

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 12 Issue 13 Wednesday, August 22, 2018

Oh ... rats!

By Cathy Dausman



Pouring concrete over crawl space, especially on an underground incline, is hot and dirty work.

Photo provided

Your home is your castle, except when it comes to rodents. These invaders storm your roof, occupy wall space and attics, burrow beneath foundations, plunder available food sources, and establish a breeding colony all in short order. But the presence of rats does not mean homeowners are unclean. Rats and mice are simply opportunistic critters always in search of food and shelter, and many Lamorindans unknowingly provide both.

Nola Woods, public affairs director for the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District (<https://tinyurl.com/y9fl9vk2>) says Lamorinda is home to three varieties of rats. Roof rats are most common. Next is Norway rats, which may also be

known as water or brown rats. A third type – the wood rat – is found along the Highway 24 corridor.

While Lamorindans shudder at the thought of having rats, they unknowingly welcome them by cultivating fruit and vegetable gardens and fruit trees, stocking outdoor pet food, and supplying nuts for squirrels and seeds for birds. Ivy, Italian cypress, a wood pile or overgrown vegetation provide the perfect rodent shelter and is common in all three communities. Construction work—either new construction or remodeling—dislodges rat populations (a group of rats is called a mischief) and can cause them to relocate, which is why you may notice evidence of rodents when you hadn't before. To promote public health awareness and



September Gardening Guide with Cynthia Brian ...read on page D12

safety, vector control offers free inspections and advice – at (925) 685-9301 – but they don't do eradication work.

"I remember when it didn't used to be such an issue," says real estate broker Melanie Kozak. She says her colleagues know to come to her with their rodent questions because she's done intensive research. She'll tell you a standard home pest inspection covers wood eating organisms, like termites, but a seller or buyer may need to request a rodent inspection in addition. "If you don't get that inspected," she says, a home sale "is a nightmare."

Kozak thinks rat infestations may be the number one issue confounding a home sale today. Longtime vacant houses and non-owner-occupied homes are most at risk simply because an infestation may go unreported for some time.

Mike Scott and business partner Anthony Lozano co-own Honest Rodent Proofing. Scott says nearly half his company's work is in Lamorinda and he frequently works with real estate agents. He estimates as much as 70 percent of East Bay homes host rodents. It stands to reason, since according to Reader's Digest online, the top five rattiest U.S. cities (not in order) include Chicago, San Francisco-Oakland, New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

"Builders just don't think about (excluding) rats," he says, "and residents just don't (want to) talk about it."

Once a rat presence is identified, the homeowner or contractor is left to eradicate the population. Even trimming vegetation, clearing fallen fruit, putting away pet and wildlife food, sealing entry holes and setting traps, may not be enough.

What's left to try? Perhaps a rat slab.

... continued on page D4

Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	9	\$1,110,000	\$2,500,000
MORAGA	5	\$350,000	\$1,605,000
ORINDA	8	\$980,000	\$2,600,000

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

- 3308 Berta Lane, \$1,525,000, 4 Bdrms, 2090 SqFt, 1956 YrBl, 7-23-18;
Previous Sale: \$975,000, 05-13-11
- 944 Hawthorne Drive, \$1,285,000, 3 Bdrms, 1486 SqFt, 1942 YrBl, 7-26-18;
Previous Sale: \$812,500, 04-03-17
- 3439 Little Lane, \$1,225,000, 3 Bdrms, 1321 SqFt, 1956 YrBl, 7-27-18;
Previous Sale: \$830,000, 05-25-07
- 3498 Monroe Avenue, \$1,675,000, 3 Bdrms, 2127 SqFt, 2005 YrBl, 7-3-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,325,000, 07-19-13
- 3368 North Lucille Lane, \$1,110,000, 3 Bdrms, 1534 SqFt, 1954 YrBl, 7-27-18;
Previous Sale: \$579,000, 11-21-02
- 3224 Palomares Avenue, \$1,815,000, 4 Bdrms, 2485 SqFt, 1953 YrBl, 7-3-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,360,000, 09-19-12
- 864 Revere Road, \$1,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 2117 SqFt, 1960 YrBl, 7-27-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,650,000, 04-28-17
- 3455 Stage Coach Drive, \$2,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 5122 SqFt, 1988 YrBl, 7-24-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,625,000, 03-05-07
- 3266 Sweet Drive, \$1,395,000, 3 Bdrms, 1202 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 7-24-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,177,000, 12-29-17

MORAGA

- 1895 Ascot Drive, \$815,000, 2 Bdrms, 1455 SqFt, 1973 YrBl, 7-30-18;
Previous Sale: \$265,000, 06-03-97
- 1965 Ascot Drive #13, \$350,000, 1 Bdrms, 678 SqFt, 1966 YrBl, 7-3-18;
Previous Sale: \$320,000, 08-08-05
- 20 Buckingham Drive, \$1,083,000, 3 Bdrms, 1654 SqFt, 1972 YrBl, 7-23-18;
Previous Sale: \$740,000, 10-06-06
- 359 Donald Drive, \$1,605,000, 4 Bdrms, 2211 SqFt, 1969 YrBl, 7-23-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,195,000, 07-27-07
- 38 Kazar Court, \$1,232,000, 4 Bdrms, 1958 SqFt, 1963 YrBl, 7-24-18;
Previous Sale: \$759,000, 07-06-11

ORINDA

- 175 Camino Don Miguel, \$1,895,000, 3 Bdrms, 2213 SqFt, 1955 YrBl, 7-24-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,200,000, 03-16-17
- 245 Camino Pablo, \$1,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 1591 SqFt, 1948 YrBl, 7-23-18;
Previous Sale: \$815,500, 08-16-17
- 11 Charles Hill Road, \$1,850,000, 4 Bdrms, 3000 SqFt, 1960 YrBl, 7-26-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,625,000, 06-15-17
- 19 Crescent Drive, \$980,000, 3 Bdrms, 1826 SqFt, 1958 YrBl, 7-30-18
- 499 Dalewood Drive, \$2,575,000, 4 Bdrms, 5000 SqFt, 1980 YrBl, 7-27-18
- 81 Hillcrest Drive, \$1,375,000, 4 Bdrms, 2715 SqFt, 1952 YrBl, 7-24-18;
Previous Sale: \$37,000, 12-29-70
- 222 Moraga Way, \$2,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 3457 SqFt, 1941 YrBl, 7-30-18;
Previous Sale: \$650,000, 09-26-01
- 66 Stanton Avenue, \$1,044,500, 3 Bdrms, 1838 SqFt, 1940 YrBl, 7-27-18

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Oh ... rats!

... continued from page D1



Rats may disturb the insulation from between the floor joists. After the slab cures insulation must be re-installed.



Concrete is delivered into the crawl space via the easiest route – in this case, a vent opening.

Lozano describes a rat slab as a very thin layer of nonstructural concrete poured over crawlspace dirt. “Slabs seal a home from any pest that burrows. In Lamorinda this is usually Norway rats or skunks,” he says.

Animals intrude crawlspaces to nest and breed away from predators. Despite its ugly name, Lozano says the upgrade keeps water from percolating up from the soil (preventing ground-level mold and water damage) and creates a cleaner, more easily accessible underfloor environment. Lozano says project costs run between \$5-6 per square foot of crawl space —it’s a dirty, multi-day process involving hand labor in confined spaces. Workers suit up and wear respirators to limit their exposure to rodent waste.

First the site is inspected for signs of infestation (rodents, droppings, nesting material, disturbed insulation). The area is cleaned, sanitized and deodorized. Then the earth is graded if needed and outfitted with a drainage system to ensure proper drainage if a water pipe breaks.

Next, a vapor barrier is installed to protect the concrete from ground moisture. Finally, concrete is pumped through a lower vent screen and trawled by hand wall to wall for a lasting seal. Traps are set again to remove any remaining rodents.

The homeowner may notice a slight rise in indoor temperature or humidity for a day or two as the concrete cures (the new surface provides a slight bit of insulation), but it doesn’t last. Scott estimates his callback rate (for rodent activity which continues after slab work) at 3 percent. “It shouldn’t be an issue after that,” Scott says.

Kozak says she sometimes does get push back from listing agents who don’t want sellers to go through the inspection process, but she reassures them that problems can be addressed.

“Rats are a neighborhood problem,” says Woods, adding, “It’s up to each of us as residents to do what we can.”



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Intentional design to highlight your personal style

By Amanda Eck



Can you believe we are already winding down summer? I am not ready for it to end, but I will not miss this heat. With autumn around the corner our thoughts switch from family vacations, paddling around the pool and outdoor dinners to the comforts of indoors. Shorter days and cozy fires, homemade soup, and lazy Sundays spent lounging around reading.

I love walking into a home and feeling how connected the homeowner is to their home. Their walls may be filled with cherished family photos, or their bookshelves filled with their favorite books, or the coffee tables display some treasure they purchased on their recent travel overseas. Our homes are our safe place, a place where we can be ourselves, let our hair down, put our feet up, show what we love and are drawn to. But our home is also a place where we share with others, our friends, our family, our pets. We want to put our best foot forward when we welcome others into our personal space. And that is where I fully believe that you can have both a space that is comfortable and approachable (i.e. lived-in) as well as beautiful and well appointed.

One does not negate the other. Beauty is a need; we were created in beauty and we crave beauty. Our homes, our surroundings, are a reflection of our soul. And sometimes we need to beautify our surroundings so that our souls can be nourished.

... continued on page D10



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While we often monitor the output of real estate markets with average price and price per square foot metrics it is also useful to monitor the health of the Bay Area economy to better predict future performance. The Bay Area Council Economic Institute and McKinsey & Company just released the 10th edition of their Bay Area Economic Profile. The report findings are important to understanding the health of our Lamorinda real estate market and its long-term health. While the report touches on many areas, the long-term health of our community and real estate market has always been and will continue to be the quality and health of our schools and children as they will ultimately be the fuel that powers future innovations and communities that will support our real estate market for generations to come.

Key report findings include:

- Even though these economic success trajectories have been almost unprecedented, the Bay Area economy is still currently on the upswing
 - The Bay Area leads in GDP per capita and has significantly outperformed its peer regions in terms of GDP per capita growth over the last three years
 - Ten disruptive Bay Area startups have valuations close to or greater than \$4 billion, with 2017 or 2018 funding rounds closing at \$425 million on average. Nine of ten of these companies are headquartered in San Francisco or the East Bay.
 - In 2017, 45 percent of US venture capital investments were made in the Bay Area
 - Over the years, the Bay Area has failed to build enough housing to keep up with population growth
- In summary, while real estate values move in cycles and are subject to correction as cycles come and go, the Bay Area, and especially Lamorinda, are well positioned for growth for decades to come. Lamorinda will benefit from the trend of new-tech companies breaking away from traditional Silicon Valley boundaries and locating



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Intentional design ... continued from page D6



Photos provided

As a designer I take pleasure in connecting with homeowners and their families, learning who they are in their home. My goal is to connect them with their home. One of the greatest compliments I have ever received was from a client's friend who had visited her home and said to her, "This is so you!" It is so important that a home reflect those who live in it.

Here are some ideas on how to create a home that reflects you:

1) **Use your hobbies as inspiration.** Do you love to garden? Why not hang some pretty botanical prints? Do you love music? Maybe hang some framed classic record albums. Do you love photography? Collect antique cameras to display. Just be careful to not get too "theme-y" (yes I made that up). While you

might love the beach, don't fill every nook and cranny of your home with beach paraphernalia. There are subtle ways to display your love for the ocean. A bowl filled with seashells, framed sea fans, or maybe just decorating in colors of the sea can add a coastal vibe.

2) **Travel.** Make it a point every time you travel to pick up something unique to display – no snow globes allowed! Preferably, choose something a local artisan has made. Pottery and small artwork are great and easy to pack in a suitcase. We like to take photos of architectural elements when we travel and I print them in black and white and have them framed.

3) **Look to your closet.** Your closet speaks a lot about you. What colors do you wear the most? Is your wardrobe casual and comfy or bright and colorful? Use that as a jumping off point for your home's color palette. If you are most comfortable in a pair of jeans, T-shirt and a pair of Sperry's, then your home will want to reflect that casual feel. And we are not talking about beanbags and tray tables, people. Let's keep it classy, shall we? But comfy sofas, upholstered ottomans to put your feet up and maybe a woven sisal rug can help the space feel like "jeans and T-shirt." Or maybe you are a little more formal and glamorous, and a button tufted sofa and mirrored coffee table is your ideal.

The most important thing to remember is this is your home and it should not only reflect who you are but it should bring out the best you. It reminds me of the quote from Oprah: "Your home should rise up to meet you."

Take some time this week to ask yourself if your home truly reflects you and your family, and if not, commit to taking some of the steps above to make that happen. And if you find yourself stuck on what to do, give us a call, I would love to embark on that journey of discovery with you.

Until next time!

As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home's interior should be both approachable and well-appointed. She often asserts, "Beauty is a necessity."

With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art.

Visit <http://amandacarolinteriors.com> for more design ideas.





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Cynthia Brian’s Gardening Guide for September

Aw shucks!

By Cynthia Brian

“Plough thorough and deep, while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell or to keep” – Poor Richard



Plucking red cherry tomatoes straight from the vine.

Photos Cynthia Brian

In August, there are few things better than eating freshly picked corn or nibbling juicy ripe tomatoes right from the vine. This month our vegetables and herbs are at their prime when shucking corn becomes a family activity. I like to pull back the husks, remove the silk, and wash the cobs, allowing them to soak in clean water for an hour or so. I then proceed to slather the kernels with a mixture of butter, garlic, basil, cilantro and red peppers. Finally, I wrap the husks onto the corn to grill on the barbecue. Delicious.

I dine and dash through my vegetable garden, nibbling on basil, arugula, and cherry tomatoes, only the eggplant, peppers, kale, potatoes, and basket of mixed herbs make it to the kitchen. With the heavenly herb harvest, I dry as many varieties as possible and make gift packets for people who buy any of my eight books. (Yes, I’m excited to announce that my third book in the Be the Star You Are!® series, “Be the Star You Are!® Millennials to Boomers Celebrating Positive Voices in a Changing Digital World” has been published. Buy your autographed copies at <http://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>.)

This month is also a great time to divide your bearded iris. These rugged and reliable bloomers are not attractive to deer. With a shovel, cut rhizomes and plant where

you want another patch of colorful flags. Did you know that the Greek goddess of the rainbow was named Iris?

In this hot month, continue to water deeply and prevent evaporation through mulching. Other advantages of mulching include eliminating weeds, which reduces the need for cultivation and reduces injury to shallow rooted plants. Buckwheat hulls, coffee grounds, shredded corn stalks, peat moss, pine needles (around acid-loving plants), tree bark of cedar, fir, oak and redwood, and wood chips are all excellent materials to use.

I recently wrote an article titled “The Language of Trees” (<https://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1204/Digging-Deep-with-Cynthia-Brian-The-language-of-trees.html>) with research proving that trees talk and support one another. When I returned from Ireland, I witnessed a once very erect pine tree reaching out with one of its branches to “hug” a neighboring pine 20 feet away. That pine was bending to reach yet another pine. Because of the volatility of this year’s fire season, I will need to cut this lonely limb. Keep your trees trimmed to a minimum of six feet above ground level, remove brush, and dead limbs from around the perimeter of your home. Since we all live in a fire zone, put together an emergency supply kit for your family and pets.

Suggestions for an emergency supply kit

In the midst of the many disasters last fall, I encouraged clients to put together an emergency “go bag.” I would like to share this safety measure with you. Whatever the calamity, it will behoove you to have an emergency supply kit in every vehicle and a larger one in your home. Make sure you know where all of your important documents are located. Make copies and put a reminder note on your bag to grab any necessities that aren’t already packed. Sometimes, as is the case with our California wildfires, a matter of minutes was the difference between life and death. Make copies of your passport, driver’s license, credit cards, and have some small bills available. Know where your chargers are for phones, tablets and computers. Back up your computers and keep files in the cloud or offsite. Make a plan for your pets and animals and have a bag ready for them as well. Most of all, remember that saving your life and that of your family is the most important thing. Everything else can be replaced.

Fill a backpack or small case with the following:

First Aid kit	Protein bars
Work gloves	Personal hygiene kit with a
Towelettes	toothbrush, soap, medications
Small towel	Matches
Bottled water (1 gallon per person per day)	Candle
Blanket	Flashlight with extra batteries
Walking shoes	Eating utensils
Peanut butter	Breathing masks (Niosh-N95)
Honey	Clothing change

I hope that we never have to use these emergency kits, but it’s best to be prepared. Most of the schools are back in session. Drive safely and be aware.

Days are getting slowly shorter. Savor those golden sunsets and enjoy shucking summer’s white and yellow corn.



A graceful garden entrance with carefree foliage, flowing ferns, cascading hardy geraniums, and newly planted begonias.



Tiny daisies could be eye-catching in a lawn.

Melanie Snow

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PACIFIC UNION
INTERNATIONAL

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for Mid-August

FINDING dead birds? West Nile disease is transmitted by bites from infected mosquitoes to many species of birds, especially hawks, owls, crows, and blue jays. If you find a dead bird, do not handle it with your bare hands. Report to the health department or vector control.

CREATE an emergency kit for any disaster. Keep a kit in every vehicle and one near an exit door in your home.

ENCOURAGE pollinators to visit your garden by continuing to plant agastache, phlox, monarda, liatris, coneflowers and aquilegia.

VISIT <http://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store> to purchase any of my eight books, including the 2018 publications of "Growing with the Goddess Gardener" and "Be the Star You Are!® Millennials to Boomers Celebrating Positive Voices in a Changing Digital World." You'll get free seeds and herbs with every purchase.

CUT back tree suckers that are sprouting from tree roots. You'll know they are root suckers as they grow rapidly.

HARVEST blackberries. Heavy prune the canes after harvesting.

DEADHEAD roses and perennials to continue the blooming season. Make a habit of deadheading once per week.

SHAPE wisteria, hibiscus, honeysuckle, lilac, mock orange and trumpet vine.

COME to a garden party on Aug. 23! Join A.S.I.D. (American Society of Interior Designers) and Janus et Cie for a Summer Garden Party in San Francisco where you'll enjoy a flower arranging demonstration, elegant bites, cocktails, presentation, and book signing. Info at <https://www.cynthiabrian.com/gardening>.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.

Cynthia Brian



Once potato leaves die back, it's time to start digging.



Cut, dry, or freeze your over abundance of herbs to use this winter.



Fresh picked corn to be shucked.



Summer is for hollyhocks ... pretty in pink.



A once straight pine branch now reaches for a hug from a neighboring pine tree.



Cut back root suckers that develop on trees.



Cynthia Brian enjoying an 11 p.m. sea sunset.

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, raised in the vineyards of Napa County, 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 Radio show and order her books at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Buy a copy of the new book, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Available for hire for projects and lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

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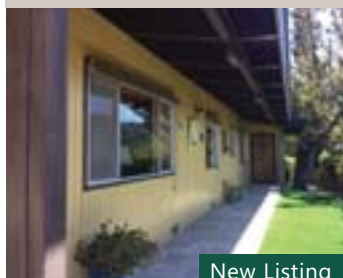
New Listing

34 Ardilla Road

Charming Orinda Hills home overlooking OCC. Fabulous open floor plan with hardwood floors & chef's kitchen!

\$984,000

ORINDA



New Listing

66 Hacienda Circle

Opportunity awaits in fantastic Orinda neighborhood. Single level living with big views, privacy, and a pool!

\$1,072,000

ORINDA



New Listing

8 Williams Court

Private cul-de-sac location w/ stunning views & pool! 4 Bed/2 Bath single-level rancher on .65 acres.

\$1,350,000

ORINDA

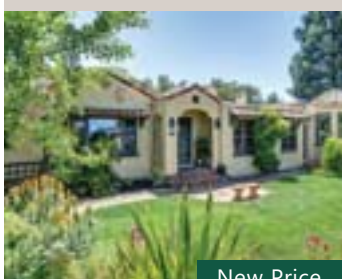


3 Charles Hill Place

Renovated mid-century haven! 3157 sq.ft. of light filled living amongst the Orinda hills.

\$1,595,000

ORINDA



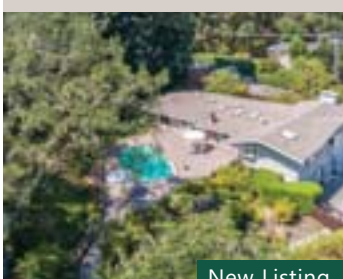
New Price

147 Camino Don Miguel

Authentic old Orinda Spanish on truly special OCC view knoll. 3223 sq.ft. of charming living spaces.

\$1,795,000

ORINDA



New Listing

15 Honey Hill Road

Beautifully landscaped 4 Bed/2.5 Bath/2752 sq.ft. single-level mid-century modern home on .85 acres.

\$1,995,000

ORINDA



New Listing

1 La Senda

Extremely well maintained & updated 4 Bed/4 Bath OCC classic set on gorgeous grounds. Large spaces inside and out.

\$2,650,000

LAFAYETTE



4030 Happy Valley Road

Elegant Country Living! Beautifully appointed +/-4128 sq.ft. home with gorgeous grounds.

\$2,995,000

LAFAYETTE

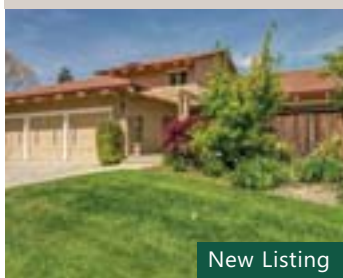


820 Acalanes Road

One-of-a-kind updated property with stunning architectural character. 5 Beds/4+ Baths/ approx. 5883 sq.ft.

\$3,995,000

MORAGA



New Listing

591 Augusta Drive

Terrific floor plan home on first fairway of MCC. 4 Bed/2.5 Bath/2945 sq. ft. on .21 acres. Master retreat upstairs!

Call For Price

MORAGA



288 Lakefield Place

4 Acre Panoramic View Estate! 5 Bed/4 Bath main house, guest house, barn, 5 car garage, and more!

\$2,295,000

ROSSMOOR



4817 Terra Granada Drive #2A

Move right in! Quiet location 2 Bed/2 Bath end-unit featuring a spacious master, wood floors, and kitchen with breakfast nook.

\$569,000

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