

Life in LAMORINDA

Moraga Dad Runs for Congress

By Sophie Bracinni

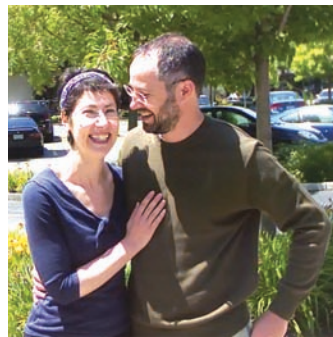
(Editor's note: The Lamorinda Weekly does not endorse political parties or candidates for any office; the following is not a statement of support for Nick Gerber's candidacy but rather a profile of one local dad, in celebration of Fathers' Day)

He has a big smile, a charming wife and two young children. He is conservative, with a green tint, and wants to take Democrat Ellen Tauscher's seat in the U.S. Congress. What makes a normal father, who was happy to promote Moraga's businesses, take a leap and want to transform a nation? Nicholas (Nick) Gerber had a life changing experience when his wife was diagnosed with cancer. The two of them decided there was no better time than now to realize their life long dreams.

Nick Gerber was raised in New-York and got an MBA from the University of San Francisco. An entrepreneur at heart, he started a number of businesses, some very successful such as the United States Oil Fund. Today, Gerber is after District 10, a bold target in an area that traditionally votes Democratic. But he thinks that the battle can be won on ideas, not labels.

As we all know, winning takes money. Gerber is not afraid to pick up the phone and ask Republican sympathizers for campaign contributions. His first objective is to get his name out there. So he's going to the luncheons, the breakfasts, the dinners and doesn't miss any meetings of the Chamber of Commerce. And when his constituency wants him to look the part and wear a tie, Gerber is happy to oblige.

As a parent, Gerber wants a better world for his children. He believes that becoming a dad made him realize that he could plant a seed, nurture it and mold it. "I wouldn't trust someone who does not have children to run the country," he adds, "You need to raise a family in order to know what children need." And Nick's family was his first support. When tragedy struck them a year ago, with Melinda Gerber's sickness, the "Gerber



Nick and Melinda Gerber

team" fought together. Today Melinda, a published author, puts her creativity to work in support of her husband's dream. She knows that if he wins, the stress on the family will be high with a husband who must spend a lot of time in Washington, D.C.

The Gerbers say they are about taking responsibility and keeping their commitments. Gerber wants government to stop treating people like children, so citizens can get the rewards that come from initiative and creativity. For example, he believes that a Universal Health Care system is not a good idea: "Of the 15% of people who are not now covered, many are young and healthy, and they do not want coverage," comments Gerber. "The problem is only about 7.5% of the population, and we do not want a system where the State will tell you that you should take one aspirin and not two." Gerber would rather see deregulation to bring down the cost. Having experienced the health care system first hand, he is very vocal about allowing patients to test new drugs if they want to take the risk and he would like to see the FDA practice a more hands-off approach.

Part of Gerber's commitment to create a better world for his children translates into strong environmental positions. He believes that the environment is fragile, that it's our duty to protect it and that we should move away from burning fossil fuel. "Good stewardship of the environment is a normal position for a Republican," he concludes. "After all, the EPA was funded by Richard Nixon, and another Republican President, Theodore Roosevelt, significantly developed the National Park System."

Where to Watch the Fireworks

By Chris Lavin



The Fourth of July is coming up, and Moraga is the only game in town if you want to watch fireworks in this area that night.

The display, by the company Pyro Spectaculars, Inc., will kick off at dark on July 4 over the Moraga Golf Course, on Moraga Way. Parking is available at the Moraga Commons and overflow parking is available near Moraga Center.

"This company has been doing our show for years, and they do a really good job," said Penelope Leach, director of the Parks and Recreation Department in Moraga.

The whole show costs the Town about \$17,000, which pays for insurance, extra police officers for directing traffic, and the fireworks themselves. Last year the Town went out for bids for a better rate on the fireworks display, but Pyro Spectaculars still won out. The cities of Orinda and Lafayette contribute some monies to the display, although much comes from private donations.

Those donations can be made through the "Buy a Rocket" campaign by calling by calling 925-631-6842. When an explosive rocket goes up, parents will be able to say, "There's ours!" ...but only once if you pay the 40 bucks. You can donate any amount, Leach said, and even the smallest amount will be appreciated.

If you are taking your kids, or if you are simply curious, some of the best information about fireworks can be found on the Internet at Wikipedia when you search for "fireworks." Also, for information about the country's birthday, you can always consult the Declaration of Independence, which was signed that day in 1776, and read at least the first three lines of the second paragraph and talk about them during the evening barbecue.

Text can be found at <http://usmilitaryhistory.com/declrind.htm>, among other places, but probably not enough. Fireworks may then ensue.

Paul Caccamo Checks In

Around the Lamorinda Weekly office he's known as "The Hiker Guy." In our last issue you met Paul Caccamo, the local musician who is hiking the Pacific Crest Trail this summer. On May 31st, after five weeks of hiking, Caccamo and his companions arrived in Tehachapi (558 miles from the Mexican border). There he took a break, a long hot shower, and visited the library from where he sent a message to his friends (excerpts below).



Greetings All -

Much of Southern California has been desert with mountain ranges interspersed in between. We've crossed the Laguna, San Jacinto, San Bernardino, San Gabriel, Sawmill and Liebre Mountains. At times we have walked more than 25 miles between water sources.

We have but 140 short miles before we reach Kennedy Meadows and the beginning of the High Sierra. After all this dryness what an incredible luxury it will be to carry only a little water. Before that we will be once again experiencing 100-degree temperatures and spending the hot hours in the shade. The beauty of this strategy is that now we walk well into the night, walking by the light of the moon with occasional help from our headlamps. The wildlife is incredible at night; they don't expect to see a human at that time.

It wasn't at night but I saw my first mountain lion ever the other day. It shot across the trail about twenty feet in front of me and I had to wonder if it was thinking I would make a tasty meal. I spent the next few minutes very loudly disabusing him or her of the notion: "You better not EVEN try it lion!" It never returned.

The grapevine tells me that many people have already dropped out of this insanity in favor of the comforts of civilization. Apparently the extreme dryness this year is punishing people enough to send them home. I can relate but am very happy to report that, apart from some brutal blisters and very sore feet, I am fine.

The other worry I had pre-trip was would I be able to handle being away from city life and family and friends for this long? Well it turns out I am very comfortable out here. I sleep a LOT better in the wilderness than in crappy motels, and while I miss my friends terribly it is a temporary situation and I think what I'm doing is worth the sacrifice. Have there been any great revelations/big changes since I've been out? Well, for one, I realize I like my work at Campo and want to go back. And Tim and Zach (my hiking partners, also known as Filthy Figaro and Sprout Boy) say I'm nicer than before. I may not agree but take that for what it's worth.

Everyone gets a new name out here, for example: Riddle, Troll, Oblivious, Mr. Pink, Grimace, Apple Pie, Speed Stick, Rocham and Ultrabrite. My name? Bounty Hunter. I'll explain later.

Next town stop is Independence, 240+ miles from here. They may not have a library - but we'll see.

-Paul C.

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