

Locally Owned Onsite Computer Services in Lamorinda

By Sophie Braccini

Lamorinda is the home of many entrepreneurs; the technical field has given rise to a very diverse breed of entrepreneurs who are eager to service our personal and professional information tools. Stores have been struggling; nobody wants to bring their equipment to a store when a problem arises. Onsite services now get the work by going to clients' sites.

A One-Woman Show

The field is primarily masculine, although one company, Techmommy, is a one-woman operation. Alison Bouchard first got involved with computers for her personal use in the early 80's. The mother of two wanted a part time job she could manage from home.

"What sets me apart," says Bouchard, "is that I use both my left and right brain. I'm a technical and a people's person; a high-tech brain with the patience of a mother." She believes that her friendly and personable approach is the key to her success. She speaks in plain English and educates as she goes. Bouchard works with individuals and small businesses, families and seniors. She troubleshoots, repairs, and sets-up PCs. "There are discrepancies caused by older versions and brands when you shop. People have their own specific needs too, so I take them shopping and within an hour we can be done." Bouchard charges \$99 an hour.

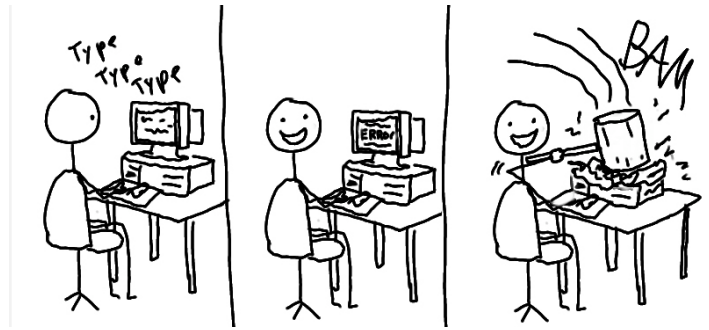
Lisa Connolly of Lafayette says, "Alison's services are very friendly and personable. She helped me become savvier about pre-teens' Internet use and their safety while online." Reach Techmommy at info@techmommy.com, 377-7711, or visit the website at <http://www.techmommy.com>.

A Company of Nerds?

Like Alison Bouchard, Edward Zeidan was not originally trained as a computer engineer. The founder of Nerd4Rent graduated in Political Science and holds an MBA. The name of the company was chosen carefully. "I wanted it to reflect our personality, we are technically savvy but very friendly, not intimidating," says Zeidan.

Nerd4Rent serves individuals and small businesses. A staff of eleven, six of whom are technicians, do setups and maintenance; they take care of malfunctions, network issues and viruses. The company charges \$149 an hour, with 15 minute increments after the first hour. Nerd4Rent will soon offer a fixed priced maintenance contract from \$9.99 to \$19.99 a month. Zeidan offers phone support and remote control support that's quicker and less expensive.

Jay Lifson, of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, has been working with Nerd4Rent for many years: "The gig is up!" says Lifson. "Ed wants us to think he's a nerd. No one is buying that disguise anymore. Those who have used Nerd4Rent know that Ed and his team are dependable, efficient, and knowledgeable. Nerd4Rent was our 2006 Small Business of the Year. Training, technical support, repairs and web design are all in Ed's tool belt." Reach



Nerd4Rent at Nerd@Nerd4Rent.com, 283-5666, or visit the website at <http://www.nerd4rent.com/>.

Teamwork

Specializing in the solving of difficult technical problems, DiabloLink Communications is a good example of how ingenuity and passion can lead to the creation of a sustainable business. Steve Angelides and Doug King started their cooperation when they jointly developed a non-profit religious news site, www.orthodoxnews.com, in the '90s. They decided to commercialize the Internet tools they had developed and built an integrated services company.

According to Angelides, what makes them efficient is the cooperation the two men have developed over the years. "We are complementary," says Angelides, "and our technological knowledge grows as we solve new issues." DiabloLink's approach to new technology includes not charging their customers for their learning curve. 30% of DiabloLink's customers are seniors, and the company offers ongoing tutoring at the rate of \$49 an hour.

"Fast response time is key in our business," explains Angelides, "we respond to phone calls twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Sometimes we can solve the issue over the phone, but often a physical intervention is necessary."

Dave Reynolds, owner of the Curves Fitness Center in Moraga, has been DiabloLink's client for the past couple of years. "I appreciate DiabloLink's fairness and reliability," says Reynolds, "most of the time, Steve or Doug will immediately know what the problem is." Reach DiabloLink at sales@DiabloLink.net, 465-9567, or visit the website at <http://www.diablolink.net/>.