

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 16 Issue 10 Wednesday, July 6, 2022



Handyman discusses gas mains ... read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Humming along



You might get up close and personal when you add a Rose of Sharon hibiscus to your hair.

By Cynthia Brian

“Like the hummingbird sipping nectar from every flower, I fly joyfully through my days, seeing beauty in everything.” – Amethyst Wyldfyre

After tucking a hibiscus plucked from my mother’s garden behind my ear, I was immediately the object of desire for a hungry hummer. The iridescent red crown identified the hovering nectar hunter as a male Anna’s hummingbird. The females and young have green crowns. What a photo op, but alas, no camera or iPhone in sight.

Of the known 331 species of hummingbirds, 27 types are found in the United States, and 14 reside in California. Hummers only live in North and South America. When most people think of pollinators, bees, butterflies, bats, beetles, birds, and moths may come to mind. Yet, hummingbirds are some of the greatest pollinators as they can



Bee balm is a favorite for hummers.

Photos Cynthia Brian

visit one to three thousand flowers in a single day. As they whiz from flower to flower, pollen from the stamen sticks to their long bills and forehead as they feed. They prefer plants with tubular-shaped flowers and many plants have evolved (some with the help of human intervention) to be more attractive to hummingbirds with brighter colors, higher nectar counts, and daylight blooms. Because they have long, slim bills, hummingbirds can feed deep into chambers and cannulas that bees or other pollinators cannot reach. They also eat tiny insects and spiders that are detrimental to flower beds and vegetable gardens.

Native and navitar plants that are red, blue, orange, yellow, blue and purple are favorites. What is the difference between native and navitar plants?

... continued on Page D12



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS ~ NEW PRICE

1112 Rahara Drive | Lafayette | 3 BD | 2.5 BA | 3.99 AC | \$2,195,000

Single-level charmer in Lafayette's desirable Upper Happy Valley neighborhood celebrates California's indoor/outdoor lifestyle and showcases an open, light-filled floorplan and updated features. Sprawling over an ultra-private, more than third-acre is approx. 2,400 sq. ft. of living space featuring beautiful hardwood floors, vaulted ceilings, large windows and two primary suites with private outdoor access. This peaceful sanctuary among towering redwoods and mature landscape is just moments from the charming downtown shopping district with boutiques, restaurants and cafes.



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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	27	\$624,000	\$5,195,000
MORAGA	16	\$450,000	\$3,487,000
ORINDA	13	\$1,350,000	\$3,850,000

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

- 1018 Ameno Court, \$1,925,000, 4 Bdrms, 2493 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 05-24-22,
Previous Sale: \$498,000, 06-21-99
- 3229 Burton Court, \$2,775,000, 3 Bdrms, 1818 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 05-19-22,
Previous Sale: \$929,000, 07-10-08
- 1140 Camino Vallecito, \$4,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 3716 SqFt, 2006 YrBlt, 05-18-22,
Previous Sale: \$3,018,000, 02-18-20
- 10 Dianne Court, \$2,530,000, 4 Bdrms, 2497 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,575,000, 09-23-15
- 1025 Dolores Drive, \$1,522,000, 3 Bdrms, 1181 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 05-25-22,
Previous Sale: \$860,000, 10-06-15
- 3963 Franke Lane, \$2,850,000, 5 Bdrms, 3117 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 05-20-22
- 1025 Hampton Road, \$2,210,000, 4 Bdrms, 1955 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 05-19-22,
Previous Sale: \$792,500, 01-24-11
- 1126 Hidalgo Court, \$2,800,000, 3 Bdrms, 2030 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 05-26-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,335,000, 03-25-16
- 820 Las Trampas Road, \$1,700,000, 3 Bdrms, 1622 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 05-24-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,100,000, 03-12-14
- 655 Los Palos Drive, \$3,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2904 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 05-19-22,
Previous Sale: \$2,440,000, 09-17-19
- 3357 Mildred Lane, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 1543 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$745,000, 11-17-11
- 1171 Monticello Road, \$5,195,000, 4 Bdrms, 3570 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 05-24-22,
Previous Sale: \$3,925,000, 02-24-21
- 3376 Moraga Boulevard, \$1,250,000, 2 Bdrms, 762 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 05-27-22
- 3494 Moraga Boulevard, \$3,550,000, 2 Bdrms, 1430 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 05-18-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,155,000, 07-09-14
- 850 Mountain View Drive, \$2,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2644 SqFt,
1957 YrBlt, 05-27-22, Previous Sale: \$1,200,000, 10-25-02
- 3235 Mt Diablo Court #210, \$624,000, 2 Bdrms, 1084 SqFt, 2019 YrBlt, 05-19-22,
Previous Sale: \$595,500, 09-21-20
- 750 Old Jonas Hill Road, \$2,612,500, 4 Bdrms, 3059 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 05-24-22
- 1092 Orchard Road, \$1,828,000, 3 Bdrms, 1888 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 05-27-22
- 3134 Ramada Court, \$1,875,000, 3 Bdrms, 2144 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 05-25-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,000,000, 05-05-14
- 3406 Shangri La Road, \$2,950,000, 4 Bdrms, 2991 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 05-16-22
- 657 Sky Ranch Court, \$2,800,000, 3 Bdrms, 3262 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,750,000, 03-29-19
- 3485 Stage Coach Drive, \$3,125,000, 3 Bdrms, 3289 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 05-19-22,
Previous Sale: \$3,125,000, 03-22-22
- 957 Stow Lane, \$2,850,000, 4 Bdrms, 2857 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 05-17-22,
Previous Sale: \$400,000, 08-01-88
- 16 Toledo Court, \$3,665,000, 4 Bdrms, 3164 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 05-20-22
- 1061 Via Alta, \$3,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 2682 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$975,000, 10-22-12

... continued on Page D10



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Gas mains



Seismic auto-shutoff valve



Gas valve

Photos Jim Hurley

By Jim Hurley

Did you know that natural gas has no smell? It's true, the natural gas that we pump out of the ground is treated to give it that distinctive odor at the processing plant before it is piped to your home. The reason is simple: if you could not smell the gas, you might sit in a room with a gas leak and suffocate or worse.

At your house, the gas main shutoff is a valve located in the pipe that feeds into your meter. It is good to know where this is should an emergency arise where you smell gas and need to shut it off.

Newer gas valves are a ball valve and are easy to shut off. Older valves are literally a cone, (not a ball), with a hole through it, wedged in the valve housing. The cone has a rectangular stem one side and a nut on the other. The long side of the stem aligns with the pipe when it is open and is perpendicular to the pipe to close. The hardware store sells a gas valve shutoff wrench; don't buy it. They are thin and short and hurt your hands.

I recommend that you buy a large crescent wrench and store it near the shutoff valve. It has a longer (better leverage), and wider (more comfortable) handle.

Should the time come that you need to turn the valve off and it is stuck, the following information will help. Now kids, I will not be responsible for homes blowing up, so please never attempt this procedure without sufficient competency with tools and plumbing. Sometimes the cone has been wedged in there many years and painted over several times. If the valve is stuck and not turning, you can loosen the nut just a little, not more than one full turn, (Do not remove the nut!), tap gently in on the nut, the cone will loosen in the housing and turn easily. (You may spray the valve and nut with TriFlow to help loosen it.) Tighten the nut again as soon as this is accomplished to prevent gas leaking from the valve.

Your gas main is a "low pressure" system, around 1/4-PSI (pounds per square inch). Compare this to the 70 to 90 PSI for your water main and 40 PSI in your tires and you can see that's pretty low. As a result of this low

pressure, you may smell a leak (thanks to the odorant mentioned earlier) but finding that leak might be difficult. I keep a bottle of leak check in my truck; you can find it at your local hardware store and is not expensive. It is a blue liquid that brushes on the fittings and bubbles up when there is a gas leak. Slop it on threaded pipe fittings generously because that ounce of prevention is worth every cent. Slop some on your main shut off valve if you have loosened and tightened the nut to unstick the valve. Make sure there is no leakage.

One other component your gas main might have is a seismic sensing shutoff valve. These are not on every home yet, but many homes in earthquake country have them. You will know quickly if you do because its red color stands out. It might be a rectangular box or a round, bell shaped object located in the gas line after the meter but before the point that the line enters the house. Bell or box, they essentially work the same way, when the ground moves sufficiently, they activate and stop the flow of gas to the house. When this happens, it can easily be reset with a flat head screwdriver. Find the little reset screw on the side of the mechanism and give it a 1/4 turn to reset, (don't try to unscrew it). If there was a hefty earthquake, make sure that there was no damage to the gas lines in your house before you reset this device.

The risk of fire or explosion from natural gas to the home is no joke. PG&E provides lots of free service regarding your gas lines for that very reason. Please use this information to your advantage only if you are experienced and confident in your ability to accomplish the task.

Jim Hurley is an independent handyman with over 25 years of experience in residential repairs. Hopefully this free advice is helpful to someone attempting Do-It-Yourself home repairs. The information presented is intended for informational purposes and for use by persons having appropriate technical skill, at their own discretion and risk.



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No summer break here

JUST SOLD: 1878 Magnolia Way, WC (Rep: sellers)

JUST SOLD: 430 Verbena Ct, Lafayette (Rep: buyers)

PENDING: 862 Bonde Ct, Pleasanton (Rep: sellers)

PENDING: 1 Ross Dr, Moraga (Rep: sellers)

SOON: Miramonte Gardens Townhome! (Call for info!)

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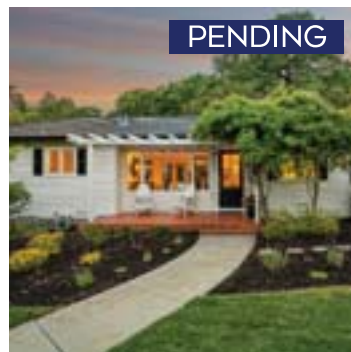
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3357 Springhill Road, Lafayette
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3357springhill.com



3 Josefa Place, Moraga
\$930,000 | 18% Over List Price
3josefa.com

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6 Tofflemire Drive, Lafayette | \$7,500,000 | 6TofflemireDrive.com



4136 Canyon Road, Lafayette | \$5,499,000 | 4136CanyonRoad.com



74 Yarrow Valley Lane, Orinda | \$4,500,000 | 74YarrowValley.com



Listing has been virtually painted

1 El Caminito, Orinda | \$2,950,000 | 1ElCaminito.com



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1631 Reliez Valley Road, Lafayette

4 bed | 3.5 bath | 2,290 sq ft | .58 acre

The stars have aligned and luck is in your corner as location, dreams and opportunities abound with this beautiful home set in peaceful and coveted Reliez Valley. There's an open kitchen/family room area with relaxing views of the manicured backyard and beckoning pool. The elegant living room has soaring glass windows to take in the majestic trees and filtered light. There is a separate ensuite guest room adjacent to the living room.



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Is Contra Costa's Real Estate Market in a Bubble?

Simple answer – YES. However, an RE Bubble does not always burst resulting in a reduction in home prices. Many economists believe our Bubble will result in a soft landing and continued increase in home values, just not as rapid as the last 17 months.

If there is an expectation that today's Real Estate Bubble will result in a reduction in prices, like the market of 2008, those buyers will be disappointed. A Housing Bubble, by definition, **occurs when housing prices rises rapidly, driven by high demand, limited supply, and emotional buying.** That defines the market of 2004 – 2007 as well as 2021 and YTD 2022. However, today's market or Bubble is quite different.

The Housing Bubble of 2004 to 2008 burst because of cheap debt, predatory and unregulated lending, and buyers often financing 100% of their home purchase, without verifiable income. When home values started dropping rapidly, homeowners were "underwater" and either walked away from their homes, did short sales (selling for less than their mortgage) or ended up in foreclosure. This flooded the market of available homes.

Today's purchases are subject to stricter lending regs, require good credit, sufficient & verifiable income and typically a down payment of 20% or more. Other economic factors affecting our market include historically low unemployment, a region of highly paid white collar wage earners, strong buyer demand and low, but growing inventory.

Rising mortgage rates are slowing down the rapid rise in home values. Also, our active inventory is creeping up as is the Days on Market and there are smaller numbers of competitive bids. To see a chart by city that will give you a glimpse of our changing market, Inventory and Days on Market, go to www.YourContraCostaRealtor.com



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Lamorinda home sales recorded

... continued from Page D2

LAFAYETTE .. continued

1065 Via Baja, \$2,195,000, 4 Bdrms, 3344 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 05-19-22,
Previous Sale: \$583,000, 04-28-98

1086 Via Media, \$4,000,000, 5 Bdrms, 3594 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 05-16-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,616,000, 12-26-12

MORAGA

118 Ascot Court #8, \$450,000, 1 Bdrms, 858 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 05-24-22,
Previous Sale: \$500,000, 07-16-19

1919 Ascot Drive, \$1,200,000, 2 Bdrms, 1455 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 05-27-22,
Previous Sale: \$750,000, 12-20-18

772 Augusta Drive, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 1908 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 05-26-22

783 Augusta Drive, \$2,700,000, 3 Bdrms, 1728 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$799,000, 02-24-11

296 Birchwood Drive, \$2,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2431 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 05-18-22

10 Corte Azul, \$2,850,000, 5 Bdrms, 2644 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 05-27-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,125,000, 08-16-04

89 Greenfield Drive, \$2,150,000, 5 Bdrms, 2598 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,258,000, 11-18-21

4 Kendall Circle, \$1,630,000, 4 Bdrms, 2147 SqFt, 2016 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,259,500, 02-02-17

6 Miramonte Drive, \$890,000, 3 Bdrms, 1248 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 05-18-22,
Previous Sale: \$585,000, 03-26-18

67 Miramonte Drive, \$1,175,000, 4 Bdrms, 1762 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 05-23-22

1541 Moraga Way, \$945,000, 2 Bdrms, 1548 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$510,000, 06-26-08

2 Paseo Linares, \$2,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 4048 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 05-17-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,460,000, 12-27-16

500 Rheem Boulevard, \$3,487,000, 3996 SqFt, 2004 YrBlt, 05-24-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,904,000, 07-08-14

1294 Rimer Drive, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 2092 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 05-25-22

47 Sanders Ranch Road, \$3,175,000, 4 Bdrms, 3463 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 05-18-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,396,000, 06-19-12

801 Villa Lane #2, \$585,000, 2 Bdrms, 942 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 05-23-22,
Previous Sale: \$365,000, 10-01-15

ORINDA

25 Altamont Drive, \$2,410,000, 4 Bdrms, 2572 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$220,000, 07-01-87

42 Ardilla Road, \$3,300,000, 5 Bdrms, 3479 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 05-25-22,
Previous Sale: \$635,000, 03-20-03

41 Claremont Avenue, \$2,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 2690 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 05-16-22

163 Crestview Drive, \$2,155,000, 4 Bdrms, 2247 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$999,000, 03-10-14

34 Descanso Drive, \$2,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 2340 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$925,000, 04-24-09

25 Frogs Leap Way, \$3,850,000, 5 Bdrms, 4127 SqFt, 2014 YrBlt, 05-27-22,
Previous Sale: \$2,545,000, 03-15-16

38 Los Altos Road, \$3,525,000, 4 Bdrms, 4467 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 05-16-22,
Previous Sale: \$2,110,000, 01-17-14

25 Marston Road, \$1,880,500, 3 Bdrms, 2326 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 05-20-22

5 Muth Drive, \$1,710,000, 3 Bdrms, 1736 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 05-23-22

121 Overhill Road, \$2,600,000, 3 Bdrms, 2044 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 05-18-22,
Previous Sale: \$350,000, 06-01-90

15 Parkway Court, \$1,960,000, 3 Bdrms, 1816 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 05-20-22,
Previous Sale: \$1,124,000, 11-14-18

33 Valley Drive, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 1666 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 05-23-22

17 Vista Del Mar, \$2,632,000, 4 Bdrms, 2894 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 05-18-22

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The original owner meticulously supervised the design and construction of this uniquely thoughtful and elegant estate; this is the first time it has ever been offered for sale. For those who desire substance and require convenience, this is truly a rare opportunity.

Price Upon Request



For details on the extensive features incorporated into this estate or a private showing, call:

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Humming along



Drought-resistant lantana and lavender will bring the pollinators.



Blue salvia is a preferred food source.



A hummingbird paradise. Photos Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page D1

Native:

- highly adapted to the climate and soil they are naturally growing in
- requires less babying (within their particular climate) than non-natives
- promotes biodiversity throughout your garden
- naturally resistant to local pests
- attract beneficial pollinators

Navitar:

- combination of the words 'native' and 'cultivar' (result of careful selection and crossbreeding by humans)
- wider variety of flower colors, shapes and forms
- incorporate different sizes of plant
- heightened insect or disease resistance
- select preferred hardiness
- main concern for - and argument against - is their lack of genetic diversity

Plants Attractive to Hummingbirds

Petunia	Weigela	Lupin
Calibrachoa	Oregon grape	Purple
Catmint	Azalea	Rhododendron
Sage	Currant	Zinnia
Salvia	Flowering quince	Lantana
Penstemon	Trumpet vine	Red hot poker
(beardtongue)	Trumpet	(torch lily)
Bee balm	honeysuckle	Echinacea
Daylily	Bleeding Heart	Delphinium
Fuchsia	Butterfly bush	Crocsmia
Cardinal flower	Cardinal Flower	Hollyhocks
Blazing star	Columbine	Pink Bower Vine
Garden phlox	Rose of Sharon	
Lobelia	Hibiscus	

...continue on Page D14



Daylilies attract hummingbirds



Crocosmia firecracker plant and roses attract hummingbirds.

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Humming along



Plant pretty petunias as annuals to appeal to the hummers.



Bees love zinnias, too!

... continued from Page D12

Hummingbirds remain in landscapes that provide all the supplies they need to survive and thrive. Besides planting species that will feed them, there are other things you can do to encourage hummingbirds to hang around.

Bathing Fountain: Due to the sticky nature of the nectar, hummingbirds need to bathe frequently. They prefer running water in a shallow area. Bubbling fountains or misters are an important investment in their healthcare. They even will frequent sprinklers!

Nests: Hummingbirds do not nest in birdhouses. They build tiny, usually around 1 inch in diameter, nests camouflaged with lichen, moss, and spider webs. This makes them hard to discover. They can be 3-60 feet from the ground and sometimes as much as a half-mile from their favorite food sources.

Feeders: Place feeders in areas where you'll be able to watch the frenzy. It's best to have multiple feeders to reduce territoriality. Hang them high enough to be safe from cats or predators which include snakes, squirrels, and larger birds. Recommended height is at least 4 feet from the ground.

Recipe for homemade nectar:

*Boil 4 quarts of water and let it cool. Tap water is fine. Do not use distilled water.

*Dissolve 1 cup cane or beet sugar in the cooled water. Do not use any

other type of sugar, artificial sweetener, or honey.

*Fill feeder $\frac{3}{4}$ full or however much is used within a few days.

*Store unused remainder in a closed container in the refrigerator for a week.

Maintenance of feeders: It is important to change the mixture every 4-5 days. If the weather exceeds 90 degrees, the nectar will ferment. Change it more often if it gets cloudy. Clean feeders between refilling without topping off. Many feeders can be safely sanitized in the dishwasher. Otherwise, use mild detergent, wash, and rinse thoroughly. Monthly sterilize the feeders in a solution of bleach and water.

Other Tips: To entertain all pollinators, maintain an organic landscape free of pesticides, insecticides, and chemical fertilizers. Your garden is their dinner table, and their daily dining provide the ingredients for your dinner table.

My garden is buzzing with every type of pollinator. As I sit in my office writing this article, a beautiful, black-chinned hummingbird with its shimmering purple and white collar was busy outside my window investigating my roses. Again, I couldn't get an appropriate photo through the window screen and shutter, but the visit was enchanting.

See the beauty in everything and thrill to the metallic humming of the wings of these living hovercrafts. Fly joyfully through your day!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.

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Cynthia Brian in her summer garden.

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.

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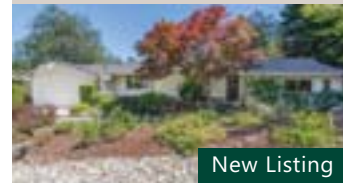


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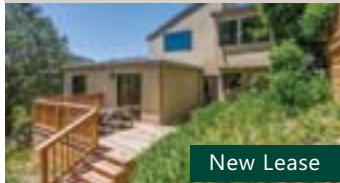
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