

business briefs

Lafayette Mercantile Open for Business

Lavande Spa, 3589 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette - 299 8877
Ribbon Cutting ceremony with the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce: January 10th at 4:30 pm

Lavande Spa offers nail care, massages and packaged beauty treatments such as "mother-daughter manicure/pedicure" or "massage for two".

Yankee Pier, 3593 Mount Diablo Blvd. Lafayette
www.yankeepier.com - 283.4100

To open on December 27th; will be open on New Year's Eve with regular menu. Yankee Pier is of the Lark Creek Group, offering market fresh fish entrees, seafood platters, salads as well as a burger alternative to fish, in a New England atmosphere.

Jos. A. Bank, 3599 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
www.josbank.com - 962-1051

Jos. A. Bank presents men's apparel. The chain has more than 400 locations nationwide and specializes in high end men's clothing from business to casual.

Duchess Boutique, 3587 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette,
Shopduchess.com - 962.0208

Hours: Mon.-Fri., 10-6; Sat., 11-6; Sun., 11-5

Duchess Boutique is a women's apparel store managed by Erica Perez, former manager of Flaunt in Danville. From the relaxed to the most sophisticated, from bohemian to classy the store offers tops and pants by Young or Fabulous and Broke, cocktail dresses by LaRok as well as shoes and hand bags by San Francisco creator Goldenbleu.

Set to open in January:

Misto Lino, with a complete line of high quality goods for the home as well as personal items: linens, home care, décor accessories, pampering products; Powell's Sweet Shoppe, an old-fashion, old-world candy store with stores in California, Colorado and Idaho.

Mercantile Parking:

During the day you can choose between street parking or outside parking in the back of the building. The basement parking structure is open to the public evenings and weekends.

From Center to Center

Beauty Source, 1460 suite E, Moraga Rd, Moraga -376-0802

The store that relocated from the Rheem Center to the Moraga Center held its ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday December 14th. The event was presided over by new Chamber of Commerce President Edy Schwartz and was attended by incoming Mayor Linda Deschambault, Moraga Center owner Joan Bruzzone and numerous fellow Chamber members and customers. The new store offers beauty products, includes a hair salon and "Utopia" a face and body works that features a complete menu of facials, peels and massage therapy services.

Union Bank Arrives in Orinda

Union Bank of California 140 Brockwood Road suite 101, Orinda
www.uboc.com - 253-8980

The full service community bank opened a new East Bay location in Orinda on December 10th. The bank totals 317 offices in California and strives to service both consumers and businesses.

News from the Chambers of Commerce:

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, 100 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette, www.lafayettechamber.org • 925-284-7404

Lafayette Chamber elected Larry Blodgett its 2008 Business Person of the Year. He will be honored during the annual membership meeting (see below). A business man and great community volunteer, Blodgett is the 3rd generation owner of Blodgett's Floor Covering. He served as a member of the Board and President of the Chamber of Commerce and was a member of the Lafayette Design Review Commission. He and his wife Karen have made innumerable personal contributions to community organizations.

Friday, January 25, 6:00pm at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. Annual membership meeting with introduction of the 2008 Board of Directors. Mayor Mike Anderson will be giving the "State of the City Address". Included in the evening program will be music provided by Generations in Jazz. Reservations required, form on the Chamber's web site.

Chamber of Commerce of Moraga,; www.moragachamber.org

The Chamber elected a new President, Edy Schwartz. She addresses the business community:

"This past year the board of directors has worked very hard to get the structure of the Chamber in place. By Laws have been written, an application for non-profit status has been applied for and many other basic things that build a strong foundation for an organization are in place. With all of that work done, this year's Chamber is free to attend to other matters. Our main goal for 2008 is to continue to build a business community where business owners, managers and workers feel connected to other businesses and the community at large. We will also continue to work to encourage educate and promote residents to Shop Moraga First so our businesses will prosper and the Town will receive much needed sales tax dollars. In January we will send out a survey to get a feel for what the membership would like their Chamber to provide for them. We will also offer mentoring to small business owners who would like support in finding ways to increase their business. In March the Chamber is putting on a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training designed specifically for businesses. The Chamber will have their annual Luau at the end of the summer and will be a sponsor to the Community Faire in the spring."

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

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce held a very successful Holiday Mixer on December 13th in the Office of the First Republic Bank, 224 Brookwood Road in Orinda. President Keith Miller and Executive Director Candy Kattenburg assisted Office manager Gail Woznak in hosting the party while Real Estate Agent Mark Shaw entertained the audience with his violin.

Helping Managers and Executives Get Back to Work

By Sophie Braccini

When Glen Zamanian was laid off in July, he knew what he had to do. "This happens to people all the time," says the Lafayette resident, "but here in Lamorinda, there is an organization that helps experienced white collar workers seeking a job paying 60K and up."

The California Department of Employment sponsors a non-profit group called Experience Unlimited (E.U.), which is managed by volunteer members. The group organizes workshop, gives access to resources, provides mentors and gives each participant the structure, moral support and discipline that are needed to get back to the workforce. Participation is free but members are asked to give sixteen hours of work back to the group every month.

Every Tuesday morning at 9:00 am the group meets at 49 Knox Drive in Lafayette. This event provides an opportunity for E.U. alumni and members to have fun, network, and socialize. On average, about forty people attend the meetings; the age bracket is 40 to 60 years old, both men and women. Some were mortgage brokers, other V.P.'s of Finance or I.T. managers. Some have part time or short-term jobs, others are unemployed.

The meeting starts with members sharing their news, then the session breaks up into workshops. Newcomers are always welcome; they are introduced to the group's modus operandi and choose an area in which to volunteer: operations, marketing, I.T. or training. They



Tony Friday starts the E.U. meeting

Photo Sophie Braccini

hear about the different services offered by the group such as a counseling session for those who have personal issues, job search techniques, networking or salary negotiation.

The President of E.U. is elected by the group and is a job seeker as well as a volunteer. The current president is the very charismatic Tony Friday, who opened a recent session with a pep talk that had power and liveliness. "Keeping the energy up and firing up the attitude are some of the keys to success," said Friday. Since this group was created to help mature individuals, they are not shy to acknowledge that they sometimes encounter age discrimination. "We have all heard that people over forty cost too much," confirms Friday, "small companies can't afford us."

In order to overcome the age barrier the group proposes different approaches to job seeking. One of the tactics consists of first researching the hiring manager for the position that is

of interest. Once that person is found, one member of the group, or alumni, will be chosen to write a referral letter introducing the applicant. That person will have a logical connection to the hiring manager and will make sure that the candidate is well qualified for the job. E.U. has found that 80% of all jobs are obtained through referrals rather than through the usual ad-answering process.

The second step is to send a "qualification profile" along with the referral letter. This document is a chart that presents on one side the requirements for the position and on the other side the candidate's experiences that most closely match them. This document replaces the traditional

resume. For those older applicants, a long resume starting in the 80's can lead to rejection. It is recommended to bring a resume for the interview, but people who have used this technique report not even having to take it out of their briefcase.

When asked how long it takes to find that new job, Friday is a bit vague, "I've never heard of anybody who didn't get a job; usually it takes 3 to 9 months for someone to get back to work." Zamanian confirms the effectiveness of E.U.: "Résumés don't get jobs, people do. Here at Experience Unlimited we help people network to expand their reach and help new employers grow."

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Jack White cuts the ribbon, while Edy Schwartz (red sweater) and Linda Deschambault (in brown) cheer him on Photo Sophie Braccini

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