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Self-serve sandbag station at corner of Mt Diablo Boulevard at Village Center Drive in Lafayette



Buried storm drain inlet flooded roadway at Bollinger Canyon Road



Public Works Director Mike Moran inspects segment of storm damaged shoulder of St Mary's Road near Driftwood Drive

Lafayette: photos courtesy city of Lafayette; Moraga: photos courtesy Moraga Public Works Department; Orinda: photos Sora O'Doherty



San Pablo Creek behind the Orinda Post Office rose above its banks during the height of the winter storms in early January.



Landslides - Painted Rock debris fell onto Rheem Boulevard

# Lamorinda suffers storm damage, but dodges major devastation

By Sora O'Doherty, Vera Kochan, Jennifer Wake

Heavy showers of rain and strong winds created problems in Lamorinda in the first weeks of 2023. Fortunately, the area did not suffer from the extreme damage, including fatalities, experienced elsewhere in California. However, the area did experience landslides both on private and public property as well as downed trees and power lines, and all three jurisdictions declared a state of emergency.

The city of Lafayette proclaimed a local state of emergency on Jan. 4. "This allows us greater flexibility to contract for work, document damage, and ask for reimbursement from the federal government should funds become available," City Manager Niroop Srivatsa explained at the Jan. 9 council meeting. As of Friday, Jan. 6 Lafayette had distributed over 6,000 sand bags, Orinda handed out 8,000 sand bags and 60 tons of sand as of Jan. 10, and Moraga also distributed a large number of sand bags.

"Diamond K opened their doors on New Year's Day and really helped the public," Srivatsa said at the council meeting, noting that the city staffed two sand bag stations, which have been replenished every day.

There were mud slides and debris flows at Pleasant Hill Road and Deer Hill Road, a slide in the upper baseball field at Community Park, the Lafayette Community Center had some leaks in the roof, there was a failed drain pipe at the creek at Victoria Court, potholes required repair throughout Lafayette, and a storm drain at Orchard Road caused some flooding. A slide below St. Mary's Road along Las Trampas Creek (the west side of the road approximately 310 feet south of Driftwood Drive) put the structural integrity of St. Mary's Road at risk. Staff had a contractor place some rip rap at the base of the slide and up into the scarp as an interim stabilization measure and the council released \$50,000 from the Emergency Response Fund 011-360.861 to complete this work. "Crews are working around the clock, working weekends as well," Srivatsa said. "Thanks to everyone for pitching in and helping out."

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# Lafayette Reservoir Tower Seismic Retrofit Project could change look of iconic structure

By Lou Fancher

Residents, visitors and people who enjoy outdoor recreation in Lafayette will want to take advantage of available opportunities to speak out about changes coming to what is arguably the city's most iconic symbol.

At the city council's Jan. 9 meeting, officials of the East Bay Municipal Utility District presented an update on the long-planned Lafayette Reservoir Tower Seismic Retrofit Project. While posing no imminent threat to Lafayette residents living along Lafayette Creek downstream of the reservoir, studies and evaluations performed in 2005 indicated the tower is highly vulnerable during a large earthquake and a retrofit is required. Roughly 1.5 million people visit the reservoir each year.

Photo courtesy EBMUD

Rendering of Lafayette Reservoir tower would involve removal of the "house" at the tower's top and shortening the structure by approximately 40 feet.

To help the council and members of the public understand the project's origin, scope and purpose, EBMUD Engineering Manager Elizabeth Bialek walked through Lafayette reservoir, dam, and tower history.

Constructed in 1927, the reservoir is not part of the district's water supply and is intended for use only as an emergency water source. The Lafayette dam is one of 25 managed and operated by EBMUD and falls under the oversight of the state's Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD). At 170 feet tall, the tower is 40 feet higher than necessary, a fact that resulted when the foundation of the original dam settled and a quick redesign lowered the dam 33 feet, but left tower plans unchanged. The 2005 studies showed the tower's extended, above-water height, if left unaddressed and subject to forces from a large earthquake, could suffer damage or complete structural failure due to high bending in the rebar embedded in the concrete walls of the tower.

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Garden trends and tips for 2023, Part Two - Page D1





See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

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## City of Lafayette recognized for excellence in financial reporting

For the seventh consecutive year, the city of Lafayette received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2021.

The Government Finance Officers Association is an organization that represents public finance officials throughout the United States

and Canada; its mission is to enhance and promote the professional management of governmental financial resources by identifying, developing, and advancing fiscal strategies, policies, and practices for the public benefit.

The Excellence in Financial Reporting Program was designed to encourage local governments to go

beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles, while promoting the spirit of transparency and full disclosure. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government

and its management.

Special recognition goes to administrative staff: Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson, Assistant Administrative Services Director Jennifer Wakeman, Accountant Robin Townley, and Accounting Assistant Debbie Janke. – J. Wake

## Tom Stack awarded Lafayette's 2023 Business Person of the Year



Tom Stack at the 2022 Art & Wine Festival

Photo provided

### By Jennifer Wake

When someone is awarded the distinction of Business Person of the Year, it's obvious they're successful in business. Tom Stack is no exception.

Starting by selling T-shirts out of a backpack in the parking lots of Grateful Dead concerts, Stack turned that endeavor into a thriving worldwide distribution operation and ended up working directly with the Grateful Dead as its VP of Licensing and Merchandising. Stack also worked across the table with Carlos Santana as his primary licensee and represented the estates of Jerry Gar-

cia, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley and Janis Joplin. Stack then moved into the real estate game, becoming a top salesperson for Coldwell Banker Realty and as of this year, notching 17 years in the business. But it was Stack's involvement in Lafayette's Town Hall Theatre that set him apart from other nominees, since two of the main criteria for the BPOY award are that their work enhances the quality of life in Lafayette and brings the community together.

In 2009, then executive director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, Jay Lifson, approached Stack and suggested he join Town Hall The-

atre's board. THT was looking at closing for good, especially following a sprinkler mishap, known as the April Fool's flood, when fire sprinklers went off, dumping 800 gallons of water upstairs and flooding the entire downstairs. The theater had to be shut, de-molded and repaired. "I came on in the fall," Stack said. "They were in dire straits and needed revenue; I like to generate revenue."

Stack, who had watched Bill Graham in action at his concert events and had an obvious love of music (with his wife, Kiki, who is in two bands, also with music connections), decided that producing concerts at Town Hall between various theater productions could be a great way to generate income and introduce new patrons to THT. Stack began producing concerts in January, March, May, September, and November, about eight or nine shows a year, with all the proceeds going to THT.

"I fearlessly fundraise," Stack said. "That was really the goal – see if I could cross pollinate this thing. As emcee, from the stage, I would plug the productions and would ask for specific items for the house and the stage like lobby furniture, stage sound and lighting. Truthfully, it was about building community and generating revenue."

Much like when he walked the parking lots selling T-shirts, Stack hit the streets, concert tickets in hand, determined to fill the venue and raise the much-needed funds for the theater. "I just went to people I knew. It

was a person-to-person thing," Stack said. Soon, the concerts generated their own buzz and sold out each time. Then Stack and his wife, Kiki, began producing the Lafayette Community Music Festival. "It was modeled after Neil Young's Bridge School with acoustic guitars, banjos, mandolins, and dobros," Stack explained. "Kiki would call all her musician friends and they would donate their time. That was her brainchild, her creation."

Unfortunately, when the pandemic hit, all in-person concerts stopped and Stack decided to leave the board in July of 2020. But the music has continued at outdoor venues, like those at the Lafayette Art & Wine Festival and the Rock the Plaza Summer Concert Series, where Stack serves as emcee.

Tom and Kiki will continue their backyard amphitheatre acoustic performances for 45-50 clients, friends and neighbors as they "sit outside to enjoy music in a glorious natural setting."

"I like to bring people together, build little communities in the moment," Stack said.

Stack will be honored on Friday, Feb. 3 during a special dinner at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. To register, visit <https://lafayettechamber.org/bpoy>. The evening will include the State of the City Address by Mayor Carl Anduri and the introduction of the Lafayette Chamber's 2023 Board of Directors.

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Excellent writing and communication skills. Ethical and professional. Live or work in or near the Lamorinda area and have the ability to write balanced, researched, well-structured articles. Prior journalism experience desired, but not required. Understanding of AP Style is a plus. Compensation is made on a per article basis.

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Lamorinda Weekly is an independent Newspaper owned by Andy and Wendy Schack with the vision to bring news and interesting stories to the communities of Lamorinda. Since the start of this paper in 2007 our team members have enjoyed a strong engagement with members of their community, the pleasure of meeting many interesting people and the satisfaction of bringing balanced and well researched news to all.

# AUHSD president's reflections on where the district is and where it's heading

By Sharon K. Sobotta

With nine years under her belt as an Acalanes Union High School District Board member, Nancy Kendzierski is taking the reins as president for her third time and she's excited to keep the momentum going. Kendzierski says it's important to keep the district's steadfast student centered approach alive and well while focusing on academics, holistic support, parental and community partnerships and financial stability amidst economic uncertainties.

"(We) should continue to broaden and enhance (the district's) curriculum to reflect the complex world we live (in) and continue to provide significant support for student well-being," Kendzierski says.

Although COVID amplified the need to provide holistic support to students, Kendzierski acknowledges that stress has impacted high school students in the district for a long time. The board has taken note of that and supported and voted in favor of measures ranging from the most recent addition of wellness centers on all campuses to adjusted school calendars to block scheduling.

"We're a high performing district and our kids are under a lot of stress and lots of expectations," Kendzierski says. "When (students) think their choices are narrowed to only a few specific things, (it can be overwhelming). In fact there's a wide world out there and lots of ways to succeed. We try to help students deal with all the different pressures, we wanted to introduce more comprehensive support than just academic counseling; this ultimately led us to having wellness centers."

Kendzierski's children graduated from the school district in 2009 and 2016 respectively. When asked what inspires her to stay engaged with the board now that her own children are out of school, Kendzierski says it comes down to her strong belief in the power of public education.

"I really believe that public education is the cornerstone of a working democracy," she says. "The way that public schools work in this country is through each district. If you care about the larger world, it's important to work on that locally. Supporting our local schools is really the foundation (for our future)."

AUHSD includes Acalanes, Campolindo, and Miramonte high schools in the Lamorinda area and Los Lomas in Walnut Creek and is the home of more than 5,000 high school students. Along with Kendzierski, Kristin Connelly, Christopher Grove, Christopher Severson continue serving. Jennifer Chen joined in 2022 after the November election and Rebecca Joseph, a student at Los Lomas High was elected by her peers to be the student board member.

Kendzierski says because student voices are essential, it's fitting to have a student on the board. "Students are their own biggest advocates."

Although the student board member abstains from votes about such matters as personnel or budget, Kendzierski says the voice is

also important. Outside of board membership Kendzierski wants the community to know about the power and persistence behind AUHSD students in advocating for themselves and each other.

"They advocate through clubs, through initiatives, through showing up and speaking in various ways in their extracurricular activities, in participating in school. They are asking for what they need and doing what they can to make it happen," she says. Last academic year, a number of AUHSD students presented snippets of work they had created and co-crafted on topics ranging from race and religion to embracing prongs of intersectional identities to parents and community members. Kendzierski says that's exactly the kind of thing that AUHSD students do. "Our students are amazing. And they are not sort of waiting. They are here. They are awake, alive and active partners."

Seventeen-year-old Gema Villafan-Perez is a senior at Acalanes High, who could be a testament to what Kendzierski says the board is striving to accomplish in the AUHSD.

Villafan-Perez is an engaged and successful student who also struggles with anxiety, but has been relieved to have resources and services at the wellness center available to her.

"The school is known for good grades and battling the pressure to do well enough can be very stressful," Villafan-Perez says. "It's been really nice for me to be able to drop into the wellness center and be able to relax in a safe space. Mental health is just as important as physical health. I think having spaces like this takes away stigma and normalizes getting support."

Villafan-Perez recalls losing a fellow student at AUHSD to suicide last year. "It was really hard because I had known that person from a young age. I think a lot of people don't know what others are going through because some people just have to put on a brave face for school," she says. "It was really hard not to see that person in class or in the hallways. I think the school stepped up its efforts after that to support us and it seems like there's more awareness of the level of anxiety the pressures of school can cause."

Villafan-Perez is involved in a handful of extra-curricular activities including track and field and orchestra, and participates in a program through her church called 'rooted.' Having activities and support at school as well as ways to show up as her authentic self both inside and outside the classroom not only help her cope, but help her thrive. "If I can show up in all of the various spaces as me and talk about my challenges with mental health, then I can normalize it and help other people feel OK too."

How important is it to Villafan-Perez and her peers that the AUHSD board factor in student stress and mental health into the decisions they are making? "Very," she says. "You don't feel like the school is ignoring you, you feel like your emotions are being validated and you feel a little like you belong."

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community. Send a letter to the editor: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com)



**Lafayette Public Meetings**

**City Council**

Regular Meeting  
Monday, Jan. 23, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

**Planning Commission Meeting**

Tuesday, Feb. 6, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

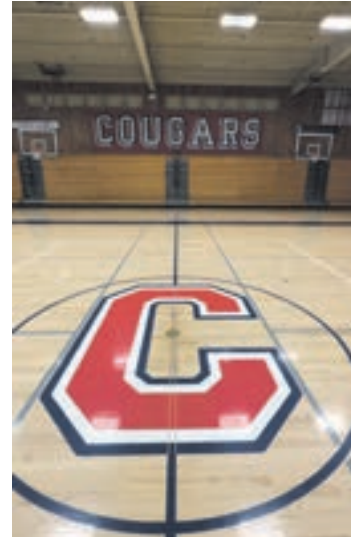
**Design Review**

Wednesday, Jan. 25, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube  
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 www.moragachamber.org  
**Moraga Citizens' Network:**  
 www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

**Town Council:** Wednesday, Jan. 25, 6:30 p.m.  
**Planning Commission:** Tuesday, Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m.  
**Park and Recreation Commission:** Monday, Feb. 20, 7:00 p.m.,  
**Moraga School District Board Meetings:**  
 Tuesday, Feb. 14, 6 p.m. www.moraga.k12.ca.us.

**VOLUNTEER FOR 2023 TOWN COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS**

Moraga is known for its strong sense of community and is actively seeking civic-minded volunteers to serve on all of its Committees and Commissions. In 2023 there will be openings on the:

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- Park and Recreation Commission (4 openings)
- Planning Commission (4 openings)

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**Town council in favor of an updated EMS and Ambulance Ordinance**

By Vera Kochan

Moraga Police Chief Jon King's presentation to the town council requested an adoption by Reference Division 48, "Emergency Medical Services," of the Contra Costa County Code, with regards to EMS and ambulance operations after waiving the First Reading. His Jan. 11 staff report noted that "the purpose of this addition is to create uniformity with the County and other cities in ensuring that ambulances that are operated safely and in accordance with established standards and allowing the Contra Costa County Emergency Medical Services Agency to enforce the updated ordinance within the Town of Moraga." The council's decision was unanimously in favor.

The original county ambulance ordinance was adopted by Moraga in 1975. An updated procedures ordinance was approved by the County Board of Supervisors in 1983 and adopted by Moraga in 1991. After another 10-month updating process in June 2022, that involved stakeholders and endorsements by the county's executive fire chiefs, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the most recent version of Division 48 of the Contra Costa County Code.

According to King's staff report, the necessity for an update was to take into consideration the many advances in the emergency medical field and ambulance operations within the past 30 years. "The updated ordinance addresses these changes, enhances patient and prehospital personnel safety by clarifying the EMS Agency's regulatory authority and oversight, provides additional oversight of EMS operations, special event medical standby services and ambulance operations; and improves the process for permitting ambulance service providers that operate within Contra Costa County."

Some of the updates include the following: "Authorizes the County to contract for emergency ambulance services with a fire agency that will provide those services in conjunction with a private ambulance subcontractor; requires criminal history background checks on ambulance owners, including live scan fingerprint checks; requires special event standby services to be permitted, employ only certified and licensed prehospital personnel, have a multi-patient plan for events, have coordinated with local public safety emergency responders and have propose business licenses and liability insurance; requires ambulance personnel to take an ap-

proved emergency vehicle operations course; enhances security by requiring ambulance operators to secure their vehicles to prevent theft of the vehicle, equipment and uniforms; requires operators to supply their personnel with specified personal protection equipment (PPE) and have an infectious disease control plan; improves transparency and consumer protection by requiring ambulance services to publicly post their fees, certificate of operation and licenses at their place of business and website; and provides a clear and transparent appeal process for all administrative actions taken relating to ambulance service providers and establishes specific criteria for the approval or denial of a Certificate of Operation for an ambulance service."

King noted the excellent EMS and ambulance services that the town currently receives from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District's personnel along with other private ambulance operators. While MOFD is not required to obtain certificates of operation, the private ambulance operators must, and both entities are expected to comply with the provisions of the ordinance.

A Public Hearing for the Second Reading of the ordinance is scheduled for the Jan. 25 town council meeting.

**Campaign to save Harvey Ranch a success**



Photos courtesy John Muir Land Trust

Amazing open space views come with the hiking trails at Harvey Ranch.

By Vera Kochan

After giving themselves approximately one year to raise the \$4 million necessary to save the 126-acre Harvey Ranch as a gateway to over 15,000 acres of wilderness, the John Muir Land Trust, whose mission is to "protect and care for open space, ranches, farms, parkland and shoreline in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties" announced that the Dec. 31, 2022 deadline was met with success.

Hoping to preserve the Harvey Ranch land for future generations, the new acquisition will join the three protected landscapes of Las Trampas Regional Wilderness, San Leandro Watershed, and Painted Rock Preserve (which includes Carr Ranch, Buckhorn Creek, and Rocky Ridge). JMLT was tasked by property owner Charlene Harvey to help her fulfill a dream that she and her late husband, Jim, shared to preserve the location against development.

The \$4 million goal covers the cost of acquiring Harvey Ranch which includes appraisals, surveys, natural resource assessment reports, title research, legal fees, staff time, and the actual purchase price for transferring title.

"The residents of Lamorinda and supporters across the Bay Area have provided the means for us to achieve another hugely significant win for conservation," stated JMLT Executive Director Linus Eukel. "Soon everyone will have a chance to enjoy Harvey Ranch's spectacular scenic views. Most importantly, we've added an additional layer of protection for a vital wildlife refuge. Preserving and keeping wildlife corridors intact is a huge priority as we take action to mitigate the impact of global climate change."

The ranch itself is a habitat for countless animals, reptiles and raptors. Making the area their domicile are gray foxes, deer, opossums, raccoons, jackrabbits, weasels, bobcats, mountain lions, Northern alligator lizards, gopher snakes, West-

ern pond turtles, red-tailed eagles, great blue herons and great egrets, to name a few. Threatened and endangered species such as the Alameda whipsnake and the California red-legged frog also call Harvey Ranch home.

The new acquisition will also provide magnificent hiking trails for nature lovers of any age and ability. From short walks to miles of trails with varying terrain, there is something to see and enjoy for everyone. Equestrians will even be allowed access to centuries-old ranch roads.

According to JMLT, virtually all of the campaign funding came from private individuals and institutions. This included an amazingly generous \$1 million matching gift from a single anonymous donor.

... continued on Page A9

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## Lamorinda suffers storm damage, but dodges major devastation



Photo courtesy Moraga Public Works Department

### Flooding at Hacienda Park's Pavilion building

... continued from Page A1

Moraga's Interim Town Manager Brian Dolan on Jan. 4 proclaimed a local emergency. A Jan. 11 staff report to the town council by Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp, Moraga Police Chief Jon King, and Dolan stated they "found conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property had arisen within the town caused by storms, resulting in heavy rainfall, flooding, landslides, strong wind gusts, downed trees and power outages, which began December 27, 2022." Council members wasted no time in unanimously ratifying Dolan's proclamation.

The town has suffered a kaleidoscope of damage throughout its boundaries. Problems included localized flooding on Moraga Road and Canyon Road; landslides at Bollinger Canyon Road, Painted Rock's debris onto Rheem Boulevard, and Mulholland Ridge above Camino Ricardo and Ashbrook Place; Laguna Creek's overflow and flooding at Hacienda Park and the Pavilion building (which also suffered electrical and HVAC issues), along with leaking roofs at the Hacienda and La Sala buildings; the Town Offices experienced roof leaks and HVAC issues; Moraga Library also has roof leaks; loss of electricity to the Town Hall buildings and most of the Hacienda; residents experienced power loss due to fallen trees in various neighborhoods; and Pacific Gas and Electric transformer issues.

When asked whether the town should worry about any storm drain damage or failures under Moraga's roads (see Lamorinda Weekly's Nov. 23, 2022 article: "State of some Moraga storm drains causes alarm"), Knapp replied, "We are in better standing than we've been in a long time, because we've been doing repairs and maintenance. We've cleared the majority of our bad pipes. Time will tell how we fare."

During the past weeks, town staff personnel have been stretched to the limit day and night with MPD responding to emergency calls. The Parks and Recreation Department did their best to control flooding in the Hacienda's buildings. MOFD's Dispatch Non-Emergency line experienced an up-tick in calls, but most of

them were fallen-tree related, to which the callers were referred to Moraga's exceptionally beleaguered Public Works Department. Not only was it all-hands-on-deck for public works, even Knapp and Public Works/Parks Maintenance Manager Kyle Salvin showed up with shovels and rakes to clear collected debris from storm drains on New Year's Eve. "We were running from one situation to another and making calls to set up barricades as needed," stated Knapp. "People were calling the town offices, or MPD, or using the Mobile Moraga app to report problems."

With limited equipment and man-power in battling Mother Nature, the town engaged local companies Bay Area Drainage, David D. Dunn Company, and Site Works to help with the emergency clearing of public streets and storm drain inlets. They also provided erosion control measures. The Public Works budget for this type of expenditure is only \$16,000, which will not come close to covering the anticipated cleanup cost from the series of storms.

Knapp explained that Moraga can take advantage of two sources of funding. Gov. Gavin Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency which directed Caltrans to request immediate assistance through the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program (FEMA) to provide monetary support with local road repairs, technical support, recovery efforts and flood-fighting materials. This allows for the potential to receive state funds. Contra Costa County will help to organize a simulation of costs that will get turned over to the state, which in turn will pass the information onto FEMA to determine each county's funding eligibility.

In Orinda, Charles Hill Road remained closed until early morning on Jan. 11. Orinda City Manager David Biggs, who adopted a local state of emergency on Jan. 6, mainly to get funding, said at the Jan. 10 council meeting, "We've had some minor slides in Orinda Oaks, a slide in Wilder, and one on Miner Road. Some utility poles blew down as well." Biggs also reported some slides on public property. Each storm, he said, brings different issues and levels of concerns. He reported that Public Works has really

been out there, as well as Parks & Rec and the Orinda Police Department. City staff was coordinating with the Fire District. The public works crew is only four people, supplemented with contract services. "There had been a lot of competition for resources," he said. "Wave after wave of storms doesn't allow us to get some routine drain cleaning, and mudslides are top priority."

Biggs appealed for help and patience from residents. "If you see something, please let us know. During business hours residents can call the city at 925-253-4231 after business hours they are asked to call the Orinda Police non-emergency line at 925-284-5010. Dispatch will also call in Orinda public work responders," he said. "Every set of eyes helps us get ahead of the curve." He asked residents to be sure to sign up for Nixle and the county warning system.

The area around Sanders Drive and Larch Avenue in Moraga suffered numerous trees downed by high winds on the night of Jan. 9. Large trees fell across Cortes Court and Larch Avenue. A large tree on the campus of nearby St. Monica's church cracked and fell into the parking lot. Residents of one home on Sanders Drive heard what they thought was a crack of thunder in the night, only to awake in the morning to find that the top half of a tall redwood tree in their backyard had broken off and crashed through their roof where it overhangs the patio. Resident Eleanor Vaughn said that she was amazed that the wind blew the tree at an angle, preventing it from crashing through their bedroom.

Her neighbor, a retired arborist, put her in touch with a crew who came and promptly cleared the fallen tree. By early

morning, PG&E had teams out working on electricity lines that were brought down by falling trees.

On the morning of Dec. 31, a clog in a drainage line above Descanso Drive in Orinda created a flow of water and mud down the public street which caused some damage to driveways along the street. The problem was reported to the city and to the Contra Costa County Sheriff at about 7:30 in the morning. In the late afternoon, first one truck from public works and then a team from a contractor cleared the clog in a major drain and pulled off a trash grate that had accumulated debris.

Director of Public Works Scott Christie is interested in pursuing improvements, but noted that the city has very limited resources, and an

email received on Dec. 31 was the first written complaint about Descanso Drive he was aware of. "Our response was not perfect," he said when interviewed, "but we were able to get things working better." He explained that big storms "really do push beyond the basic capacity of the system," adding, "I think the system is reasonably designed; sure, if we had unlimited funds we could build a system that could support a 100-year storm."

San Pablo Creek in downtown Orinda did rise above its banks at one point, but, although there was a tremendous flow of water, the creek mainly was able to contain it. On a positive note, a number of river otters were spotted by a member of Friends of Orinda Creeks having fun in San Pablo Creek on Jan. 9.



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## Friends of Orinda Creeks, Planning Director explore hurt feelings, compromise on DPP

By Sora O'Doherty

Rejecting suggestions from resident Nick Warranoff that the city postpone the Downtown Precise Plan (DPP), the newly reorganized Orinda City Council pushed ahead with the project, which they plan to adopt at the same time as the Housing Element and the updated Safety Element on Jan. 31. The city heard a presentation from Eli Krispi of city consultant Placeworks on the safety element.

The portion of the presentation on the DPP was conducted by Planning Director Drummond Buckley and Assistant Planner Darin Hughes. Buckley explained that the DPP will be the one place to go for Orinda's vision of the downtown and that it will guide future decisions regarding downtown based on that vision and the guiding principals enumerated in the plan. "Many people would like to see change in downtown Orinda," Buckley said, "and if people come in with proposed projects that could create change. It could be new developments or redevelopment of existing buildings, but the DPP will provide a pathway for change and help us ensure that the work is well done."

The DPP contains five chapters, one of which deals with San Pablo Creek. This

section was opposed by the Friends of Orinda Creeks because they believed that the DPP recommended only the city's plan for the creek based on some information that the Friends allege is incorrect.

The basic disagreement between the city and the Friends was over the path of the creek. The Friends' plan called for a "meander," which would reestablish a curving section of the creek that was straightened when the creek was confined to a cement channel decades ago.

Buckley explained that the city did not have any money to purchase land from private property owners to accommodate a meander, nor could the city use eminent domain to acquire property. According to the Friends, the city consultant had said that a meander would require the removal of 60 to 80 parking spaces from parking lots along the creek, while the Friends maintain that their plan only ever talked about the removal of 10 parking spaces. The Friends also disputed the consultants' claim that the meander would undermine Camino Pablo, because the planned meander would be to the east, away from the road.

Buckley noted, "We owe that of gratitude to the Friends for starting that con-

versation, and for supporting the creek." But he added, after "all these years – and it hurts a little bit, to be honest – that there's this negativity" when the essence of the dispute, is really only how big the project should be. Both sides think that they are being realistic, and that, he concluded, is where they disagree. Michael Bowen of the Friends responded, "I think that as long as we're going to talk about our feelings, that we feel hurt, too, and we don't quite understand why these two concepts can't be."

New council member Brandyn Iverson, who served on the Planning Commission before being elected to the city council, suggested that the DPP should allow for the possibility of either plan, and Buckley agreed that that was a possibility and he had no objection. After Mayor Inga Miller was reassured that making that change would present no impediment to future development along the creek, the council agreed to ask staff to modify the language of the DPP to indicate that there were two possible plans for creek restoration.

Another commenter was Kevin Burke of East Bay for Everyone. "I don't think the Housing Element will be certified," he said. "The Gateway site is really bad. I think you should listen to the community and start building housing at BART." He also questioned why the St. Stephen's church site was removed from the Housing Element. Buckley pointed out that the housing element was not on the agenda, but explained that the California Department of Housing and Community (HCD) understood that BART would not be ready to proceed with plans for housing on their site in Orinda until the next housing cycle. Miller explained that the St. Stephen's site was removed because the church said that they would not proceed with housing on the site.

The DPP evolved from a long journey to improve

Orinda's downtown. After more than 30 years of hoping for change in the downtown, the city council in 2016 enlisted the help of the Urban Land Institute and Mainstreet America to research possible downtown development and make suggestions. As things evolved, the city council decided to hire a consultant to craft a downtown plan, but were unable to find a suitable firm. It was decided that the city would produce the DPP in-house.

Over the past years, city staff and their consultants, Placeworks, have conducted research, have reached out to residents and stakeholders of Orinda, have held open meetings and workshops to discover what was wanted for downtown Orinda and how redevelopment could best be achieved. Into the mix were thrown the sixth cycle housing element and numerous pieces of state legislation aimed at forcing cities to provide for more housing. In some cases, the legislation overrides city control, which caused the city to want to adopt objective design guidelines that would apply even without discretionary approval of projects.

Objective Design Standards are envisioned by the DPP, but will not become regulations until adopted in conjunction with amendments to the Orinda General Plan and the municipal code. If and when adopted, the ODS would govern residential uses in two new downtown zones, Downtown Core and Downtown General zones with densities set to 25, 30, or 55 units per acre and building heights of 35 to 45 feet. There would also be a sub-zone of Downtown General-Enhanced, which would allow for the possibility of 100% housing without retail uses.

The DPP, the Safety Element, and the Housing Element are on the agenda to be adopted by the Council at a special meeting on Jan. 31.

## Orinda's only concern with new fire code is limitation on traffic calming

By Sora O'Doherty

City Manager David Biggs presented the staff report on the 2023 proposed fire code update to the Orinda City Council on Jan. 10. The matter was on for discussion only, but the new fire code will be up for the first reading of the proposed ordinance at the Jan. 18 Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board meeting.

Biggs noted that the only proposed amendment which may be of concern to the council is the provision which proposes to limit certain physical traffic calming de-

vices/improvements in the Very High Fire Severity Zone or in neighborhoods with a single access point. He added that the town of Moraga has similar concerns.

City staff have been in discussion with Fire Chief David Winnacker on the traffic calming issue, and he has stated in correspondence to the city that "should the city of Orinda be concerned regarding the inclusion of the amendments clarifying the manner in which traffic calming devices and roadway obstructions are reviewed,

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## January art exhibits in Orinda galleries



Linda Sutton: Barely Bothered, Size: 16 x 10, Medium: Oil on board



Doug Crooks: Wood Spirit Bird House



Cover illustration by Elaine Drew for her graphic novel: The back and front cover of the graphic novel, "A Knight's Bad Day," 14" x 10" gouache painting

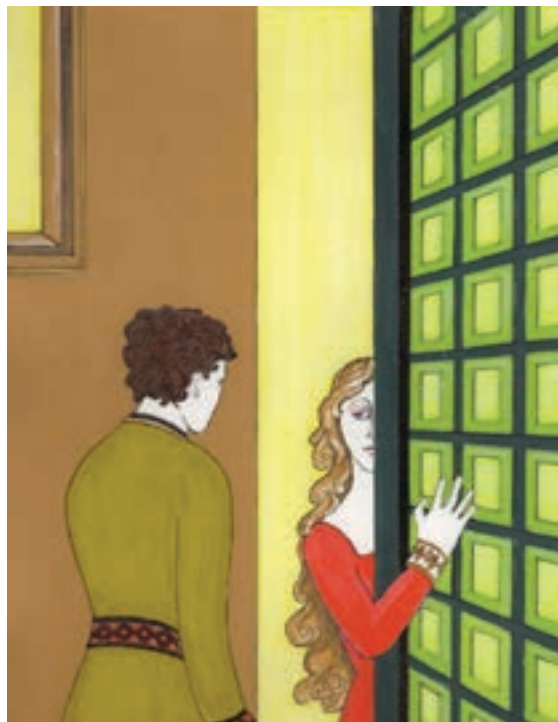


Illustration by Elaine Drew for her graphic novel, "A Knight's Bad Day," 7" x 10" gouache painting The door is opened by a beautiful lady.

Photos provided

The Lamorinda Arts Council is pleased to present a virtual gallery of original illustrations by featured artist and author Elaine Drew through Feb 3. Meet a bevy of colorful characters in Drew's historical fiction graphic novel, "A Knight's Bad Day."

Elaine Drew's love affair with the Middle Ages began when she worked at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. She enjoyed wandering the galleries looking at the luminescent color and gold of Medieval painting. "After I married, I

lived in England for four years, surrounded by history. Our small village was within walking distance of Winchester, the royal seat of the early English kingdom of Wessex." Her graphic novel is set in Wessex in the year 800, her favorite time period. Find out more at [elainedrew.com](http://elainedrew.com).

Meanwhile, in the art gallery at the Orinda Library this month, the Lamorinda Arts Council presents paintings and hand carved bird houses in an exhibit by Linda Sutton, Teresa Onoda, Lois Reynolds Mead, and

Doug Crooks. The exhibit runs through Jan. 28. The gallery is open during normal library hours: Monday to Thursday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Friday to Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., closed Sunday. – S. O'Doherty

An online preview of the exhibit is available at [https://lamorindaarts.org/product-category/orinda-library-online-gallery/?mc\\_cid=8fac84186f&mc\\_eid=69514672a1](https://lamorindaarts.org/product-category/orinda-library-online-gallery/?mc_cid=8fac84186f&mc_eid=69514672a1)

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#### City Council

**Special Meeting:** Tuesday, Jan. 31, 7:00 p.m.

**Regular Meeting:** Tuesday, Feb. 7, 7:00 p.m.

#### Planning Commission

Wednesday, Jan. 18, 7:00 p.m.

#### Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Feb. 8, 6:30 p.m.

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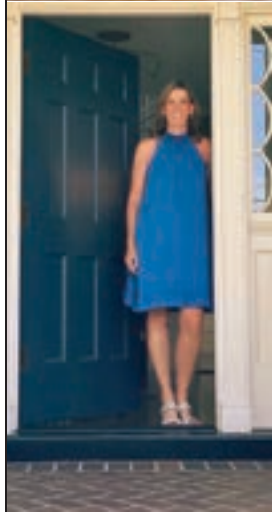
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Ann Newton Cane has devoted herself to community activities and other volunteer work, including service on the College Preparatory School's Board of Trustees; leadership positions in the National Charity League; Parents' Club President at the Orinda Intermediate School; Swimming Chair of the Meadow Swim and Tennis Club; President of the Homeowners' Association of the Grand Lodge in Deer Valley, Utah; and service on the Membership Development Committee at the Claremont Country Club in Oakland.

Ann's close community involvement gives her special insight into what it takes to succeed in today's ever-changing housing market. In 2022 she surpassed \$80 million in sales and retained her status as the largest sales producer in the Golden Gate Sotheby's Lafayette office.

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# Letters to the editor

## Thank you to Lamorinda Community

Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley is very grateful to the Lamorinda Community for its support of our See's Candy Shop this year.

As in previous years, all profits from the See's Candy sales will be reinvested in local community charities.

Gloria Eive  
President,  
Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley

## Orinda School Parcel Tax

At the same time as it is asking Orinda taxpayers for a parcel tax, the Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees continues to show its disdain for those same taxpayers and other members of the public. The OUSD has rejected my requests that members of the public be allowed to comment via zoom at board meetings rather than have to appear in person, because of the difficulty that attendance in person poses for many due to family obligations and because of the three widespread viruses plaguing our community. Also, the OUSD continues to refuse to allow members of the public to see, prior to each meeting, the written comments on agenda items submitted by other members of the public, even though both the Orinda City Council and Orinda Planning Commission allow such access online.

The Board President, Hillary Weiner, VP Cara Hoxie, and Superintendent Aida Glimme, while claiming that a parcel tax is needed to retain and attract teachers, refuse to even put on an agenda for discussion my request that the Board adopt a simple resolution asking the Orinda City Council to adopt an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance. Such an ordinance would require that any new housing project in Orinda include a percentage, set by the Council, of units to be set aside for affordable housing. As defined by state law, a four person household would qualify for such housing with a household income of up to \$171,000. Not only would this help retain and attract teachers, but it would also increase Orinda's diversity. One would think that the OUSD, while asking taxpayers to reach into their pockets, might at least hold a public discussion over an additional way to help retain and attract teachers – one without cost to taxpayers. Lafayette has had such an ordinance since 2016. Moraga is adopting one, and most Contra Costa jurisdictions already have one.

Given the benefit to teachers and the district, the OUSD should adopt a resolution encouraging the Orinda City Council to adopt an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.

Nick Waranoff  
Orinda

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence – we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters must be factually accurate. Lamorinda Weekly reserves the right to refuse publishing a letter submission. Visit [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) for submission guidelines. Email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, 1480 Moraga Road STE C #202, Moraga, CA 94556

# Campaign to save Harvey Ranch a success

... continued from Page A4

A \$550,000 grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation acknowledged JMLT's efforts of continuous preservation to the area; and during the Moraga Town Council's Sept. 14 meeting, members unanimously approved a \$250,000 contribution for the purchase of Harvey Ranch open space (the payment comes from Fund 100 – One-Time Developer Fees, Palos Colorados). Other large individual contributions helped to close the funding gap as the deadline neared.

"At stake was the potential loss of untouched land that will now become a gate-

way to pristine wilderness, a new staging area with trailheads and trail connections, quick access to amazing views and pathways, an enhanced buffer for wildlife, a protected view shed, and a keystone element of the natural environs of Saint Mary's College," said Eukel. "What a wonderful way to start the new year! We are so grateful to the JMLT community for making this possible."

A property dedication and grand opening to the public is being planned for late spring 2023.

For more information about the John Muir Land Trust visit: [jmlt.org](http://jmlt.org).

# Orinda's only concern with new fire code is limitation on traffic calming

... continued from Page A6

MOFD does not object to withdrawing this amendment."

There was no public comment on the item, which was heard very late in the meeting after 11:30 p.m. In council discussion, Vice Mayor Darlene Gee said that she really didn't see anything too problematic with the new code, except the issue of the city having flexibility on traffic calming measures. Gee, who is professionally a transportation engineer, added that she could not un-

derstand why physical traffic calming measures would be an issue for fire equipment.

Mayor Inga Miller agreed that traffic calming measures are really important to create safe driving conditions within the city. She said that she hoped the fire chief will come around on that, and hoped that the fire district will see the wisdom of having traffic calming measures on the city's streets.

Biggs promised to convey the council's thought to the fire district.

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## New location opens for Ballplayers in Moraga



Photo provided

Ballplayers owner Steve Hammond gets help cutting the ribbon at the new location in the Moraga Shopping Center.

Ballplayers in Moraga has expanded and recently hosted a grand opening for its new location at 1460-A Moraga Rd. in the Moraga Shopping Center. The new space has a batting cage and pitching area as well as an open floor plan for training athletes of all ages and sports. They will host indoor birthday parties as well. "It will be known as 'The Bank', as it

was renovated from a former bank into a youth sports facility – where athletes can invest in their physical, social and mental health," owner Steve Hammond said. Find out more at [bayareaballplayers.com](http://bayareaballplayers.com) or email [bayareaballplayers@gmail.com](mailto:bayareaballplayers@gmail.com)

– J. Wake

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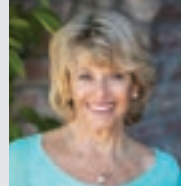
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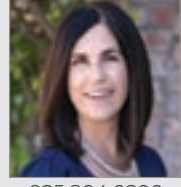
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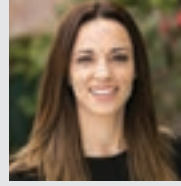
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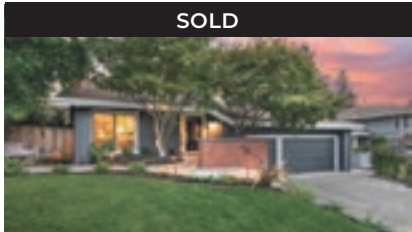
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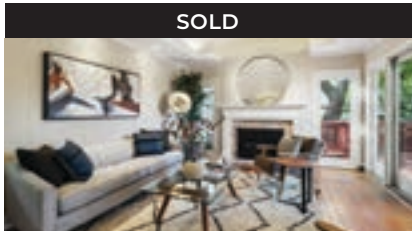
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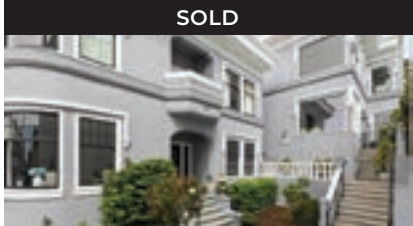
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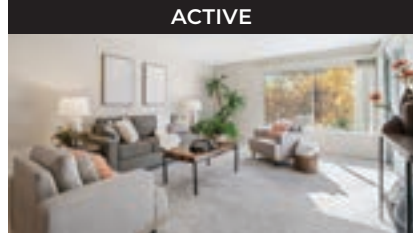
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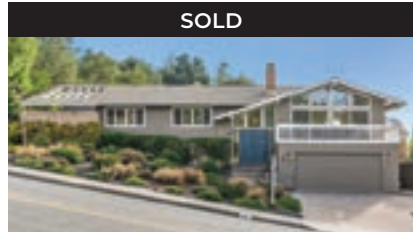
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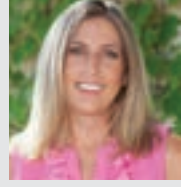
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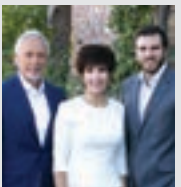
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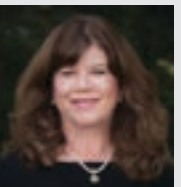
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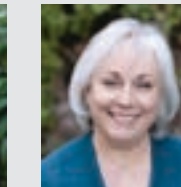
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# ~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

## Miramonte student spreads awareness on Catalan Independence Movement



Photo provided

Inesi (left) talks to former Catalan president Quim Torra (right).

### By Casey Scheiner

Most high school students focus on a mixture of academics, athletics, and social activities. However, one local teenager has an even higher priority: promoting awareness for a major independence movement in Spain.

Ardal Inesi, a junior at Miramonte, recently completed work on his documentary “A Case for Catalan Independence,” which he filmed, narrated and edited.

Inesi was passionate about independence for Catalonia, a region in Northern Spain containing the city of Barcelona, from a young age. His Catalan mother brought him into an extended family passionate about lifting Catalonia from Spanish rule.

Consequently, Inesi is also fluent in Catalan, the primary language of the region.

“A lot of my family lives in Barcelona and its surrounding area, so they all speak Catalan around me,” Inesi said. “My maternal grandfather is a major advocate for Catalan independence.”

Last summer, Inesi followed his grandfather’s connections in this sphere and traveled to Barcelona to speak with many prominent Catalan independence figures. In less than a month, he interviewed three Catalan presidents and three other separatist leaders.

“It was really cool to be in Barcelona talking to people who are so influential in resistance to Spanish control

of Catalunya,” Inesi said. “I also got to go to Belgium to interview an exiled former Catalan president. All of these interviews really put the project in perspective.”

It’s impossible to condense Inesi’s 72-minute documentary into a few sentences, but the crux of his argument revolves around Catalonia’s history and culture being largely independent of those of Spain. Additionally, he defended the ideal of national self-determination and applied this principle to argue for independence, citing mass support for autonomy from Catalan citizens.

“For much of its history, Catalunya has been separate from Spanish affairs,” Inesi said. “Today, Catalans believe it should return to such a system.”

Along with the desire to promote Catalan independence, Inesi recognized the fact that many people are unfamiliar with the unique culture of the region. He sought to change that with this film.

“Most people have no idea how distinct Catalonia’s history and culture are from those of Spain,” Inesi said during the documentary.

The documentary, though a labor of love, was a time-consuming endeavor for Inesi, as turning his interview and narration footage into a compact film was a demanding task.

“I spent what felt like weeks at my computer in my basement grinding my project,” Inesi laughed. “The

toughest part was making subtitles for all of the parts where Catalan was spoken.”

Though his documentary was the culmination of his efforts surrounding Catalan

independence, many in the community already recognized Inesi as a vocal proponent of the cause.

... continued on Page B3

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14 UC DAVIS | 2:00 PM

21 CAL POLY SLO | 1:00 PM

### FEBRUARY

11 CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY | 12:00 PM

11 SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY | 2:00 PM

25 GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY | 1:00 PM

### MARCH

04 BYU | 1:00 PM

25 UC BERKELEY | 1:00 PM

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## Enjoy the soothing scent of baked apples in these delicious buttermilk muffins



Buttermilk Apple Muffins

Photos Susie Iventosch

### By Susie Iventosch

This is another one of those recipes that a friend gave me years ago, and it has sat in my to-do pile for probably the past 15 years or so. Yikes. Sometimes you just need a bit of motivation to pull out the mimeographed pages and start whipping up recipes. I had exactly that just recently with a house full of guests for the New Year's holiday

weekend.

The recipe is from a page in a cookbook that I don't have, but from my friend's hand-written note, it seems to be from Bishop's Pumpkin Farm in Sheridan, Calif., which is right next to Wheatland. This makes me think the recipe dates back to when our kids were going on Halloween field trips in the early 1990s. The pumpkin farm is closed until next fall, but this recipe will tide you over until you

can get there to sample Mrs. B's baked goods, which if this recipe is any indication, are amazing!

What I love about these muffins is how light they are and the fresh apple is so good. We added an extra half cup of chopped apples, plus our own oil-based crumb top-

ping, which we love on these delicious muffins. The recipe only makes 12 regular muffins, so I've already made a second batch inside of two days. I haven't yet doubled the recipe, but I should think that would work just fine. If you try it, let me know how it goes.

You can use your favorite baking apples for this recipe, as none are specified, but I used Honeycrisp and they are really good in the muffins. Also, I like to double this crumb topping recipe and store it in the refrigerator, so when I want to make muffins again, that step is done!

### Buttermilk Apple Muffins

#### INGREDIENTS

##### Muffins

3/4 cup firmly packed light brown sugar  
1/3 cup vegetable oil (I used canola)  
1 egg, beaten  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. nutmeg  
1 1/2 cups peeled and coarsely chopped apples (I used Honeycrisp)  
1/2 cup buttermilk

##### Crumb Topping

1/4 cup all-purpose flour  
1/4 cup light brown sugar  
1/4 tsp. cinnamon  
1/8 tsp. cardamom  
1/8 tsp. all-spice  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/4 cup chopped toasted walnuts (or pecans)  
2 tablespoons canola oil

#### DIRECTIONS

##### Crumb Topping

Prepare crumb topping in advance so you are ready to top the muffins as soon as the batter is ready. To make the topping, simply combine all dries and mix well. Stir the oil in with a fork and mix until crumbly. Set aside. If you decide to double the topping recipe, just store the extra in an airtight container in the refrigerator until ready to use.

##### Muffins

Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a muffin tin with muffin liners. Lightly spray the inside of the liners with cooking spray. (This makes it so much easier to peel the liner away from the muffin when you are hungry!)

In a mixing bowl, combine brown sugar, oil, egg and vanilla and blend well with a fork or whisk. Add flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg, and mix well with a wooden spoon. Stir in apples and buttermilk to combine with the other ingredients.

Distribute the batter into the prepared muffin tins. Then divide the crumb topping evenly over the top of each muffin.

Bake for 18-20 minutes, or until the center of the muffin springs back when touched with your finger. Remove from oven and serve warm or cool and freeze or refrigerate until later.



#### INFO:

<https://www.bishopspumpkinfarm.com/home>

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>



## 'My Sailor, My Love,' a lesson in forgiveness and compassion for human frailty



Photo provided

### By Sophie Braccini

An old man who hides his decrepitude, a daughter burdened by resentment, an older woman who wants to believe in love and acceptance touch each others' lives in the intriguing and poignant Swedish/Irish film, "My Sailor, My Love" opening in Orinda on Jan. 20.

Howard is a retired sea captain and a widower. His life may have been rough, but he has obviously protected himself with a heavy layer of selfishness. His daughter feels she was never seen and loved by the old man she is now visiting frequently while grudgingly trying to manage his life. She hires a maid, Annie, to take care of her father's house. The

charming older woman soon tames the grumpy old man and a romance slowly develops. But this is not to the daughter's liking who has different plans for her father.

Swedish director Klaus Härö wanted to tell a love story that is not a first love, but something happening much later on in life. To do so he chose experienced theater actors who could give the film its subtlety and make it believable to the audience. The cast is top notch.

Each character is well developed and brings something quite unique and complex to the story. The old captain is hiding his inevitable physical and mental decay. His long and rough sea life has transformed the young man in love with his wife he once was. He talks about it with his daughter: "It gets harder and harder to come home, and one day

there is no grace at the gate." Grace happens to also be the name of his daughter. The dead mother's shadow is in the picture. She haunts her daughter and is part of what feed her unresolved grievances. She is hard on herself, she lacks grace in her life. The film dives into a topic that is not easily addressed on the silver screen, how a man has lost the love of his daughter, without anything terribly egregious hidden in their past, and how to live with this loss when mending cannot be performed.

Howard is hard and unreachable to his daughter, but to Annie he is showing his better side and is generous. The director exposes with sensitivity the different sides of human beings. These characters have flaws, these characters have great qualities. The human equation shown here is complex and endearing. Annie

holds one of the keys of the movie when she explains to Grace how she can love her father: because she takes him as he is. She has no demand, no expectation, no grievance, and first and foremost, she does not judge. And this is maybe why, in spite of former mistakes, in spite of a heavy past, in a space of deep acceptance love is still possible.

Even at the end of the movie, the characters' ambiguities and their dark, irreducible parts will not be completely lightened. It is like an Irish sky, with heavy gray clouds that can feel weighty at times but that nonetheless wrap us up in their unspeakable charm.

The movie is brought to Lamorinda for at least a week by the International Film Showcase. It will open on Jan. 20 at the Orinda Theatre. Tickets at [orindamovies.com](http://orindamovies.com).

## Ukrainian-Canadian artist's paintings to be featured at Lafayette's Town Hall Theatre Gallery



Photos provided

### Submitted by Jenny Rosen

The city of Lafayette's Public Art Committee has selected "Movement," a collection of

paintings inspired by the Avant Garde movement in Kyiv by local Ukrainian-Canadian artist

Yana Verba, for exhibit at the Town Hall Theatre Gallery in Lafayette. The exhibition runs Jan. 19 through March 5. There will be a free opening reception Sunday, Jan. 29, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Gallery (3535 School Street in Lafayette). Verba will present an artist talk and a new site-specific chalk installation referencing the massacre at the Donetsk Regional Academic Drama Theater in Mariupol beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Born in Ukraine and immigrating to Canada in 1999, Verba studied at the School of Visual Arts in New York and received a BFA from Ontario College of Art & Design University in Toronto. She grounds her art practice in a language of abstraction, using rhythmic patterns, colors, and movement. Informed by Modernists of the early 20th century, Verba presents a series of paintings inspired by Ukrainian artist and stage designer Vadym Meller's costume

sketches created between 1919-1921 for Bronislava Nijinska's "School of Movement" dance school in Kyiv.

Verba encourages viewers to look back a hundred years ago when, despite the Ukrainian-Soviet War, Kyiv was the Ukrainian capital of arts, theater, and literature. "By looking back in time, I hope the viewer can make a connection to our time, when Ukraine is fighting the Russian invasion that is trying to erase the Ukrainian people. Our culture, our songs, our spirit, and our love for life and freedom will never be erased. People are singing Ukrainian folk songs while sheltering from bombs in the Kyiv subway. Ukrainian youth are getting together to dance, clean up the ruins, and restore communities. Although the war has forced people to move the theatre into the bunkers, Ukrainian arts are still thriving."

# Solo seniors

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson

Forbes magazine, December 2022 issue had an interesting article about the number of people living alone over 50, with the article noting that number to be 26 million Americans. If you or a friend is a “solo senior” without family, it is very important to do some good planning for your next steps and those “what if’s” of a longer life, including considerations for housing, healthcare, and personal safety.

### Housing

The Forbes article mentioned above focused more on the financial impact and the shortage of small space housing more suitable for downsizing seniors. Selling a bigger home and moving into a more manageable space is appealing to many but the inventory is not there to meet the growing needs. I have seen people in our community selling big homes and moving into luxury apartments. Some are choosing retirement living options, if they need more support and desire more socialization. The latter seems to be appealing to younger active solo seniors

who might not have children or spouses. They often choose a retirement community that will meet their needs now and in the future. Those are most often buy-in communities called “Continuing Care Retirement Communities” (CCRC).

### Healthcare

An important document to work on is your Advanced Health Care Directive. Seniors living alone need to have a trusted friend, professional fiduciary, or financial institution on standby to oversee their care if they lose capacity. An Advanced Healthcare Directive serves as a guide for that individual or institution for short-term care or a long, progressive illness. We all have little “quirky” likes and dislikes. Those can range from what you would desire in a care setting to the type of food you never want to see. For instance, I have stated in my documents that I need to see trees in every environment in which I live, or even stay for a short-term stay. I would never want to be served beets or red meat. We need to be specific in our planning and the information we communicate to those who would make decisions for us. These “you” val-

ues and desires need to be written into your legal documents. I highly recommend “Prepare for Your Care” (prepareforyourcare.org) as a place to download an Advanced Health Care Directive document. It is a wonderful document and a great guide for a conversation with the person who would be making decisions for you.

It is also very important for solo seniors to stay healthy – because they are their own watchdog. They do not have a spouse or partner pointing out what they should be doing and many are without adult children. Developing a healthy lifestyle will ensure you are in charge of your own quality of life.

### Safety

Living alone means thinking about safety as well. A brief checklist of some important items that focus on safety: 1) Universal Design within the house or apartment; 2) Having monitors to alert someone you might have had a fall. There are many options in this area. Some will send an alert when you use the bathroom or open the front door; others only send an alert when you fall. 3) Declutter your home to reduce the risk of falls, as well as

to provide a better environment for relaxation and rest. 4) Annual wellness exams – staying on top of possible problems early. 5) Keep a “go to hospital list” with names of doctors, lists of health diagnoses, and all current medications as well as a copy of your Advance Health Care Directive and your POLST (Physicians Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment) form if you have one. Be sure this is posted or visible in your home. Many of my clients have put this in a plastic sleeve and attached it to the refrigerator or a side cabinet. 6) Put together a “Go-Bag” with the essentials you need to take in the event of a fire or earthquake: three days of food, medications, extra pair of glasses, etc.

If you need help designing a “road map” for yourself if you are a solo senior you can have a consultation with a professional Aging Life Care member through Aginglifecare.org. You will want to choose someone with a care management certification and a license in his or her field of expertise – like nursing, social work, or counseling. I am always willing to give you names of fiduciaries, elder law

attorneys, or Professional Aging Life care experts, also called Geriatric Care Managers.

Upcoming class: Feb. 17: Dementia: From diagnosis to family care! For a Zoom link email: LindaFJ620@outlook.com



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989. Eldercare Services is now a division of Home Care Assistance and continues to provide Bay Area families with care management, advocacy, counseling, support groups and education.

# Miramonte student spreads awareness on Catalan Independence Movement

... continued from Page B1

“Ardal would mention Catalonia and its independence movement on an almost daily basis. He would talk about his summer in Catalonia and his talks with the leader of

Catalonia,” Miramonte senior Ricky Davis, a captain for Inesi’s favorite sport of cross-country, said. “At practice he would educate people about its independence movement and would frequently engage in educational debates over

the legitimacy of Catalonia.” Though Inesi’s documentary is now finished, his efforts to raise awareness about the Catalan people’s struggle for independence are anything but over. In addition to future projects, this fall he be-

gan working on an Original Oratory speech for his public speaking class to inform his classmates about Catalan independence. He hopes to take the speech to tournaments in 2023.

“I’m excited to continue

discussing Catalonia and its right to self-determination. Until we get independence, it’s a topic I want to keep bringing people’s attention to,” Inesi concluded.

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## Burton Valley students support Ukrainian refugees in the Bay Area



Burton Valley students with Ami Dodson from JFCS

Photo provided

### Submitted by Mackenzie Preisler

Burton Valley Elementary's annual AIM Book Bonanza was a success again! Each year, the AIM class chooses a cause and donates the money that they make from their annual fundraiser. This year the AIM class donated the money to Jewish Family Services to help the Ukrainian refugees in the Bay Area, hoping to help them after their long journey from Ukraine to flee from the war.

After weeks of collecting gently used children's books, the class had enough books to start pricing and sorting; they were finally ready to start their sale. The prices ranged from 25 cents to \$3. The students also sold handmade origami, rainbow loom bracelets and keychains, bookmarks, as well as raffle tickets, and sports cards. They also had a signed Lady Gaga book bidding, with the winning

bid of \$115.

The classroom was transformed into a book store and sales started on Dec. 7. All the students worked really hard, and all the effort was worth it. When the sale ended two days later, the AIM students counted up the money for a total of \$3,503.61, which was a new record. Not only did the AIM class break the record for the most money raised, but they also broke the record for most books donated from students at Burton Valley Elementary. The remaining books were donated to the Contra Costa WIC program and West County Reads.

The students were filled with joy and pride when they presented the check to Ami Dodson from Jewish Family and Community Services for the Ukrainian refugees. Mrs. Martinson's class is very grateful for all the support and donations from the BVE students. Their book donations and purchases and book donations made all the difference.

## Rotary Club of Moraga continues support for MEF



Photo provided

From left: Pete Alvarez (Campolindo High School principal), Dr. Julie Parks (Moraga School District superintendent), Igor Kipnis (Moraga Rotary co-president), Dr. John Nickerson (Acalanes Union High School District superintendent), Roger Gregory (Moraga Rotary co-president), Ana Moon (Moraga Education Foundation – board of director president)

### Submitted by Hubert Ma

Rotary Club of Moraga continues to support the Moraga Education Foundation by presenting another financial donation after Acalanes Union High School District Superintendent John Nickerson's presentation at the Jan. 10 Rotary meeting. "Rotary is a great partner with our schools. Their support helps us develop the whole child during their academic career," Nickerson stated.

"Donations like Rotary's helps MEF fund the hiring of credentialed science teachers in Moraga's elementary schools," Ana Moon shared at the meeting.

"Moraga Rotary is a service orga-

nization that believes in supporting our local schools via Moraga Education Foundation," stated Moraga Rotary Co-President Roger Gregory. "Our membership along with those that support our various fundraisers like Dinner with Rotary enable us to provide this financial donation," added Moraga Rotary Co-President Igor Kipnis.

Moraga Education Foundation will be one of the benefactors of Rotary's Jan. 24 takeout dinner – additional details, [www.moragarotary-fundraiser.com](http://www.moragarotary-fundraiser.com).

Rotary Club of Moraga ([www.moragarotary.org](http://www.moragarotary.org)) meets every Tuesday at noon both via Zoom and at LaFinestra restaurant (1419 Moraga Way in Moraga).

## Brian South honored by Rotary Club in Scotland



Photo provided

Past President of Rotary Club of Tranent Jim Tait (left) presents the Quaich to Past President of Rotary Club of Moraga Brian South (right) at the Burns Supper in Tranent, Scotland.

### Submitted by Gary Irwin

Moraga Rotarian Brian South was invited to deliver the Immortal Memory speech at the Burns Supper given recently at the Royal Musselburgh in Tranent, East Lothian, Scotland. This dinner is held annually by the Rotary Club of Tranent in honor of the renowned 18th century poet Robert Burns, who is remembered as the Bard of Scotland and whose work had worldwide impact. The annual Burns Supper is also a celebration of Scottish culture, complete with bagpiping, a meal with haggis, toasts, recitations of Burns' poetry, and Scottish musicians and entertainment.

South's speech was carefully re-

searched, and dealt mainly with the poet's popularity in the United States in the mid-1800s. He also donated to the Rotary Club of Tranent an authentic 19th century book of Burns' poetry with an inscription by a daughter as a present for her father in 1888.

South's speech also described interesting details on the connections between Burns and President Abraham Lincoln, who was known to have read and memorized Burns poems and to recite them throughout his life.

Rotary Club of Tranent connected to Moraga when each club hosted Youth Exchange students in their respective countries, and Eilidh Tait, daughter of Tranent Rotary Past President Jim Tait, was sponsored by Moraga Rotary to attend Campolindo for a year. During COVID lockdowns, the two Rotary Clubs renewed their

connection via Zoom, when each club provided a program at one another's meetings. Jim Tait even related the story of their family's grandfather who won the golf Open Championship three times in the late 1800s. Rotary Club of Tranent also generously donated an engraved Quaich, a traditional Scottish drinking vessel which will be awarded by Moraga Rotary to each year's new Club President.

Brian South has Scottish ancestors as a descendant of the Stewart Clan and he wore the appropriate Tartan tie. He was able to spend a few days as a guest of the Tait's, and he enjoyed Scottish hospitality, local cuisine, and unusually dry weather!

## In Memory

### Ruth Cartwright

Nov. 23, 1959 – Oct. 15, 2022



Ruth Cartwright was born on Nov. 23, 1959 in Richmond, California and graduated from Pinole High School. She held a number of jobs before she joined Safeway in 1992 and was very active in her church: Saint Joseph in Pinole. She died suddenly on Oct. 15, 2022.

After losing the love of her life in a tragic motorcycle accident, Ruth raised her only daughter and managed to arrange her work schedule at Safeway so she could always drive her daughter to softball tournaments for over a dozen years. Ruth was devoted to her two grandsons (ages 6 and 12) and had a standing Friday night date with her oldest grandson. Her favorite band was Aerosmith; her favorite song was "Dream On."

Ruth usually worked checkstand No. 3 in the Moraga Safeway across from the self checkout stands. Always cheerful, even at 5:30 in the morning, she checked out her customers with marvelous efficiency and knew many of them by name. She utilized her sense of humor and ready wit to make things go smoothly. She continues to be missed by her coworkers and customers. Below are some comments from some of Ruth's friends and coworkers:

Brenda D: "Ruth and I have been friends for 29 years. We worked together in Orinda and Moraga. Customers still say how sweet she was and how much they still miss her smiling face. She is sorely missed. Rest in peace Ruth. Love you, Brenda."

Danny L: "Ruth was a devoted Raiders fan and she always had a smile on her face."

Tanya G: "She was a lovely woman and what I loved about Ruth the most was that she cared about people."

Ursula S: "When I heard that Ruth had passed away, I was so shocked that I cried. At 62 she was much too young. I love her and miss her."

Jaqueline C: "Ruth and I shared more than just working together, next to each other, every morning – we shared our lives, the joys and troubles. ... I miss her so much."

If you would like to contribute to a GoFundMe for Ruth's daughter and grandchildren, here is the link: [https://www.gofundme.com/f/ruth-cartwright-memorial-fund?utm\\_campaign=m\\_pd+share-sheet&utm\\_content=undefined&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link\\_all&utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_term=undefined](https://www.gofundme.com/f/ruth-cartwright-memorial-fund?utm_campaign=m_pd+share-sheet&utm_content=undefined&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer&utm_term=undefined)

## 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.

**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.

# Saint Mary's Performing Arts welcomes back January Term productions for young audiences

Submitted by Ben Enos

Theatre for youth at Saint Mary's College is back! After a hiatus over the past two years, the Performing Arts Department at Saint Mary's is excited to resume its annual January Term productions for young audiences in 2023. Over the past 20 years, more than 60,000 students have attended these productions.

This year's January production will premiere an original script, "Earthchild

and the Waking Up: An Eco-Drama for Young Audiences." The play tells the story of a young girl who receives a message from the trees – "Help us!" – and sets out on a mythic journey to the Center of Power to relay it. Along the way she makes friends, overcomes obstacles, meets animal allies, is healed by the Mother Tree, has insights about humanity's interdependence with nature, and ultimately passes on her message to the Bigwigs at the Center of Power. Will

it be enough? Will her words fall on deaf ears? Come and find out!

"Earthchild and the Waking Up" will include puppetry, song, music, audience participation, and inventive staging that breaks down the boundaries between the stage and the auditorium. The show's running time will be 60 minutes, with access to an online pre-show environmental literacy workshop created by the Saint Mary's students involved in the production. The

workshop's key theme will be the web of inter-being that connects humans with the rest of nature.

The show will run Jan. 24-27 at 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Admission to those shows is \$8 (all ages). Additional shows will run Jan. 25 at 6 p.m. and Jan. 26 at 4 p.m., and admission to those shows is \$12. For tickets, visit [stmarys-ca.edu/earthchild](http://stmarys-ca.edu/earthchild). For field trip reservations, ADA & other questions, contact Tara Sundy at [tms8@stmarys-ca.edu](mailto:tms8@stmarys-ca.edu).

## Not to be missed

### Art

**Moraga Art Gallery's exhibit** "Light and Fire," opening Jan. 18, features the work of two celebrated member artists from Lafayette: Lucy Beck, an award-winning photographer and ceramicist Donna Arganbright. John Hopper of Walnut Creek is the featured guest artist. A free reception will be held on Saturday, Feb. 4 from 5 to 7 p.m. The gallery, in the Rheem Shopping Center at 432 Center Street, Moraga, is open Wednesday to Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. For more information visit [www.moragaartgallery.com](http://www.moragaartgallery.com) or call (925) 376-5407.

**The Lafayette Public Art Committee** announces the opening of "Movement," an exhibit of paintings inspired by the Avant Garde movement in Kyiv by local Ukrainian-Canadian artist Yana Verba, at the Town Hall Theatre Gallery. The exhibition runs Jan. 18 to March 6. Verba will present a new site-specific chalk installation referencing the massacre at the Donetsk Regional Academic Drama Theater in Mariupol at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 29, as part of an opening reception from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Theatre (3535 School Street in Lafayette). The event is free and opening to the public.

**New exhibition at Valley Art Gallery:** "WINTERMISSION" by Gallery Artists, through Feb. 4. Free, open to the public, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday. Valley Art Gallery: 1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 110, Walnut Creek, [www.valleyartgallery.org](http://www.valleyartgallery.org); (925) 935-4311 or email us at [valleyartgallery@gmail.com](mailto:valleyartgallery@gmail.com)

### Music

**Cantare, an Oakland-based** non-profit community choral organization, presents "Songs by the Beatles," performed by the 20-voice Chamber Ensemble with Director David Morales. A wonderful evening for you and your Valentine! Saturday, Feb. 11, at 7:30 p.m., Lafayette Community Center, Jennifer Russell Auditorium, 500 St. Mary's Rd, Lafayette. General Admission: \$30; Students: \$10. Visit [www.cantareconvivo.org](http://www.cantareconvivo.org) for tickets and more information, including health/safety guidelines. Contact: [info@cantareconvivo.org](mailto:info@cantareconvivo.org), (510) 836-0789.

**"Chopin In Paris,"** conducted by California Symphony's Music Director Donato Cabrera, will be presented Saturday, Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 5, 4 p.m. at the Hofmann Theatre at Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. A 30-minute pre-concert talk and Q&A led by Cabrera will begin one hour before each performance. Information and tickets (\$49-\$79) are available at [CaliforniaSymphony.org](http://CaliforniaSymphony.org).

**Ensemble for These Times** presents "Call for Scores: Solo Piano" on Saturday, Feb. 25, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., at Berkeley Piano Club, 2724 Haste Street, Berkeley. Emerita pianist extraordinaire Dale Tsang returns to celebrate E4TT's 15th anniversary with works chosen from a new Call for Scores for solo piano. Cost: \$0 - \$30. For more info see <https://e4tt.org/solopiano.html> or call (510) 684-0505 or email [info@e4tt.org](mailto:info@e4tt.org).

**Berkeley Chamber Performances** presents Del Sol Quartet on Tuesday, Jan. 31, from 7:30 to 9 p.m., at Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave., Berkeley. Cost: \$35 Regular Admission; \$17.50 Student Admission. For more info see <https://berkeleychamberperform.org/season/2022-2023/del-sol-string-quartet> or call (510) 525-5211 or email [info@bcp1.org](mailto:info@bcp1.org).

**St. Paul's Concert Series** is excited to present MusAlliance Duo, featuring Peter Omelchenko on Domra (mandolin) and Anna Kus-

## Not to be missed

### Theatre

ner on Guitar, in a spectacular performance on Jan. 28, at 7 p.m. Joining this string duo is Marina Tolstova, Soprano Extraordinaire, adding her touch of magic on selected pieces during the performance. 1924 Trinity Avenue, Walnut Creek, Online broadcast: visit [stpaulswc.org/concert-series](http://stpaulswc.org/concert-series) to receive concert link. Donations graciously accepted at the door (avg. \$20/\$10 Students) and in our online registration. All are welcome regardless of donation!

**Town Hall Theatre Company** presents "Nanay," written by Molly Olis Krost, directed by Yari Cervas. Jan. 20 and 21, 27 and 28. Tickets: \$25. Jan. 28 is the Pay-What-You-Can performance. 3533 School Street, Lafayette. 925.283.1557, [www.TownHallTheatre.com](http://www.TownHallTheatre.com).

**Theatre for youth at Saint Mary's College** is back! Our January 2023 production will premiere an original script, "Earthchild and the Waking Up: An Eco-Drama for Young Audiences." The play tells the story of a young girl who re-

ceives a message from the trees — "Help us!" — and sets out on a mythic journey to the Center of Power to relay it. The show will run Jan. 24-27 at 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Admission to those shows is \$8 (all ages). Additional shows will run Jan. 25 at 6 p.m. and January 26 at 4 p.m., and admission to those shows is \$12. For tickets, visit [stmarys-ca.edu/earthchild](http://stmarys-ca.edu/earthchild). For field trip reservations, ADA & other questions, contact Tara Sundy at [tms8@stmarys-ca.edu](mailto:tms8@stmarys-ca.edu).

### Literature

**January 2023 event at Orinda Books:** Saturday, Jan. 28 at 2 p.m. Andrea Mein DeWitt, will discuss her new book, "Name Claim & Re-frame: Your Path to a Well-Lived Life." DeWitt is a life coach and lives in Orinda. Her new book encourages readers to step into their power, their potential, and their truth. 276 Village Square, Orinda, (925) 254-7606, [www.orindabooks.com](http://www.orindabooks.com), [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com)

### Other

**Free Tax preparation** will again be offered by AARP Tax-Aide. The service, provided by volunteer IRS certified tax counselors, is available starting in February. Tax-Aide does not have an income limit, but helps low to moderate income taxpayers of any age, with special attention given to seniors 50 plus. Starting mid-January, appointments and information are available by calling (925) 726-3199 for the Walnut Creek-Rossmoor site; (925) 272-0902 for the Danville-Veterans Memorial Bldg. of SRV site; (925) 973-3250 for the San Ramon Senior Center site. For general Tax-Aide information and other locations, call (925) 726-3199.

**The American Association of University Women Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette branch** (AAUW-OML) will hold its seventh STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Conference on March 25 at Saint Mary's College in Moraga. AAUW-OML welcomes sixth through eighth-grade girls who are interested in learning about STEM to participate in three


## Not to be missed

### Garden

**Moraga Garden Club**—January 19. Dr. Lewis Feldman, PhD. will present "Berkeley's Unexplored Treasures: UC Botanical Garden" via a virtual tour of the UC Botanical Garden, discussing its history, the background on the Garden's special collection, and its future mission which includes education, conservation and research. We are open to the public and welcome new members. Join us for nibbles at 9:30 a.m., Program to follow, at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street. [www.moragagardenclub.com](http://www.moragagardenclub.com)

**Please submit events to:** [calendar@lamorinda-weekly.com](mailto:calendar@lamorinda-weekly.com)

## Lamorinda's Religious Services



**Lafayette United Methodist Church**  
955 Moraga Road 925.284.4765 [thelumc.org](http://thelumc.org)  
**Sunday 10am in person worship**  
We are a church that strives to love as Jesus loves. Our congregation welcomes, includes, and affirms everyone on their journey of faith regardless of race, ethnicity, age, economic status, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

**St. Anselm's Episcopal Church**  
An Open, Affirming & Loving Community  
**In-Person & Virtual service Sun. at 9:00 AM**  
If someone would like to be added to our Zoom invitation please call 925-284-7420 or email [cathy.w@stanselms.us](mailto:cathy.w@stanselms.us)  
682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, [www.stanselms.us](http://www.stanselms.us)

**ORINDA CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH**  
24 Orinda Way (next to the Library)-925-254-4212  
**Sunday Services and Sunday School 10-11 am**  
Informal Wednesday Meeting 7:30 – 8:30 pm  
All are welcome  
[www.christianscienceorinda.org](http://www.christianscienceorinda.org)



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WORSHIP SCHEDULE In person worship at 9:30 a.m. Live stream on [facebook.com/HSLCOrinda/](https://facebook.com/HSLCOrinda/)  
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# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Addition of indoor track fosters growth of SMC's men's and women's track teams



Women's Head Coach Marty Kinsey



Rayna Stanziano (226)

Photos SMC Athletics/Tod Fierner

### By Jon Kingdon

Marty Kinsey's success at Saint Mary's began when he was a student running on the cross-country team from 1997-2001. As the captain of the team, the Gaels would earn its highest finish in program history at the West Coast Conference and NCAA West Region Championships.

When Kinsey returned in 2010 to be the men's and women's cross-country coach, very little had changed from his time as a student. The budget for the men's and women's teams was \$9,500 for the men and \$8,500 for the women, which covered all the operational costs of the teams. "It was more like running a club team with a very small budget," Kinsey said. "I was hired to change the direction of the program and to build it up, which we have been doing each year. My intent was to start a track team even before I was hired and determined what we needed to do to start the program."

Kinsey approached then Athletic Director Mark Orr (now the AD at Sacramento State), with a major presentation to begin the program. "We made a giant proposal, and he was on board with it though we had to rework some of the numbers that I had brought in," Kinsey said. "We studied the track teams in the WCC and showed Mark how the experiences, and competitions those athletes were participating in, attracted the top recruits to those schools."

Kinsey made it clear that if Saint Mary's wanted to be able to recruit the top distance runners, having a track team was essential. "Track is the gold standard in that it's the Olympics and there is no cross country in the Olympics," Kinsey said. "If you can't offer track as a sport, it makes it really hard to recruit top cross-country runners," Kinsey said.

When the track teams began in 2012, it was a slow beginning but a beginning nonetheless. "We had to reach the minimum standards set by the NCAA which was to have at least 14 athletes each on the men's and women's (they had 16) rosters," Kinsey said. "We then had to compete in at least six competitions, and we were then able to send individuals to many more than those six races and travel meets."

With a brand-new team, Kinsey took a unique approach to recruiting athletes that first year. "We sold our recruits by telling them that they had the opportunity to be here at the beginning, to be a part of the process that would build the Saint Mary's track team and when you graduate, you can look back at the success of the program, 10 and 20 years later, taking pride and being able to say that you were the one that started it. Just four years later, we got our first two NCAA qualifiers which was pretty cool."

Over the next 2 1/2 years, Kinsey was able to increase the size of the track team from 28 to 65 though the growth of the team, oddly enough, could be

attributed to the pandemic. "When the coronavirus hit, Saint Mary's enrollment was struggling," Kinsey said. "We were one of the few institutions on the West Coast that was able to practice during the pandemic. We had COVID testing twice weekly and that was just for practice. It was all very regulated, so my associate head coach, Harlan Lopez took over the men's practices and I took over the women's and we got more and more athletes to join the teams. It was then that we unofficially separated the teams so we could have more of a focus on each gender."

With the increased size, came an increased budget from the athletic department and outside sources. With a deal that was struck with Under Armour, providing gear starting in 2015 and outside fundraising, the budget for the track teams increased exponentially, well into six figures.

For Kinsey, the final piece of the puzzle was to have an indoor track team which had become an essential part in recruiting for the cross country and outdoor track teams. This was made clear to Mike Matoso, Saint Mary's Athletic Director, when he was at the 2021 cross-country championship which Saint Mary's hosted, and he saw how well Gonzaga had performed when historically they had not been that good. "I told him their plan was increased scholarship dollars, separating the men's and women's programs, and having an indoor track team," Kinsey said. "Within a year,

Mike made all that happen for us because he is competitive and he wants us to be successful and we both knew that the better our teams are, the better the experience it is for our student athletes."

With the indoor track season beginning this year, Kinsey took the same approach in recruiting that he did when he started their track team, though now there was more

talent to begin with. "Last year, our women's cross-country team shattered all our records and four of them are on our top 10 list of all time and we even beat Cal which had always been a big goal of mine," Kinsey said. "We identified recruits that had an underdog mentality and wanted to be part of the new and the firsts and we're still going through that. We told them that we are looking for athletes that want the unique opportunity to come build the foundation and be part of a team."

There are no indoor track facilities at any college in California, so this first season, the Gaels will be traveling to Seattle and Portland twice and Spokane. "Adding indoors is the final piece to the student-athlete experience for our track athletes in being able to travel and compete more," Kinsey said. "It will definitely help with recruiting for our track and cross-country programs and will dramatically benefit us as we take it to the next level. Our cross-country and outdoor track team is now on a par with Cal-Berkeley, Stanford, USF, Santa Clara, and Gonzaga. With the indoor team, we've been able to add two Division 1 sports to Saint Mary's. We're in the middle process of getting up to 5 1/2 scholarships for the men and 6 1/2 for the women which are very competitive numbers in our conference."

As helpful as it would be to have an indoor track at Saint Mary's, particularly with the

recent rainstorms, Kinsey appreciates the many places that the team is able to train.

"We're pretty lucky with the locations that are available to us to run on such as the Iron Horse Trail, Redwood Park, the Steam Trail and the Lafayette-Moraga Trail," Kinsey said. "If there is too much standing water, we can work out on campus on the roads around the campus loop or the paved trails. When it was really hot in Moraga last fall, we would hop into a van and go to Inspiration Point in Tilden Park where it was only 85-88 degrees which allowed us to run more comfortably."

The women's indoor team will have 25 athletes, two on the heptathlon, three on hurdles and sprints to middle and distance runners. Leading the team is redshirt junior Rayna Stanziano. "Rayna is one of the best runners to ever come out of the East Bay," Kinsey said. "Last season, she was all West Coast Conference and qualified for the NCAAs in the 800, 1,500 and 5,000 meters and was the only female in the entire west region to do that. We're looking for this indoor season to be a learning experience for her and building fitness for the outdoor season. Rayna has a shot at making the NCAAs which requires her to finish in the top 16 in the country in her event."

Harlan Lopez, who was initially hired in 2018 and now exclusively coaches the men's teams, gives all the credit to Kinsey, Matoso, and Kami Cray, the team's sports supervisor, for the growth of the teams. "When we split the programs, we got more funding which really helped us to recruit more athletes and now adding indoor track, it gives our athletes another experience to go compete," Lopez said. "This will allow them to be sharper and more ready when the outdoor season starts."

The men's team is led in the longer distances by sophomores Blaine Reynolds and Curtis Volf and in the shorter distances like the 800 meters by grad student Reinder Prince and freshmen Jason Habash and Noah Pagaran. "We're really a young team but they all should do really well," Lopez said.

"Now that we're in line with the top teams in our conference, it's a good time to be a Gael," Kinsey concluded.

## Classified • Classified • Classified • Classified • Classified • Classified • Classified

### Help Wanted

Biostatistician (Moraga, CA): Provides statistical expertise & input to drug development programs, including the design of translational research / biomarker analysis plans using advanced statistical methodologies. Works closely with scientists in translational research & clinical development to write study protocols & design experiments, collaborate on biomarker strategy, study design, methodology, data analysis, & interpretation. Provides statistical input into the preparation of data package to support the filing of New Drug Application (NDA) / Biologics License Application (BLA) to the FDA, & Marketing Authorization Application (MAA) to the European Medicines Agency (EMA). Develops & reviews statistical analysis plans, including the definitions of derived variables, the structure & content of analysis datasets, statistical analyses, & the design of templates for statistical tables, figures, & listings for clinical study reports. Guides clinical data management & statistical programming members in development standards for building databases, edit checks, & statistical programming specification for data analyses. Monitors project progress & ensures on-time completion. Performs exploratory analysis with knowledge of machine learning & other statistical skills using R & SAS. \$137,500.00/Year. Requires Master of Science degree in Biostatistics with 6 months related experience. Apply to: Clindata Insight Inc., 533 Moraga Rd, Ste 200, Moraga, CA 94556. Attn: HR.

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# Mahaney's seamless transition from Campo to Division I basketball at SMC



#20 Aidan Mahaney

Photo SMC Athletics/Tod Fierner

By Jon Kingdom

For many high school seniors, it can be a difficult time progressing from high school to college, whether it's in the arts, theater, academics or sports. In his time at Campolindo High School, Aidan Mahaney and the basketball team had four years of unparalleled success. The Cougars had a composite 96-15 record, a state championship, a co-state championship and in his senior year, Mahaney was named the Bay Area Player of the Year and he was selected to MaxPreps's All-state team.

It would not be an overstatement to describe Mahaney's passage to Saint Mary's College as seamless, athletically and academically. In six of the first 10 weeks of basketball season, Mahaney has been named the freshman of the week by the West Coast Conference. After completing his first semester with the Gaels, Mahaney downplayed the effort necessary to keep up his academics and play for a Division I basketball team. "It's good and a little busy balancing basketball and school," Mahaney said. "All in all, I enjoyed it."

Mahaney, a communications major, credits Campolindo for his handling the academic demands at Saint Mary's. "I really enjoyed my time at Campolindo," Mahaney said. "The academics were amazing and coming to Saint Mary's has been easier for me than other people because of the academic foundation I had there but more so for me was my becoming a better person."

Mahaney learned quickly how different it was playing at the college level. After scoring 25 points in the opening game against Oral Roberts, he followed that up with a 3-point game against Vermont, hitting only one of six shots. "In high school, you can get an easy game, but you get no off nights in college," Mahaney said. "We talk about being an everyday guy because you're always going to be playing against a team that can beat you, so I have been focusing on that and being consistent."

With the help of two former Saint Mary's guards on the staff, Mickey McConnell who was the WCC player of the year as a senior and Joe Rahon who was named West

Coast Conference Defensive Player of the Year, Mahaney has been able to improve his offensive and defensive skills.

"I didn't fully understand how beneficial it would be to have two former point guards on the staff," Mahaney said. "I watched Joe (2014-2017) when he was playing, and Mickey (2007-2011) was the first Saint Mary's player that I remembered watching in person. They have so much knowledge and they have been a great help to me and are helping me get through my journey. I couldn't be happier that they are here."

In Mahaney's first nine games, he averaged 13.0 points per game, connecting on 38.3% of his shots. At that point, Mahaney was moved into the starting lineup and in the next 11 games, he has averaged 16.9 points/game and has connected on 52.4% of his shots, raising his season average to 15.2 with the Gaels winning 10 of those games.

It's Mahaney's ability to score that led head coach Randy Bennett to put him in the starting lineup. "We needed his shooting on the floor," Bennett said. "Aidan's been playing well, and he's earned it. He's a good teammate and only cares about winning. He doesn't get caught up in all that other stuff. There are going to be a lot of things brought up about his scoring as a freshman and a lot of comparisons being made but all he's really keeping track of are the wins and losses. He's a really good worker. We have a day off but he won't take the day off and most guys aren't like that. He understands the value of hard work."

Former Saint Mary's and current NBA players, Patty Mills and Matthew Dellavedova played for Bennett and he sees a key characteristic they all share. "Confidence," Bennett said. "Patty and Delly had all the intangibles. Aidan has the confidence piece. He's seen all the good ones going back as far as the fifth grade. It's not like he's wondering if he can play."

Confidence in his ability to put the ball in the basket, was never something that Mahaney was short of and that has carried over to Saint Mary's. "It is a little bit harder because you have bigger guys at the rim, but I also think with our offense and with Coach McConnell calling

many of our plays, our offense has been putting me in good positions to shoot," Mahaney said. "There's a lot more action in our offense which gives me more of a running start and an advantage into the ball screen so although it can be harder to get off a shot, I'm also playing with better players and really good coaches who make the work load a lot easier for me by giving me good plays and surrounding me with good shooters."

McConnell, who was a teammate of Mills and Dellavedova their first years at Saint Mary's, is able to draw comparisons with Mahaney. "They're all unique in their own way but they all have a lot of confidence and it's not just a false confidence," McConnell said. "Aidan should just keep getting better as he gets more games under his belt. He does not get down when he has a bad streak. Against Wyoming, he started out 0 for 6 and then hit his next five shots. As long as he's playing the right way and shooting the right shots, he has the ability to get back on track."

Under coach Steven Dyer at Campolindo, defense was stressed but it's still been an adjustment for Mahaney to play in Bennett's program. "I wasn't aware of how detailed things were going to be," Mahaney said. "Coach Dyer is a defensive minded coach first as is Coach Bennett. There are a lot of little adjustments I've had to pick up, but the coaches have done a really good job in teaching me how to play defense."

It's just another area where Bennett is looking for Mahaney to keep learning. "For a freshman, Aidan's a pretty good defender but he's got to keep improving," Bennett said. "He wants to be the guy that we don't have to hide on defense, but he has to continue to improve and we're trying to get him there. At this point, he has the advantage of getting trial by fire. He'll fail but he's going to get thrown right back out there. That being said, Aidan is a pretty good defender but good is not going to get it for what he's trying to do."

Mahaney does not argue with Bennett's assessment: "I can improve in every area. My goal is to improve defensively because it's such a huge part of what we do here. I want to become a really good defender, but I can say that for every aspect of the game. Every part of my game has a long way to go. As I improve, our team can improve." Since Mahaney became a starter, Saint Mary's average points per game has gone from 62 to 71.8.

Equally important to Bennett is Mahaney's maturity and leadership. "Aidan has been a very good leader for someone his age and that was a big reason why we recruited him," Bennett said. "It's tricky when you're a freshman and you already have good leadership on the team. You have to use your leadership, but you can't come in and start barking and stepping on toes and we've talked about things like that. Aidan knows how to make people feel good about themselves and how to build his teammates' confidence."

The respect that Mahaney has for his teammates has allowed him to avoid any such issues. "Logan Johnson, Alex Ducas and Kyle Bowen have

been like brothers to me," Mahaney said. "I don't believe I could have a better group to lead us. Playing with Logan has been a blessing for me. There are few people that can give me better advice than him. Besides helping me on offense and defense, if I'm not playing that well, he's right there in my ear giving me positive words to keep me going, even helping me to handle things off the court. I've known Luke Barrett since third grade and it's great to have a lifelong friend in Cade (Coach Bennett's son) to be on the team with me. I've enjoyed playing with Augustus Marcelionis in the backcourt because I feel our games complement each other."

Mahaney had the opportunity to attend any school in the nation but opted for the short trip to Moraga. "I'm very close to my family," Mahaney said. "They are my biggest fans and I'm a big fan of my oldest brother Noah. Seeing his face at every game along with my parents means a lot to me. Plus, whenever my family comes out, Coach Bennett makes sure to say hello to them."

Having a number of players on the Gaels roster from Australia and Lithuania has provided Mahaney with an exposure to different cultures. "My mom wanted me to experience the world, and I

have been able to do that here. Because of the diversity of our roster, I've been exposed to more culture than you would think a kid from Orinda would be."

Bennett has had numerous players go on to play professionally in the NBA and internationally, and is aware of Mahaney's longtime goal to play professionally and he keeps it in perspective. "That's easy to say and hard to do," Bennett said. "One thing for sure, Aidan will put in the work, and I can't say that about all the guys. He understands how hard it is and he will put the time in because basketball is so important to him."

With that goal in mind, Mahaney has had no second thoughts about becoming a Gael and playing for Bennett. "I've been very happy with my decision to come to Saint Mary's," Mahaney said. "My relationship with Coach Bennett goes back a long way and he's as much as I could hope for from a head coach. He knows my goals and he has been holding me to high standards. He's not about a single game or a good practice but it's always a matter of us getting better and reaching our goals. I came here to get better, and I can say that he's been a huge part of that development."

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# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 16 Issue 24 Wednesday, January 18, 2023



The Real Estate Quarter in Review

read on Page D4

*Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

## Stunning storms and 2023 Garden Trends, Part two



Camellias are blooming.



The color of the year, orange calendulas offer sunshine in the rain.



Madeira and sage are happy bedmates.

Photos Cynthia Brian

**By Cynthia Brian**

*“Hope and faith flower from the cheerful seeds of the old year to the sprouting garden of the new year's dawn.” ~ Terri Guillemets*

For the past three-plus weeks, we have endured intense storms (bombogenesis) with strong winds and extreme precipitation. Substantial atmospheric rivers caused flooding, mudslides, debris flows, and power outages. Rock-filled dry creeks are raging, trees have been uprooted, and many residences required sandbags as protection from the heavy showers.

I am grateful for the rain and only wish I had personal reservoirs and underground cisterns to capture the run-off as my barrels and

buckets are overflowing. Despite the torrents, the drought is not over. We need more rain.

Weeds and seeds are sprouting everywhere. On my hillside, orange and yellow self-seeded calendula plants are blooming while poppy plants are peaking through the soggy soil. I have begun weeding daily, even in the downpours, as the small seedlings are so much easier to pull. Bruce Macler, a regular reader of Digging Deep and an Ambassador for MOFD's Fire Adapted Community program wrote me to encourage gardeners to start pulling out non-native, invasive, flammable, and difficult-to-control Brooms including Cystisus, Gentista, and Spartum while the soil is soft.

... continued on Page D8



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## Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	12	\$725,000	\$6,300,000
MORAGA	4	\$1,400,000	\$1,925,000
ORINDA	10	\$1,600,000	\$3,750,000

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

- 911 Anita Court, \$1,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 1974 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 11-29-22, Previous Sale: \$590,000, 12-19-01
- 1000 Dewing Avenue #406, \$725,000, 1 Bdrms, 943 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 12-05-22
- 2 Harper Court, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2998 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 12-09-22
- 9 Joplin Court, \$1,775,000, 4 Bdrms, 2002 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-02-22
- 26 Julie Highlands Court, \$2,175,000, 4 Bdrms, 3813 SqFt, 1997 YrBlt, 12-09-22, Previous Sale: \$1,582,000, 03-16-17
- 210 Lafayette Circle #302, \$2,101,000, 2 Bdrms, 1658 SqFt, 2021 YrBlt, 12-02-22
- 3940 Los Arabis Drive, \$6,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 5255 SqFt, 2021 YrBlt, 12-09-22, Previous Sale: \$1,475,000, 06-13-17
- 1845 Reliez Valley Road #A, \$1,461,500, 3 Bdrms, 1870 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-28-22, Previous Sale: \$1,075,000, 08-13-20
- 3276 Vals Lane, \$1,657,500, 3 Bdrms, 1833 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-01-22, Previous Sale: \$1,275,000, 08-11-14
- 9 Warwick Court, \$1,850,000, 4 Bdrms, 2003 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-01-22
- 4006 Woodside Court, \$1,833,000, 4 Bdrms, 2816 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-07-22
- 4030 Woodside Court, \$1,835,000, 5 Bdrms, 2823 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 11-30-22, Previous Sale: \$1,660,000, 02-04-20

### MORAGA

- 774 Country Club Drive, \$1,400,000, 2 Bdrms, 2079 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-30-22
- 83 Greenfield Drive, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2531 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-08-22
- 36 Greenfield Drive, \$1,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 2474 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-09-22
- 48 La Salle Drive, \$1,925,000, 3 Bdrms, 2187 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-08-22, Previous Sale: \$48,500, 11-29-22

### ORINDA

- 718 Ironbark Court, \$1,765,000, 5 Bdrms, 3266 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 12-09-22
- 23 La Fond Lane, \$3,750,000, 5 Bdrms, 4170 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 12-09-22, Previous Sale: \$1,357,500, 12-13-12
- 11 Los Altos Road, \$2,193,000, 4 Bdrms, 3015 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 11-30-22, Previous Sale: \$600,000, 06-01-90
- 253 Manzanita Drive, \$1,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 2591 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-06-22, Previous Sale: \$1,862,000, 02-04-21
- 407 Miner Road, \$3,705,000, 3 Bdrms, 4213 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 12-06-22, Previous Sale: \$1,850,000, 08-20-12
- 499 Miner Road, \$1,899,000, 4 Bdrms, 2334 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-01-22, Previous Sale: \$949,000, 04-01-03
- 589 Tahos Road, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 2503 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-02-22
- 8 Tappan Court, \$3,125,000, 4 Bdrms, 3424 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 12-02-22, Previous Sale: \$2,265,000, 08-26-20
- 52 Via Floreado, \$2,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 3176 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 11-28-22
- 30 Wilder Road, \$2,575,000, 4 Bdrms, 3479 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 12-09-22, Previous Sale: \$1,912,000, 04-06-18

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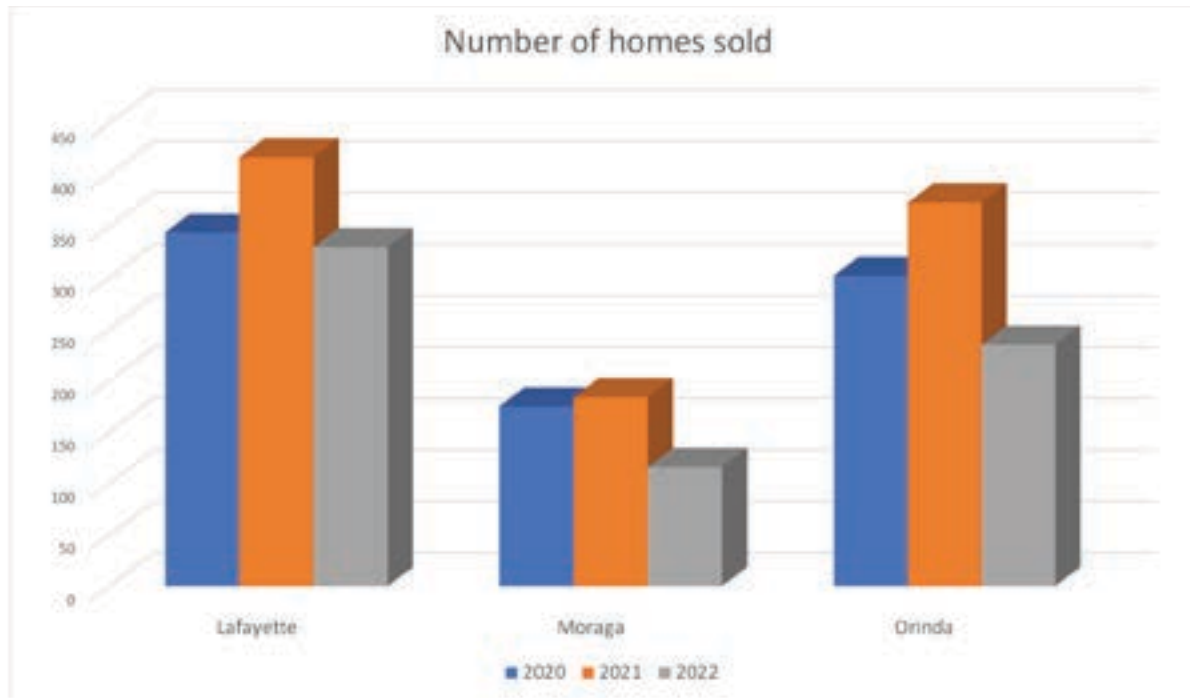


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Based on information from the Contra Costa Association of REALTORS (alternatively, from the Paragon MLS) as of 12/1/22 (date the AOR/MLS data was obtained). All data has not been, and will not be, verified by broker or MLS. All information should be independently reviewed and verified for accuracy. Compass is a licensed real estate broker (01527235) in the State of California and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only. Information is compiled from sources deemed reliable but is subject to errors, omissions, changes in price, condition, sale, or withdraw without notice. No statement is made as to accuracy of any description. All measurements and square footages are approximate. Exact dimensions can be obtained by retaining the services of an architect or engineer.



## The Real Estate Year in Review



### By Conrad Bassett, Licensed Real Estate Broker and CRP, GMS-T

This past year was an interesting year for buyers and sellers of residential real estate in Lamorinda. The first half of 2022 started very strong and then changes came as interest rates increased steadily throughout the last half of the year.

Sales volume was much lower in each community and average prices increased in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda.

Homes stayed on the market for a similar limited time like in 2021 and the majority of homes still sold at or above their final asking price.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported for closings Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2022, 330 single family homes closed in Lafayette versus 417 in 2021. There were 344 in 2020. For the 330 reported closings, sales prices ranged from \$655,000 to \$12 million and the average time on market was 17 days, similar to the 16 days in 2021 and 19 days in 2020.

The average sales price was \$2,456,834.

This was a large increase from the \$2,124,266 in 2021. It was \$1,916,042 in 2020, \$1,789,012 in 2019, \$1,736,519 in 2018. The average price has more than doubled in the last decade.

The average sales price was about 107% of the final list price which in 2022 was \$2,293,809. This comes from a combination of properties being listed well below their actual value and in some cases “bidding wars” that pushed up prices. There was one Lafayette foreclosure sold on the MLS.

Only seven homes closed below \$1 million ... the same as in 2021.

In Moraga there were 116 single family closings in 2022. There were 184 single family closings in 2021 and 175 single family closings in 2020. Prices ranged from \$1,350,000 to \$3,625,000. The average sales price was \$2,214,037. This was the first year that the average price in Moraga exceeded \$2 million. In 2021 it was \$1,926,353. In 2020 it was \$1,590,853, \$1,486,327 in 2019 and \$1,485,713 in 2018. As in Lafayette, the average home price has more than doubled in the last decade.

The average number of days on market in 2022 was 12. In 2021 it was 14. As in 2021,

the average home sold for 109% of its asking price. The average list price was \$2,013,167 so the average home sold for about \$200,000 above asking. There were no REO properties that closed on the MLS and no short sales.

In Orinda the number of single-family closings was 235 versus 373 a year ago. The reported sales ranged in price from \$875,000 to \$6.75 million with an average price of \$2,291,847. In 2021 it was \$2,187,385. In 2020 it was \$1,889,942. In 2019 it was \$1,629,030 and in 2018 it was \$1,729,306. Again, the average sales price has more than doubled in the last 10 years. The average market time was 22 days – up from 17 days a year ago.

The average sales price was an average of 106.4% of the final list price. A year ago it was 107% of the final list price for the reported sales. There were no REO (bank owned) sales in Orinda in 2021.

There were no reported sales in Canyon in the MLS in 2022.

On an average price per square foot basis for reported sales in 2022, Lafayette homes sold for \$945.10, well above the \$823.60 in 2021.

In 2022, Moraga homes sold for \$872.73 per square foot. In 2021 it was \$775.04 per square foot. It was \$644.18 in 2020.

In Orinda last year it was \$862.26. In 2021 it was \$797.26.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had 34 closings – down from 36 closings in 2021. Sales prices ranged in 2022 from \$623,485 to \$2.6 million. Moraga had 81 closed units – down from the 118 in 2021. Sales ranged from \$340,000 to \$2.1 million. This includes “attached” homes in Moraga Country Club. Orinda had 16 closings up from 13 in 2021. Four of these were in the complexes on Brookwood Road and the others in Orindawoods. They sold from \$460,000 to \$2.25 million.

It should always be noted that there are also a few direct sales that do not go through the MLS and they are not reported here. These are usually sales between private individuals.

... continued on Page D6

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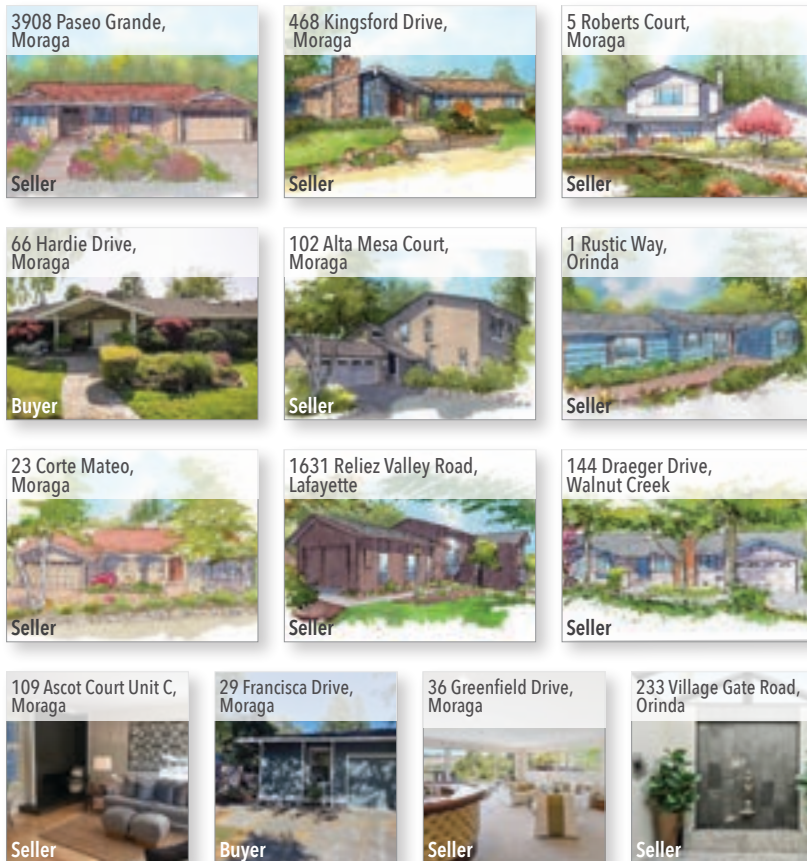
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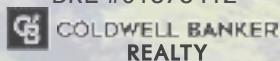
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## The Real Estate Year in Review

... continued from Page D4

As of Jan. 7, there were only 17 dwellings under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined, with asking prices of \$599,000 to \$3.925 million. It should be pointed out that there are no REOs and no short sales. Prices have continued to rise over the last few years and more owners now have equity in their homes and have not had to go the short-sale process or face foreclosure.

A comparison of year-end inventory in the three communities combined shows 38 homes on the market. Last January there were 18 homes on the market. Seasonally the biggest inventory is in the spring and early summer, however this current number may point to a year with additional buying opportunities. The current asking prices range from \$575,000 to \$9.995 million in the three communities combined.

In Lamorinda in 2022, 118 homes sold for over \$3 million! In Lafayette alone 63 sold for \$3 million or more in 2022.

Mortgage rates have been steadily climbing since they reached historic lows. Corporate relocations have increased as many companies want their staff to be in their destination offices rather than working remotely from their departure locations. We have not seen many outbound relocations for people working for companies who have announced that their corporate headquarters will be moving out of the state.

One other factor that is and will affect the markets will be the reluctance of those who financed or refinanced at rates below 3% to want to make discretionary moves and pay rates of twice as much as they have today. This will limit supply.

The East Bay communities like Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda as well as Piedmont and several neighborhoods in Oakland and Berkeley continue to benefit from their proximity to San Francisco where prices remain very high. Comparably speaking, the East Bay is still relatively more affordable and many of the buyers in the East Bay have come from the peninsula and Silicon Valley and San Francisco.



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

### **Stunning storms and 2023 Garden Trends, Part two**



The citron lemon (*Citrus medica*) is the original citrus fruit from which all lemons have been cultivated.



The architectural elegance of a bare Pistache tree in winter.

Photos Cynthia Brian

.. continued from Page D1

For those big broom plants that are difficult to eradicate, MOFD has a special tool available to lend to the public which will pull out these unwanted invaders, including the taproot. Contact MOFD to borrow this useful device. Thank you, Bruce, for the nudge to work on making our gardens fire safe while it is still winter.

In my last column, I discussed popular trends predicted for 2023 by the Garden Media Group with suggestions as varied as vertical gardening to the age of 100 being the new 50!

([www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1623/Digging-Deep-with-Goddess-Gardener-Cynthia-Brian-2023-Garden-Trends-Part-1.html](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1623/Digging-Deep-with-Goddess-Gardener-Cynthia-Brian-2023-Garden-Trends-Part-1.html))

Gardening at age 100 will require raised beds to avoid having to bend over as well as provide a manageable height for wheelchairs. This year, classic columns, statues, boxwood hedges, and iconic Greek gardens offer inspiration, especially with Gen Z. Stone walls, archways, and olive trees are in demand. For a timeless arrangement, roses, agapanthus, cyclamen, and water-wise succulents are included in designs as key plants. A staple of Greek design is gravel gardens, excellent choices for large and small spaces, requiring minimal maintenance in drought times.

Arbors have graced gardens throughout history. They provide shade and add a focal point to any landscape design. Although Greek decor will be progressively popular, when considering an arbor, select one that will complement the style of your home and garden. Choose durable materials that will withstand the weight of vines.

Climate action is also addressed in the trend report. The first hardiness zone map was drawn in 1960 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The country is half a zone warmer since the last map was updated in 2012 indicating that the climate velocity of heat will increase 13 miles per decade. Our earth's climate is projected to warm by an additional 11 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of this century. Planting climate-resilient trees will be one way to combat this warming planet. Reforestation produces clouds that cool the climate. Trees sequester and store carbon, conserve energy through their shade, decrease stormwater runoff, filter air pollutants, and reduce urban heat. It is critical to plant the correct trees in the correct places to increase biodiversity and resilient ecosystems. Hiring a gardening coach or arborist for specific zip codes will become increasingly important.

Orange is the designated color of the year. Orange has spiritual connotations deeply rooted throughout history. In Buddhism, it is the color of perfection and illumination. In Confucianism, it is the color of transformation. In Hinduism, Krishna's dresses are orange. In Western culture, orange is considered earthy, amusing, exciting, and warm. It is also the preferred pigment for prison apparel. Showcasing plants with orange or terra cotta hues will be the rage in garden centers this year.

Although we don't need to implement suggested trends, it's always beneficial to understand what is happening in the world. With a new year ahead of us, we can plan how we want to spend the next 11 months and how we want our landscapes to look and operate.

... continued on Page D10



A waterfall on Cynthia's property.

Photos Cynthia Brian



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**Plump purple-black olives on the tree**

Photos Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page D1

Attract wildlife, especially birds, to your property by enticing them with native plants, trees, shrubs, and flowers. These will provide a consistent source of food throughout the year. Hang feeders, nesting boxes, fountains, and birdbaths to welcome these avian guests who will pollinate and protect your yard.

What's happening on my property right now? Listening to the cascading waterfalls, thunderous creeks, and croaking frogs brings joy to my heart. Watching the birds find shelter throughout my landscape indicates these feathered friends call my garden home. Newts and salamanders are frequenting my pond. My camellia tree is full of buds and blooming. Pink Bergenia brightens the understory of shrubs. The 37-year-old olive tree boasts big black olives, although I am not



**Greek fountains and ornamentation are popular this year.**

planning on harvesting them. The hillsides are carpeted with sprouts of wildflower seeds scattered in the fall. Sage and Madeira are dazzling companions. The grass is emerald with new growth. Deciduous trees fascinate with branches of architectural interest. Lemons, limes, and tangerines knocked out of trees by the rains are gathered daily to use in the kitchen. The ground is saturated and unable to drain quickly. Retaining walls, gravel walks, and sandbags are protecting my home from the deluge. Thousands of narcissi blossoms scent the air. The heavy pruning of rose bushes will commence soon.

Indeed, with the stunning storms, hope and faith flower from the cheerful seeds of the old year to the sprouting garden of this new year's dawn.

I am grateful. Stay safe and weather the storms.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy January!



**Cynthia Brian wishes you a healthy, happy, prosperous, and golden New Year!**

Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian 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). Her newest children's picture book, No Barnyard Bullies, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures is available now at [www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store](http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store) For an invitation to hang out with Cynthia for fun virtual events, activities, conversations, and exclusive experiences, buy StarStyle® NFTs at <https://StarStyleCommunity.com> Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) <https://www.GoddessGardener.com>

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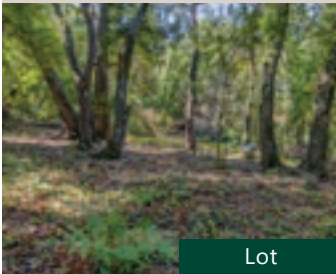
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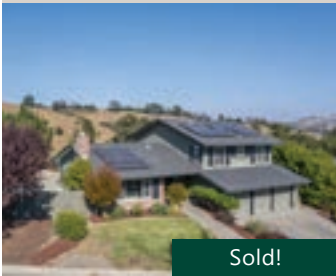
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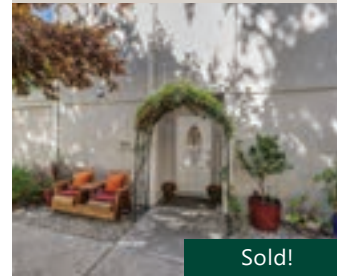
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