

greet LAFAYETTE

THE LONG GAME

Acalanes Football, Beyond Friday Nights



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17th Annual Senior Symposium SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 8:30am - Noon

UNDERSTANDING ALZHEIMER'S, DEMENTIA AND MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT:

TOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Bruce L. Miller, M.D.

A. W. and Mary Margaret Clausen Distinguished Professor of Neurology
and director of the UCSF Edward and Pearl Fein Memory and Aging Center
Memory, Aging and Alzheimer's Disease: What We Know Today and What's Ahead

Linda Fodrini-Johnson, M.A.

Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI): From Anxiety to Hope-Taking Positive Action Through Lifestyle Changes

George Noceti

Senior Vice President, Wealth Advisor, Morgan Stanley
Funding Dignity: Financial Planning for Alzheimer's, Dementia and Cognitive Decline

NEW LOCATION: St. Perpetua Catholic Church, 3454 Hamlin Road, Lafayette
Visit www.CFLafayette.org for updated program information as it becomes available.

Join the Community Foundation of Lafayette for its 17th Annual Senior Symposium on Saturday, September 26

Hear from leading experts as they share the
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Hello Lafayette!

September is an exciting time of year! For many, it marks a fresh start to school, and for business owners, it's a time to reenergize and plan for the coming year.

This month, our cover story takes you inside the **Acalanes Dons football program**, where the lessons extend beyond the field.

You'll also meet **brothers Jesse and Josh Christensen, founders of Christensen Brothers Construction**, and learn how a childhood love of building grew into a business rooted in craftsmanship, trust and lasting relationships. We hope you enjoy their story, along with the many other features in this issue.

We're looking ahead to our **November issue**, where we'll recognize Veterans Day with stories

from our community. We invite you to nominate a local veteran or tell us about an organization or community effort that honors or supports veterans. **Send us your idea at Lamorinda@n2co.com by September 20.**

Warmly,

Your *Greet Lafayette* Team
Lamorinda@n2co.com
GreetLafayette.com

P.S. As *Greet Lafayette* grows, we're always looking to introduce readers to outstanding local businesses. If there's a Lafayette business you think deserves to be featured, we'd love to hear from you!



Share a Veterans Day story for our November issue. Email us at Lamorinda@n2co.com.

Greetings from Mayor Anduri



The City has begun work on a plan that will guide the future of our downtown. We currently have around 10,000 housing units in Lafayette. The state requires us to have zoning in place to allow for an additional 2,114 units to be built. The Housing Element that the City adopted to comply with this requirement calls for most of those units to be in multi-family developments along Mt. Diablo Boulevard. This could double the amount of housing in our downtown and along the Mt. Diablo Boulevard corridor.

We must thoughtfully plan for the impact of those potential units. The City has retained consultants to conduct what we refer to as the Mt. Diablo Boulevard Multi-Modal Mobility Study. The purpose of this urban planning and transportation study is to reimagine or reconfigure our downtown and the entire corridor so that residents moving into new units and current residents alike can minimize their use of personal automobiles when carrying out daily activities.

This is our opportunity to consider ways to make it easier and more pleasant to get around on bicycle or on foot, or by using shuttles or autonomous vehicles. It is also a chance to increase the vibrancy of our downtown so that our small businesses thrive and people of all ages look forward to spending time downtown. Finally, it is an opportunity to rethink emergency and evacuation routes.

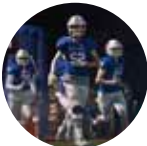
Work on the study began in July, and we anticipate it will be completed by the end of 2027. There will be plenty of opportunities for public input, and I hope you will participate.

Carl

Please let me know if you have suggestions for future topics for the Mayor's column at canduri@lovelafayette.org.

YOUR GREET LAFAYETTE CONTRIBUTORS & TEAM

Thank you to everyone who made this special issue possible!



Acalanes Football
Student Life



Hank & Frank Bicycles
Meet Your Neighbor



Andrée & Austin Hurst
Front Porch Music
Charitable Passions



Le Pit Club
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Stella & Tanq
Pets With Personality



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Hello Lafayette!
Community Spirit



Kevin Hamilton & John Crossley
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Carl Anduri
Mayor of Lafayette



Christensen Brothers Construction
Business Spotlight



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You Are Invited!

We invite business owners and professionals, and Lamorinda residents to join us for the following social networking opportunities. Please plan to join us!

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 — Greet Happy Hour (5 - 7 pm) | Canyon Club Brewery, 1558 Canyon Rd., Moraga

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 — Greet Networking Lunch (11:30 am - 1 pm) | Social Bird, 3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7 - Greet Happy Hour (5 - 7 pm) | Western Flyer Brewing, 3660 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28 - Greet Networking Lunch (11:30 am - 1 pm)
Chef Chao, 343 Rheem Blvd., Moraga

BY INVITATION
Greet Gatherings
All *Greet Lafayette* and *BeLocal* business partners are invited to attend. We currently come together four times a year at Local Vines to mingle and engage in conversations that more intentionally and creatively connect and bridge our businesses. Our next one is on September 24. Email Christine.Raymond@n2co.com to learn more about these invite-only gatherings

Greet Restaurant Tastings
Residents and participating business partners come together to make friends and enjoy delicious food! Residents can email Lamorinda@n2co.com to be added to the invitee list. Select business partners will be invited individually. We're in the midst of planning two now!

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STUDENT LIFE

Varsity and JV players sharpened their fundamentals at football camp in Lake Tahoe this summer.



THE LONG GAME

FROM FRESHMAN YEAR TO FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS — AND BEYOND

At Acalanes, running onto the field on Friday nights is a dream years in the making for many players. But it's just one part of a longer story. Every summer, a new group of freshmen joins the football program, some putting on pads for the first time. They come to learn the fundamentals, but quickly discover they're becoming part of something bigger than themselves.

For varsity and junior varsity players, summer includes training camp in Lake Tahoe, where long days of practice, scrimmages and shared meals help turn teammates into a team.

Head Coach Joel "Coach Blue" Isaac says that's exactly the point. "It's easy to get caught up in the X's and O's of it all. But the true purpose of our program is to raise good men. From the moment they join us, players and families learn that the team's values far outweigh stats and individual accolades. It's about learning to be a great teammate."

The Acalanes coaching staff sees football as a classroom: "We want our players to trust our staff and one another, be vulnerable enough to ask for help, fight through adversity, and hold themselves and each other accountable."

Those lessons become the team's culture, passed from one class to the next. This season, senior captains Finn Rivera, Tyler Winkles and Grant Condy are taking the lead.



Head Coach Joel "Coach Blue" Isaac puts Luke Dafferner, Dylan Teay, and Justin Davis through summer drills.

"I looked up to the varsity players and hoped that one day I would have the opportunity to be in their position," Finn said. "The players who came before us helped establish the standard and tradition of Acalanes football, and being able to

"THE TRUE PURPOSE OF OUR PROGRAM IS TO RAISE GOOD MEN." —COACH BLUE



The Dons honor the flag before every kickoff. Photo by James Birdwell



The Dons' student section brings the energy on Friday nights. Photo by James Birdwell

wear the same jersey and continue that tradition is something I'm incredibly proud of and don't take for granted."

Now in his third year on varsity, Tyler says it's their turn to carry that culture forward by setting the example for younger teammates. Grant's focus is on "helping the new guys out so we can build a great team on and off the field."

By the time Friday nights arrive, months of preparation are on full display. The Dons run through the inflatable "A" in front of a sea of blue. For a few hours, the community comes together, not just to watch a game, but to carry on the tradition.

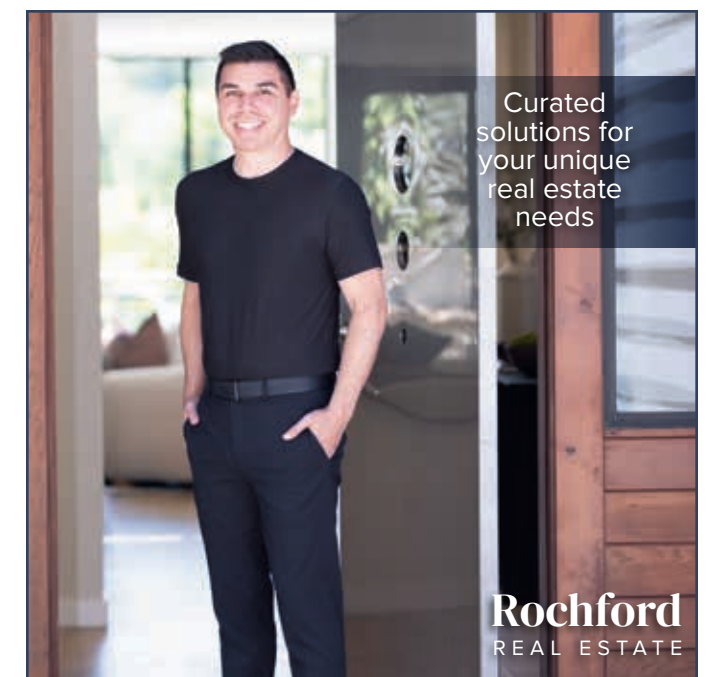
At Acalanes, Friday night lights are never the end goal. Behind the scenes, families, alumni, neighbors and local businesses invest in the program because they believe in what it builds beyond the game.

"We hope to repay that investment by developing young men who become outstanding teammates, leaders and citizens who continue giving back to Lafayette," said Julian Tandler, board member of the Lafayette All-American Football Association, the volunteer organization that supports the Acalanes football program.

That's how Coach Blue measures success. "The life lessons our players take with them after coming through our program are what fuel everything we do."

Come cheer on the Dons! Find the schedule and ways to support the program at acalanesdonsfootball.com.

Special thanks to Realtor Brian Rochford of Rochford Real Estate for sponsoring our Student Life section.



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Where Grown-Up Musicians Go to Play

Front Porch Music finds its audience in Lafayette.



Front Porch Music founders Andrée and Austin Hurst

and Lamorinda Music's Big Room, plus their own outdoor community concerts. These songwriter sessions, open mics, and community concerts feature adult acoustic musicians performing solo, in duos, and in groups, playing original music and covers spanning a wide range of styles. Participants come from all over Lamorinda and beyond, reaching into Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

The organization's reach extends well past the musicians themselves. By keeping ticket prices at around \$20, Front Porch Music makes live performances accessible to anyone who loves live music but can't always justify a pricier ticket or a late-night trip into San Francisco. That affordability is central to



Front Porch Presents comes to Town Hall Theatre four times a year. Photo by BlueGoo Photography



Musicians Warren Dreher and Joanne Cosmos Finn. Photo by Jodi Foucher

the mission: quality performance, close to home, without the barrier of cost.

Front Porch Music's generosity extends further still through its Gift Guitar program, which has donated more than a dozen instruments to people in need, including foster youth through Youth Homes. A new partnership with Trinity Center in Walnut Creek is now working to bring musical instruments to people experiencing homelessness.

None of this happens alone. Musicians and community members form the backbone of support, alongside partners such as Lamorinda Music, Town Hall Theatre, and Lafayette Christian Church, which hosts concerts in Founders (Oak) Grove and at its gazebo along the Lafayette-Moraga Trail. Funding from the Community Foundation of Lafayette, the Zellerbach Family Foundation, and the California Arts Council keeps the programming going, along with support from the Peaceful World Foundation in Petaluma, which sees music as a bridge to connection and peace.

The latest addition to the effort is Front Porch Music CONNECTS, a new website where musicians can create free profiles and promote their shows, music lovers can find affordable live performances across the East Bay, and venues can discover local talent. This fall, the platform will expand further, helping nonprofits connect with musicians for galas and community events.



Kathleen Brennan-Andrews performs during a summer open mic on the porch at the Hurst Farm. Photo by Andrée Hurst

For anyone tired of playing to an audience of none in their own living room, the invitation stands: join Front Porch Music on the porch.

To learn more, visit frontporchmusic.org.



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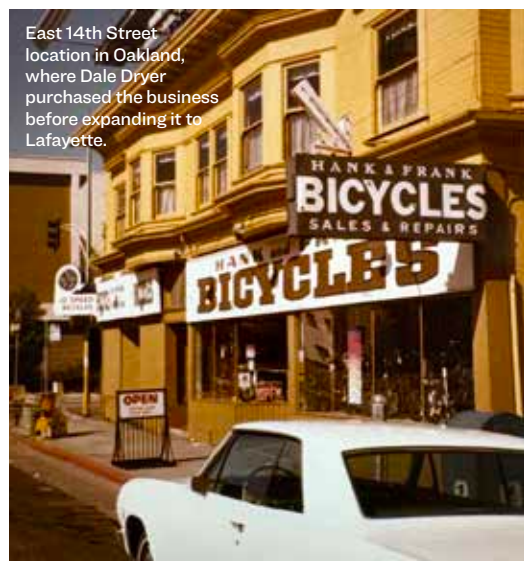
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Dale Dryer, his wife, Julia (right), and store manager Linda Warden (left) at the Lafayette shop, circa 1988. Courtesy Lafayette Historical Society

For over five decades, Lafayette has been our ultimate happy place.

—FRANK DRYER



East 14th Street location in Oakland, where Dale Dryer purchased the business before expanding it to Lafayette.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Along for the Ride

The Legacy of Hank & Frank

Hank & Frank Bicycles announced its retirement after 52 years in Lafayette, and customers responded with an outpouring of memories.

They remembered first bikes, first jobs, BMX rides, family adventures and lifelong friendships.

Founded in Oakland in 1925 by Hank Stahl and his partner Frank, Hank & Frank was purchased by Dale Dryer 57 years ago. A few years later, he opened the Lafayette shop, where the Dryer family served generations of local cyclists.

“For over five decades, Lafayette has been our ultimate happy place,” Frank Dryer, Dale’s son, said. “It represents the quintessential small-town feel, a deeply supportive environment we’re proud to call home. More than a business location, it’s a fun, vibrant community anchored by families and an unshakable sense of community.”

Hank & Frank’s mission extended far beyond selling bicycles. It was about helping people experience the freedom, confidence, connection, and joy that a bicycle can bring. Whether it was a child’s first ride or a cyclist’s next adventure, every customer was welcomed with care, respect, and guidance they could trust. Free lifetime tune-ups were just one way the team cared for customers.

Behind the counter, employees became family. Friendships forged on the sales floor grew into weekend rides, camping trips, neighborhood barbecues, summer parties and Tahoe excursions.

As news of the retirement spread, Hank & Frank’s social media pages filled with heartfelt tributes. One longtime customer captured what many were feeling: “Thank you for every tune-up, every first bike, every roadside rescue.”



Longtime employees helped make Hank & Frank a Lafayette institution. From left: Brenden Cohen, Frank Dryer, Steve Eng, Justin English, Suzanne Amato, and Kenji Light.



Dale purchased Hank & Frank 57 years ago and carried forward a tradition of craftsmanship, honesty and neighborly care.

Over the years, Hank & Frank became a fixture in Lafayette. The shop was part of family outings, daily commutes, race days and all the miles in between. It was there for countless childhood milestones, from first test rides to the day the training wheels came off.

“One of my absolute favorite memories is a dad who brought his two little girls, probably about 6 years old at the time, into the shop to get their very first bikes,” Frank recalled. “Over the years, I watched those girls grow up right before my eyes. Recently, they walked back through our doors as adults, bringing their own children in for their first bikes. Those multi-generational families have made the deepest, most lasting impact on all of us.”

Thank you for every tune-up, every first bike, every roadside rescue.

—LONGTIME CUSTOMER

The bicycles may be gone, but the friendships, and the memories they created, remain. Hank & Frank lived up to the words on its sign: “Where Friends Meet.”

Thank you, Hank & Frank Bicycles, for being such a special part of Lafayette!

A special thank you to Realtors Stella Tsakonas and Stephanie Mull for sponsoring the Meet Your Neighbor section.

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Jesse and Josh Christensen have spent more than 25 years building custom homes, additions and remodels throughout the East Bay. Photo by Craig Isaacs, BlueGoo Photography



The CBC Leadership team: (left to right) Jesse Christensen, Chris Revelli, Josh Christensen, and Ryan Friel. Photo by Craig Isaacs, BlueGoo Photography

BUILT ON PRIDE

Jesse and Josh Christensen have earned a reputation for trust.

Long before Christensen Brothers Construction had a name, Jesse and Josh Christensen had a habit: building things together. Tree forts as kids in Walnut Creek, blanket forts before that, then odd jobs posted on a church job board as teenagers — painting, digging French drains, building retaining walls.

That's when they discovered two things that would shape their lives. They loved working with their hands, and people would pay for work done right.

That early instinct sent them to Colorado as laborers, then to Wyoming, where they helped frame a 7,000-square-foot home through a brutal winter. By 1998, the brothers had landed on the same crew and established themselves as its best framers, working alongside Chris Revelli, who would become their first employee and remains with them today.

In October 2000, they struck out on their own. Their first project, a high-end custom home in Diablo, launched a company built around what they did best: rough framing custom homes and additions across the East Bay.

More than 25 years later, CBC is now a full-service general contractor specializing in additions, remodels, and ADUs — but the philosophy hasn't changed. "We're not motivated by money. We're motivated by pride," Jesse says. "When your name is on the company, there's no hiding behind it."

That pride shows up in how CBC does business. The company keeps 30 full-time employees — laborers, rough and finish carpenters, and superintendents — while drawing on a trusted, personally vetted network of subcontractors for specialty trades such as plumbing and electrical. Clients get the consistency of an in-house crew alongside true specialists, all built on relationships the brothers



A custom home in Orinda reflects CBC's quality and craftsmanship. Emerson Grace Design, Vivian Johnson Photography



Emerson Grace Design, Vivian Johnson Photography

"Jesse and Josh Christensen are wonderful people and expert craftsmen! They did an addition for us and did an amazing job. Everything was clearly presented, they kept me posted at every turn, and I'm thrilled with our new addition. I highly recommend them to others in Lamorinda!"

—JANEY MCWHORTER, LAMORINDA RESIDENT



Emerson Grace Design, Vivian Johnson Photography

her sons built for her. Both brothers are now designing homes of their own, a milestone the two brothers who grew up in a two-bedroom apartment never imagined possible.

For Jesse and Josh, every project ultimately comes down to trust. "We've spent 25 years earning that trust one project at a time," Jesse says, "and we'd be honored to earn yours."

To learn more, go to cbcbuilders.com or call 510-750-2655.



**CHRISTENSEN BROTHERS
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have cultivated over 25 years working alongside those same tradespeople.

CBC's process is deliberately transparent: fees are set upfront based on the project scope, so homeowners always know what they're paying for and why. Jesse and Josh's advice to Lafayette homeowners considering a remodel reflects that same philosophy: pick your contractor before you finalize your plans.

"Most people design their dream project first, then discover it's way beyond budget," Josh explains. "Bring your contractor in at the beginning, and

we can guide the design toward your real spending target from day one."

The brothers' roots in the community run deep. They moved to Walnut Creek in 1984, attended Las Lomas High School alongside Chris Revelli, and have spent their entire careers building in the neighborhoods they call home.

That personal connection extends to family, too. One of their most meaningful builds was an ADU for their mother, who spent a lifetime in rentals before finally retiring into the home

Hello Lafayette! A Community Welcome Event



Lafayette Juniors, a nonprofit that connects women through community service, hosts an information table at the inaugural Hello Lafayette! Welcome Event in February 2026.



Community members explore tables showcasing more than 30 local organizations, businesses, and services that make Lafayette a vibrant community.

Whether you're new to town or looking to get connected, **Hello Lafayette!** brings local organizations, programs, and resources together in one place.

Launched earlier this year by the City of Lafayette and the Lafayette Juniors, in partnership with the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation, the initiative grew from the City's vision of being a welcoming community.

"We wanted to do more to make our new residents feel welcome and help them quickly learn about the resources and opportunities available to them," Mayor Carl Anduri said.

Hello Lafayette! has held two events featuring tables hosted by city departments, nonprofits, local businesses and community organizations. Designed as a one-stop introduction to Lafayette, the events connected attendees to parks and recreation programs, volunteer opportunities, arts and culture, emergency preparedness, city services, and local businesses.

"The reception from both the Lafayette community and business leaders, and from the new residents, has been so inspiring," said April Divakaruni, president of the Lafayette Juniors. "The energy at these events

is so positive and warm — neighbors meeting neighbors and sharing the corner of the community they love the most and have worked so hard to build. It is clearly a reflection of the kind of community we want to be."

While Hello Lafayette! was created with new residents in mind, it's open to everyone. Whether you've recently moved to Lafayette or have lived here for years, it's an opportunity to discover the people, programs, and organizations that make our community such a special place to call home. The event organizers plan to hold the events about twice a year.

Learn more at lovelafayette.org/newresidents. Email info@lafayettejuniors.org with any questions.



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1165 Glen Road	\$4,995,000	\$4,800,000	38	4	3.5	4511	0.59
1059 Lizann Drive	\$3,595,000	\$3,475,000	26	5	4.5	3900	1.91
21 Cosso Court	\$3,400,000	\$3,400,000	0	3	2.5	2522	0.96
3434 Silver Springs Court	\$2,765,000	\$3,075,000	4	4	2.5	3202	2.44
3284 Surmont Drive	\$2,999,000	\$2,825,000	53	4	3.5	5082	0.50
1125 Glen Road	\$2,150,000	\$2,810,000	9	4	3.5	2442	0.54
3024 Bradbury Drive	\$2,395,000	\$2,725,000	0	4	3.5	2570	0.36
3175 Surmont Drive	\$2,595,000	\$2,595,000	10	4	2.5	2964	1.35
858 Mountain View Drive	\$2,668,000	\$2,590,000	50	5	3.5	4280	2.01
11 Diablo Vista Way	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	0	5	3.5	2948	0.95
1126 Hidalgo Court	\$2,295,000	\$2,468,000	17	4	2.5	2030	0.24
1676 Foothill Park Circle	\$2,195,000	\$2,465,000	9	5	3.5	3119	0.48
1119 Oak Hill Road	\$2,185,000	\$2,365,000	9	4	3	2531	0.48
665 Sky Hy Circle	\$2,385,000	\$2,335,000	22	4	2.5	3184	0.31
3448 Solana Court	\$2,330,000	\$2,330,000	0	4	2.5	2071	0.47
3250 Judith Lane	\$1,998,000	\$2,050,000	4	4	2.5	2428	0.30
599 Silverado Drive	\$1,995,000	\$2,025,000	10	6	4.5	3320	0.41
1026 Windsor Drive	\$2,195,000	\$2,000,000	32	6	3	2811	0.28
1100 Dunsyre Drive	\$1,999,000	\$1,970,000	49	4	3	3535	0.39
4105 Coralee Lane	\$1,995,000	\$1,915,000	33	4	3	3161	0.68
3018 Bradbury Drive	\$1,950,000	\$1,850,000	17	4	2	2340	1.07
4 Crest Road	\$1,825,000	\$1,830,000	16	3	2.5	2143	0.36
4033 Valente Drive	\$1,795,000	\$1,790,000	6	4	2.5	2460	0.28
854 Revere Road	\$1,750,000	\$1,725,000	36	4	2+	2447	0.30
694 Glorietta Boulevard	\$1,595,000	\$1,700,000	6	4	2	1647	0.34
944 Juanita Drive	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	0	3	2	1599	0.23
1170 Sunrise Ridge Drive	\$1,595,000	\$1,595,000	23	3	2.5	2588	0.30

Information compiled from MLS on 7/23/2026

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Stella (left) and Tanq.



Alison and Yonnie with Stella, their rescue border collie mix.

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INTERVIEW WITH ALISON WALL |
BY ABBY HAIMOVICI

How did Stella and Tanq join your family? Stella has been with us for eight years. She was rescued by a nonprofit in Washington, D.C. after she was found wandering the Virginia countryside, and she soon made her way to us. We did her DNA testing, and she is predominantly border collie, black Lab, and chow (purple tongue and all!).

We picked Tanq up from a rescue at 8 weeks old. His mother was a stray, and the rescue took her in before she had her puppies. She was all white, and while they don't know for sure who Tanq's dad was, he is confirmed 100% German shepherd!

How did you name them? Tanq is short for Tanqueray, named after the gin, and Stella is named after the beer. Our third pet is Ketel, a tabby cat. Try to guess the theme!

How would you describe their personalities? Stella is a person. We can't prove she understands most of the English language, but we are fairly sure she does. She is all sweetness, and just wants to be by her humans' side (but not on their lap).

Tanq is a hard-working goofball. He is the guardian of the house, often sleeping against the front door or patrolling the backyard. He loves people, and if they show any sign of love in return, will relentlessly seek to play with them.

Any funny moments? Stella was the first to know our daughter, Maddy, was on the way! Not normally a lap dog, she spent an entire day with her head in my lap — or trying to climb right on top of it. That prompted us to find out the good news for ourselves!

We moved to Lafayette just over a year ago. On moving day, Tanq (at 100 pounds) barreled straight through the screen door, tearing it apart and creating his very own dog door. It may never be fixed — it works too well!

What are their favorite activities? Stella loves to sunbathe and run on the beach, then curl up beside her humans for a nap on the couch. Tanq loves to chase deer and coyotes along our fence, and would never rest if he had his way.

What do you love the most about each of them? Stella is the best companion anyone could ask for. She will lie in bed with you until noon, or jump up for a reservoir run. As long as she's by your side, she's good.

With Tanq, it's watching him with our daughter, Maddy. When Yonnie and I brought her home from the hospital, Tanq wouldn't even enter a room with her. Someone who knows about these things told us he was being careful. He



Tanq is never far from Maddy's side, her shadow in the house and in the yard.

knew she was precious and was worried he was too big. Now, he doesn't leave her side. He's her shadow in the house and in the yard, and lets us know if he thinks we are not paying enough attention!

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You Were Made for This

BY PASTOR CHRIS BALDWIN, COMMUNITY AND FORMATION, LOPC

Something quiet has been happening across our neighborhoods. People are more connected than ever — texts, notifications, feeds — yet many of us feel something is missing. Researchers call it a loneliness epidemic. Most of us just call it a regular Tuesday.

We weren't designed for isolation. We were made for something more textured than a screen can offer — the weight of a hand on a shoulder, a shared meal, laughter that spreads through a room before anyone knows why. We are, at our core, creatures who need one another.

At Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), we believe one of the most countercultural things a person can do today is simply show up — to a table, a living room, a conversation. Our Community Groups gather people from across Lamorinda around shared interests and honest questions, building real community over time. These aren't programs. They're people choosing to know and be known.

We're also hosting our annual Fall Fest on Sunday, October 4. No agenda beyond a free, family-friendly gathering with food (free tacos!), fun, and unhurried time together.

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THE TOWER'S LONG WATCH: 1929-2026

A Lafayette Landmark Enters a New Chapter

BY JOHN KENNETT, LAFAYETTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Completed in 1929, the outlet tower was built for a much taller dam than was ultimately constructed.

FOR NEARLY A CENTURY, the tower rising from the waters of Lafayette Reservoir has quietly watched over our town. Since 1929, it has been more than a concrete tower. It has been a landmark, a silent sentinel, and a familiar part of the landscape for generations of Lafayette residents.

Long before the reservoir existed, water shaped Lafayette's history. Early settlers built homes near creeks, but those streams often disappeared during the dry summer months. Wells, windmills, and wooden water towers became essential, and even town founder Elam Brown moved twice in search of a dependable water source. Yet, while drought was a challenge, floods could be devastating. The great storm of 1862 swept through the valley, destroying barns, bridges, buildings, and livestock.

By the 1920s, it was clear that Lafayette needed a more reliable water supply. The Lafayette Improvement Club helped lead the effort to create the Lafayette County Water District, eventually bringing Lafayette into the East Bay Municipal Utility District system. Plans soon followed for a reservoir that would provide both water storage and flood protection for a growing community.

Construction began in 1927 on an ambitious dam project at the west end of town. The original plans called for a much

taller dam, and the outlet tower was built to match. During construction, however, engineers discovered that the soil beneath the dam could not safely support the weight.

The design was changed: the dam was lowered, its base widened, and its slopes made gentler. The outlet tower, already completed, remained. The result was an unexpected landmark — a tower standing far taller than the dam it was built to serve.

When the reservoir opened to the public as a recreation area in 1966, the tower became part of everyday life in Lafayette. It never dominated the town below. Instead, it quietly revealed itself from the dam, picnic areas, and winding trails, rising beside sweeping views of water and hills. It became a backdrop for family walks, fishing trips, photographs, and peaceful afternoons by the water.

For countless children — and plenty of adults, too — the tower held a touch of mystery. Behind its arched doorway and windows, imaginations wandered. Who lived inside? What stories might those windows tell? The tower never answered, and perhaps that quiet mystery became part of the magic that drew generations back again and again.

Today, Lafayette Reservoir remains both a treasured recreation area and an important emergency water supply.



For nearly 100 years, the tower has stood as one of Lafayette's most recognizable landmarks. Today, it is being lowered by about 40 feet as part of a seismic retrofit.

But the tower's long watch is entering a new chapter. Engineers have determined that it may not withstand a major earthquake, and work is underway to lower it by approximately 40 feet as part of a seismic retrofit.

Its familiar silhouette will change, and with it, perhaps, a little of the mystery and quiet magic that have long been part of the reservoir experience. Yet its enduring spirit will live on — in photographs tucked into family albums, in stories shared across generations, and in the memories of those who paused along the reservoir's edge and smiled when the tower came into view.

Some landmarks are remembered because they are grand. Others are remembered because they quietly become part of our lives.

For nearly a century, the tower has done just that. Though it may no longer stand as tall, it will forever remain one of Lafayette's most beloved landmarks.

Some landmarks are remembered because they are grand. Others are remembered because they quietly become part of our lives.

Special thanks to Aegis Living Moraga for sponsoring our Lafayette History section.

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Le Pit Club's Cars & Coffee brings car enthusiasts of all ages together in Lafayette, August 2026.

A Sunday Tradition

Cars, Conversation and Community at Lafayette's Cars & Coffee

PHOTOS BY JODI FOUCHER PHOTOGRAPHY

Every Sunday morning, a parking lot along Mt. Diablo Boulevard fills with everything from vintage classics to modern sports cars as people gather for Cars & Coffee. What began informally nearly two decades ago has grown into a weekly Lafayette tradition.

The tradition began with Hendrik and Laura Kirleis, owners of Caffino, the drive-thru coffee kiosk later known as Perks. A classic car and truck owner himself, Hendrik wanted to create a place where people from across the East Bay could bring their vehicles and swap stories. He greeted each arriving vehicle, sometimes as early as 6:30 a.m., while Laura kept the coffee flowing. It soon became a Sunday ritual.

Over the years, they organized themed events with Le Pit Club, a local car club, and gave back to causes including Toys for Tots, Maui wildfire relief, and local high school auto shop programs, with the club matching funds raised.

When Perks closed in 2024, the Kirleises hoped the gathering would

continue. Simon, a Lafayette resident and regular Cars & Coffee attendee who founded Le Pit Club, stepped in to keep it going. “The cars are only the magnet to connect our community,” he said. “The best part is that at each event you learn something new and make a new friend.”

Longtime attendee Larry Blodgett appreciates the come-as-you-are spirit. “You see everything from a ‘Garage Queen’ to an ‘Old Jalopy,’ and it doesn’t

matter. Bring what you have, just check your ego and attitude at the curb.” Larry often drives his restored 1956 Ford Thunderbird, revived after a 33-year hibernation, and also owns a 1946 Dodge pickup and a 1952 Dodge panel truck.

Another regular, Mike Raffo, might arrive in his 1931 Ford coupe or 1965 Chevelle El Camino. For special events, he drives Lafayette’s historic 1919 Model T fire truck, Old Betsy. “We fill up



A colorful lineup of classic cars.



Cars & Coffee, started nearly two decades ago by Hendrik and Laura Kirleis, continues to bring longtime regulars together. From left: Satoshi Iwahashi, Phil Toy, John Fornbacher, Mike Raffo, and Larry Blodgett



A rare, track-built Ferrari 360 Challenge makes an appearance.

The cars are only the magnet to connect our community.

—SIMON, LE PIT CLUB



Larry Blodgett with his restored 1946 Dodge pickup.

the entire back of Old Betsy with toys during the December toy drive. The generosity of the community and attendees is very touching.”

Giving back remains important to Le Pit Club, which has supported families facing medical challenges, animal rescue organizations, Acalanes High School, and other causes. More recently, the club partnered with the Oakland Ballers and the ALS Foundation for a fundraiser that brought 30 cars onto the baseball diamond.

For many, the connections extend beyond Sunday mornings. Regulars get together for barbecues and other social events and even help one another keep their cars on the road.

Satoshi Iwahashi, a longtime attendee, said, “What I love most is the people. You can have a conversation with anyone. Over the years, many of us have become friends. That’s what this gathering has become, a community.”

Cars & Coffee also brings generations together. Acalanes junior Emiko Kuniyoshi often comes with her grandfather. “I love how passionate everyone is about their cars, and I like

hearing how they got them. My grandpa loves to share stories about the cars he had when he was younger.”

Whether you arrive in a classic, on a motorcycle, or in a supercar — or simply come to admire the vehicles — Cars & Coffee welcomes everyone. **Learn more and find upcoming events at lepitclub.com.**

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Meet Me at Canyon Club

How Kevin Hamilton, John Crossley and team built Canyon Club Moraga’s welcoming “third place,” where good beer, live music and familiar faces come together.

BY CHRISTINE CAMP | PHOTOS BY ANN MURPHY

Part brewery, part biergarten, part neighborhood backyard, Canyon Club has become the kind of place where an ordinary afternoon turns into something more. Located at 1558 Canyon Rd in Moraga, Canyon Club Brewery has the easy familiarity of a neighborhood pub, Moraga’s version of “Cheers,” though the vibe leans closer to a good backyard barbecue.

That comparison echoes one of the best compliments owner Kevin Hamilton has received: “It feels like I’m in my backyard when my dad and his friends are barbecuing and listening to music.” “That’s exactly the atmosphere we want to provide,” he says.

Kevin grew up in Boston, came west for Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and settled in Lafayette with his wife and three daughters. After an MBA and a finance and real estate career, he returned to an industry he’d known since 14, inspired by biergarten culture he experienced in Germany as a teen.

Canyon Club opened in 2019 around the idea of a “third place,” a gathering spot beyond home and work. John Crossley joined soon after, partnering with Kevin and the brewery’s investors.

When COVID hit, Canyon Club sourced scarce essentials for residents, and the community kept the brewery’s lights on in return. That bond



Canyon Club founders Kevin Hamilton and John Crossley



Canyon Club’s beer program is led by Master Brewer Christian Kazakoff and Head Brewer Madison Bohrer (shown), who develop recipes and oversee every stage of the brewing process.

continues through fundraisers, school events and local partnerships.

Today, Canyon Club serves locally sourced food, cocktails, wine and house-brewed beer, with live music Friday through Sunday. A second location opened in Danville in 2025. Cheers to Canyon Club!

Come pull up a chair and enjoy weekend live entertainment, Food Truck Mondays, or Tuesday Night Trivia. Go to CANYONCLUB.WORKS or @canyonclubbrewery to subscribe to the newsletter.



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