



# V LAFAYETTE VISTAS

Published  
by the  
City of  
Lafayette

Fall 2012  
Vol. 22, No. 4

## A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP by Police Chief Eric Christensen

As a young patrol officer working in another community, I once took a phone call from a citizen who told me she was afraid that someone would soon be killed by speeding traffic in her neighborhood. She described how neighbors were speeding uncontrollably down her street without concern for the children who played in the area. I agreed to take a look at the problem and, the next day, parked my patrol car in front of her house. She was right. Her street was like a NASCAR track, with cars speeding way over the limit as they raced through the neighborhood. And so, for the next couple of days at the start of my shift I went to that neighborhood, parked my car, tuned the radar unit, and began writing tickets.

*(Cut This Out and Tape It Near Your Phone and Computer)*

### How to Contact the Lafayette Police

Emergency Call 911

Non-Emergency Call 925-284-5050

Email Crime Tip 94549Tip@so.cccounty.us

Email Traffic/Speeding Tip 94549Traffic@so.cccounty.us

Business was great! It was so good, in fact, that the neighbors put folding chairs out on their lawns to watch the show! As each car approached, they tried to guess whether it would get stopped or not and, if the lights on the patrol car went on, the crowd cheered; if they didn't, there was a low sigh. The oohs and aahs sounded like people watching fireworks! When the group began doing *the wave* – cheering me every time I returned from issuing a citation – that's when I knew I was truly serving the public.

The citizens were happy because their dangerous situation was being addressed, and I was satisfied because I was doing my job well.

Not surprisingly, after two weeks of

enforcement, it was difficult to catch even one speeder. The folding chairs dwindled, the wave ceased, the circus had left town. Afterwards, I would occasionally return to the area, but the habits of those who once treated the street like turn two at Talladega had been broken.

And it all started with a phone call from a citizen.

### Our Motto

If you look up the word “motto” in the dictionary you'll find that it's a phrase seeking to summarize the motivation or intention of an entire group or organization. A motto is an idea that you want your people – both customers and employees – to embrace and remember.

The motto of the Lafayette Police Department is *A Community Partnership*. Why? Well, one thing I've learned in my twenty years in law enforcement – going all the way back to my patrol days running traffic enforcement – is that tips from

citizens and observations made by concerned parents are often the best crime-fighting tool we have.

Residents know their neighborhoods better than my sergeants do, and a businessperson knows the comings and goings in his storefront better than the beat officer.

We therefore rely on you to help us do our jobs. For the Lafayette Police Department to be effective, we need your support and involvement. Everybody needs to contribute. We must work together in, yes, *a community partnership*.

### But we don't want to bother you!

We hear this a lot: “*we would have called, but we didn't want to bother you.*” Put that concern aside! If you see a

problem in your neighborhood, don't hesitate to let me or my staff know.

If you sense that something is out of place or odd, send us an email or give us a telephone call. We actually *want* to be bothered with these types of things because if we can prevent crime before it occurs, that's a win for everybody except the criminal.

A closing example: one day last June, a resident in the Acalanes Valley area arrived home to find a strange car parked across the street. He knew that there had been several residential burglaries in the neighborhood and, because this car seemed out of place, he went across the street and took a digital photograph of the license plate. As soon as he did, the vehicle started up, made a U-turn, and picked up another unfamiliar person jumping over a backyard fence dropping stolen property as he ran. The neighbors phoned the police with the license plate information, and the burglars were soon arrested.

That's how a community partnership works.

Here's what you can do. When you see something out of the ordinary, call us. If you prefer email, send your tips to us at [94549Tip@so.cccounty.us](mailto:94549Tip@so.cccounty.us). Your email will be forwarded to the officers on the beat, the sergeant on duty, to investigators, and even to the nosy Chief of Police. And if you have a traffic complaint, send it to our traffic officers via [94549Traffic@so.cccounty.us](mailto:94549Traffic@so.cccounty.us).

Finally, if you'd like to be notified immediately when something is wrong in your neighborhood, we recommend that you join our Nixle and Twitter (“@LafayettePD”) feeds. Nixle is like Twitter, but for law enforcement only.



# NEWS & NOTES

## FROM THE CITY OFFICES

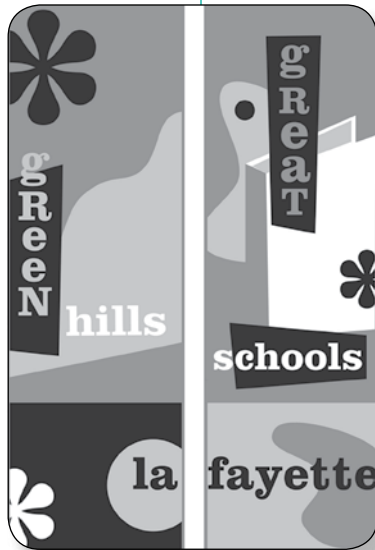
### ■ Best City Expenditure Ever?

Back in 2006, the Lafayette City Council allocated funds from the budget to purchase and install an automatic external defibrillator (AED) in the trunk of each police car in Lafayette. *Was it worth it?* Well, four years ago a fellow fell over during the Reservoir Run and one of the AEDs was used to revive him. Last August, Lafayette Police Officers Jacquie Dennison and Debra Williams responded to a medical call on Via Media and paddled the man back to life. And, at this year's Art and Wine Festival, an elderly gentleman was resuscitated. Sergeant Dan Nugent and Community Services Officer Cathy Surges were working the festival as it closed down on Sunday evening when they were waved down by a citizen who said that one of the vendors had collapsed while cleaning up his booth. A nurse began CPR while Cathy retrieved the AED from the squad car. The CPR was unsuccessful in restarting the guy's heart, but a single zap from the AED brought him back.



### ■ Green Hills, Great Schools

The local high school football team is pretty good this year, but the stuff happening in classrooms of the Acalanes Union High School District is even better. The California Department of Education released the 2012 Academic Performance Index (API) for all California schools and districts yesterday, and the district-wide score for the Acalanes Union High School District API increased for the eighth consecutive year to reach 908. According to Superintendent John Nickerson, that is the **highest score ever achieved by a high school district in California**, and it once again makes AUHSD the #1 API high school district in California. While API scores represent only a narrow measure of what the district seeks to accomplish, this is a remarkable achievement. We're honored and lucky to live in such an education-oriented community.



Congratulations go out to the students, parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and everybody else out there who supports our local schools. If you haven't yet done so this year, you can support the Lafayette Partners in Education at [www.LafayettePartners.org](http://www.LafayettePartners.org). Green Hills, Great School – that's what Lafayette's all about.

### ■ Plaza Way Overlay Approved by City Council

Last year, the City Council appointed two Planning Commissioners and two City Council members to work with Plaza Way property owners to help find parking solutions that would allow great tenants to occupy the iconic Park Theatre and the other historic buildings on Plaza Way. Since those structures were mostly built before the invention of cars – and thus have very few parking spaces – this was a tough challenge. After months of intensive analysis and meetings, the committee recommended a proposal to reduce the City's parking requirements in exchange for about \$2M in private investment plus a commitment to create a combined parking lot behind



the buildings. The concept was approved by the City Council in October, and should lead to upgrades for the Park Theater and the old Handlebar Store over the next twelve months.

■ **DSP Passed by Council** – *Vistas* readers will recall that half of the last issue was devoted to describing the draft Downtown Specific Plan

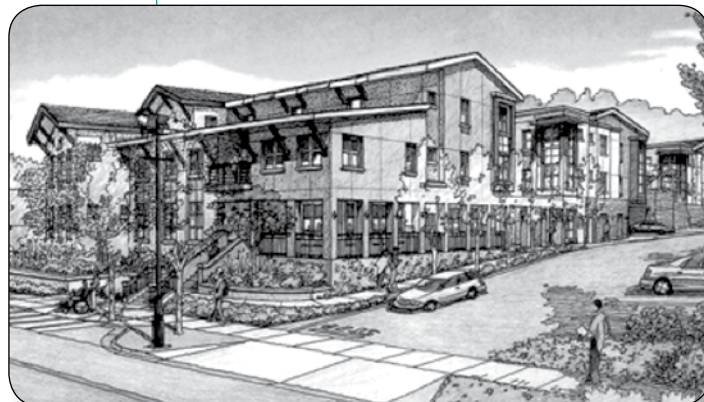
that was to be heard by the City Council in September. After six years, more than a hundred public meetings, and several *Vistas* articles, the City Council approved the plan after just a couple hours of discussion. Twelve people spoke – six for and six against – and the Council approved the plan with some minor changes on a unanimous 5-0 vote.

### ■ Council Rejects Roundabout, Approves Medians

The proposal to install a traffic roundabout on Mt. Diablo Blvd. near the Gazebo received a thorough vetting this fall. It was heard by the City's Downtown Street Improvement Committee, Circulation Commission, and Planning Commission before finally landing in the City Council chambers in October. When, however, more than forty speakers unanimously opposed the idea, the City Council rejected the proposal. The council did approve a modified plan for intermittent landscaped medians in that same area.

### ■ Eden Housing Groundbreaking

They had to look far and wide to find enough gold shovels for the October groundbreaking of the Eden Housing project, located next to Bo's Barbeque on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Six years in the making, it was a joyous occasion when this project finally got underway. Soon there will be forty-nine new units provided for seniors with very low incomes in Lafayette. Hard hats off to everybody who worked so hard to make this important project a reality.



# SAID FRED: A GUEST COLUMN

by Lafayette School District Superintendent Fred Brill



I appreciate this opportunity to make a guest appearance in the City's *Vistas* newsletter to share some exciting news about the Lafayette School District. We started school in August, and students and staff hit the ground running. We've had an increase in student enrollment of more than 200 students over the past two years. Families continue to move to Lafayette because of the wonderful schools and community!

Last year, our teachers, parents and community engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning review, revision, and recommitment process. While we have made significant changes—such as a focus on STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), and 21st Century skills (communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity), the strategic planning process affirmed that our district is heading in the right direction.

*Here are a few things we would like you to know:*

- **Teaching critical thinking skills beginning in kindergarten helps all of our students navigate and comprehend difficult text.** Students are being taught specific strategies used by good readers to understand even the most complex pieces of text. STAR scores in English/language arts in our district continue to increase with gains of up to 8 percentage points at some grade levels.
- **We increased our focus on student writing through the New York Writing Project.** The result was that on the 2012 State Writing Assessment we saw an increase in the percentage of students receiving the highest score by 41%.
- **Our students are becoming powerful math thinkers.** With a greater emphasis on problem solving and reasoning, District math scores on the California Standards Test assessment continue to trend upwards, in some cases as much as 11 percentage points.
- **We have implemented new intervention programs for students with special needs,** and added programs and support in early intervention and kindergarten. As a result, 60% of our students with special needs are now Proficient or Advanced on the California Standards Test. This compares to 45% in 2011.

In addition to having great teachers, our schools are effective because we enjoy incredible support from parent organizations, the City of Lafayette, Lafayette Partners in Education, the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, the local Rotary Clubs, and the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Events such as the Art and Wine Festival, the Lafayette Reservoir Run, and the LPIE Crab Feed bring the community together and provide essential resources for our schools.

And we are successful because of your relentless support for Lafayette's schools. While the State has cut education funding by 22% over the past five years, Lafayette's 2011 parcel tax passed with a 74.19% approval rate. For that, we thank you.

Unfortunately, we are not quite out of the woods. If the State fails to solve its fiscal crisis, the Lafayette School District could lose up to or more than \$1.5 million in State funding. Please stay informed about the various measures and candidates on the November ballot.

On behalf of the Governing Board, teachers, support staff and students, I thank you for all that you do for our schools. It makes a tremendous difference in the quality of program that we are able to provide for our students.

Respectfully,

Fred Brill, Ed.D., Superintendent  
Lafayette School District

## NEW STREET NAME SIGNS FOR LAFAYETTE

The City Council recently approved a new standard specification for street name signs and, in so doing, signaled its intention to replace every single one of Lafayette's 850 street name signs over the next five years. *Why?* Well, first, there's a new Federal law that requires all road signs to meet certain reflectivity standards by 2018. And second, as Lafayette developed over the last hundred or so years, many different varieties of street name signs were installed with little apparent coordination.



Depending on the street corner, you might find white signs with black letters, green signs with white letters, or brown signs with white letters. There are some intersections with all three color combinations! Some signs have the City logo on them; others don't. Some use a compact font style; some don't. Some are all caps, some aren't.

The overall result is a mishmash that is confusing, reflects a lack of attention to detail, and does not contribute to a unified city feel.

To remedy the problem, an ad hoc committee of local design volunteers met many times earlier this year to review different font, color, and size options and combinations, and developed Lafayette's first-ever city-wide standard street name sign specification.

The new spec calls for every new street name sign to have reflective white letters that are at least 4" tall on a dark brown background, and to use the Rawlinson Roadway font. The higher reflectivity, larger size, and fonts with serifs will make it easier for visitors, fire, police, and ambulance drivers to find their destination. For font enthusiasts, the Rawlinson font was recently chosen by the National Park Service to replace the Clarendon road guide sign typeface that the NPS has used for decades.

Since the City's project will be expensive – an estimated \$150,000 to \$180,000 total – the implementation will occur over the next five years. We've divided the town into five implementation zones, and will retrofit one zone annually until 2016. The first phase will be the downtown area, and you should start seeing the new signs sometime this fall. For questions call Public Works Technician David Terhune at 925-934-3908, or send him an email: [dterhune@lovelafayette.org](mailto:dterhune@lovelafayette.org).



City of Lafayette  
3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210  
Lafayette, CA 94549

PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Lafayette, CA  
Permit No. 161

## Postal Customer Lafayette, CA 94549

# OPEN SPACE UPDATE

In the Summer 2009 issue of the Lafayette Vistas, the Lafayette Open Space Committee was introduced to Lafayette. The committee was formed by the City Council in early 2009 and worked through the year to draft the City's first ever Open Space Plan, which was approved by the City Council in January 2010. The Open Space Committee was later disbanded and in its place a number of residents formed the Lafayette Open Space Group, which is not affiliated with the City.

**Why does Lafayette need an Open Space Group? Don't we have lots of open space in the hills around us?**

Yes, Lafayette is blessed with some beautiful ridgelines, the Lafayette Reservoir, Briones Park and the Lafayette Community Park. However, many of the ridgelines we see and some of the trails we use are on property which is not protected open space. It is private property and access could be blocked at any time, or the land could be developed so that it is no longer open space.

**But aren't those open spaces protected by the General Plan?**

The General Plan has rules in place prohibiting building on designated ridge lines. However, the open space we enjoy includes more than those ridgelines, and development is permitted within from 250 to 400 feet of a designated ridge line. Property owners and developers can also appeal and request a variance to the ordinance.

**What about our trails – is that land protected?**

Lafayette has a number of City trails, which are mostly on easements. That means that there is a right of public access on the trail, which generally passes through private property. Many walkers and hikers however, use fire roads and EBMUD access roads, and that access could be closed at any time, as has happened in some areas.

**Why do we need public open space?**

The land is then preserved for future generations, and in many cases public access is also guaranteed. A great example of recent community involvement was the acquisition of part of the Acalanes Ridge, adjacent to the Walnut Creek Open Space, just east of Acalanes High School.

**Does the City of Lafayette condemn land and take it from private owners to use as Open Space?**

No, the City does not condemn land for open space acquisition. The Open Space Group works to help identify open space opportunities and to facilitate partnerships with government entities and not-for-profit groups to purchase land from willing sellers, so that it can be protected as open space.

**How can you help?**

If you know of land that is potentially for sale please contact the Open Space Group at [www.LafayetteOpenSpace.org](http://www.LafayetteOpenSpace.org) to help determine if the property would meet the criteria for possible open space acquisition. We welcome all inquiries and comments.



## CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: 284-1968

### Council Members

Carol Federighi	<b>Mayor</b>
Mike Anderson	<b>Vice Mayor</b>
Brandt Andersson	<b>Council Member</b>
Carl Anduri	<b>Council Member</b>
Don Tatzin	<b>Council Member</b>

Messages to all Council Members:  
[cityhall@lovelafayette.org](mailto:cityhall@lovelafayette.org)

### Administration

<b>General Reception and</b>	<b>284-1968</b>
<b>Steven Falk, City Manager</b>	<b>Fax: 284-3169</b>
Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir.	<b>299-3227</b>
Gonzalo Silva, Financial Srv. Mgr.	<b>299-3213</b>
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	<b>299-3210</b>

### Community Development

Tony Coe, Engineering Srv. Mgr.	<b>284-1951</b>
Niroop Srivatsa, Planning Srv. Mgr.	<b>284-1976</b>
Ron Lefler, Public Works Srv. Mgr.	<b>299-3214</b>
P.W. Hotline (to report problems)	<b>299-3259</b>

**If you observe illegal dumping in creeks & storm drains or accidental spills on roads, call Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 646-2286.**

### Lamorinda School Bus Program

Juliet Hansen, Program Mgr.	<b>299-3216</b>
	<b>Or 299-3215</b>

### Parks, Trails and Recreation 284-2232

Jennifer Russell, Director	
Senior Services	<b>284-5050</b>

### Police Services

Emergency: 24 Hours	<b>911</b>
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours	<b>284-5010</b>
Police Business Office:	<b>283-3680</b>

**Anonymous Tipline, Traffic Enforcement, Suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network), 299-3230**

<b>Fax</b>	<b>284-3169</b>
------------	-----------------

<b>Address</b>	<b>3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210</b>
	<b>Lafayette, CA 94549</b>

<b>Website</b>	<b>www.ci.lafayette.ca.us</b>
----------------	-------------------------------

**E-MAIL:** Council/staff members can be reached via e-mail using this address format:

**First Initial + Last Name @lovelafayette.org**

**Example: SFalk@lovelafayette.org**

**Want more City news online? Subscribe to the City Manager's Weekly Summary by sending an email to [sfalk@lovelafayette.org](mailto:sfalk@lovelafayette.org)**