

## IT'S ALIVE!

*“Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.”* — Ladybird Johnson

On November 14, 2009, after 15 years of planning, 10 years of fundraising, 5 years of design and construction, and thousands of hours of volunteer elbow grease, the Lafayette Library and Learning Center opened.

Opening day saw 10,500 come through the grand doors and now, nearly a month later, over 200 people an hour – about 1,550 a day – are enjoying this exquisite building. This compares to about 500 daily patrons at the old location. So, our town's vision of a community place where people can gather, learn, inspire and discover has finally been realized.

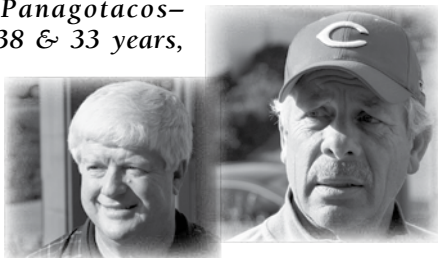
Vistas staff went to the library one weekday morning in December to ask people what they liked best about the new facility:

**Stacie & Spencer (age 2) Bennett – Lafayette residents for 5 years**

We are first time visitors and are enjoying the reading area by the windows. We like that there is much easier access to the books and lots of nooks and crannies in which to sit. Spencer is a book junkie and we plan to spend many rainy days here. Spencer's favorite books are *Horns & Toes* and *Blue Hat, Green Hat* by Sandra Boynton.

**Ron Judson & Milt Panagotacos – Lafayette residents for 38 & 33 years, respectively**

Milt: I'm not really a "library person" – in fact, I can't remember the last time I was in one, but I'm very excited about this! I was a little skeptical about the size of the library to begin with, but I see now that it's more than just books. I am hoping to have more opportunities for seniors and community members to gather. Ron: I buy lots of books and subscribe to a number of magazines, so I'm hoping that instead, I'll be able to walk or bike downtown more often, grab a cup of coffee and relax at the library. That way, I can save money and get more exercise at the same time!



**Mary & Ellie (4) Conner – Walnut Creek residents**

From the sculpture by the amphitheatre, the entire structure just leads you in. This library is bigger, cleaner and newer and has a great selection of books and movies. Today Ellie got *Angelina Ballerina*, *High School Musical 3* and a *Dora the Explorer* movie. We will definitely be back for story time in January. I love the public art and the easy parking.



**Lisa, Trevor (2½) and Blake (4 months) Anderson – Lafayette residents for 6 years**

It's all amazing – the size, the light, the airy feeling of space. We went to the old library all the time and we plan to have many fun days here exploring. Trevor's favorite book is *My Car*.



## LIBRARY ALIVE CAMPAIGN

*Now is the moment to become a champion!*

Each and every dollar donated to LIBRARY ALIVE moves the Lafayette Library Foundation closer to raising the money needed to complete the Open Doors, Open Minds goal of \$1.2 million. There is still time to get your name permanently placed on the donor wall. For more information, visit [www.lafayettelib.com](http://www.lafayettelib.com) or call 925-283-6513.

**Brooks Dickinson – Walnut Creek resident**

I ride my bike here almost every day – the biking parking is great! It takes only about 15 minutes to get here from Walnut Creek. I enjoy the modern, open look of the building as well as the fact that there are many "green" features. There is ample access to the Internet and I like that there are separate, private spaces for the kids.



**Library Hours • Phone: 925-385-2280  
Mon–Thurs: 10am–9pm • Fri, Sat & Sun: 1–5pm**

## Meet Sergeant Gwen Brady



**Gwen Brady** is the new sergeant covering the 2:00pm–midnight shift Sunday through Wednesday. Gwen has been with the Contra Costa County Sheriff's office for 12½ years. She has many

years experience in law enforcement, including a stint in the Navy where she served in the 1st Desert Storm campaign.

Gwen started out in a small town in Louisiana with a population of about 2,000. After graduating from high school – in a class of only 28 people – she went to LSU and majored in English while also being an avid supporter of the LSU Tigers. During her Navy deployment she was stationed in Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Thailand and Singapore, eventually landing back in the states in Alameda.

Gwen decided to stay in California after leaving the military and after a brief career with Comcast as a training manager, she attended Los Medanos College and joined the Sheriff's Office in 1997. During her time in law enforcement, she has spent time as a deputy at the jail in addition to assignments in North Richmond and San Ramon. In San Ramon, she started the first "Character Counts" program – a companion of DARE – which was the first of its kind in Northern California.

Gwen says she enjoys meeting the people and business owners in Lafayette and feels that the most rewarding part of law enforcement is her ability to positively impact people's lives and also help those who have been victims of crimes move on with their lives. She says, "I tell them that tomorrow is going to be better. And it always is."

## NED ROBINSON RIP



Lafayette lost one of its great ones in December with the passing of Ned Robinson. Few people played as important a role in shaping Lafayette's modern history as Ned. In the mid-1960's, Ned was involved in the second attempt to incorporate the City. According to Donn Black, "...the chief frustration was the sign situation in Lafayette. We kept trying to work with the County, and the County kept promising us that we'd have an ordinance. But we somehow never did. More than any other one thing, it was the frustration over not being able to do anything about the ugly sign situation that made us start looking at the importance of city government."

In 1966, after talking with the Lafayette Improvement Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and others, a committee of Black, Bill Chilcote, and Robinson put together an incorporation study. They raised \$3,000 and hired a consultant to evaluate the financial implications of incorporation, who found that the city could make a go of it without a property tax. This paved the way for a successful incorporation vote.

According to Black, there were twenty city council candidates in that first election. "The key was that not a single one of those 20 candidates opposed incorporation. Ned Robinson was a good example. Ned had opposed incorporation earlier, in '59, and as I recall, was elected to the council that would have sat had incorporation succeeded then. His opinion had changed, based on new facts. Every candidate was very supportive, and I think most of them were out campaigning harder for incorporation than they were for themselves." And so, with Ned's and others' support, Lafayette was incorporated.

Interestingly, Robinson lost in that 1968 election – he finished 6th, just missing the Council. He ran again, however, in 1970, finishing first. Ned served as mayor in 1972 and 1978, and his fingerprints are all over the City's early important documents, including the General Plan, the Hillside Ordinance, and others. Ned thought he retired from the City Council in 1982, but he was appointed to fill out a term in 1983.

Ned Robinson was active up until the end, attending meetings last October regarding the Downtown Specific Plan process, writing letters to the Council expressing his views, and generally stirring up things.

He was an active traveler, and loved to talk about the mountains. According to City Manager, Steven Falk, "you'll never meet a nicer guy." Or one who loved Lafayette any more than Ned Robinson.



## LAFAYETTE REPORT CARD – STRAIGHT As

**D**espite tough economic times, the City of Lafayette has earned Standard & Poor's highest credit rating – AAA. As a result, Lafayette joins an elite group of only 169 municipalities in the country and 25 in the state.

The ratings reflect S&P's view of the economic, financial and managerial strength of the municipalities. Key factors that were considered were debt per capita and reserves. For example, Lafayette has a per capita debt of \$3,824 as compared to a national average of \$6,942 and a General Fund Reserve equal to 72% of expenses, which far exceeds the average of 30% for all the AAA cities.

In addition to quantitative measures, qualitative information factors heavily into credit analysis. "While the economy will determine a rating category to a large extent, management will be one of the deciding factors in fine-tuning the rating. The management or administrative structure of a government will move a rating up or down more significantly and swiftly than any other element of a credit review," says S&P.

Currently, Lafayette has \$26 million in outstanding general obligation debt. This debt was incurred in 1995 when voters

passed a tax measure authorizing the sale of bonds for the repair and maintenance of the major roads and arterials. This money has allowed Lafayette to substantially reduce the backlog of deferred road repairs (although there remains about \$15 million worth of work yet to do, mostly on residential streets). While the City's excellent credit rating does not affect the outstanding bonds, it will allow Lafayette to borrow and/or refinance funds in the future at the lowest rates available.

### California Cities with AAA Rating

#### Northern

Campbell  
Lafayette  
Mill Valley  
Mountain View  
Palo Alto  
San Jose  
San Ramon  
Saratoga  
Sunnyvale

#### Southern

Beverly Hills Malibu  
Camarillo Manhattan Beach  
Carlsbad Mission Viejo  
Cerritos Pasadena  
Del Mar San Clemente  
Fountain Valley Santa Monica  
Laguna Beach West Hollywood  
Lake Forest Yorba Linda



# JUMPING INTO THE FRAY

Good government often means bringing disparate groups together to find common ground. By this measure, the City of Lafayette's work is cut out for it as it plans how bicyclists and its citizens will use Lafayette Community Park.

For as many as ten years, youths have been using wooded areas in Lafayette Community Park as a clandestine BMX park. Tree roots and streambeds became eroded as kids rode and jumped their bikes through the woods. Lafayette has been aware of this illegal use for some time, and tried for several years to protect the fragile riparian areas around Las Trampas creek by signage and occasional police presence. But the area's dense cover made policing difficult, and signs lasted days before being vandalized. "The law enforcement approach did not work," says Parks, Trails, and Recreation Department (PTRD) Director Jennifer Russell. "I was pulling my hair out."

With unauthorized recreation resulting in environmental degradation, erosion, and possible liability for the city, one solution presented itself when a couple of the bikers, Matt Atwood and Paul Jackson, contacted PTRD Recreation Coordinator Jonathan "Ace" Katayanagi, whom they knew from PTRD youth programs. From this dialog, a plan arose: create a bike park that would give bicyclists a safer, supervised, and sanctioned place to jump their bikes—a proper bike park that wouldn't have to hide in the bushes.

PTRD looked at other Bay Area cities that had built similar parks and requested City Council approval to open up about an acre near the ball fields for a bike park. PTRD Director Jennifer Russell, a thirty-year veteran of the department, notes that the plan was in keeping with historic objectives for the park since the city acquired the land, formerly a walnut orchard, in 1988. "We had a master plan that looked at the land," Russell says, "The north end would be used for passive and natural activities, with the other end

used for active sports like the baseball and soccer fields that are there now."

PTRD reviewed consultants and picked Hilride Progressive Development, Inc. to create a plan for the site. Hilride worked closely with local bicyclists to develop a plan for riders of several skill levels that would save costs by using volunteer labor from the riders themselves to build the bike park they wanted to use.



Bikers and the city both report great satisfaction with Hilride's work at creating consensus around the project.

For its part, the Park, Trails, and Recreation Department has cut no corners in the ongoing planning process. For example, though the city is exempt from ridgeline development restrictions, PTRD performed a visual impact analysis in June (it found "no significant visual impact" to neighbors). It is perhaps due to this thoroughness that progress on the project has been considerably slower than bicyclists had hoped. A habitat assessment, part of the environmental impact reporting process, identified Las Trampas Creek as a potential estivation area for the California red-legged frog, a threatened species. Though biologists have not seen the frog in Las Trampas Creek since 1994, the fifteen-year-old sighting is enough to require additional inputs from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Fish and Game Commission, and potentially the US Army Corps of Engineers. Ironically, though the park may ultimately protect

the frog by moving illegal bike jumping out of the creek area, building it may require expensive remediation of the frog habitat.

Still in the planning stage, the park is by no means a done deal. While strong support from the bicycling community is clear, support from the larger community is less so. In response to the pro-development web site, [www.lafayettebikepark.com](http://www.lafayettebikepark.com), produced by Hilride, Lafayette resident April Sommer has built an anti-development site, [www.nolafayettebikepark.com](http://www.nolafayettebikepark.com), which argues, among many other points, that the bike park is an inappropriate use of natural and financial resources, would cause traffic and parking problems, would be unattractive, would harm wildlife, and would reward the illegal acts of the unsanctioned bike jumpers. Sommer, an attorney and longtime Lafayette resident, reports a growing base of citizens that she has organized in opposition to the bike park plan. Sommer and other citizens testifying at City Council meetings have voiced dissatisfaction over communication with the city, feeling that the extensive efforts to create "buy-in" with bicyclists have not been matched in communication and outreach with neighbors.

The Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission recently passed a motion to approve an additional \$100,000 in the Capital Improvements Projects Budget to proceed with the permitting process. \$60,000 is already included in the 2010-11 City Budget for design and environmental work. Funds for this project will come from private donations and developer fees which must be used specifically for recreation projects and cannot be used for general purposes, such as street maintenance or police.

Whether you believe Lafayette should build a bike park or leave this end of the Community Park undeveloped, your town wants to hear from you. You can voice your opinion at City Council meetings, Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission meetings, which you can find scheduled on the website at [www.lovelafayette.org](http://www.lovelafayette.org) or you can email your thoughts to the entire council at [cityhall@lovelafayette.org](mailto:cityhall@lovelafayette.org).



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### AROUND TOWN

**Feb 25 – Mar 27** **TOWN HALL THEATER** • The Importance of Being Earnest • Tickets/Info: 925-283-1557 or [www.thtc.org](http://www.thtc.org)

**Mar 4-7** **10TH ANNUAL LAFAYETTE JAZZ FESTIVAL** • Four days of great music! **March 4:** The Big Band featuring Mic Gillette & the Joe Barton Quintet, Del Valle Auditorium; **March 5:** Stanley Jazz Messengers with featured artist Ellen Rowe, Lafayette Library and Learning Center; **March 6:** Cal Jazz Band featuring Frank Martin and his Quartet, Lafayette Library and Learning Center; **March 7:** Contra Costa County Honor Jazz Bands, Veterans Memorial Building. Tickets \$5-\$15 available at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce 925-284-7404 or [www.lafayettechamber.org](http://www.lafayettechamber.org)

**Mar 12** **DIVERTIMENTI BAROQUE ENSEMBLE** • A Concert of 17th & 18th Century Music, 1:30-2:30pm, Lafayette Community Center  
• Period woodwinds – oboes, recorders, flute, bassoon plus harpsichord. \$3/Senior Center members, \$5/non-members

**Mar 15** **Lafayette Juniors 11th Annual Tour of Lafayette Kitchens** • 10:00am-3:00pm. Tickets \$35 (\$25 tax-deductible). Attendees receive an event guide detailing design elements and design resources featured in each home. Proceeds to benefit Brighter Beginnings, a non-profit organization for families in need. Tickets/Info: [www.lafayettejuniors.org](http://www.lafayettejuniors.org)

## TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

One of the City's most important functions is to let you know what is going on in Lafayette and keep you informed of new projects, plans and issues that affect your quality of life. It is equally important you have a way to communicate with the City Council and other commissions about subjects that concern you.

The City recognizes that communication is vitally important and has therefore appointed a committee to investigate ways to improve the interaction between residents, City officials and City staff. The committee is looking for innovative ways to keep you in the loop, provide you with pertinent, accurate information, and give you a voice in City policies. So, here is your opportunity to tell us what you like, what you don't, and give us your suggestions for improvement. You can fill out a form online at [www.ci.lafayette.ca.us](http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us) or email the editor directly at [TRobinson@lovelafayette.org](mailto:TRobinson@lovelafayette.org).

**From which sources do you get information about local issues and city government?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> City Council / Commission meetings            | <input type="radio"/> Community meetings |
| <input type="radio"/> City Manager's Daily Briefing                 | <input type="radio"/> City website       |
| <input type="radio"/> City Manager's Weekly Summary                 | <input type="radio"/> Vistas newsletter  |
| <input type="radio"/> Word of mouth (family, friends or colleagues) | <input type="radio"/> Newspapers         |

**From which sources would you like to get information about local city issues?**

- Social networking websites like Facebook or Twitter  
 Blogs     Television     School Packets     "Push" emails

### CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: **284-1968**

#### Council Members

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

Ann Merideth, Director	<b>299-3218</b>
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), 299-3232 X 2205**

<b>Fax</b>	<b>284-3169</b>
<b>Address</b>	<b>3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210 Lafayette, CA 94549</b>

**Website** [www.ci.lafayette.ca.us](http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us)

**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**

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