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The U.S. Artistic Swim Team with Dr. Selina Shah, the team's physician.

Photo provided

## World-class U.S. Artistic Swim Team trains for Olympics at Campo

By Jon Kingdon

If you have recently been to the Campolindo Soda Aquatic center, you may have seen several young women walking around with their faces slathered in a white cream. It was not a performance of Kabuki Theatre. You were witness to the United States National Junior and Senior Artistic (formally Synchronized) Swim Teams, which have located to Lamorinda in 2013 and have practiced at that facility every

year since. The facial covering is from baby anti-rash cream to protect the swimmers from the sun's reflection off the water. Why not zinc oxide? The anti-rash cream is just as effective, and it washes off more easily.

The last time that the U.S. team medaled in the Olympics was in 2004 when they received a bronze medal. To address this shortfall, USA Artistic Swimming, which is recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the sport,

went overseas to hire a new coach in December 2018, Andrea Fuentes, who was formally the head coach of Spain's Artistic Swim Team.

Fuentes, who was introduced to synchronized swimming when she turned 9 and competed for Spain until she retired at age 30, won three silver medals and one bronze medal in her Olympic career. She also won 16 world championships medals and 16 European championships medals before retiring to coach for Spain in 2013. ... continued on Page A10

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## How MOFD personnel helped dispatch the largest wildfire in California history

By Nick Marnell



Photo provided

From left, MOFD engineer Dave Mazaika, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein, engineer Steve Rogness, Capt. Mike Marquardt

On Nov. 13, four members of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District returned from their 14-day assignments at the North Zone of the August Lightning Complex, a wildfire caused by a series of lightning strikes Aug. 17. The August Complex fire destroyed more than 1 million acres, the largest wildfire in recorded California history.

MOFD personnel on site included Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein, Capt. Mike Marquardt and engineers Steve Rogness and Dave Mazaika. The men shared their experiences as members of the South Central Sierra Interagency Incident Management Team, based in Hayfork, about 45 miles west of Redding in heavily forested Trinity County.

Interagency incident management teams are called together when fires grow too large or complex for local agencies to handle. The teams comprise people who are called up from their regular jobs when an incident re-

quires their specialized services. The August North Complex fire was managed by the U.S. Forest Service, which put together an incident management team in Hayfork in the middle of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Base camp peaked at 500 personnel, with half of the group firefighters, half of the group the incident support system.

"We built a small city within a 48-hour period," Mazaika said.

A typical day began with a 7 a.m. briefing, with most activity wrapped up by 10 p.m.

Marquardt, the Line Safety Officer, worked out in the field as the eyes and ears for incident safety. He verified escape routes. Are firefighters wearing the proper equipment? How are the road conditions? He confirmed weather reports. Weather extremes ranged from the possibility of heatstroke in August to frostbite in November; one morning, the temperature dropped to 12 degrees.

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See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements  
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**City staff to donate \$5,000 to food bank in lieu of bonuses**

By Pippa Fisher

The city of Lafayette will this year forgo their annual employee bonuses, instead donating the money to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

City Manager Niroop Srivatsa brought the matter to the council for approval at the Nov. 23 meeting, crediting City Clerk Joanne Robbins for coming up with the idea. The annual bonuses are discretionary but Srivatsa noted that, "While this has been a difficult year

and city staff has worked very hard during these unprecedented circumstances," she would not be recommending a bonus program. The \$5,000 is already budgeted. "The pandemic has had a significant impact on businesses and our community," said Srivatsa in the staff

report. "While our General Fund has not taken as bad of a hit as we had projected in June, there are no signs that the local economy will get back to normal any time soon." The council unanimously backed this decision.

**Lafayette discusses significant rezoning to comply with state requirements**



Photo Pippa Fisher

Construction of new housing has remained a priority throughout the Bay Area during the pandemic. Work continues on Mt. Diablo Boulevard at Dolores Drive on the Lennar Homes construction of 66 condominiums (including 10 below market rate rentals) in a mixed use project to include retail and a full service restaurant.

By Pippa Fisher

With Lafayette's state-required Housing Element update underway city leaders weighed in on the conversation at a special joint city council and planning commission meeting. The Nov. 30 meeting was, explained the city's housing consultant

Diana Elrod, a 'big picture' meeting with the intention of getting the discussion started, seeking input as to which of several potential housing scenarios would be appropriate to give to the environmental consultant for analysis, as the city moves forward in the sixth cycle Housing Element update required by state law. In this next cycle Lafayette is an-

icipating a Regional Housing Needs Allocation of about 1,660 housing units, according to the Housing Methodology Committee's recommended methodology for the distribution of regional housing needs issued by the State Department of Housing and Community Development and adopted by the Association of Bay Area Governments in October. That number is four times higher than the 400 units required during the current fifth cycle and must again include four income categories – very-low, low, moderate and above moderate incomes. Elrod explained that in order to accommodate the numbers the city will have to upzone the permitted density in several areas and must do so in time for state certification by January 2023, with rezoning of the BART lot completed by July 2022. The Housing Element of the General Plan is the only element that must be approved, or certified, by the state. Elrod noted that while RHNA is not a mandate to build, recent legislation has pushed jurisdictions to provide more incentive and remove impediments for developers. As the city looks for 'opportunity sites' Elrod encouraged commissioners and council members to consider proximity to BART, the existing infrastructure, the limited land area available, addressing ways to ensure an appropriate mix of housing versus jobs and to keep in mind limited local control. Should the downtown zoning remain at 35 units per acre and the BART lot be set at 100 units per acre with

Deer Hill Road upzoned to 20 units per acre? Or should downtown zoning be increased to 50 units per acre, BART at 75 units per acre and Deer Hill upzoned to 35 units per acre? What about retail and mixed use? Elrod presented several possible scenarios, each with varying zoning densities between the downtown, the BART lot and in most cases land along Deer Hill Road, in order to accommodate potential housing. In all scenarios, she said, they have tried to build in a buffer of units to their inventory of sites in order to ensure ongoing compliance with the Housing Accountability Act. Mayor Mike Anderson raised the point that the area north of Deer Hill Road is rated a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Elrod said that the city would not be obliged to use the land but if they don't count it now, they will have to come up with other areas to upzone. Vice Mayor Susan Candell and Council Member Cam Burks both made clear they want to challenge the numbers allocated. Burks noted that in the past council members had challenged and found errors in the previous allocation. "There is a record of deficiency in this process by the state," said Burks. Burks, clearly exasperated that the state has refused multiple requests to pause the push for housing during the pandemic, described the state government as an "embarrassment" saying, ... continued on Page A3

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# Pillar – more than just a space to work in Lafayette

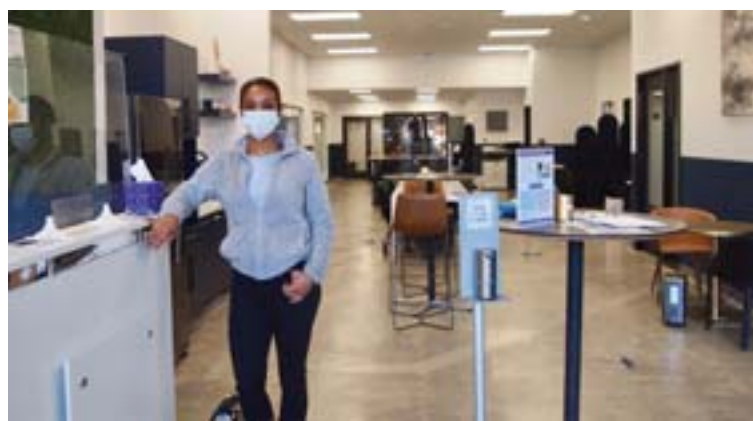


Photo Pippa Fisher

Amirh Davis, who co-founded Pillar co-working space in Lafayette with her business partner Christina Iguodala, is always happy to give tours of the new facility which includes high quality childcare.

## By Pippa Fisher

It was an idea two years in the making, born out of the demand, identified by two moms juggling working from home and caring for an infant, for a space to work while keeping their small children safely nearby. The state-of-the-art, co-working space in downtown Lafayette opened its doors in early March ... and, per state guidelines, was forced to shut its doors just two weeks later.

The pandemic is challenging for many, of course, but especially for those entrepreneurs launching a brand new endeavor right at the start of the shelter-in-place.

Pillar is located at 3515 Mt. Diablo Blvd. opposite Whole Foods Market. Amirh Davis, who founded the facility together with her partner Christina Iguodala, is clearly very proud of the beautiful facility, which she explains reopened in accordance with COVID guidelines over the summer.

With a philosophy of providing a space for creativity and cultivating connection, the 5,000-square-foot building has been designed to provide individual, private offices, meeting rooms, training rooms, and an on-site, adjacent childcare facility, complete with a safe, outdoor play area as well as a nap space for children and a room for nursing mothers.

Both Davis and Iguodala recognized the demand for a quality work space outside the home, combined with the option of keeping infants and small children close by. They realized co-working facilities offering childcare were very rare.

In fact the childcare offered by Pillar is much more

than just childcare, with a play-based, specialist-designed, emergent curriculum allowing children to explore and develop as individually appropriate. Qualified Early Childhood Education teachers use art, dramatic play, blocks, music and movement, literacy, math and science to guide learning.

Davis says that one of their ideas is to work with Sparkles & Joy Founder Semira Moslem (see story in Nov. 11 issue of Lamorinda Weekly). Given the current COVID tier and occupancy restrictions, plans are not yet finalized but, according to Moslem, “The hope is we’ll have a pop-up some time in Q1 at Pillar for current and prospective Sparkles & Joy customers featuring a chef’s special appetizer along with non-alcoholic beverages to promote both Sparkles & Joy along with Pillar’s amazing workspace and founders.”

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson recognizes the hard work Davis and Iguodala are investing in this facility. “Amirh and Christina are dynamic entrepreneurs who have much to share,” he says.

Currently Pillar has reduced seating capacity in all shared spaces, meeting rooms and café areas to allow for proper social distancing, and have added additional private offices and workspace options to provide increased isolation.

Pillar offers flexible membership plans and welcomes drop-ins. Currently childcare options do not include drop-ins – parents must reserve a space online in advance – in order to help keep stable cohorts of children.

For more information on Pillar, visit <https://pillarcowork.com/>

# Lafayette discusses significant rezoning

... continued from Page A2

“How profoundly ludicrous this entire thing is right now... why we’re even talking about it tonight and not waiting until we figure out how to keep people and our community safe.”

Candell suggested looking also at other areas in the city, specifically the area opposite Oakwood Athletic Club.

Council members and commissioners heard public comments from over a dozen callers, some only now becoming aware of these issues. While some worried about the increased traffic on already congested streets, and the visual impacts of multi-story housing in the down-

town and around BART, others had concerns over possible parking woes if BART development didn’t include adequate commuter parking.

Several others, however, urged the city to move forward quickly, especially with the BART development and reminded the city of the critical need for affordable housing near transit in order to make Lafayette a more inclusive city.

It was a unanimous vote to take four possible scenarios forward, as well as the area opposite Oakwood, for staff to assess further.

The public will have another opportunity Dec. 15 to hear more on the subject of housing at the General Plan Advisory Committee meeting.



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## 30-Day Snapshot of Lamorinda Sales

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Sold Price
3179 Stanley Blvd	3	1	1124	\$1,050,000
3720 Magwood Ct	3	2	1888	\$1,000,000
31 Westminister Pl	3	2	1508	\$1,130,000
3265 Wooded Creek Ln	4	2	2031	\$1,225,000
3148 Oak Hill Rd	3	1	1594	\$1,200,000
3164 Somerset Place	4	3	2194	\$1,230,000
3371 Sweet Cr.	4	3	2232	\$1,350,000
3131 Sandalwood Court	4	2	1509	\$1,500,000
3281 SOGA	3	2.5	2719	\$1,361,000
1308 Mariano Rd	3	2	1886	\$1,710,000
15 Via La Cumbre	4	3	3090	\$1,340,000
3402 Blackhawk Rd	3	2	1835	\$1,485,000
3190 Diablo View Rd	4	3	3034	\$1,507,000
23 Greenline Ct	4	3	4531	\$1,790,000
1179 Glen Rd.	4	3	2072	\$1,977,000
3839 Boyer Cr	4	2	2794	\$1,641,725
3225 Greenhill Drive	4	2.5	2956	\$1,860,000
2 Middle Rd	4	3	2823	\$1,905,000
14 Northridge Ln	4	3.5	3290	\$2,008,000
3259 Summit Drive	4	3.5	3225	\$2,150,000
3230 Greenhill Cr	5	3.5	4899	\$2,200,000
3893 Quail Ridge Rd	4	3	3528	\$2,150,000
50 Rancho Diablo Rd	3	2.5	2342	\$2,050,000
3445 Silver Springs Rd	3	2	1917	\$2,175,000
3864 El Nido Ranch Rd	4	3.5	3499	\$2,300,000
1148 Hercules Street	4	4	3671	\$2,360,000
3443 Solano Ct	4	3.5	3434	\$2,460,000
1207 Camino Vallecito	4	4.5	4189	\$2,290,000
2976 Wilshire Ct.	3	3.5	3136	\$2,280,000
3295 Los Arroyos Cr	5	4	3476	\$2,410,000
5024 Via Ruess	4	4.5	3787	\$2,354,650
3172 Camino Colowada	5	4.5	3256	\$2,510,000
1982 Walter Valley Road	4	4.5	4748	\$2,790,000
3103 Happy Valley Rd	5	4.5	4070	\$1,828,795
3229 Upper Happy Valley Rd	5	4.5	3665	\$4,560,000

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Sold Price
15 Gloria Ct	4	3	2421	\$1,650,000
3097 Westham Cr	4	2	2189	\$1,532,000
152 Danefield Pl	4	2	2055	\$1,825,000
12 Crockett Cr	4	3	3012	\$1,875,000
208 Promenade Rd.	4	3.5	3131	\$2,071,000
2 Crockett Drive	4	3	3453	\$2,540,000
8 Southard Ct	5	4	4132	\$2,695,000

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Sold Price
10 El Topomal	3	1.5	1157	\$485,000
34 El Topomal	3	2	1457	\$1,030,000
88 Woodwood Rd	3	2	1517	\$1,079,000
14 Eastwood Dr	4	2	1632	\$1,262,000
22 Knickerbocker Ln	3	2.5	2180	\$1,690,000
48 La Vuella	4	3	2129	\$1,626,000
191 Moraga Way	3	2	1799	\$1,200,000
39 Charles Hill Rd	5	3	3720	\$1,518,999
5 Madrone Pl	3	3.5	1869	\$1,310,000
50 Bates Blvd	4	3	2050	\$1,415,000
57 Van Ripper Ln	3	2	2390	\$1,530,000
44 El Camino Moraga	3	2	1883	\$1,650,000
32 Evergreen Dr	4	3	2418	\$1,630,000
4812 Alvar Rd	3	3.5	2790	\$1,640,000
3813 Glorietta Blvd	4	2.5	2914	\$1,781,000
14 Camino Soleraste	4	3.5	3126	\$1,790,000
12 Soem Drive	3	3	2850	\$1,690,000
21 Los Arroyos	4	3.5	3739	\$1,830,000
521 Tates Rd.	4	2.5	2814	\$1,890,000
293 Ivy Place	4	2	2789	\$1,200,000
34 Sanborn Rd	4	3	2920	\$1,821,000
4 Candorick Rd	4	2.5	2448	\$1,900,000
60 Southwood Drive	3	3	2905	\$1,925,000
46 Valley Dr	4	3.5	3190	\$1,870,000
28 Via Caldecito	5	2.5	3641	\$1,820,000
205 Southard Ct	3	3.5	3850	\$1,400,000
38 Valley Dr	4	4	3213	\$2,175,000
56 Sumner Ln	4	4.5	3138	\$2,300,000
46 Martha Road	4	2.5	2648	\$1,810,000
37 Oak Rd	5	4	4672	\$2,300,000
2 North Lane	5	3	3874	\$1,830,000
31 Olivine View Rd	4	4	3519	\$2,375,000
2 Casa Vieja	4	3.5	4186	\$2,900,000
7 Annie Road	5	4	5301	\$1,175,000
12 Candle Yr	4	4.5	4894	\$1,300,000
41 Donald	4	4.5	3929	\$1,625,000
10 Garden Ct	5	4.5	5396	\$1,540,000
48 Charles Hill Road	6	3.5	5953	\$3,700,000

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Sold Price
148 Oranger Dr	3	2	1402	\$1,300,000
3972 Campolindo Dr	3	2	1756	\$1,130,000
17 Wooded Cr	4	2	1565	\$1,830,000
3736 Campolindo Dr	4	2.5	2309	\$1,340,000
3933 Paseo Grande	4	2.5	2341	\$1,345,000
1842 School St	5	3	1917	\$1,349,000
82 Marie Pl	5	3	2208	\$1,389,000
267 Lakefield Pl	5	2.5	2424	\$1,350,000
1355 Camino Patiso	4	2.5	3790	\$1,400,000
3866 School Street	4	2	2055	\$1,555,000

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**Lafayette Public Meetings**

**Planning Commission Meeting**  
Monday, Dec. 21, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference Meeting with Love Lafayette YouTube  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

**Design Review**  
Wednesday, Dec. 16, 7 p.m. Zoom  
Teleconference Meeting with Love Lafayette YouTube  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

**City Council**  
Special Meeting  
Wednesday, Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m.  
Regular Meeting  
Monday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:  
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## Moraga seeks to reinstate Tree City USA status



Photo Vera Kochan

**Trees-a-plenty grow colorfully in Moraga Commons Park**

**By Vera Kochan**

Having been a Tree City USA member in 2008, 2009, 2014, 2015 and 2016, the town of Moraga is poised to once again apply to the program thanks to the support gained during the

town council's Nov. 18 meeting. Citing fiscal emergencies between 2017-2019, the town had to redirect its tree assessments, documentation efforts and manpower in other directions. There is no fiscal impact to submit an application.

The Beautification and Tree Planting Program Implementation Committee was responsible for the initial 2008 recognition which applies only to trees located in town-owned parks and parcels. Although, it is evident that residents have done their fair share to help beautify Moraga with a wide variety of plantings.

Tree City USA was established in 1976, and is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation. It is administered by the United States Forest Service and National Association of State Foresters. A nationwide program, it has admitted over 3,500 cities under its umbrella. In 2019, 146 California communities were recognized as a Tree City. The state's program is administered by the CAL Fire Urban and Community Forestry Department.

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, benefits to joining the program include: reduces costs for energy,

stormwater management and erosion control; savings in energy consumption by up to 25%; boosts property values; creates stronger ties within neighborhoods and community pride; urban forest management triggers improved ordinances and innovative programs; educates residents about the importance of sustainable tree management; and gains publicity and recognition for a Tree City member.

Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt stated that there are four standards to achieve Tree City USA recognition. First, there must be a tree board or department. The Parks and Recreation Department would oversee the tree program while utilizing two on-call arborists, when needed, to assist park maintenance workers.


Secondly, all cities must have a Tree Care Ordinance. Moraga currently has several such ordinances in place re-

garding care, maintenance, removal and replacement.

In addition, each city must have an annual \$2 per capita Community Forestry Program budget. The town's annual Parks and Open Space Budget is \$417,300, of which \$93,960 is slated for tree maintenance (planting, pruning and removal). This figure comes to \$5.33 per capita based on Moraga's 17,630 residents.

Lastly, each city must have an Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation. The town's most recent Arbor Day Proclamation was in 2015. The Pear and Wine Festival's annual tree planting ceremony will help meet the requirement.

"I think the Tree City program aligns with a lot of the values reflected in town policies in the community," said Brandt. "So much of Moraga is our excellent parks and our iconic green hills. The tree is very symbolic of that."

 **Town Council** Wednesday, Dec. 9, 7 p.m.  
**Planning Commission:** TBA  
**Park and Recreation Commission:** Tuesday, Dec. 15, 7 p.m.,  
**Moraga School District Board Meetings:** Special Board Meeting Tuesday, Dec. 15, 6 p.m.  
 www.moraga.k12.ca.us. See also AUHSD meeting page A2

## Holiday Tree lights up Moraga Commons Park



Photo Vera Kochan

**Moraga's Holiday Tree adds much needed cheer to the season.**

**By Vera Kochan**

For the sake of poetic license, one can liken COVID-19 to The Grinch during this time of year. So many annual holiday traditions have either been canceled or reconfigured in order to curb the recent explo-

sive up-tick in positive cases. However, Moraga's Parks and Recreation Department is the town's own Cindy-Lou Who, continuing to find ways to keep the holiday spirit from being snatched away by The Grinch.

The Holiday Tree at Com-

mons Park is once again shining bright with its multi-colored lights acting as beacons of hope and joy to a pandemic-weary community. This year there was no fanfare or celebration before the initial lighting ceremony. No masses of families to enjoy hot cocoa served by Santa's elves; no carolers singing classic holiday songs to the crowd; and saddest of all, in order to stay safe before his big trip around the globe on Christmas Eve, Santa stayed home at the North Pole to shelter-in-place with Mrs. Claus.

Fear not Moraga, The Grinch may have caused a setback to the usual way the town celebrates the lighting of the Holiday Tree, but he hasn't taken away our spirit. Like the Whos down in Whoville, residents have noticed the festive lights beckoning them to stand around the tree (6-feet apart, please) and bask in the wonder of the season.

For anyone wishing to contribute to the Buy-A-Bulb fundraising goal of \$6,000, donate online at www.moraga.ca.us or send a check made payable to the Town of Moraga, Attn: Buy-a-Bulb, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, CA 94556.

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## Santa is making his list, and checking it twice

**By Vera Kochan**

For the first time ever, Santa's elves, with the help of the Moraga Parks and Recreation Department, have placed a bright red North Pole Mailbox in Moraga Commons Park just waiting to be filled with letters from kids to Santa. The mailbox is located near the giant Holiday Tree by the playground.

Santa wants each child to let him know what they'd like for Christmas, and he would like everyone to tell him a little bit about themselves. But, the magic doesn't stop there. Those children who mail a letter (in an envelope) to Santa, and include a return address, will receive a reply letter a few days before Christmas.

Santa expects to hear from 250 Lamorinda children this year, and he wants to remind everyone that the deadline to mail a letter to Santa is Dec. 17. At the stroke of 5 p.m., his most trusted elves will come out of hiding and whisk the mailbox back to the North Pole. Ho-Ho-Ho!!!



Photo Vera Kochan

**Letters to Santa Mailbox stands ready to transport correspondence to the North Pole.**

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## Moraga sees fewer negative economic impacts from COVID than projected

By Vera Kochan

As Contra Costa County, and much of the state, rolls back into the purple tier category, imposing restrictions on retail and other businesses that many had hoped was a thing of the past, Moraga has managed to emerge in better shape financially than was originally projected in June.

The town's Fiscal Year 2019-20 revenue was projected to decrease by \$356,840 over the adopted budget due to projected decreases in real property transfer tax revenue, sales tax revenue along with Parks and Recreation revenue. However, revenue decreases were offset by expense savings with a decrease in general government expenses and Parks and Rec operational costs.

The Audited Financial Reports for the year ended June 30 and confirmed that the town ended FY 2019-20 in better shape than originally anticipated with a general fund reserve of \$4,992,784 compared to a projected \$4,870,651.

According to a staff report and presentation during the town council's Nov. 18 meeting by Administrative Services Director Norm Veloso,

Moraga's FY 2020-21 budget included assumptions regarding COVID-19's impact on revenues and expenditures.

Sales tax revenues are predicted to be \$1,024,000 (down 1.7% from FY 2019/20). This is based upon COVID-19 related economic impacts from consumer activity and business regulations during the period between July and September. Actual results will be available by the end of December.

The Contra Costa Association of Realtors Local Market Update for August and September show home sales and prices in Moraga remain strong. Town staff expects the Real Property Transfer Tax revenue for the year will surpass the \$120,000 budget.

Property tax revenues could reflect a projected slowing in the real estate market. The staff report states, "Should there be an impact on property value, the impact will not be felt by the town for 18-24 months due to the county's assessment practice in which property tax assessment typically reflects values of the property anywhere from 18 months to several years prior to collection."

Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt

explained that COVID-19 continues to impact her department causing county regulations and cancellations that affect town events such as the Fourth of July fireworks, Hacienda Nights and the Summer Concert Series, not to mention bookings at the Hacienda de las Flores. However, the net impact is estimated to be a low \$10,000 based on projected revenue reductions of \$140,000 which will be offset by expense reductions of \$130,000. Parks and Rec has found ways to operate within the county's mandates and has seen a gradual increase in events and programs.

Measure K Revenue (district sales tax) is forecasted to be \$1,907,000. This figure is down 4.6% from FY 2019-20. Much like the sales tax revenues, COVID-19 has impacted Measure K revenues through consumer behaviors and business regulations. Staff expects to evaluate this projection during the mid-year budget adjustment process.

In August, the town received \$209,235 (its allotted portion of the Federal CARES Act). Federal law specified that all of the funds must be used for unbudgeted costs related to COVID-19 between

March 1 and Dec. 30. To date the town has used \$45,412 of the \$100,715 budget on equipment and facility enhancements; \$11,345 of the \$20,000 budget towards the

Small Business Emergency Relief Program; \$51,000 of the \$51,000 budget for emergency response materials; and \$37,520 of the \$37,520 budget on personnel expenses.

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**The Orinda Association:**  
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**Orinda Public Meetings**

**City Council**

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 7 p.m.  
 Regular Meeting  
 By Teleconference Only

**Planning Commission**

Tuesday, Dec. 22, 7 p.m.  
 By Teleconference Only

**Traffic Safety Advisory Committee**

**Regular Meeting**  
 Tuesday, Dec. 22, 7 p.m.  
 By Teleconference Only

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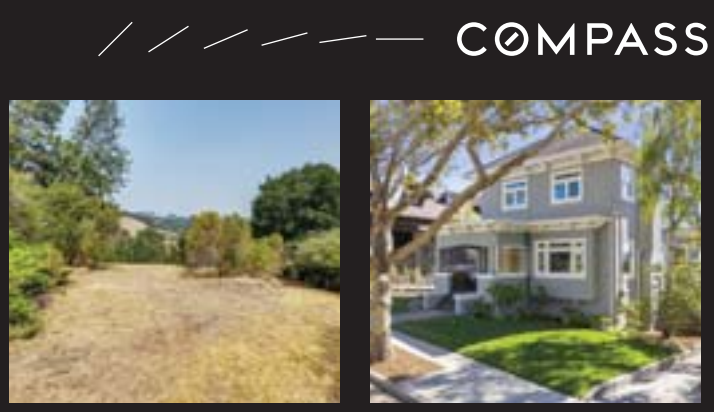
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**Mayor's Award of Excellence goes to the Firewise Council**

By Sora O'Doherty

Outgoing mayor Darlene Gee selected the Orinda Firewise Council for her Mayor's Award of Excellence as she completes her year leading the city council. "I selected the Orinda Firewise Council because they have had a significant and extremely positive impact on our community," Gee said, noting that "they raised awareness of the need for fire prevention and emergency preparedness at all levels, from our residents to the City Council."

According to Gee, the Firewise Council helped spur the formation of the Joint Fire Subcommittee of Orinda with the Moraga-Orinda Fire

District and the town of Moraga. They also played an invaluable role in helping to pass Measure R, which will allow the city to advance critically needed actions to help prevent wildfires in Orinda. In addition, Gee said, "they have put forth extensive efforts at the state level with our elected officials and the State Insurance Commissioner to advocate for issues that affect Orinda." Gee concluded, "I felt the Firewise Council represented an exceptional level of volunteerism that is changing our city for the better and helping to protect our quality of life in Orinda."

The Firewise Council is a consortium of leaders from the Orinda Firewise groups

who have come together to support each other by sharing resources and best practices and to engage the city of Orinda and MOFD in wildfire prevention. According to its web page, OFC was founded in February of 2020 in response to the "new normal" of a year-round wildfire season resulting from climate change and decades of unmitigated fuel buildup. OFC says that, driven by the enthusiastic support of neighbors, elected leaders and a visionary fire chief, they have quickly grown in size and influence. OFC committees are working to bring residents, the city of Orinda, firefighting professionals and neighboring communities together to make everyone

safer from wildfire. OFC believes that no one is safe from a wildfire until everyone is safe from a wildfire. The indiscriminate nature of wildfire, OFC says, creates an interdependency, so that all landowners need to mitigate fuel on their property regardless of whether it's public, private or corporate.

The OFC Executive Committee includes Melanie Light, Chair, Barry Horn, Ken Light, Linda Landau, Michael Brown, Rachel Duclos and Sue Wecht. The membership committee includes liaison Joyce Arnon, Joan Lucas, Susan Anacker and Sue Wecht. The agency committee is chaired by Tim Lipman with Lucy Talbot.

**Orinda selects consultant for restoration of San Pablo Creek**



Photo Sora O'Doherty

**San Pablo Creek  
 By Sora O'Doherty**

Following decades of talking about the creek in downtown Orinda, the city council at its Dec. 1 meeting took a step forward, unanimously approving a contract with PlaceWorks as a creek consultant for the downtown precise plan. PlaceWorks will receive \$54,100 and the city manager is authorized to approve change orders up to \$8,115.

Isabelle Minn, principal of PlaceWorks and team members Sydney Temple, senior hydrologist of Questa Engineering Corp., and Jim Martin of the Environmental Cooperative all attended the Zoom council meeting and explained their experience and their roles in the creek restoration study.

PlaceWorks will hold a two-part kickoff meeting with city staff. The team will visit the project site with city staff to assess and document the condition of the creek before meeting with The Friends of Orinda Creeks to discuss the project, hear about past efforts and receive input regarding the current planning effort.

The PlaceWorks team will prepare a hydrologic resources report, a biological resources inventory and opportunities/constraints report, and a memo summarizing feedback on the restorations concept prepared by FlowWest. PlaceWorks will also hold a community engagement event and prepare a new restoration concept memo, including a narrative description of the restoration concept, implications for planning and design in the downtown specific plan, a summary of CEQA requirements and recommendations for next steps.

According to the staff report, San Pablo Creek is an urbanized perennial creek that flows through the downtown precise plan project area. The creek daylight for approximately 1,500 feet near the intersection of Camino Pablo and Santa Maria Way before entering a culvert (behind Bank of America) that continues under the Safeway parking lot. A short segment also day-lights just northwest of Avenida de Orinda.

The Orinda general plan identifies use of San Pablo

Creek in multiple policies, including the development of a beautification plan for downtown with guidelines for public improvements such as landscaping, tree grate design, outdoor lighting, tree planting and street furniture. The plan also encourages property owners to make more intensive use of the creek side of their buildings by designating a "private street" with public access parallel to the creek that would provide an alternative connection for shoppers.

The staff report, prepared by Planning Director Drummond Buckley, points out that the topic of San Pablo Creek restoration has been raised many times throughout the years as part of downtown planning efforts, and Friends of Orinda Creeks have been working for many years with the goal of restoring the creek. Restoration efforts date back to the 2001 San Pablo Creek Preliminary Restoration Plan. The ConnectOrinda Plan, adopted by the city council in November 2019, recommended a "Plan for Creek Access" project, which would highlight the creek, coordinating with landowners for public access, and incorporating features to enhance the creek experience.

In 2019, the city council established a strategic priority to work toward the long-term goal of daylighting and attaining restoration of San Pablo Creek from Santa Maria Way to the historic Orinda Way Bridge and design for pedestrian access throughout. In the downtown precise plan online survey conducted in May 2020, the creek was mentioned by respondents over 80 times. In addition, during the character area workshop in November, many attendees were supportive of restoration and/or access to San Pablo Creek as a community benefit as part of objective design standards, Buckley concluded.

The team members explained to the city council that their plan involves on-call creek restoration services for the city, including landscape architects, planners, environmental planners, and scientists trained in working on parks, trails, natural resource planning and design and

community engagement.

Questa Engineering, founded 1982, will provide hydrologic resources and Environmental Collaborative, founded in 1983, specializes in biological and wetland resource assessments, and has extensive experience over decades working on the city of Lafayette's downtown creek preservation project.

In response to questions from the council, Buckley said that the project plans to include a discussion of noise reduction from Camino Pablo, a large busy street on the west side of the creek. Mayor Darlene Gee expressed interest in identifying grants or other resources that might be available to fund the creek restoration. Buckley explained that the current project will make applying for grants easier because grantors will see that there is a plan in place to move forward with the project. City Manager Steve Salomon added that there are a number of places where the city can apply. "This item is a step to getting us to a point where the city will be able to tell funders that their money will result in hard results," Salomon said, adding, "I think this is a positive thing, that should give Orinda a tremendous ability to get money from outside sources."

In written public comments, Nick Waranoff said that "in these financially challenged times, the creek is a luxury item that Orinda cannot afford." Michael Bowen, chair of the Friends of Orinda Creeks restoration committee, offered strong support for the project. He said, "This is a really top-notch team to move the ball down the field," and that the Friends are very grateful for the talent the team has brought to the effort.

Vice Mayor Amy Worth was very pleased to support the project. "On all the times we have had meetings to talk about [creek restoration]," she said, "the auditorium has had a very large number of people who want us to move ahead with this." She agreed that if the city wants to compete for regional and other grants, it needs to have a viable plan and a commitment.



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## New Measure R Oversight Commission to replace CIOC

By Sora O'Doherty

With the passage of Measure R in the general election, Orinda is committed to establishing an oversight commission to monitor how the funding raised by the new add-on sales tax is spent by the city. In a staff report prepared by Larry Theis, assistant city manager and director of public works, it was recommended to the city council at its Dec. 1 meeting that the existing Citizen Infrastructure Oversight Commission, with its mission limited to infrastructure, be dissolved and replaced by a new oversight commission with a much broader scope.

According to the staff report, the CIOC has done excellent work planning, monitoring, and making recommendations on the use of over \$56 million funding from two voter approved bond issues and the existing add-on sales tax (Measure L - Approved by the voters in 2012). Measure R, however, was adopted as a general sales tax and, as such, the use of the funds raised by the tax cannot legally be specified. The city council has indicated that the funding will be used for a wide range of work, including fire

prevention, emergency planning, public drainage improvements to prevent erosion or flooding, as well as the maintenance of the public road system, which has been improved with the current half-cent sales tax.

Outgoing city manager Steve Salomon recommended that the council act soon so that the city clerk can recruit people for the oversight commission with the goal of having its first meeting in February or March. Staff will return to the council on Dec. 15 with a scope of work for the committee, which should have from seven to 10 members, and establish a schedule for new, monthly meetings and set clear objectives and goals in concert with the next bi-annual budget.

The report also recommended that certain initial steps be taken, such as preparing an interim short-term spending plan, prior to the establishment of the Citizens Oversight Commission. Staff does recommend support for an increase in the operational budget for immediate vegetation and tree trimming removal on city owned properties such as City Hall, parks, and open

spaces, which would include ramping up the elimination of more vegetation, including eucalyptus trees along Camino Pablo.

In addition to the Citizens Oversight Commission, the city plans to hire a program manager to oversee emergency preparedness in Orinda. Salomon told the council that Orinda does not want to duplicate or displace things that MOFD is doing. "We have to develop a good evacuation plan, including a family reconciliation location" where families can meet in the event of a disaster, Salomon said. "Floods will happen again, earthquakes, hazardous material spills will happen."

Salomon said there is no one who can coordinate these efforts on the city staff at present. Because of COVID problems, he said, "we've laid off people and left positions open. I can't think of a more important thing. If you want to do this right, this is what needs to happen." Orinda hired a project manager for roads, he said, but this is different. Fire is an issue that is not going to go away for Orinda, he said, and added that the city will need

some consultants to help recruit the right person for the job.

Mayor Darlene Gee suggested that the job would not be to recreate the wheel but utilize plans by MOFD, CERT and the Firewise Council in a coordinated effort.

During public comment, Melanie Light, chair of the Orinda Firewise Council, described the current situation as an "amazing, pivotal moment. We are transforming ourselves into a fire resistant community." Light gave a shout out to Salomon, and urged that education be high priority. In addition to a dedicated project manager, she suggested hosting a "living with wildfire" fair, perhaps underwritten by a corporate sponsor or insurance.

Judd Hammon, chair of the CIOC, noted that there is an expanse of topics that need to be addressed by the new commission. To limit the commission to Measure R would be asking for trouble in his opinion, and concluded that Orinda needs multiple disaster planning.

Council Member Dennis Fay said this is a "turning point for this city" and suggested that

the new commission include a designated slot for a Firewise Council member and expressed a need to coordinate with the county's new half-cent county-wide sales tax measure as parts of Orinda are in unincorporated county area. Council Member Inga Miller emphasized that Orinda should not limit itself in the charge to the commission, and should include the ability to look for other funding sources.

Council Member Nick Kosla said that the elephant in the room is the eucalyptus trees and big Monterey pines in Orinda that are very difficult and expensive to remove. He suggested that the city work with neighbors, and provide public education, to ensure that there isn't just clearcutting. He also alluded to growth in neighboring cities, and wondered how that will affect evacuation.

Vice Mayor Amy Worth acknowledged the hard work of volunteers in Orinda, who contributed to the passage of Measure R. "We have a real opportunity to look at best practices," she said, "and make best use of technology."

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# MOFD calls out insurance companies for cancellations over fire code violations

By Nick Marnell

According to the California Department of Insurance, property insurance is becoming harder to find for residents in high-risk wildfire areas. As portions of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District lie in these high-risk areas, the district passed a resolution in November reminding insurance companies that they may not make arbitrary decisions regarding fire safety in order to either cancel or fail to renew insurance policies for district property owners.

Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs gave a recent example of insurance industry

overreach.

An Orinda resident called the district and said that she was required to remove three oak trees on her property because her insurance company claimed the trees were a fire hazard. If she did not comply, the company would not renew her property insurance. The homeowner asked the district to come to her house and take a look, as she could not believe that the trees were a fire hazard.

After an inspection, MOFD found that her property complied with the fire code.

"The district simply wants to call attention to this issue,

and make everyone aware of it," Isaacs said.

The gist of the resolution is that MOFD is the sole and exclusive provider of fire protection, prevention and suppression services within its jurisdictional area, and the fire code compliance that the district has promulgated is the standard by which properties will be judged.

"Insurance companies cannot apply an arbitrary standard that is different from the fire code," Fire Chief Dave Winnacker said.

Representatives from State Farm, the state's largest property insurer, had no comment but directed inquiries to the Insurance

Information Institute. "Those insurance companies are going to need to look at and understand their use of the language in their fire code reference," said Janet Ruiz, strategic communications director of the institute.

The resolution has

nothing to do with insuring, or not insuring, a property. MOFD cannot force an insurance company to renew a homeowner's policy, and an insurance carrier can drop a policy holder for just about any reason it chooses.

Except for a "fire code

## Fire District Public Meetings

### Moraga-Orinda Fire District

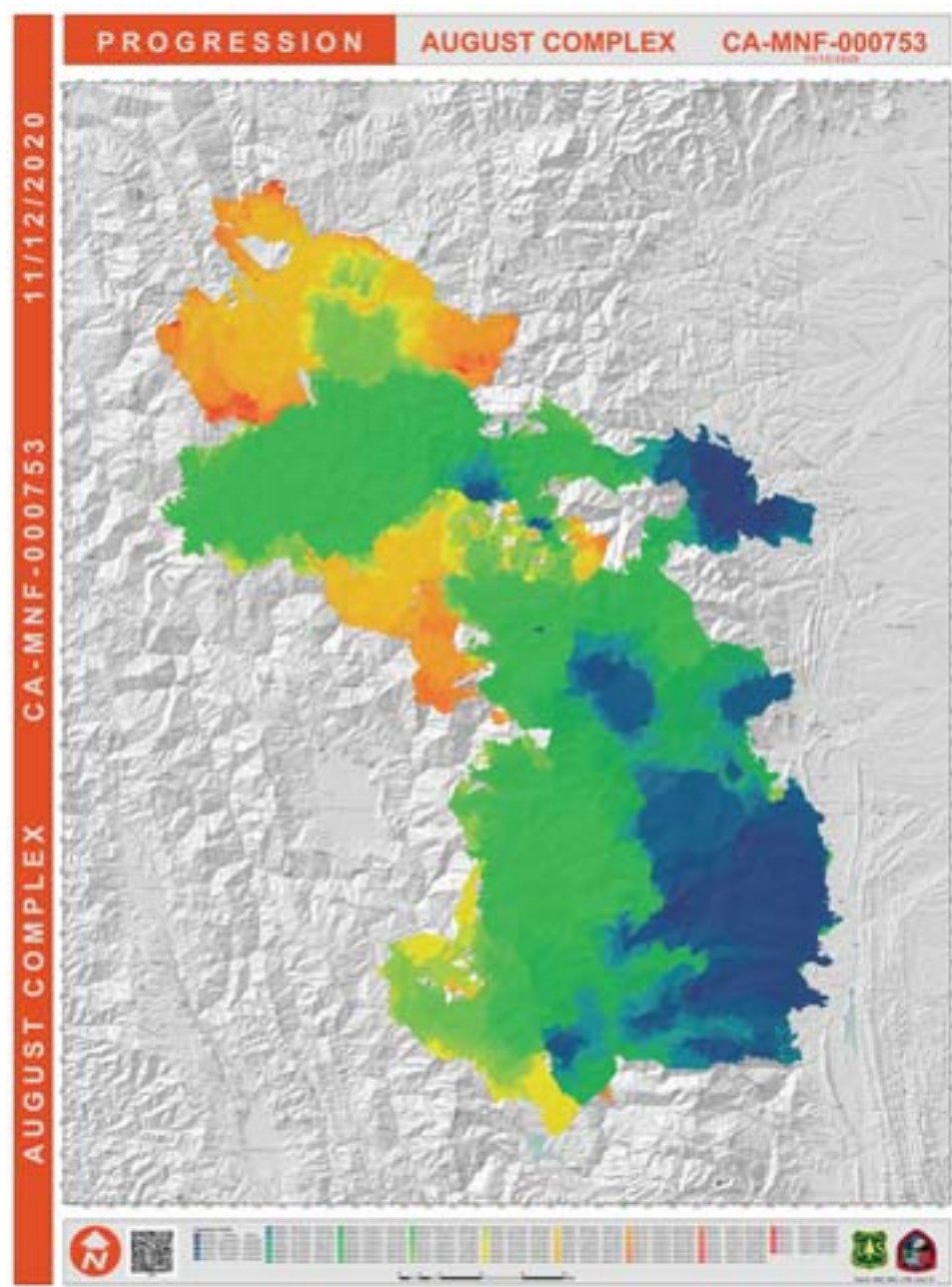
Board of Directors  
Wednesday, Dec. 16, 6 p.m.  
For meeting times and agendas, visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)

### ConFire

Board of Directors  
Tuesday, Jan., 19, 1:00 p.m.  
For meeting times and agendas, visit [www.cccfpd.org](http://www.cccfpd.org)



# How MOFD personnel helped dispatch the largest wildfire in California history



Courtesy Steve Rogness

Color-coded map of the wildfire progression, from August (blue) to September (green-yellow) to October (orange)

When an accident did happen, Mazaika, the medical unit leader, took over. His responsibilities included the supervision of emergency medical technicians, who themselves took care of the firefighters, and the administering of medical care needed by any member of the interagency team.

No serious accidents, and no COVID outbreaks, occurred during Mazaika's assignment. "Just a couple of minor incidents," he said.

GIS specialist Rogness toiled much of the time in a trailer, creating maps. Operational maps. Aviation maps. Scale maps. Progress maps for media and public officials. More than 20 types of maps.

"Every day, crews would come back with new information and Steve would enter that information into his maps," Marquardt said. Rogness shared a fascinating progression map of the wildfire, showing the fire's origin in August through its peak in late October. (see photo)

Base camp included numerous staff and management personnel. Finance managers kept time sheets, paid suppliers, managed cash flow. The Logistics division obtained food, executed contracts for laundry, cleaning services, portable trailers and toilets. Contractors erected a medical tent and a communications center, and organized accommodations for the 500 personnel. The communications office kept local residents and public officials up to speed.

And that was where Rein, the liaison officer, stepped in. His job was to relay complete, accurate information from the incident command post to outside stakeholders: national forest personnel, the state fire agency, Fish and Game, local police, townspeople and public officials.

Rein recalled a briefing he presented to the Trinity County Board of Supervisors.

"Why did you close Route 36?" the

board demanded, as that road is one of the primary thoroughfares through the county.

"It wasn't us," Rein told the board. "It was Caltrans, not the fire organizations." He convinced the supervisors that the closure was ordered for public safety.

Agricultural cannabis is a growth industry in Trinity County, and Rein said the team had no issue with the residents over the product. "But you could tell that the local folks knew exactly where you were," he said.

Once the firefighters contained the August Complex fire, the cleanup phase began.

"It became fire suppression repair," Rein said.

The crews spent days doing erosion control along the bulldozer lines. They knocked down berms. Added water bars. Removed dead trees along Route 36. Along that same highway, more than 7,000 damaged guardrails were replaced.

The goals were to protect the area from mudslides and harsh weather events, and to have the region return to as natural a look as possible.

"Return" was a word that Marquardt could rarely identify with over the summer and fall. He served on four incident teams beginning Aug. 1, from Orange County to the Diablo Range to Trinity County. "Eighty-five days out of the district, home for only nine," Marquardt said.

But not one of the participants even implied that the time spent on the outside teams was not worthwhile.

"Working with the incident management team provides MOFD personnel the opportunity to see large fire operations first hand, as well as share their MOFD expertise with other agencies," Rein said.

The expenses related to the firefighters' work on the incident management team are reimbursed to the district by the federal government.

... continued from Page A1

"Firefighters are fighting fires. They aren't looking out for these things," Marquardt said.

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## Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Nov. 15 - Nov. 28



Alarms	46
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	17
Traffic	61
Suspicious Circumstances	10
Suspicious Subject	17
Suspicious Vehicle	14
Service to Citizen	55
Patrol Req./Security Check	46
Public/School Assembly Check	1
Supplemental Report	22
Vacation House Check	7
Welfare Check	20
Ordinance Violation	1
<b>Vehicle violations</b>	
Auto Burglary	
1700 Block Reliez Valley Rd.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
4000 Block Legion Ct.	
3200 Block Phillips Rd.	
3400 Block Black Hawk Rd.	

Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
1000 Block Carol Ln.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
600 Block N Silverado Dr.	
Withers Ave./Reliez Valley Rd.	
1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd. (2)	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Dewing Ave.	
Petty Theft From Veh	
3400 Block Black Hawk Rd. (2)	
Reckless Driving	
St Marys Rd./Acampo Dr.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Lafayette Cr	
Moraga Rd./St. Marys Rd.	
Glenside Dr./St. Marys Rd.	
Condit Rd./Windsor Dr.	
Springhill Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd.	
Stolen Vehicle Recovery	
1000 Block Hawthorn Dr.	
Vehicle Theft	
3100 Block Plymouth Rd.	
1000 Block Hawthorn Dr.	
<b>Other criminal activity</b>	
Computer Fraud	
3100 Block Windsor Ct.	
Fraud Credit Card	
600 Block Burton Dr.	
Fraud False Pretenses	
3300 Block Hermosa Way (2)	
3700 Block Highland Rd.	
3200 Block Marlene Dr.	
Identity Theft	
Police Department	
3400 Block Moraga Blvd.	
10 Block Butler Dr.	
Misc Burglary	
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Panhandling	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Petty Theft	
1100 Block Sierra Vista Way	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)	
Residential Burglary	
1000 Block Buchan Dr.	
Shoplift	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (5)	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)	
1200 Block Quandt Rd.	
<b>Nuisance to the Community</b>	
Disturbance-domestic	
3300 Block N Lucille Ln.	
600 Block Huntleigh Dr.	
900 Block 3Rd St.	
Disturbing The Peace	
El Nido Ranch Rd./Sunnyhill Rd.	
El Curtola Blvd./Saranap Ave.	

El Nido Ranch Rd./Acalanes Rd.	
Loud Music	
El Curtola Blvd./Old Tunnel Rd. (3)	
Loud Noise	
El Curtola Blvd./Old Tunnel Rd.	
Loud Party	
1000 Block Carol Ln.	
Public Nuisance	
1000 Block Oak Hill Rd.	
Not Available	
3400 Block Golden Gate Way	
Vandalism	
800 Block Solana Dr.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
<b>Other</b>	
Covid19 Violation	
500 Block Merriewood	
700 Block St. Marys Rd.	
K9 Outside Assist Request	
Santa Rita Rd./De Anza Dr., Ric	
Stray-patrol Loose	
Burton Dr./Silverado Dr.	
Threats	
1000 Block Miller Dr.	
900 Block Moraga Rd.	
900 Block Colina Ct.	
900 Block Janet Ln.	
Trespass	
3400 Block School St. (2)	
Unwanted Guest	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	

## Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report Nov. 17 - Nov. 30



Alarms	17
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	10
Traffic	36
Suspicious Circumstances	2
Suspicious Subject	3
Suspicious Vehicle	3
Service to Citizen	47
Patrol Req./Security Check	22
Supplemental Report	6
Vacation House Check	3
Welfare Check	10
Ordinance Violation	0
<b>Vehicle violations</b>	
Accident Property	
1200 Block Rimer Dr.	

Dui Misd	
Ifo 24 Hour Fitness	
Sky Hy Dr./Moraga Rd.	
Excessive Speed	
Moraga Way/Eastwood Dr. (2)	
Augusta Dr./St Andrews Dr.	
Moraga Way/Viader Dr.	
Moraga Way/St. Andrews	
Moraga Way/Ivy Dr. (3)	
Moraga Way/Moraga Valley Ln.	
Moraga Way/Miramonte Dr. (2)	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
St Marys Rd./Moraga Rd., Laf	
1900 Block Ascot Dr.	
Reckless Driving	
Rimer Dr./Camino Pablo	
Country Club Dr./Canyon Rd.	
St. Marys Rd./Rheem Blvd.	
<b>Other criminal activity</b>	
Fraud False Pretenses	
70 Block Corliss Dr.	
900 Block Camino Ricardo	
Grand Theft	
1500 Block Camino Peral	
Panhandling	
Cvs	
Petty Theft	
1500 Block Camino Peral	
1100 Block Moraga Way	
Petty Theft Bicycle	
Not Available	
Warrant Service	
2300 Block Rumrill Blvd., Spa	
<b>Nuisance to the Community</b>	
Disturbance-domestic	
20 Block Sullivan Dr.	
Disturbance-fight	
90 Block Miramonte Dr.	
Disturbing The Peace	
20 Block Sullivan Dr.	
Loud Music	
Campolindo High School	
Public Nuisance	
10 Block Lynwood Pl.	
100 Block Walford Dr.	
Vandalism	
400 Block Moraga Rd.	

## ORINDA POLICE

## Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Nov. 22 - Nov. 28

Alarms	19
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	3
Traffic	11
Suspicious Circumstances	2
Suspicious Subject	1
Suspicious Vehicle	3
Service to Citizen	28
Patrol Req./Security Check	26
Public/School Assembly Check	1
Supplemental Report	3
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	2
Ordinance Violation	0
<b>Vehicle violations</b>	
Auto Burglary	
Bear Creek Rd./Camino Pablo	
<b>Other criminal activity</b>	
Identity Theft	
70 Block California Ave.	
Residential Burglary	
20 Block Bingleaf Rd.	
<b>Other</b>	
Other Felony	
20 Block Orinda Way	
Rite Aid	
Unauthorized Possession	
Rite Aid	
Unwanted Guest	
400 Block Camino Sobrante (2)	



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## World-class U.S. Artistic Swim Team trains for Olympics at Campo

... continued from Page A1

There has been a great evolution in the sport over her career, Fuentes said. "It's changed a lot. It's much faster, tougher, and more difficult. There was more show in the past. Now, it's a pure sport, having to hold your breath all of the time and battling against the gravity."

Coaching the U.S. team was an adjustment for Fuentes who was used to the governmental support her teams received in Spain while only finding minimal financial support for the American team. "In Spain, we have the support of the government," Fuentes said. "The players have salaries and many more resources. Here, it's still more of a model sport so it's difficult to get funding. We've been putting in a lot more hours in practice and have improved our team unity. I don't have captains because I

believe that each swimmer must be the captain of their own roles. I like everybody to be super accountable at the same level."

Dr. Selina Shah, a sports medicine physician whose office is in Walnut Creek, has been the team physician for USA Artistic Swimming since 2013 and echoes Fuentes sentiments. "The European and Asian countries dominate the sport because of their government support. In Russia and Korea, if you win a gold medal, you are treated like royalty."

Without these subsidies, the athletes must pay for their own housing. Some live with host families, some are sharing housing and some entire families have moved into the area from all over the country. It's been a very welcoming environment for the team. "We love the area, and we would love to be able to do shows here and invite every-

body to come see us," said Fuentes. "We are getting close to qualifying for the Olympics now and it's very exciting. We just want to thank all of Lamorinda and hopefully can give a little bit of life with this dream."

Unfortunately, with the pandemic, any public exhibitions have been put on hold.

Artistic swimming is an amalgam of several sports, Shah says: "It takes being a really good swimmer, along with incredible strength, stamina and flexibility. It's like cross training; a mixture of gymnastics, ballet, and swimming. The successful artistic swimmers just know that the ideal goal is to try and be better and enjoy all the training that comes with it. It's mostly fun when you know you're going for an end goal of successful competitions and ultimately the Olympics."

Fuentes who is familiar with almost every synchronized swim team in the world, found a unique quality in her swimmers. "The strength of this team is their pride in the United States. I have not seen this in any other country and for them to see and defend this flag, it makes their adrenalin rise so much that it gives them extra superpowers. These other countries do it for the team and themselves but it's not the pure pride like we see here. We won't get any money from the U.S. Olympic Committee until we qualify for the Olympics."

Regardless, the team is comprised of an amazingly talented group of women. "These are incredible athletes, just like ballet dancers and gymnasts on land," Shah said. "They make what they do in the water look so easy but it's incredibly demanding. Since this is the national U.S. team, they are elite athletes. With their level of dedication, commitment, stamina, and determination, they are in a league of their own. It's just incredible how hard they work and train. The artistic element of the sport, as in dancing, rhythmic gymnastics and figure skating, requires these swimmers to really come to understand their bodies."

With so many different water sports available, what type of athlete is attracted to Artistic Swimming? According to Fuentes, "It's for swimmers that like music and dance that have a little bit of artist inside them. It's a good combination of being in the water with a hard sport and a team sport but like gymnastics, it's not only a pure sport. They come to understand how the water works. Without the support you have on land, you



**Coach Andrea Fuentes**

have to have the mental talent to be tough because of the need to not breathe."

Holding your breath for 25 to 30 seconds may not seem that difficult but when performing competitively, it's a far different story, according to Fuentes: "Our swimmers can hold their breath for up to three minutes but when they are under water and their heart is going at 180 beats per minute, 30 seconds is an eternity."

Not only does the sport require great focus, but it also puts a great strain on their bodies. "It's very demanding because they use all the muscles in their body," Shah said. "It's to an extreme degree because of the amount of flexibility, sustaining of movement and holding of positions that is not only difficult but required. Combined with the intense use of cardiovascular stamina, it shows how incredible their lung capacities are."

The hips and shoulders are most susceptible to soft tissue injuries to the tendons and ligaments because of the extreme movements. As a former gymnast, dancer and swimmer, Shah can empathize with what the swimmers are going through. "The wrists and ankles are also a concern because they have to really point (plantarflex) their feet to an extreme degree along with the strength required in their wrists and upper body for the sculling technique. We will prescreen the swimmers and evaluate their areas of weaknesses. The coaches have also incorporated into their regimens preventative exercises such as rotator cuff strengthening and the use of therabands. They have been good about coming to me early

on when they begin to feel injuries so that we can nip them in the bud and try to prevent them from becoming a chronic problem."

The team is battling for a final spot for the upcoming summer Olympics in Japan next August. "We are very close to qualifying for the Olympics," said Fuentes. "Our next tournament will be in March in Tokyo where we will need to beat France and Greece, two very experienced teams, to make it to the Olympics. We are a young team, but we are starting to rise."

Fuentes lives in Lafayette and has two children attending elementary school and has really been taken with Lamorinda and the Bay Area. "I love Lamorinda because the people are so nice along with its drive and innovation. The schools where my kids attend are very respectful. The Bay Area is one of my favorite places in the world. I love the character, drive, and energy here. It's very clean and civilized compared to many other parts of the world."

What was it that led Fuentes to become a coach? "I wanted to change lives of my athletes in a good way. I want them to have their best experiences in education and growth, to prepare them for their next lives when they finish their athletic careers. I want them to take this teaching of making it happen no matter what and being fair and in the best intentions. They should always pursue their dreams no matter how difficult they are. This is what I am doing and I'm teaching them to be game changers, so I think it's important for humanity in general, no?"



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**U.S. Artistic Swim Team**

Photos provided



# Looking Good in Lamorinda Home for the holidays



Luck Clutch

Photo Moya Stone

## By Moya Stone

I recently attended a webinar discussion on “fashion during the pandemic” with a panel of women who work in the business; one panelist mentioned that she thought entertaining at home was going to be a big trend. She predicted that by next year designers will have a dedicated line of at-home wear. I think she’s on to something.

With the holidays coming up, entertaining at home and Zoom gatherings are in vogue. Wondering what to wear? Luck clothing boutique in Lafayette offers high-end comfortable attire. Proprietor Lorin Platto says that we are dressing more comfortably these days, but we still want to dress up.

“People are sick of sweats and they want to feel human again,” she says.

Keeping that in mind she has stocked jogger style pants with matching tops in elegant fabrics such as satin and velvet. In these outfits “People can dress up, look nice, but still be cozy and comfortable,” Platto says. As we spend more time entertaining outside, layering is essential and Luck has that covered too, offering an array of sweaters with festive details such as rainbow buttons or sparkle inset designs, and faux fur jackets, puffer coats, as well as blanket-like shirt jackets, which are popular paired with tights and boots. Dresses are also a customer favorite and for something dramatic, the Rainbow Sequin Midi Dress by Farm Rio combines comfort with a high fashion impact, perfect for New Year’s Eve at home.

Additional fashion selections are available at Luck’s pop-up store located around the corner at 3575 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Open through the end of the year, the pop-up has items removed from the main store selling at reduced prices.

In local fashion news, Lafayette’s Myara Children’s Boutique has closed but they are still offering their festive

dresses online at Myara.com.

For the fashionista on your holiday shopping list, the recently published book “Chinatown Pretty: Chinatown’s Most Stylish Seniors” by photographer Andria Lo and journalist Valerie Luu, is an excellent gift choice.

As second generation Asian Americans, Lo and Luu have a shared fascination with the unique sartorial style of the older members of the San Francisco Chinatown community. Curious about the people behind the clothes, they began to approach individuals on the street and ask how they put their outfits together. This interest turned into a book, which covers dozens of stylin’ seniors in six

city Chinatowns – SF, Oakland, LA, Chicago, Manhattan, and Vancouver, BC. The people interviewed are as varied as their clothing with ages ranging from 60 to one woman over 100. Most immigrated decades ago from China or Vietnam, and they have held all kinds of occupations from seamstress to social worker. I enjoyed the peek into these people’s lives and I also appreciated that the authors included a brief history of each of the six Chinatown neighborhoods. “Chinatown Pretty” is a fun read, a visual treat, and important documentation of an overlooked segment of fashion history.

Consider ordering “Chinatown Pretty” from Orinda Books or the new independent bookstore Reasonable Books located in the old Papyrus shop on Mt. Diablo in Lafayette. Shop owner, Rudy Winnacker, says that they are happy to special order books for customers. Enjoy the season and remember to go forth (safely) in style.

Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at [www.overdressedforlife.com](http://www.overdressedforlife.com).



Image courtesy of Luck Boutique

Rainbow Sequin Midi Dress by Farm Rio is available at Luck Boutique.



Chinatown Pretty

Photo Moya Stone

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# Letters to the editor

## Two good outfits

Once again recently, Ron Schumacker of Moraga Motors solved a small problem and didn't charge me. What a great local shop. No wonder it's where I go for work I do pay for. Beats driving out to the dealer in Concord.

I haven't had a rat problem since Honest Rodent Proofing did work at my house. They were more thorough than outfits I've used before. I'm glad I called them.  
Dale Walwark  
Moraga

## In response to Nov. 25 Letter

I'm very unhappy that you chose to publish the letter entitled (quite inappropriately) "Our Community" in the Nov. 25 issue.

First of all, the writer didn't include his actual name, or at least you chose to publish it as "Jared L." All other letters to the editor I recall in your paper have included first and last names.

Second, I believe your guidelines say letters must be factual, but the letter makes disingenuous claims about slavery ("America didn't create slavery, it abolished it."). America had slavery for 246 years (1619 to 1865), enshrined it in the Constitution, and continued to hold many African-Americans in near slavery after Reconstruction under draconian Jim Crow laws for another century. That's what the Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s was all about. And discrimination didn't stop in 1965.

Jared L's comments about implicit bias are equally wrong headed, as are his comments about black poverty. There are dozens of recent books that draw tight connections between centuries of slavery, Jim Crow, and subsequent economic, legal and other constraints that kept many blacks in the US in poverty, leading to the conditions that Jared L. opines about (crime, dropouts, etc.). Redlining, bias against blacks in the housing, job and financial markets and other factors created the situation Jared L. blithely blames on the victims. And psychologists at Harvard and elsewhere have written extensively on the role implicit bias plays in our society, and elsewhere.

I believe Lamorinda Weekly can do better. I hope you will promote a more inclusive and informed conversation on these matters in the near future, rather than giving space to the most narrow minded among us to serve up racism in sheep's clothing. I suggest reaching out to many in the community (Lamorinda and beyond) for advice and comment.

Thanks for listening.  
Chris Rauber,  
Lafayette resident and regular reader

## Concern over Letter to Editor

On November 25th, the editorial team of the Lamorinda Weekly chose to publish a letter from Jared L. that perpetuated racist stereotypes and claimed racist falsehoods as truth. When an editor and publisher provide a platform for dangerously inaccurate rhetoric, it brings into question their journalistic integrity. It also causes significant harm to the Families of Color who live in this community. By allowing Jared's falsehoods to be printed in your paper, you sent his unsubstantiated "statistics" and ill-informed racist personal opinions into the homes of countless people who were then subjected to the harm that racism causes. Letters to the editor may not represent the beliefs of the editor, but when they are used to spout racist tropes, the choice to publish those falsehoods does reflect on the journalistic ethics of a news organization.

Lamorinda is currently engaging in tremendous anti-racism work at the school district level, within the city council, and among numerous grassroots groups that have all been born from the desperate need to make this community more equitable, safe and inclusive. A look at the masthead on your website shows that your editor, writers, and publishers all present as white. You would be doing a tremendous service to your readers if your team was instead a reflection of the diverse community that receives your paper on their doorstep. As a journalist, I know that local journalism is often the heartbeat of a small town. It can be used to build community, foster understanding, and share information. You may be a small paper, but you still have a responsibility to uphold the standards of journalistic integrity that a larger paper would. Publishing racist misinformation, and granting Jared's request to remain anonymous, is not what reputable news organizations do. I'm curious to know what editorial decisions went into allowing Jared to not publish his last name, when it's your own paper's policy to require it. I would welcome the opportunity to engage with you in further dialogue, and to point you in the direction of local leaders who are doing this work. The work of anti-racism is life-long, and it is important for white folks to be responsible for making these changes. The privilege that you are afforded by having the Lamorinda Weekly as your platform, should be used for good.

Kim Simon  
Lafayette

## Opting for change

Jared L's letter from November 25th called for being identified by one's life path, not by color or gender, and we could not agree more.

We aspire for a town where people are treated on their merits, children are graded equitably regardless of race, all people are treated as belonging in our city, and residents don't tighten their grip on their handbag when they see a person of color.

Yes, this happens here. Our leaders are listening, learning, dissatisfied with the status quo, and opting for change.

Bias no longer is codified in law as slavery, yet exists in policy, culture and measurable outcomes. Black Americans receive a different score for kidney function because the as-

sumption that all Black Americans are more muscular. Despite education and income, Black and Brown persons are hospitalized at higher rates with Covid. Despite education and income, Black women suffer more labor complications and their babies die at higher rates. People pursuing the American dream, making the right choices, finishing advanced school and working hard; all exhibiting the right behaviors but worse outcomes. We have a long way to go.

Please join our LAFSD district DEI committee, run for city council, mentor our students; get involved as we make our country better. Thank you for calling for unity as we move forward.

All Americans deserve their constitutional rights: to exercise speech, not be unreasonably searched, to assemble on a bridge over Highway 24 and Lafayette Plaza. We strive for all people to enjoy these rights equally, where White and Black Americans can protest, resist, jog, or sleep in bed, and not get shot.

Please reach out and join us. For together we can remain pushing towards the ever more perfect union. "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction," quoting another President. "It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for (our children) to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where (we) were free."

Kishore Nath, MD  
Lafayette

## Working together to solve problems

Last week, you published a letter to the community from "Jared L." As a member of this community, here is my response to his call to an "open dialogue to a better way." Quotes from his letter are italicized.

*We have a Black mayor.* Black exceptionalism is in of itself steeped in bias that you claim that does not exist. Our community has recently experienced blatant acts of racism painted prominently in our public spaces.

*American didn't create slavery, it abolished it.* Slavery was brought into the US for economic gains that benefit white people and still do. Legalized slavery was abolished but followed immediately by mass incarceration, and redlining which perpetuated segregation and discrimination. Listen to stories shared at our public meetings.

*Implicit bias is not scientific fact.* There may be controversies about which test best measures bias, but it exists. Follow the science.

*Eighty percent of young Black men are fatherless.* Fathers are important. Why are they missing? Let's start with the high rate of police brutality of our Black brothers. Ahmaud Arbery, Treyvon Martin, Miles Hall. Systemic oppression in our societal structures are creating families without fathers.

*What about making good choices?* Making good choices does not protect you from being Black in America. Among women with a college education or higher, the pregnancy related maternal mortality rate is 5.2 times that of their white counterparts, and 1.6 times GREATER than white women with less than a high school diploma. Making good choices is not sufficient in closing the gap.

*I am not my color, I am not my sex.* As for me, I am my color and I am my sex. Do not erase my identity by assuming we all have the same lived experiences and same access to resources in this country.

I am an American, we all are. Let's stop dividing ourselves and solve our problems together with hope and understanding. Amen.

Christine Chang Pecci, MD  
Taiwanese - American, Bay Area born, Acalanes class of '86

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# ~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

## Local café's Goodness Tree brings joy to isolated seniors this holiday season



Photo Pippa Fisher

**Genuine Goodness Co-owner Donna Pickthall directs a group of young volunteers as they decorate the Goodness Tree outside her cafe in Orinda Dec. 3.**

**By Pippa Fisher**

For the owners of Orinda's Genuine Goodness, helping others in time of need is just what they do. And this holiday season they have come up with a way to involve the community in brightening the lives of seniors during the pandemic that has many feeling completely isolated.

It was an idea that came to Genuine Goodness Co-owner Donna Pickthall, inspired by her sister-in-law in England.

Recognizing that many older folks may not be able to see their families this year, Pickthall and her business partner Diane Eames have put up a Christmas tree outside their café with names of local seniors so that people in the community can take a name, and return with a small gift to be distributed to Lamorinda Village members as a reminder that they are not forgotten.

It is truly a community affair. Pickthall's daughter and her friends, masked up and

ready to work, came along to the shop Dec. 3 to decorate the tree and make the tags. Orinda Boy Scout Troop 237 will be distributing the gifts.

"These gifts are reminders from the wonderful people in our community that the older adults in our lives are loved and missed," says Lamorinda Village Operations Manager Kathryn Ishizu.

Ishizu has been working with Genuine Goodness since the summer. "Through this pandemic, Genuine Goodness has been a huge supporter of

seniors, donating meals to seniors on Fridays and also supporting our hardworking Lamorinda Village volunteers with a meal."

"We started helping seniors at the beginning of COVID," explains Pickthall. "Our cafe had become quiet and we had surplus food every week so we decided to use it to make into meals to give away. I realized our seniors were particularly isolated, so getting a meal a week was not only a treat, but a connection with a neighbor and a reminder that they are not forgotten."

They make soup, salad and fresh bread once a week for 25-30 seniors in the community at the Orinda Senior Village and throughout Lamorinda in a partnership with Lamorinda Village.

As with many other small businesses, COVID has hit Genuine Goodness hard. Pickthall says although they had to close the café, they keep going with "Take and Bake" meals which can be ordered online

through their website. Additionally Pickthall says she is launching pop-ups for delivery and collection of British foods, with the next event on Dec. 13 at Genuine Goodness in Orinda.

Lafayette residents Eleanor and Larry Bishop are grateful for Genuine Goodness' generosity.

"Sometimes when you are older," says Eleanor Bishop, "your appetite is not as it was but when you open the beautifully presented and delicately prepared food from Genuine Goodness, it just makes your eyes sparkle."

Ishizu is equally grateful and notes that Genuine Goodness has been there to help those suffering from unexpected catastrophes.

"They've collected donations for fire victims and closer to home, they have been wonderful supporters of the older adults in our community," says Ishizu. "Lamorinda Village is grateful for their thoughtful inclusion of seniors during this difficult time."

**More information on ordering Genuine Goodness' Take and Bakes can be found at <https://www.gengoodness.com/> Information on the British pop-up shop can be found at <https://www.greatbritishpopupshop.com/>**

## One local man's road to prosperity through 'Jeopardy'



Henry Baer Photo provided

**By Jon Kingdon**

Millions of Americans across the country on Nov. 23 watched that evening's episode of the game show "Jeopardy," and heard the introduction of "Henry Baer, a software engineer from Lafayette, California." The next two episodes for Baer began with "Our returning champion ...".

Baer graduated from Acalanes High School in 2014 and from Caltech with a degree in computer science. While at Caltech, Baer applied for the "Jeopardy College Tournament" but he was turned down. He applied

again and was then chosen as the first alternate for the tournament. Since no one dropped out, all he could do was watch the tournament along with the studio audience.

Two years later, he received a call from the show. "They called me last January and said I should apply again, which I did," said Baer, who now lives and works in San Francisco for a small company named Merge, which is building a platform to facilitate the movement of data between enterprise software.

... continued on Page B3

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would like to **THANK** all the **VOLUNTEERS** who delivered groceries, made Buddy Calls and Emergency Go Bags and supported our elder neighbors during Shelter in Place this challenging year.



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## A lighter version of leek latkes, with some flavorful finesse



Leek Latkes

Photo Susie Iventosch

### By Susie Iventosch

This year I was inspired to make leek latkes because of a recipe I found in Orly Ziv's cookbook for fried leek patties. Orly is a foodie in Tel Aviv, Israel and she offers market tours and cooking classes, which I enthusiastically took and thoroughly enjoyed while we were in Israel a few years ago. Ever since, I've had several of her recipes earmarked and leek patties is one of them.

When I first set out to make the leek latkes, I decided that I really should have some potatoes in them, since latkes are traditionally made with potatoes. They were good, but not quite what I had in mind. So the next day I worked up another batch, but substituting onions and garlic for

the potatoes. Magic! These latkes, made with either matzo meal or bread crumbs are delicious and exactly what I had in mind from the beginning. While I love making chicken schnitzel with matzo, I actually prefer the bread crumbs for these leek latkes.

Since we are not hugely into fried foods, preferring the lighter version of sautéing food in just a little bit of oil rather than a lot of oil, we like to cook our latkes low and slow in a frying pan or on a griddle. In fact, one of the keys to this recipe is to sauté the leeks, onions and garlic first before mixing them with the egg and bread crumbs. This way the onions and leeks have a head start on cooking all the way through!

Serve these up with a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese or a dollop of crème fraiche! Delish!

### Leek Latkes

(Makes about 20 two-inch latkes)

#### INGREDIENTS

4 large leeks, cleaned and trimmed to just the whites and very light green parts, and very thinly sliced  
2 large yellow onions, chopped  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
4 eggs  
8 tablespoons bread crumbs or matzo meal  
1/2 teaspoon lemon pepper  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon ground pepper  
1/3 cup olive oil (+/-)  
Garnishes:  
Crème fraiche and grated Parmesan cheese  
Finely minced chives

#### DIRECTIONS

Clean leeks (this takes a bit of work to get all of the dirt off) and trim them to just the white and very light green parts. Discard the dark green parts of the leeks.

Chop onions and mince garlic.

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a skillet.

Add leeks, onions and garlic to skillet. Cook over medium heat for approximately 5 minutes, or just until veggies are translucent. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature.

Put eggs into a mixing bowl and whisk well.

Add veggies and bread crumbs and mix well. Season with lemon pepper, salt and pepper. Let mixture sit for 10 minutes or so, to allow the bread crumbs to soak up some of the moisture.

Cook latkes in batches, by heating oil on a skillet or griddle over medium-low heat. I really love to use the griddle, because you can cook so many at one time! Drop batter by a large spoonful onto the griddle and cook until set and the bottom is golden brown, flattening with a spatula as it cooks. Flip latkes and continue to cook until the other side is also nicely browned. Remove from griddle and keep warm on a tray in a low-temperature oven while you finish cooking the remaining batter.

Serve hot with a dollop of crème fraiche, sour cream or plain yogurt and minced chives, or a sprinkling of freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

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. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



More information about Orly Ziv:  
[https://www.cookinIsrael.com/cooking\\_with\\_orly/](https://www.cookinIsrael.com/cooking_with_orly/)

## Questions seniors should be asking amidst COVID surges

### By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

Although news of an effective vaccine for COVID is surely a godsend, getting it distributed and into the arms of our U.S. population will take some doing. Thus, high school seniors still face some uncertainties about what colleges will look like in the fall of 2021.

For seniors who applied during the early application cycle, December will bring admission news and by spring regular decision results will be pouring in. As your shortened college list begins to take shape, doing some dedicated research into how colleges are handling the pandemic is advisable. Issues related to financial aid and return on investment are paramount. Here is a short list of questions to ask and things to con-

sider that may stimulate other questions of importance to your family.

The technology to switch to remote learning was easier for some colleges than for others. How seamless was the transition and did the college charge technology fees for the delivery of online courses? (See "Assessing Online Learning – before, during and after COVID-19" at [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com) for four questions you should be asking.)

Will schools be less generous with financial aid packages than in prior years?

Did the college lose faculty? We know many senior professors retired due to the pandemic. How will the loss of prestigious faculty affect your return on investment?

How will colleges assess your financial need? The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) assesses fi-

nancial need and pulls a family's financial information from two tax years prior. For complete information about FAFSA visit <https://finaid.org/>. Most importantly for high school seniors, students planning to attend college in fall 2021, your financial need will be assessed based on your family's 2019 tax returns. Your financial situation may look a lot different in 2020 than it did in 2019. A job loss or serious illness may have caused a change in your family's ability to afford college. After you have sent in your financial aid forms, call and ask about how to proceed with an appeal to review changed circumstances.

College admission and financial aid offices are generally very responsive to inquiries during the pandemic. After all, they are not on the road wooing students to apply and

thus are more available for questions from families. Contact them and ask all your questions and express all your concerns; and if a college is not forthcoming, I suggest crossing it off your list.

Now more than ever, a college education is an essential first step toward a fulfilling career. I am an expert at college matching and have made it my business to stay up to date and informed on the dramatic and ever-changing impact COVID is having on higher education. Staying current and compassionate are critical to providing my students and their families with the information they need for wise decision-making. I encourage you to contact me now for a courtesy consultation, so I can help you understand your options.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD personally guides each student through each step of selecting and applying to well-matched schools for undergraduate and graduate school study. Over the past two decades, Elizabeth has placed hundreds of students in some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. The number of clients taken is limited to ensure each applicant has personalized attention. Contact Elizabeth early in the process to make a difference in your outcomes. Write [elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:elizabeth@doingcollege.com); Visit [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com); or Call: 925.385.0562.

## Orinda gallery announces new exhibit, 'Arrivals'



Photos provided

Karen Frey's "Kitchen Window Glass-Relection" [Watercolorwescover.com/creator/karen-frey](http://Watercolorwescover.com/creator/karen-frey)

### Submitted by Christian Ehrhorn

CE Fine Arts in Orinda's Theatre District is inviting the community to meet the artists who are now showing their work in the gallery as part of the new exhibit, "Arrivals," which is open through Feb. 19. The virtual Open House is scheduled at 5 p.m. Dec. 12. This will be a unique opportunity to ask the featured artists – Karen Frey, Peeta Tinay, Aaron Webb and Chris-

tian Ehrhorn – questions about their artwork and their process.

Frey works in watercolor and encaustic. Her masterful paintings in both mediums depict intimate still life moments, sweeping landscapes, and bustling urban scenes.

Tinay is a basket weaver whose large scale baskets are unique in their size and multi-color finishes. Her bold constructions are often dyed, weathered, and wax finished resulting in stunning pieces that may be used and/or

displayed.

Webb creates deep meaningful paintings utilizing dyes, paint, cold wax, and texturing elements such as salt. His work explores the reactivity between materials as a reflection of his own method of processing personal experience, emotional response, and surviving trauma.

Ehrhorn's most recent compositions explore depictions of place through the often fragmented and hazy residuals of memory. His oil paintings prompt the viewer to recognize their own experiences by hunting for figurative elements within his paintings.

CE Fine Arts wishes to safeguard gallery staff and visitors during the time of COVID-19. Everyone visiting the gallery is required to wear a face mask and maintain social distancing by keeping at least six feet apart and the gallery has hand sanitizer for guests to use when entering the gallery.

You will find the link to join the Open House reception on the CE Fine Arts gallery website: [christiane Ehrhornfineart.com](http://christiane Ehrhornfineart.com)



Christian Ehrhorn's "Nicaraguan Sunday" Oil on canvas [christiane Ehrhornfineart.com](http://christiane Ehrhornfineart.com)

arts.com. CE Fine Arts is located at 39 Moraga Way in Orinda. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 4 p.m. and private gallery tours are also

welcome. For more information or to schedule a private viewing, visit the gallery website, call (510) 703-7020, or email [caefinearts@gmail.com](mailto:caefinearts@gmail.com)



# 'The Weasels' Tale': a gift from Argentina celebrates 10 years of IFS



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THE NEW FILM BY THE ACADEMY AWARD® WINNING DIRECTOR FOR "THE SECRET IN THEIR EYES"  
DIRECTED BY JUAN JOSÉ CAMPANELLA

Image provided

By Sophie Braccini

Ten years ago Jo Alice Canterbury from Orinda and Efi Lubliner from Lafayette

invented a local movie distribution system out of their common love of foreign films: the International Film Showcase. This December, they are cel-

brating 10 years of presenting monthly foreign gems to the community by offering a free viewing, online, of the Argentinian thriller/comedy "The Weasels' Tale (El cuento de las Comadrejas)" by Oscar-winning director Juan José Campanella.

Mara Ordaz was a legendary movie star in her time. The Argentinian actress was one of the only two foreign actresses to win an Oscar. Now in her late 70s, the elder diva lives in the decaying glow of her past glory, in a property that, like her, used to be magnificent but is showing the marks of old age. She lives with three male companions: her husband, a former second tier actor, an old screenwriter and a former director. Their peaceful life is disturbed only by their daily bickering and bantering, and the killing of weasels that are pestering their chicken coop; until two unscrupulous real estate developers set their eyes on their property. Thus begins a life-size chess match, with many surprising twists and turns, until the very end.

This movie is Campanella's 11th production and bares the traits of the director's mastery. "The Weasels' Tale" has none of the darkness and complexity of "The Secret In Their Eyes" that earned Argentina its second Oscar in 2009. This movie is humorous, ironic, irreverent, daring at times, with a veil of darkness coming from the frailty of the main protagonists' old age. But if they are old and sometimes vulnerable, the ancient folks are not defenseless. In fact the audience will discover in their resourcefulness, sometimes even deviousness, that is nothing but quite invigorating, especially to a mature audience.

The acting of all the protagonists is world class. Graciela Borges, as Mara, plays her own role somehow. She was

crowned one of the greatest Argentinian actresses of all times. She made her debut at age 14 in 1955 and has enjoyed a long acting career. She plays with such humanity the fallen star who has retained all the narcissism of her past status. She is at the same time unbearable and touchingly vulnerable. The trio of older gentlemen around her are priceless. Barbara and Francisco, the two young protagonists hold their own on par with the rest of the cast.

The movie is an ode to aging without compromising any of one's fighting spirit, whatever it might cost.

This beautiful film is a fitting gift to the community from the IFS. Lubliner and Canterbury say that it is not easy to find good foreign comedy that will appeal to an American audience, and they are sure that this one will. Every year the duo of Lamorindans go to the Palm Springs film festival to see as many as four foreign movies a day and get to meet directors and distributors from all over the world. They relish this decade of cinematographic adventure during which they have built a solid network in the industry and brought gems to the community at the Orinda Theatre.

Now, of course, all is online and attendance on the little screen has not been equivalent to the great following the IFS built at the Orinda Theatre over the years. Lubliner and Canterbury nonetheless decided that the anniversary had to be celebrated and this is why "The Weasels' Tale" is offered online for free to those who send an email to Efi@edcsystem.com to ask for a free pass. The offer is valid during the entire month of December.

The epic Taiwanese movie "Raining in the Mountain" is also available online at <http://internationalshowcase.org/>

## One local man's road to prosperity through 'Jeopardy'



Henry Baer on the set of "Jeopardy" with Alex Trebek.

Photo provided

... continued from Page B1

"With the onset of the COVID-19 virus, I did not hear anything. Then this past September, they finally called me and gave me nine days to come down to Los Angeles as a contestant which I immediately agreed to."

Most people would drop everything and pore through the J! Archive which lists every "Jeopardy answer" for the last 37 years but Baer had a prior commitment: "I spent the entire week hiking with a friend so I did not start prepping that hard until the weekend before."

After that, Baer was focused entirely on "Jeopardy" preparation: "I spent about 14 hours a day reading old

'Jeopardy' answers. I figured there was not that much I could learn in three days, but what I got was an understanding of what the responses writers were going for, learning their style and the way they like to hint at things."

Performing in front of a national audience only affected Baer a little. "I think I had stage fright the entire time, though I did get more comfortable as the game went on. I just stayed focused on playing the game and did not think too much about what I was saying or doing. I was just having fun playing the game."

Ironically, it was not what Baer learned at Caltech that was the ideal preparation for the show. "The things you learn at Caltech and what shows

up on 'Jeopardy' are completely independent of each other, apart from the occasional science question," Baer said. "Actually, what prepared me the most was my participation in Quiz Bowl (a general knowledge game) which I participated in from middle school through college."

The "Jeopardy" staff do their best to make the contestants feel comfortable, even during a pandemic, Baer said: "We all got COVID-19 tests right before the show and temperature checks when we got in. The audience was only made up of other contestants and the crew. They were incredibly sweet people. I was told to bring several changes of clothes but I just brought the two monochromed shirts that I owned and planned to switch back and forth."

The first show began at 9:30 a.m. and there was 20-minute break between games, which was just enough time for Baer to change his shirt.

The interaction with Alex Trebek, the show's longtime host, and the contestants was kept at a minimum, said Baer. "It was kind of surreal. You're waiting for the game to start and Alex just popped out from behind the board as the show began. After each game, he would come over and talk with us about the game we had just played."

Baer had planned to make a round of posts about his upcoming appearance, but when Trebek passed away, Baer 'low keyed it' because "I did not want to play it up at that point,

though I did tell my family, co-workers and close friends."

Baer adjusted in his first game as he was trailing the leader in Double Jeopardy (the last round). "At that point, I realized that I needed to take more chances. When I got the daily double, I bet everything because if I missed that question, there would be no chance I could win so I put it all on the line (successfully). My other strategy was to keep a fast-enough pace to prevent the other players from getting too comfortable."

After two wins and a second-place finish, Baer walked away with a total of \$63,800, before taxes. Baer is keeping his earnings in perspective: "Since I am starting a new job with a small company, I'm just going to be saving the money which will let me focus on my job at this point."

Coincidentally, Baer crossed paths with a player named Gabe Ostler who was waiting for his name to be called: "Gabe graduated from Miramonte and we swam against each other through high school."

After the shows aired, Baer heard from a long-lost relative: "I heard from a second cousin who I had never met and somehow he remembered me from his genealogy research. He told me that I was his grandfather's brother's great grandson. He then sent me an insane amount of genealogy research that I had never seen before."

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## Saklan student featured in Plastic Free Living Magazine



Ryan Lo

Photo courtesy Sandy Lo

### Submitted by Emily Williamson

Ryan Lo, a seventh grader at The Saklan School, was recently featured in Plastic Free Living Magazine. It was Ryan's podcast, "A Change is a Chance," that interested the magazine's editor.

In his podcast, Ryan aims to help young listeners understand some of the environmental challenges we face today. The magazine specifically high-

lighted the episode on Ryan's podcast about Plastic Free July, in which he interviews Ms. Rebecca Prince-Ruiz, the founder of the Plastic Free July Foundation, to better understand what it's like to be plastic free and how everyone can take small steps to reduce plastic usage.

When asked about Ryan's podcast, Saklan's Head of School David O'Connell noted, "What I like about the podcast is that it emphasizes what real-world learning is. Ryan describes how discovering one thing led to a more profound interest in other topics and a thirst to know more. That curiosity led him to develop deep probing questions that he could not answer without the help of outside experts."

Ryan has attended The Saklan School since kindergarten. He has fully embraced the school's mission to challenge students to think creatively, act compassionately and live courageously. Ryan's podcast and his message of making small changes to help the environment has inspired his classmates and teachers to join him in his journey to think creatively and act compassionately in regards to the environment and ways to reduce plastic use.

To learn more about small changes you can make to help the environment, check out Ryan's podcast, "A Change is a Chance," online at <https://anchor.fm/Ryan-lo>.

## Campo freshman's nonprofit focuses on tutoring students



Aditya Kapur, founder of Developing Young Minds

Photo provided

### Submitted by Aditya Kapur

A nonprofit club started by Campolindo freshman Aditya Kapur, called Developing Young Minds, is offering its services to elementary school children in the community.

Developing Young Minds is offering to teach elementary students a range of subjects, from academic ones – math, English, science, history, computer science – to sports, to even the arts.

Aditya's club charges a small fee of \$5 for 30-minute classes (due to the pandemic, currently performed in a virtual format over Zoom) and distributes 100% of the proceeds to the Oakland Public Education Fund, supporting children in impoverished communities and providing them with a better education. His club has raised over \$300 to date for this cause in its short two-month existence and is

looking to broaden its efforts by bringing more children on board.

Classes are typically one-on-one, with a max of two children per class and teachers can tutor students, strengthen their understanding of the subject, or even assist them in getting ahead. The six current high school instructors of Developing Young Minds are eager to share their passion, knowledge, and foster learning in a variety of subjects as well as supporting the noble cause of providing funding for education of children in underserved communities. Parents of pupils have been complimentary about their children's experiences with the program. For those who are interested in being a part of Developing Young Minds and its efforts in fostering education, community and diversity in society, please reach out to Aditya Kapur via email at [aditya.kapur24@auhsdschools.org](mailto:aditya.kapur24@auhsdschools.org).

## In Memory

### Carolyn Louise Knoll

August 29, 1947 – November 26, 2020



Eldest daughter of William J. and Bette Lou Knoll, brother David J. Knoll and survived by sister Diana Lorenz, Carolyn Louise Knoll graduated from St. Genevieve's High School in 1965 and attended San Diego State College. At an early age, civil rights for all developed in her heart being part of the freedom walks virtually of the '60s and '70s; never losing that heart and broaden to making a difference in her community and world.

Started her career of professional excellence in title and escrow at TransAmerica Title Company and working at various companies having found at her career with North American Title Company as Operations Manager as her happiest place. Lived mostly in Oakland and the surrounding areas but also in Philadelphia, Heber City Utah, and Oahu, Hawaii. While on Oahu she was a park ranger at the USS

Arizona Memorial. Her heart's desire as a teen to join the Peace Corps was granted in 2006 where is served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ukraine for two years. To be able to volunteer for the Peace Corps, she needed to graduate college, so she did thru California State University, East Bay with a BA. Moving back to Orinda, California in 2015 from Oahu, she retired and volunteered at Lindsay Wildlife Experience, Reading Partners, helping children to read – honorable mention that she also volunteered in an Alameda program for inmates, helping inmates to read. She is highly intelligent and spiritual; when she walked into a room, all noticed a confident woman.

No celebration of life planned; suggest because of her heart please donate in her behalf to your favorite animal or civil rights nonprofit.

## In Memory

### Julie Rapalje Helms

August 29, 1933 – November 21, 2020



Julie Rapalje Helms (née Caulkins) passed away peacefully in Walnut Creek, Calif. on Nov. 21. She was born in New York on Aug. 29, 1933, a 12th generation descendant of Sarah Rapalje, the first European child born in the colony that would become New York State. Julie grew up on Long Island, graduated from Allegheny College, and later attended the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Michigan.

Julie married John "Jack" Forsyth Helms on Sept. 21, 1963. They moved to Moraga, Calif., in 1973, where they raised two children, David and Laurie. Julie and Jack shared a love of the outdoors, which they passed onto their children through hiking, camping, backpacking, fishing, and skiing.

Julie worked as a social worker in the fields of mental health, foster care, and adoption, and was later employed as the Assistant to the Artistic Director of a local theatre. Her love of acting and the theatre led to her performance in plays at all of the local theatres, in addition to appearing in numerous commercials and films.

She volunteered countless hours through her children's schools, her church, Girl Scouts, and local theatre. Her greatest joy was her family, and she was a dedicated homemaker and a loving wife, mother, and grandmother.

Julie was a member of St. Mark's United Methodist Church, and most recently the Lafayette United Methodist Church.

Julie is survived by her beloved husband Jack, her children David (Cheryl) Helms of Walnut Creek, Laurie (Peter) Maxwell of Santa Barbara, and five grandchildren: Kiersten, John, Holly, Michelle, and Sarah. She was predeceased by her older brother Thomas Vassar Caulkins.

The family will gather privately to celebrate her life. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be sent to Yosemite Conservancy.

## Miller closes in on a million



Photos provided

David Miller is about to hit a million! Yards, that is. Since Jan. 1, and even with COVID restrictions and AQI shutdowns, Miller has completed swimming more than 940,000 yards at Soda Aquatic Center on the Campolindo Highschool campus. And he's raised over \$20,000 for the Cancer Research Institute.

Learn more about his quest at [www.swimamillion.org](http://www.swimamillion.org)  
- J. Wake

**Community Service:** We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

### Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

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



Not to be missed

Not to be missed

Not to be missed

Not to be missed

ART

**The Moraga Art Gallery** announces a new art exhibit, "Spaces, Inside and Out" which runs through Dec. 24. The gallery is open Friday through Sunday, noon to 3 p.m. and is currently open Thursday through Sunday, noon to 3 p.m. For information, visit the Moraga Art Gallery website: <https://moragaartgallery.com>.

**Valley Art Gallery 55th Annual Holiday Collection** for artful giving! Gallery Artists through Dec. 26. Special holiday gift Trunk Shows Dec. 10 - 12, (wood art by Robert Nolan.) 2020 marks the 55th Annual Holiday Collection at Valley Art Gallery, and we have a lot going on! Our new gift exhibition includes a wide variety of beautifully crafted, ceramic, wood and glass pieces, original designer jewelry, small paintings and many other unique, one-of-a-kind gift items. Free, open to the public. 1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 110, Walnut Creek; [www.valleyartgallery.org](http://www.valleyartgallery.org); (925) 935-4311

MUSIC

**Acalanes HS Instrumental Virtual Winter Concert** Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. Enjoy the amazing musical talents of the Acalanes Instrumental Bands this month! Instrumental Music Director Ms. Lauren Gibson will be showcasing performances by each ensemble (Jazz Ensemble, Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, and Orchestra) as well as chamber music. Best of all, you can hear all this beautiful music safely from the comfort of your home via Zoom video conference. This concert is free to the public but donations are always welcomed! Look for the Zoom link at <http://acalanesinstrumentalmusic.com> or <http://ahsperformingarts.org>.

**Diablo Ballet** will present an encore presentation of Julia Adam's The Nutcracker Suite which will be

available for viewing Monday, Dec. 21 through Wednesday, Dec. 23. Julia Adam's The Nutcracker Suite, which was created for the company in November 2019, takes a local twist on the timeless holiday classic when the Diablo family and their daughter Clara check into the Nutcracker Suite at the Fairmont Hotel on Nob Hill on Christmas Eve. This whimsical ballet captures the magic and anticipation of the holidays that will delight every member of the family. Virtual tickets are being sold one per household through the Leshher Center for the Arts and once a ticket is purchased, it's viewable as many times whenever you'd like for three days. Tickets can be purchased by calling 925-943-SHOW (7469) or visit [lesherartscenter.org](http://lesherartscenter.org). For additional information, visit [diabloballet.org](http://diabloballet.org) or call (925) 943-1775.

**The Peter Pan Foundation** presents "Winter: A Season of Virtual Entertainment and Inspiration," featuring local youth and teen performers, professional headliners and special guests from the Broadway stage in a heartwarming series of winter-inspired showcases you won't want to miss., Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. - Radio Hour Matinee. Evening shows: Friday, Dec. 11 at 5 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 12 at 5 p.m.; and Friday, Dec. 18 at 5 p.m. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [www.peterpanfoundation.org](http://www.peterpanfoundation.org). In addition to our virtual Winter show, the PPF is busy creating and sharing music and magic throughout the season!

THEATER

**Orinda Starlight Village Players** Produces a Children's Christmas Event Zooming with Christmas Jaunts and Jingles. Oh no! Santa is missing his lead reindeer and he really needs help finding him! Who would take him? And how can he get him back in time to make his Christmas gift deliveries? Written and produced by Malcolm Cowler, Christmas Jaunts and Jingles is the third Zoom mystery

game for OrSVP. The group has not been able to perform on their outdoor stage due to COVID-19 so Cowler developed interactive mystery games to keep patrons in touch with the theatre. The OrSVP actors perform the show and the online audience interacts via puzzles and questioning the suspects. This Christmas Holiday show is designed to appeal to children 6-12 years old participating with an adult relative or guardian but will also be appreciated by the Young-At-Heart. Performances are every Tuesday and Thursday at 7 p.m at no charge in December. To access the show, please contact Jill Gelster at [info@orsvp.org](mailto:info@orsvp.org) for a reservation.

OTHER

**Pre-School Fair.** For more than 20 years, Lamorinda Moms has organized and hosted an annual Preschool Fair designed to help local parents find the perfect preschool for their child. This free event is open to Lamorinda Moms members as well as the general community. Like with many things in 2020, we did a pandemic pivot and went virtual with our 23rd annual preschool fair! In addition to our traditional booklet, we've added the participating preschools to our website. Get all the details about the schools, how they're handling COVID-19 and even some video content. Live now on our website: [www.lamorindamoms.org/lamorinda-preschool-fair-2020](http://www.lamorindamoms.org/lamorinda-preschool-fair-2020)

**Climate Action in Our Community** Webinar Dec. 16, 6:30-8 p.m. It's time to connect with others, save resources and money in the home, and create a healthier Contra Costa for the future! In this webinar, Sustainable Contra Costa will help you start Teams through the Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge. You can work together with friends, family, and community organizations to save resources and money in the home and fight climate change. <http://climateactionincommunity.eventbrite.com/>

**Dorothy Day House is hosting a** blanket and winter apparel drive to collect clean, gently worn or new warm blankets, coats, jackets, ponchos, and beanies throughout December between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., 7 days a week at their primary location at 1931 Center St. Area residents are invited to make a difference in our local community by donating to the coat drive and helping Dorothy Day House reach our goal of collecting enough items to ensure that no one goes cold this winter in Berkeley. To coordinate a donation, drop off, please contact Robbi Montoya, Director of Programs, at (510) 705-1325.

**See's Candies online holiday** program Moraga Kiwanis Club relies on its annual pop-up store and See's candy fundraiser that generates funds that it gives to local charities. For safety considerations, this year it is only participating in the See's Candies online holiday program. It still enables it to safely purchase See's Candies at the same price as See's factory stores and still help support the worthy charities the club supports. Charities need help more than ever during COVID. Please support this online fundraiser and visit the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley website <https://moragavalleykiwanis.org/> ! Thank you Lamorinda, for your ongoing support!

**Hospice East Bay Moraga Tree of** Lights: Live Streaming at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13. This free ceremony provides a way for families and friends to honor their loved ones and find solace in the symbolism of light as the names of their loved ones are read. The Live Stream is instead of the usual Moraga Country Club ceremony. Hospice of the East Bay provides hospice care whether or not patients have insurance and allows additional services, such as music therapy and children's grief programs, which are not covered by Medicare. For the link to the event go

to: <https://hospice.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/2020TreeofLights/Schedule/tabid/1158145/Default.aspx>

GARDEN

**The Montelindo Garden Club** January meeting begins Friday Jan. 15 at 10 a.m. on Zoom. Everyone is welcome. Presentation: Inviting pollinators in; Speaker: Janet Sluis. Janet Sluis is a well-known horticulturist specializing in organic, low water, regionally appropriate, easy-care plants. She is the Sunset Western Garden Collection's curator and plant expert. Janet will speak about what people can do to address declining bird and insect populations by selecting appropriate plants and trees, including those that will provide year-round habitat and food sources. To request a Zoom link to attend this meeting, email: [montelindogarden@aol.com](mailto:montelindogarden@aol.com)

**The Orinda Garden Club**, along with several other Bay Area garden clubs, together are sponsoring a free, virtual symposium: Bay Visions 2021: "The Power of Plants Will Protect the Bay." Please join us for this discussion on Jan. 13, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., for an inspiring look at adaption, regeneration, and the powerful role plants play in mitigating the challenges facing San Francisco Bay. Speakers include Karina Nielsen, Professor and Director, Estuary & Ocean Science Center, San Francisco State University; Dr. Katharyn Boyer, biology professor at San Francisco State University's Estuary & Ocean Science Center; and Josie Iselin, author of The Curious World of Seaweed. Register (for free) here: [www.eventbrite.com/e/bay-visions-tickets-127648342629](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/bay-visions-tickets-127648342629)

Please submit events: [calendar@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:calendar@lamorindaweekly.com)

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# Lamorinda

# OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 14 Issue 21 Wednesday, December 9, 2020



*Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ... read on Page D12*

## Feng Shui

### Bringing peace and serenity to the dining table



Using fall themes help set a dining room table that reflects the harvest & abundance of fall we want to share with others.

#### By Michele Duffy

As we search for more tranquility and calm in our lives, Feng Shui can incorporate positive and uplifting energy into our homes. Even if environmental harmony is not part of your personal quest, we can create peace in our homes to counter the often chaotic world we live in. At the very least, creating calm at home with Feng Shui will allow your home life to welcome more health, wealth and happiness, and nowhere is that more important this time of year around the popular dining room table.

First, why are dining rooms important? In



Photos provided

Using candles creates intimacy which is a key component of how we dine together, especially over the holidays.

Feng Shui, dining rooms represent our ability to attract wealth, health, and relationship harmony into our lives. Dining rooms are more intimate and private compared to other rooms in our homes. For example, not everyone invited over is invited to stay for dinner. Dining rooms in Feng Shui function to remedy hunger, create happy family bonds, amplify sharing, and attract more of what we are harvesting in fall into our lives.

Feng Shui in the dining room also helps to create the intimacy that special occasions suggest, reflecting the intimacy you want to create. Dining rooms are more Yin (calm) than

Yang (active) and the flow of Qi should ideally circulate as freely as any other area in your home, especially around the dining room table. Avoid crowding the room with superfluous furniture and avoid clutter by not making the table a “dumping ground.” Clutter creates heaviness, stagnation, and obstacles for health, sharing and gathering. Dining rooms should also never face bathrooms. Try your best to designate one room to be the dining room in your home, keep it clutter-free, and keep the décor pleasantly muted.

Start with de-cluttering and cleaning the dining room from top to bottom including any overhead light fixtures, draperies, furniture and floors, so literally everything sparkles. Focus next on the actual dining room table. FengShui prefers round wood tables because they invite abundance without end, and if you also add a lazy susan to the tabletop, the food and abundance are further elevated. Rectangular, square, or oval dining tables are also good choices as they reflect the abundance of the food to feed the family, just do not push the table up against a wall, which blocks Qi flow.

The dining table must be inviting and welcoming to those you want to seat around it for festivities. Does the table fit all guests comfortably? Place a mirror on a wall that reflects and doubles the abundance and wealth the dining table represents, as well as functions like a window to bring in more light and nature. You may also want to leave out the expanding table leaf this year to make sure your dining table is scaled to support the number of diners, which will be much fewer in 2020.

It's also time to organize, sort and count the table linens including deciding to toss the tired or stained options. What is the current lighting configuration in your dining room? Throw out half-used table candles and refresh them with brand new candles that when lit will encourage family conversations well into the evening.

... continued on Page D4



## Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	14	\$832,000	\$2,900,000
MORAGA	11	\$405,000	\$1,905,000
ORINDA	14	\$920,000	\$3,317,500

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

### LAFAYETTE

- 1023 Circle Creek Lane, \$832,000, 3 Bdrms, 1167 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-14-20, Previous Sale: \$370,000, 12-01-00
- 979 Condit Road, \$1,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 2478 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-26-20
- 3565 Herman Drive, \$1,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 2349 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-28-20, Previous Sale: \$585,500, 06-11-02
- 390 Hermosa Court, \$1,675,000, 4 Bdrms, 1966 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 10-27-20, Previous Sale: \$905,000, 01-10-14
- 1820 Ivanhoe Avenue, \$2,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 3195 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 10-27-20
- 3194 Lucas Drive, \$1,080,000, 3 Bdrms, 1369 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 10-14-20
- 597 Michael Lane, \$1,345,000, 3 Bdrms, 1468 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 10-14-20, Previous Sale: \$193,000, 05-01-87
- 1418 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,720,000, 6 Bdrms, 2765 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-28-20, Previous Sale: \$1,410,000, 12-19-16
- 3164 Rohrer Drive, \$1,725,000, 3 Bdrms, 2126 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 10-30-20, Previous Sale: \$1,290,000, 03-10-15
- 859 Santa Maria Way, \$2,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 3731 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 10-26-20
- 228 Seclusion Valley Way, \$2,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 3446 SqFt, 2019 YrBlt, 10-29-20, Previous Sale: \$3,400,000, 08-16-16
- 373 Shire Oaks Court, \$1,025,000, 4 Bdrms, 1578 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 10-12-20
- 1096 Via Roble, \$1,600,000, 2 Bdrms, 2592 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-30-20, Previous Sale: \$795,000, 05-02-02
- 2 Wellesley Court, \$1,810,000, 3 Bdrms, 2136 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 10-15-20, Previous Sale: \$1,625,000, 08-28-17

### MORAGA

- 119 Ascot Court #1, \$638,000, 3 Bdrms, 1320 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 10-29-20, Previous Sale: \$218,000, 06-15-99
- 126 Ascot Court #A, \$405,000, 1 Bdrms, 858 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 10-13-20, Previous Sale: \$310,000, 06-09-15
- 338 Birchwood Drive, \$1,750,000, 3 Bdrms, 2419 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 10-15-20, Previous Sale: \$842,000, 06-03-02
- 1467 Camino Peral, \$889,000, 3 Bdrms, 1584 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-28-20, Previous Sale: \$625,000, 10-24-07
- 135 Devin Drive, \$1,225,000, 3 Bdrms, 1545 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 10-29-20, Previous Sale: \$925,000, 05-06-16
- 4 Haven Court, \$1,905,000, 4 Bdrms, 2552 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 10-26-20, Previous Sale: \$1,750,000, 09-27-18
- 4 Lamp Court, \$1,700,000, 5 Bdrms, 3092 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 10-29-20, Previous Sale: \$1,560,000, 06-02-06
- 194 Miramonte Drive, \$835,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 10-29-20, Previous Sale: \$475,000, 03-18-08

... continued on Page D9

## VLATKA BATHGATE #1 Coldwell Banker Realtor in Orinda



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Call me at 925 597 1573

Vlatka@BestLamorindaHomes.com

CalBRE#01390784



GLOBAL LUXURY



In gratitude to my wonderful clients I have donated in their name to the charities of their choice.

### Recent Sales

- 37 Oak Rd, Orinda
- 371 Calle La Montana, Moraga,
- 1295 Shakespeare Dr, Concord
- 1 Aghalee Rd, Orinda
- 234 El Toyonal Rd, Orinda
- 15 Candlestick Rd, Orinda
- 34 La Cuesta Rd, Orinda
- 9 La Fond Ln, Orinda
- 14 Berkeley Ave, Orinda
- 1571 1st Ave, Walnut Creek
- 42 Knox Dr, Lafayette
- 5316 Woodgrove Ct, Concord
- 70 Coral Dr, Orinda
- 59 Canyon Green Way, San Ramon
- 112 Spring Rd, Orinda
- 10 Rheem Blvd, Orinda
- 25 Longridge Rd, Orinda
- 807 Paseo Roble Ct, Walnut Creek
- 1128 Sanders Dr, Moraga
- 9 La Fond Ln, Orinda
- 516 Estancia Ct, San Ramon
- 21 Greenwood Ct, Orinda
- 3256 Greenhills Dr, Lafayette



VLATKA CAN HELP YOU WITH BUYING OR SELLING YOUR HOME.  
WWW.BESTLAMORINDAHOMES.COM

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RADIANT GAS FIREPLACE

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San Leandro

John Notch owner  
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Call for appointment







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LAFAYETTE, CA 94549  
925.284.1400

**WALNUT CREEK**  
1910 OLYMPIC BLVD., #100  
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94596  
925.937.4000

**DANVILLE**  
100 RAILROAD AVE., #A  
DANVILLE, CA 94523  
925.800.3510

**BRENTWOOD**  
60 EAGLE ROCK WAY, #B  
BRENTWOOD, CA 94513  
925.420.57174

**SIERRA TAHOE**  
6883 N LAKE BLVD., #B  
TAHOE VISTA, CA 96148  
530.414.1475

ADAM HAMALIAN



925.708.5630  
DRE# 01917597

CHRISTINA LINEZO



415.425.3085  
DRE# 01964989

JOHN FONDAZIO



925.817.9053  
DRE# 01938194

JULIE DEL SANTO  
BROKER/OWNER



925.818.5500  
DRE# 01290985

LISA TICHENOR



925.285.1093  
DRE# 01478540

MATT McLEOD



925.464.6500  
DRE# 01310057

COMING SOON TO LAFAYETTE CALL FOR DETAILS



MARY PISCITELLI/PETER GILLIS 925.765.9095

3683 HAPPY VALLEY RD., LAFAYETTE \$3,495,000



J. DEL SANTO/ K. BRICKMAN 925.818.5500

3203 STONE VALLEY ROAD, ALAMO \$1,995,000



HURLBUT TEAM 925.383.5500

2776 W. NEWELL AVENUE, W.C. \$1,250,000



SHERRY HUTCHENS/ADAM HAMALIAN 925.212.7617

RACHEL DREYER



415.990.1672  
DRE# 01994561

RUTH EDDY



925.788.5449  
DRE# 01313819

SHERRY HUTCHENS



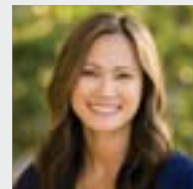
925.212.7617  
DRE# 01320608

TERESA ZOCCHI



925.360.8662  
DRE# 01907345

TINA FRECHMAN



925.915.0851  
DRE# 01970768

BRYAN HURLBUT



925.383.5500  
DRE# 01347508

JANE SMITH



925.998.1914  
DRE# 01476506

JOY WIEHN



415.377.1884  
DRE# 02047712

LAUREN DEAL  
HURLBUT TEAM



925.876.4671  
DRE#02060294

MARY PISCITELLI



925.765.9095  
DRE# 01426129

VALERIE DURANTINI



415.999.6116  
DRE# 01376796



# ARRIVING SOON



## IN LAMORINDA

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

**Regional Director Ron Mintz**

925.872.0968

ron@vanguardproperties.com

DRE# 01095341

VANGUARDPROPERTIES.COM

DRE#01486075



## Feng Shui

### Bringing peace and serenity to the dining table

... continued from Page D1

If possible keep the dining room as near as possible to the kitchen and both the dining room and kitchen should be on the same floor. Fresh flowers on the dining room table are always a wise choice and please make sure to discard once the blooms wane, along with any

stinky water. Placing a bowl of fruit on the table is also great symbolism for abundance. Please avoid using dried flowers as they imply deterioration or “dead” chi.

Ask yourself, what is most important to you this holiday season? Creating an inviting and warm dining experience should include simplifying, de-stressing, and abandoning what overwhelms. This year we may also be called to help others in this time of great need: maybe we decide to volunteer at a food bank or help prepare meals for the homeless. Wherever your head is these days allow yourself to be open to the possibility that everything is as it should be, and at very least, in your own home.

Remember to include laughter, gratitude, acceptance, and reflection into your dining room experience this year and, if you do, it will be easier to appreciate your blessings, together with your loved ones, even in these stressful COVID times.

<b>WEALTH &amp; PROSPERITY</b> XUN Wood Southeast Purple	<b>FAME &amp; REPUTATION</b> LI Fire South Red Summer	<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b> KUN Earth Southwest Pink
<b>FAMILY</b> ZHEN Wood East Green Spring	<b>HEALTH</b> TAI JI Earth Center Orange, Yellow Brown	<b>JOY &amp; COMPLETION</b> DUI Metal West White Autumn
<b>KNOWLEDGE &amp; SELF-CULTIVATION</b> GEN Earth Northeast Blue	<b>CAREER &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b> KAN Water North Black & Dark Blue Winter	<b>HELPFUL PEOPLE &amp; TRAVEL</b> QIAN Metal Northeast Grey

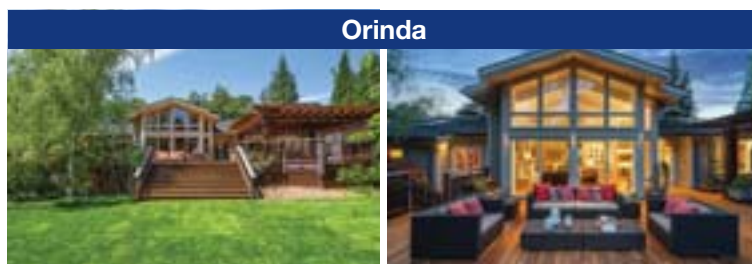
Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating “Space as Medicine” Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2020 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to spaceharmony@gmail.com.



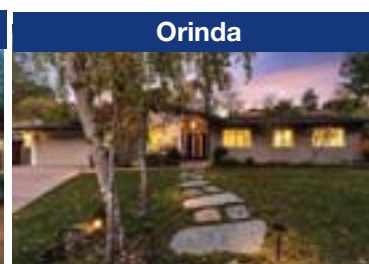


**YOUR CB ORINDA REALTORS:**

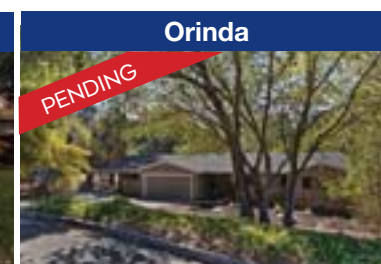
LAURA ABRAMS  
 BEVERLY ARNOLD  
 EMILY BAHN  
 MARAM BATA  
 VLATKA BATHGATE  
 ALBERT BERNARDO  
 NANCY BOOTH  
 ROBERT BROWN  
 ROBERTA CALDERON  
 TONY CONTE  
 KELLY CRAWFORD  
 COLIN ELBASANI  
 JOANNE FISHMAN  
 LANA FITZPATRICK  
 SUZANNE GEOFFRION  
 JEFFREY GILLET  
 SORAYA GOLESORKHI  
 HANK HAGMAN  
 ANDREA HARRIS  
 MARGARET HARTWELL  
 PETER HATTERSLEY  
 YAN HEIM  
 MICHELLE HOLCENBERG  
 WENDY HOLCENBERG  
 DICK HOLT  
 COOKIE JAVINSKY  
 SHELLIE KIRBY  
 SHERYL KORTRIGHT  
 MEREDITH LINAMEN  
 MARY BETH MACLENNAN  
 LARA MARKEL  
 CHRISTINE MASON  
 CHRISTINA MCCORMICK  
 MICHELE MCKAY  
 CHAD MORRISON  
 PEYMAN MOSHREF  
 AUDREY NEALE  
 WALTER NELSON  
 BRUCE NEWMAN  
 DIANE PETEK  
 MARGARET PRICE  
 SUSAN SCHLICHER  
 CATHY SCHULTHEIS  
 JOEL SHEIMAN  
 MELANIE SNOW  
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 NORLA TORRES-TURNEY  
 LINDA VAN DRENT  
 THERESA WANG  
 GREG WATKINS  
 VAL COOK- WATKINS  
 JERRY WENDT  
 SCOTT WINBURNE  
 FRANK WOODWARD  
 JUNE YOUNG  
 ANA ZIMMANK



**Orinda**  
**20 Hacienda Circle \$3,825,000**  
 6 Bedrooms/6 Baths, 8063 sq. ft. State of the art, architecturally designed craftsmen estate.  
 Melanie Snow /Laura Abrams  
 925-360-0344/510-697-3225  
 20haciendacircle.com Lic#00878893/01272382



**Orinda**  
**11 Rae Ave \$1,449,000**  
 4 Beds/2 Baths. Stunning single level close to 12 years of award-winning schools.  
 Linda Van Drent 510-913-7098  
 www.11raedr.com/mls Lic#01051129



**Orinda**  
**10 Chelton Court \$1,079,000**  
 3 Bedrooms/ 2.5Baths. Del Rey rancher with to roam/expand on 0.49-acre parcel  
 Mary Beth MacLennan/Tony Conte  
 925-324-6246/925-708-1396  
 10CheltonCt.com Lic #01480008/00959101



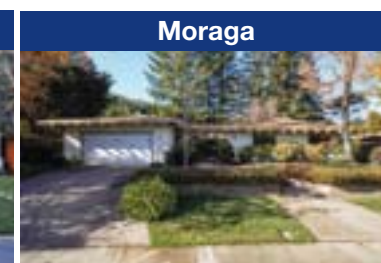
**Lafayette**  
**1201 Cambridge \$3,195,000**  
 4 Beds/ 3 Baths. Happy Valley Elegance including an extra 600 sq ft Guest Cottage  
 Melanie Snow  
 925-360-03440  
 www.1201cambridge.com Lic #0878893



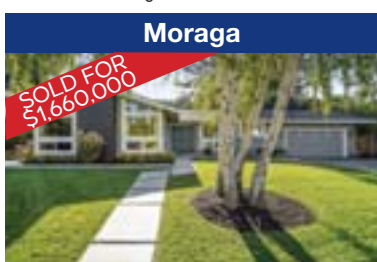
**Lafayette**  
**1 Dead Horse Canyon Rd \$2,495,000**  
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 Suzanne Geoffrion/Dick Holt  
 925-699-4832/925-297-9150  
 1deadhorsecanyon.com Lic #01878803/00827803



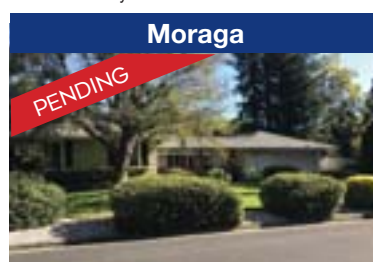
**Lafayette**  
**1076 Serrano Court \$1,485,000**  
 3 Beds/ 2 Baths. Quintessential Lafayette rancher with Farmhouse style charm.  
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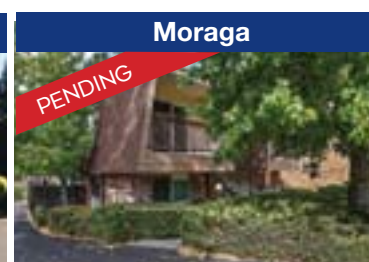
**Moraga**  
**315 Constance Place \$1,780,000**  
 4 Bedrooms/2.5 Baths. Perfect for entertaining with pool, spa, koi pond & more.  
 Michelle Holcenberg 925-324-0405  
 Lic #01373412



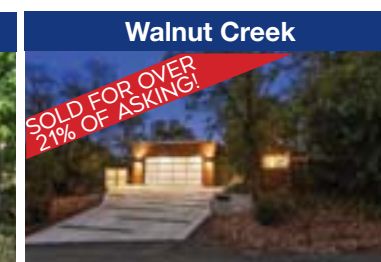
**Moraga**  
**126 Brookfield Drive \$1,549,000**  
 4 Beds/ 2 Baths on a cul-de-sac. Updated single-story contemporary  
 Michelle Holcenberg 925-324-0405  
 www.126brookfield.com Lic #01373412



**Moraga**  
**212 Sheila Court \$1,399,000**  
 4 Beds/ 2 Baths. Single-story home on cul-de-sac with gorgeous resort-like pool  
 Michelle Holcenberg 925-324-0405  
 Lic #01373412



**Moraga**  
**142 Ascot Court, #3 \$499,000**  
 2 Beds/ 2 Baths  
 Fabulously updated cozy condo  
 Mary Beth MacLennan/Tony Conte  
 925-324-6246/925-708-1396  
 142ascotct3.com Lic #01480008/00959101



**Walnut Creek**  
**14 Edmund Court \$1,450,000**  
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 sg@soraya4homes.co Lic #01771736







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Outdoor Kitchen, Fireplace, Putting Green & Yard

**32 Heather Lane, Orinda**

4 bd | 3.5 ba | 4048 sqft | .80 acre | \$1,699,000  
PLUS :2 bd/1ba Apartment for Inlaws or Income!



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58 Oak Dr, Orinda



929 Hough Avenue, Lafayette



870 Corcoran Ct, Benicia



1489 Camino Peral, Moraga



162 Northcreek Circle, Walnut Creek



1801 Castro St, Martinez



*Reflection. Looking back so the year ahead is even clearer.*



### Buyers

11 Wins | 48 Offers in Competition  
9 Cities | 3 Bay Area Counties  
3 States (CB National Referral Network)

**Buyer Sales Volume--\$14.6M**

### Sellers

9 Sales | 18 Total Offers  
7 Cities | 2 Bay Area Counties  
2 States (CB National Referral Network)

**Sellers Sales Volume--\$5.7M**

**Over \$20M in Sales Volume**

### Town Hall Theatre

16 Virtual Fundraising Events  
65 Live Events over 10 Years

*Farewell to a great gig!*

**TomStack.com**

925.878.9964 | Tom.Stack@camoves.com

*Happy Holidays To All!*



184 Alice Lane, Orinda



127 Warfield Drive, Moraga



2933 McClure St, #14, Oakland



306 Manor Park Circle, Pacheco



20 Crestmont Drive, Oakland




1493 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek



306 Ashton Way, Pleasant Hill







*Cheers to a happy, healthy,  
and healthy new year.*

**I'm fortunate to have helped these buyers and sellers in 2020. Many of these opportunities were "off market." It's more important than ever to work with an agent that is local - 2021 is already heating up and I can help!**

*Buyers* 257 Overhill Road, Orinda • 100 Estates Drive, Orinda • 20 Ellen Ct, Orinda • 100 Sandhill Road, Orinda • 50 Don Gabriel Way, Orinda • 3613 Shukla Ct, Walnut Creek • 76 Scenic Drive, Orinda • 57 Van Ripper Lane, Orinda • 10 Wild Lilac Way, Orinda

*Sellers* 257 Overhill Road, Orinda • 100 Sandhill Road, Orinda • 106 Brookline Street, Moraga • 101 Hillcrest Drive, Orinda • 12 Kimberly Drive, Moraga • 18 Charles Hill Cir, Orinda • 213 Overhill Road, Orinda • 76 Scenic Drive, Orinda • 14 Silverwood Ct, Orinda • 1091 Pereira Road, Martinez • Rheem Blvd, Orinda

Amy Rose Smith  
Village Associates  
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amy@amyrosesmith.com  
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### Only 1 Elevator Home Left!

Latest release of four new homes in the new Oakmont neighborhood. Steps to Piedmont Avenue

Master planned for optional solar, air conditioning, office, in-law suite and elevator to meet owner's future needs.

Private Showings by Appointment

Starting at \$2,195,000  
TheGoldenStateSeries.com

- Open floor plans with expansive folding doors lead out to the lovely private patio per plan
- 3 Bedrooms
- 3.5 Baths
- Office space (optional)
- Exquisite details in each unique home
- Designer chef's kitchen with commercial range and stainless steel appliances per plan
- Spa-like owner's suite
- Ample closet and storage space
- 2 car dedicated parking space & garage



THE TILDEN | 4517 Howe Street



THE YOUNTVILLE | 4519 Howe Street



THE PRESCOTT | 4523 Howe Street



THE STINSON | 4521 Howe Street



**Andrew Pitarre**  
Real Estate Consultant  
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## Lamorinda home sales recorded

### MORAGA ... continued

- 3951 Paseo Grande, \$1,665,000, 5 Bdrms, 2655 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 10-30-20,  
Previous Sale: \$452,000, 08-01-92  
1842 School Street, \$1,345,000, 4 Bdrms, 1932 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 10-30-20  
272 Tharp Drive, \$1,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 1580 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-26-20,  
Previous Sale: \$687,500, 09-16-11

### ORINDA

- 393 Camino Sobrante, \$2,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 3653 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-26-20,  
Previous Sale: \$2,350,000, 07-23-15  
66 Charles Hill Road, \$1,825,000, 3 Bdrms, 2998 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 10-27-20,  
Previous Sale: \$550,000, 05-17-99  
4 Chelton Court, \$1,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 1464 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 10-13-20,  
Previous Sale: \$395,000, 09-01-99  
17 Culver Court, \$3,317,500, 2 Bdrms, 4327 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-13-20,  
Previous Sale: \$2,505,000, 03-08-06  
115 Fiesta Circle, \$1,760,000, 4 Bdrms, 2017 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 10-28-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,579,000, 07-28-15  
35 Honey Hill Road, \$1,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 2642 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 10-30-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,200,000, 01-05-10  
253 Ivy Place, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2246 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-30-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,400,000, 02-05-08  
15 Linda Vista, \$1,347,000, 5 Bdrms, 1948 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-27-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,168,000, 05-01-15  
9 Loma Vista Drive, \$920,000, 4 Bdrms, 2327 SqFt, 1940 YrBlt, 10-30-20  
25 Longridge Road, \$1,100,000, 2 Bdrms, 1200 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 10-13-20,  
Previous Sale: \$645,000, 11-07-07  
10 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,887,500, 5 Bdrms, 3304 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 10-16-20,  
Previous Sale: \$775,000, 08-13-98  
232 The Knolls, \$1,130,000, 3 Bdrms, 2447 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 10-12-20  
216 The Knolls, \$1,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 2408 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 10-16-20,  
Previous Sale: \$1,295,000, 05-03-18  
19 Vallecito Lane, \$1,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 1672 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 10-13-20



## GORGEOUS SPANISH-STYLE EXPANDED RANCHER

### 315 Constance Place, Moraga



4 bed + office, 2.5 bath, 2,700 square feet | Offered at \$1,780,000

Be charmed by this spacious, single-story home set on a beautiful cul-de-sac with a gorgeous, private yard with pool and koi pond. Four bedrooms plus an office, large kitchen open to dining room and living room. Hardwood floors, updates throughout, inviting courtyard entryway. Close to top-rated K-8 schools, Canyon Club Brewery and the Farmer's Market.

Photos and 3D tour at [www.holcenberg.com](http://www.holcenberg.com).

### JUST SOLD



Sold for \$1,340,000.  
Represented Buyers.



Listed for \$1,549,000. Sold for \$1,660,000. Represented Sellers.

[www.holcenberg.com](http://www.holcenberg.com)

**Michelle Holcenberg**

Coldwell Banker Top 100 SF Bay Area

[michelle@holcenberg.com](mailto:michelle@holcenberg.com)

925-324-0405

BRE #01373412

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# In 2020, I've been helping others shelter-in- new-places

4 Ramona Drive, Orinda  
257 Ivy Place, Orinda  
14 Donna Maria Way, Orinda  
9 Via Corte, Orinda  
117 Via Joaquin, Moraga  
14 Candlelight Ln, Lafayette  
1045 Los Arabis Ln, Lafayette  
10 Bud Ct, Pleasant Hill  
1984 Maybelle Dr, Pleasant Hill  
55 Spar Ct, Pleasant Hill  
1302 Walden Rd. #228, Walnut Creek  
1160 Lindell Dr, Walnut Creek  
630 Thomas L Berkley #401, Oakland



Thinking of a new address?  
Let's talk.

"John was also extremely realistic to us with expectations, understood our budget and showed us great houses that met our goals." -Jessica S.

"He was patient and helpful throughout the process, and when it came time to make an offer, his guidance was spot on"- Karen L.

**JN** John Nash  
realtor

CalBRE # 01995244  
www.johnbnash.com  
john@johnbnash.com  
925-330-9474

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If we don't meet your expectations, we will refund your rent for up to 60 days.\*

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We believe it's never been more important for seniors to love the communities they call home, and we're committed to doing everything possible to achieve just that.



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1010 Second St, Lafayette, CA 94549



Lic #079200597  
\*Limited time offer.  
Call for details.

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## 42 Oak Road • Orinda Offered At \$1,595,000

- 4 Bedrooms | 3 Baths | 2860 SF | .28 Acre
- Living Room has High Ceiling, Tall Windows, Hardwood Floors
- Charming Kitchen with Pine Cabinetry and Granite Accents
- Family Room has Gorgeous Stone Fireplace
- Spacious Primary Bedroom with Large Walk-in Closet and Fireplace
- Bonus Room is Ideal for Home Office, Work-Out or Distance Learning
- Wine Room, Interior Laundry, Light-filled Formal Dining Room
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- Excellent Orinda Schools



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## *Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

### **Young sprouts!**



Photos Cynthia Brian

**After planting her seeds, the garden must be watered.**

#### **By Cynthia Brian**

*“The lesson I have thoroughly learnt, and wish to pass on to others, is to know the enduring happiness that the love of a garden gives. I rejoice when I see anyone, and especially children, inquiring about flowers, and wanting gardens of their own, and carefully working in them. For love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies, but always grows and grows to an enduring and ever-increasing source of happiness.” ~ Gertrude Jekyll*

Watching the wide-eyed wonder of children during the holidays is an additional dividend of the magical season of Christmas. The twinkling lights, the tantalizing aromas of cinnamon and nutmeg, the joyful caroling tunes, and most of all, red-nosed Rudolph prancing through the night sky leading his herd of reindeer to the chimneys of good little girls and boys.

December is a great month to spark children’s enthusiasm for gardening. The rewards go far beyond reaping a harvest of fruits, flowers and vegetables. Not only do kids get to dig in the dirt, but it is also a plus if they get dirty.

Since families usually erect a Christmas tree or Hannukah Bush, it is fun to let each child grow their own tree. When my kids were young, we bought one-gallon pines, spruce, and firs to plant a Christmas tree farm. They watered, pruned, protected, and prepared the trees to be cut for our festivities. Although the trees never matched the symmetry of ones purchased from a lot, once they were festooned with all the homemade ornaments, they were uniquely

beautiful. Most of all, the children were proud that they had grown this special tree all by themselves. They also each decorated a small growing Christmas tree for their bedrooms with sparkling lights on a timer that went off at bedtime. After the holidays, the tree went out to the patio, to be tended by them.

Teaching kids to garden instills responsibility, patience, love, creativity, tolerance, hope and imagination. Their minds expand and they learn a deep appreciation for living organisms. By introducing them at a young age to the natural world, we are showing them how to respect and honor the environment. When we scrape vegetable scraps, eggshells, coffee grinds, fish bones, and other biodegradable items into a pail that we add to our outdoor compost bin, we are demonstrating the value of enriching the soil with natural, nontoxic substances. Ask your child to help you shovel woodchips into a wheelbarrow to add to the yard before winter storms arrive to prevent erosion, keep the soil warm, and provide an appealing appearance to your landscape.

Every child needs to learn where their food comes from. Healthy eating habits are learned from the ground up. Add packets of seeds to a Christmas stocking with instructions for a private pot or plot to be planted in the spring. Stuff in a small field guide about growing vegetables, fruits, and herbs. Encourage dreaming of what crops to plant in the spring. You’ll be amazed at what kids will eat when they put in the effort of growing it. Brussels sprouts? Check! Broccoli? Check! Spinach? Check!

... continued on Page D15



**The pretty border plant, alyssum in purple or white is a perfect starter plant for kids.**



Melanie  
Snow

# #1 Lamorinda Coldwell Banker Agent YTD 2020



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241 Orchard Rd, Orinda  
131 Canon Drive, Orinda  
2 Irving Lane, Orinda  
894 Richard Lane, Danville  
328 Glorietta Blvd, Orinda  
4145 Hidden Valley Rd, Lafayette  
3780 Via Granada, Moraga  
972 Carol Lane, Lafayette  
506 McBride Drive, Lafayette  
440 Deerfield Drive, Moraga  
29 Lost Valley Drive, Orinda  
915 Mathew Court, Walnut Creek

## ON THE MARKET:

1201 Cambridge, Lafayette  
20 Hacienda Circle, Orinda

## HAPPY SELLERS

16 Del Mar Court, Orinda  
3221 Lucas Circle, Lafayette  
14 Candlelight Lane, Lafayette  
12 Snow Court, Orinda  
3193 Lucas Circle, Lafayette  
3221 Lucas Circle, Lafayette  
8 Nobi Lane, Orinda  
568 Merriewood Drive, Lafayette  
4 Haven Court, Moraga  
119 Hawthorne Court, Pleasant Hill  
866 Revere Rd, Lafayette  
3175 Surmont, Lafayette  
1509 Rockledge Lane, Walnut Creek



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## Cynthia Brian's Goddess Gardener Tips for Gardening with Kids

**GIVE** each child a pot or a plot of land to grow whatever they desire. When you give them the responsibility, they will rise to the task.

**BUY** size-appropriate tools. A hand trowel, rake, shovel, wheelbarrow, and bucket expressly for gardening chores gives a child a sense of accomplishment. Don't forget the garden gloves!

**SUPPLY** seeds that are easy to grow. Include vegetables such as carrots, radishes, beets and lettuces, and some pretty flowers like sunflowers, zinnias, marigolds and calendulas.

**MAKE** it fun by showing them how to use chopsticks to plant seeds.

**BUY** small two-to-four-inch containers of herbs for a windowsill garden. Dill, mint, sage, parsley, and oregano are simple to grow and can be snipped for pizza, spaghetti, and soups that put smiles on their faces.

**GROW** thornless succulents including ice plant, aloe vera, echeveria, and jade that require very little water or care.

**PLANT** theme gardens with your kids. Everyone loves butterflies and a Butterfly Garden will encourage kids to watch the evolution of nature from creeping caterpillar to graceful flyer. Include alyssum, butterfly bush, coreopsis, asters, salvias, Lamium, milkweed, penstemons, lavender, and snapdragons. Other ideas include a Pizza Garden with everything except the pepperoni and cheese, a sensory garden of plants with texture, taste, smell, sound and beauty. Or how about a 24-Hour Garden where each of the plants blooms at a different time? Use morning glories for the a.m., four o'clocks for the afternoon, evening primrose for early evening, and moonflowers for the night. If you have the room, one of my favorites is a Pie Orchard with peaches, apricots, cherries, pears, and a berry patch. Or two gardens my own kids loved were the Christmas Tree Farm which they planted leftover small pots of live trees, spruce, pine and fir, and the Halloween Cemetery of various types, colors, sizes, and textures of gourds and pumpkins.

**SHARE** plant and seed catalogs with your little sprouts. Let them select photos they find enticing and read to them the descriptions. Follow up with a socially-distanced, masked-wearing field trip to a nursery or garden center to investigate the various specimens.

**ALLOW** kids to experiment and design their own spaces. Rows don't have to be in straight lines. Eliminate adult ideas of perfection and instead shoot for enthusiasm and curiosity.

**GIFT** a magnifying lens to your child so they can get up close and personal with leaves, flowers, stamens and bugs.

**MARVEL** at the soil workers. Examine the worms and insects.

**WALK** around your fall landscape to choose colorful leaves for festive displays and to press into Christmas cards.

**HELP** them decorate for the holidays with natural berries and branches. Pyracantha, cotoneaster, and holly are filled with red berries. Wear gloves and offer help with the prickly holly and pyracantha.

**BE CREATIVE** by making garden art from steppingstones to scarecrows! My daughter painted a funny face on a broken rake that still guards our vegetable garden.

**DOWNLOAD FREE** coloring books to let kids color their world. There are seven different ones, all with botanical art that is simple and appropriate for little sprouts. <https://bit.ly/39CnSDv>

Happy gardening. Happy growing. Happy December.



This gorgeous fall landscape at John Windle's home offers a kaleidoscope of opportunities for art projects and festive compositions.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Although prickly, pyracantha berries are great as holiday décor.



... continued from Page D12

Children are naturally curious and by keeping your nature talks short and fascinating, you'll develop a gardener for life. Gardening is fun and it's an excellent way to keep our bodies and spirits in optimum shape. While you are sowing the seeds of growing in the minds of young sprouts, you'll also be planting resilience and acceptance. Failure is fertilizer. When something doesn't grow, we throw it on the compost pile to grow a new garden next season. As a metaphor for life, our children are all going to flounder and fail. The teachable moment from Mother Earth is that there are no mistakes if we learn the lesson and fertilize for the future.

Whether you are a big or tiny sprout, my gift is to pass on my love and knowledge of gardening with you. Dig it with your kids!

Wishing you a jolly December of magic and marvel!



A small potted spruce tree can be decorated by children now and nurtured for the next season.



Cynthia Brian's little sprout gardening partner uses chopsticks to plant her seeds.



Cynthia Brian and her garden helper young sprout, Kaylee.

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your spring garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com). Buy copies of her best-selling books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at [www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store](http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store). Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) [www.GoddessGardener.com](http://www.GoddessGardener.com)

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Lease

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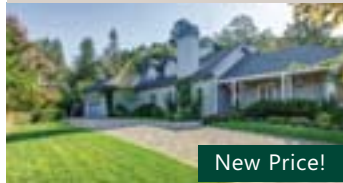


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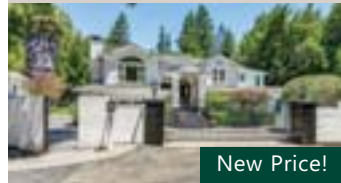
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