

business briefs

Lafayette Attorney Honored:

Lafayette resident Michael Ney will be honored as a Kennedy Laureate at John F. Kennedy University's Laureate Award Celebration on Friday, Nov. 16. A Senior Partner at McNamara, Dodge, Ney, Beatty, Slattery, Pfalzer, Borges & Brothers, Michael Ney has been an integral contributor to the local legal community since being admitted to the Bar in 1972. Currently specializing in civil litigation, he has served as Judge Pro Tem, Contra Costa Superior Court and Deputy District Attorney of Alameda County (1972-1973), as well as the Board of Directors for the Association of Defense Counsel of Northern California. Ney is also a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates and the American College of Trial Lawyers.

Moraga's Colleen Markham Joins "Epic Change":

Colleen Markham has been named the Northern California Chapter Head for Epic Change, a new national non-profit organization whose first project is to rebuild Shepherds Junior Academy, a school serving one hundred children aged 2-11 in Arusha, Tanzania. Epic Change founder Sanjay Patel said of Markham, "I have known Colleen for almost five years now and her energy and compassion towards others made it an incredible easy decision for us to appoint her into this position." The project to rebuild Shepherds Junior Academy is estimated to cost about 250,000 over the next five years, and Patel reports they have raised almost \$30K to date and are preparing to purchase land on which to build the new school. "The children of Shepherds Junior remain hopeful that help will come," says Markham, "and Epic Change is ensuring that these children's modest dreams become reality."

For more information, go to <http://epicchange.org>

News from the three Chambers of Commerce:

- Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, 100 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette - www.lafayettechamber.org; 925-284-7404**
- Community Thanksgiving Breakfast - Friday, November 16. Join city leaders, residents and the business community for breakfast as we have done for 27 years. The annual event will be held on Friday, November 16th from 7:30am-9:00am at Lafayette United Methodist Church, 955 Moraga Rd., Lafayette. Reservations can be made by calling the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce at 284-7404 or visit www.lafayettechamber.org. Cost is \$15 per person.
- Business Issues/Government Affairs Committee Open Meeting on 29 Thursday at 8:00 am - Lafayette Chamber Conference Room.

Chamber of Commerce of Moraga - www.moragachamber.org

- Chamber monthly meeting on November 30th at Terzetto Cuisine at 8:00am, 1419 Moraga Way in the Moraga Center. The new board will be elected.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce, 24 Orinda Way, Orinda - www.orindachamber.org:

- Breakfast Meeting Friday, December 7, 2007 - 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. Location: Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda, CA 94563
- Bill Lindsey will introduce Rev. Shumake of the Richmond Improvement Association
- Launch of the Shop Orinda campaign on November 17th.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact Sophie Braccini at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com or contact Lamorinda Weekly at 925-377-0977.

California Bank of Commerce moves to the Mercantile

By Sophie Braccini



Left to right as you look at the picture: Tom Park - Executive Vice President, Mark DeVincenzi - Chief Marketing Officer, John Rossell - President & CEO, Roxy Klein - Director and Chair of the Investment Committee, Virginia Robbins - Chief Administrative Officer, Steve Shelton - Executive Vice President
Photo Katy Dyer

After only four months of operation, the California Bank of Commerce, headquartered in Lafayette, boasts eighty clients representing nearly \$18 million in deposits or an average deposit of about \$225,000 per client. These deposits build on the \$25M in capital provided by local investors in the Lamorinda area. This week the bank moved to its new location, on the first floor of the new Lafayette Mercantile building on Mount Diablo Boulevard.

Local investors gathered last May at the Lafayette Veteran's Memorial to hear the bank's business plan and participate in the future success of the enterprise. CEO John Rossell confirms their accomplishment, "We had to return about \$3M to investors; the community really came through and their purpose is to invest for the long term, some even buying shares for their children." Roxy Klein, Board Member, was not surprised by the result of the fundraising, "We knew there was a strong need for a community business bank in this area. Our research showed that 98% of the businesses in the East Bay Area have less than 100 employees.

These businesses need the personal attention and service that California Bank of Commerce can provide."

The target clientele of the Bank is located throughout the Bay Area. According to Rossell, the clients are mid-size companies, achieving from \$2 to \$50M in sales, looking for establishing a real partnership with their banker. "The service to our customers combines a sophisticated electronic interface with very experienced account managers: that's a very powerful blend. Plus, our strong relationship with Wells Fargo allows our clients to use their branches, so we have no problem servicing a restaurant in San Francisco or an insurance company in Walnut Creek," says the C.E.O.

Klein believes that the greatest strength of the bank is the expertise of the staff, noting, "Our executive management team has more than 100 years of combined banking experience." "That's why you won't see our advisors in their offices," explains Rossell, "they're at their customer's site, doing what they do best, acting as consultants. For example, helping

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them streamline their accounts receivable, or even getting a better P.R. positioning." The Bank's management team believes that's what sets a community bank apart from regional and national banking chains: partnering with customers, access to top management and quick decision making.

Richard J. Scherer, President of the Pelican Group, explains that it's because of past relationship and trust that he chose CBC: "We got involved with CBC because of our trust in some of the executives of the bank such as Steve Shelton and Michele Wirfel. We've been doing business with these two individuals for over 10 years now." Scherer explains that a community bank is what he needs: "Large banks have never understood my business and have not been there when I needed them. CBC relates well to medium sized companies and offers services and loans for an array of needs including capital improvements, equipment financing, and real estate lending. These are the services I look for in a bank." The trust was such that Scherer was one of the initial investors building the bank's capital and he adds that if times for banking get tougher, "Yes, I'd stick by them as they have by me during tough times."

Professional Condos in Moraga

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Interest is building for the eight suites available. David Schnayer, the real estate agent in charge of unit sales, reports that about two dozen business owners have expressed an interest in the project. "We have met with law firms, insurance brokers, dentists, CPAs, a church group, engineers, design companies and a few financial institutions," says Schnayer, "most are professionals who live in Lamorinda; about half currently have their offices in Walnut Creek and beyond."

The units are priced from just below \$500,000 to \$1,399,000. Colliers International will accept reservations at this time with a 3% refundable deposit. For more information contact David Schnayer, 925-279-4606 or Matt Hastings, 925-279-4625.

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Edy Schwartz:

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If Moragans do not shop in town it's because they have the perception that there is not much choice there, and if new businesses don't want to come it's because they feel the amount of local shopping is weak. She felt that this "Catch 22" condition should be broken first in the minds of residents and that's how "Shop Moraga First" started. The group comprising Schwartz, Bill Snider, Grant Stubblefield, Craig Lazarus, Janet Forman, Ellen Bean and Andy Schreck created the concept and went to the Chamber of Commerce for support.

"Edy is the type that leans forward and doesn't give up, she gets things done," says a fellow chamber member. "Edy is unfailingly cheerful; she has one of the greatest positive attitudes I've experienced," adds Boyd. "She has a lot of passion for our town and brings people together in a very supportive way," says long time friend Ellen Bean, "I've never worked with somebody that's quite as reliable, present, able to go with the flow and operate without judgment. In recent years she has learned to balance activities and stillness."

Edy now has the pleasure of seeing her first two grandchildren grow up in Moraga. She is a member of the American Association of University Women, and promotes the annual "Sister to Sister" summit. She also makes sure she finds time to smell the roses.

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