



The Lafayette School District is currently seeking applicants who are active in a senior citizens' organization to fill an open position on the Measure C Bond Citizens' Oversight Committee.

Applications are available on the District website at www.lafsd.org or email Kathy Kessenich at kkesseni@lafsd.org for more information.

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Modern Tones – unique recording facility opens in Lafayette

By Pippa Fisher



Students jam together at Modern Tones Music Studio.

Photos provided

Tucked away, but still close to downtown, a world-class, musical gem has popped up in Lafayette. The Modern Tones Music Studios offers music instruction and so much more.

"We are unique in the Bay Area," says the studio's owner Jacob Light as he explains their objective – to make music fun for all and to provide guidance and support to help people reach their potential in the high-end, professional grade studio. It's not just music instruction but also performing, production and connection with other musicians. Their students are not just kids – they are geared to adults, too, many rediscovering their love of music.

The six instructors – all professional recording session musicians – offer a fresh approach to music, setting monthly and quar-

terly goals for their students and teaching them whatever music sparks the students' excitement. "We have a lot of requests for Imagine Dragons and Ed Sheeran," Light notes. "We make sure students know all the basics. We tailor our instruction to the students," he says, adding they also get requests for video game music.

Rhythm and harmony can be taught with an Ed Sheeran song just as well as with a Bach or Mozart piece, says Light, who was classically trained but who enjoyed Nirvana and Green Day growing up. "As long as there's an emotional connection with the song," he adds.

Light was born and raised in Israel. He has spent 25 years as a musician. Now settled with his wife and child in the East Bay, he

says he has found a love of teaching, which also allows him time with family instead of being on the road most of the time.

This business is clearly Light's dream. His passion is music and his enthusiasm is infectious. His pride in the new facility is obvious as he gives a tour of the six recording rooms.

"The place used to be a dog-grooming business," he recalls as he explains how in May 2016 he completely gutted and renovated the space – a process that took roughly a year.

The next year was spent setting up the studios. He did much of the work himself, spending 17-hour days working hard to ensure the sound would be perfect. He says the soldering work alone took over a week. All the high-quality cabling cost thousands of

dollars but he says that since his background is recording in the best studios in the world, his own studio had to be up to the same high standards. All the high-quality guitars available to students are from Light's own personal collection – all worth thousands of dollars.

Light is proud of each of the six recording rooms. Each room is isolated and each is acoustically treated for different specific instruments or vocals, according to the amount of reverberation required.

The state-of-the-art control room is connected to the live room for whole bands or isolated drums, a vocal booth and three isolation booths set up for professional mixing and recording.

The décor is clean and fresh. No detail has been overlooked although Light credits his wife on the interior design.

In addition to guitar, bass, piano and violin, Modern Tones also offers instruction in songwriting, music production and voice. They offer voiceover work

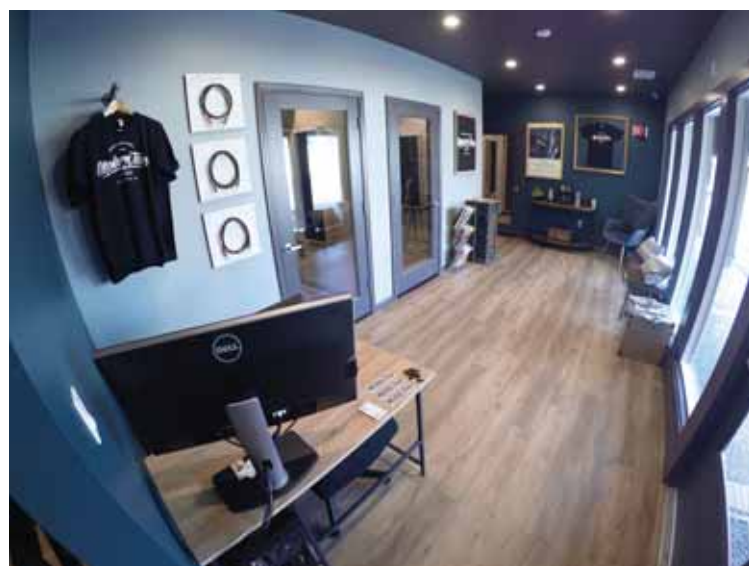
and audio book recording.

Light says they have recently helped a band of 16-year-olds produce an E.P. of their own music and says they helped them learn how to perform. All the studio's instructors are younger, professional musicians who know how to use technology and teach students how to use multi-tracking, how to promote themselves and how to create great YouTube videos. They even have an in-house rap and hip-hop producer.

The studio uses technology in all aspects of its business with online scheduling and automated reminders, streamlining the operation and keeping costs competitive.

Modern Tones Studios had its ribbon-cutting ceremony in May and is now open to the general public. Located behind Jack-in-the-Box at 1018-B Almanor Lane in Lafayette, there is plenty of free parking right outside the studio.

For more details go to <https://moderntonestudios.com/>.



The state of the art recording studios.

Letters to the Editor

MOFD Funding

Regarding your June 27 article "MOFD projects a strong fiscal year ahead." Kudos to the MOFD Board for finally making the tough call to start funding the District's under-funded employee retirement plans. We cannot pass on this debt to our children and grandchildren. How a little district with 70 employees can get tens of millions of dollars in debt is mind boggling. If it was correctly reported, and I do not doubt that it was, that the decision to start significantly funding the retirement plans was "vilified by the firefighters and Director Kathleen Famulener," then shame on them. Since MOFD was founded 21 years ago, its (tax) revenues have increased to almost three times 1997 levels. Yet costs, reflected by inflation, should have less than doubled. Revenues adjusted by inflation have increased 60 percent. Yet our service has remained unchanged. We are served by the

same five stations and 17 responders per shift as we were in 1997. All of the increase has gone to the employees, and then some (the underfunded retirement plans). Our firefighters are great people. They serve us well. They deserve to be well compensated. And according to a 2016 survey (before the 10 percent increase since then), an average salary excluding benefits of \$150,000 would be considered by most to be well compensated. That the firefighters and Director Famulener fight the full funding of the retirement plans so that more money is available for higher salaries is disturbing. The thought of more service to the taxpayers and residents of Orinda and Moraga apparently is not even under consideration. Maybe after another 20 years.

Steve Cohn
Orinda

Lafayette City Hall

The City Council of Lafayette has been using General Fund monies to purchase property and then selling the property with all the proceeds of the sale being placed in a special fund for a new city hall. As an example, the Council approved the purchase of the old library

for \$1.97 million then sold the library to the Lafayette School District for \$1.995 million with all the proceeds being placed in the special account for a city hall. The GF was not reimbursed the \$1.9 million used to purchase the property. The use of GF monies by the council to further its desire for a city hall is a disservice to the

residents of Lafayette. General Fund money should only be used only to service the needs/requirements of the residents of Lafayette, such as road repair, etc.

Mel Epps
Lafayette



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