

Management Changes Tune for 24-Hour Members

By Cathy Tyson



Members entering the new Moraga 24-Hour Fitness location Photo Cathy Tyson

It was all smiles and shiny new exercise machines at the opening of the new Super Sport 24-Hour Fitness facility in Moraga on Friday. The new club is a huge improvement over the old facility, spacious, airy, with upscale finishes, a sea of exercise equipment, a dedicated spinning room with 34 bicycles, and an expansive locker room with granite countertops.

The good news inside belies the recent flurry of complaints from angry members who were upset about paying additional fees that they thought were unwarranted. In a June letter, members were informed that everyone who would like to use the new facility would have to pay an additional fee.

Apparently all of the member complaints have had some impact on management. There's been a shift to now honor memberships initiated after August of 2007; they can use the new club without any additional fees. According to a company spokesperson, "One-Club" members who signed up from August 25, 2007 forward will be transferred as a "One-Club" member to the new Moraga lo-

cation. A similar arrangement is in place for those that signed an "All-Club Sport" members will be upgraded to "All-Club Super Sport" and will have access to the new club, free of additional fees as well as all Super Sport, Sport and Active 24-Hour locations.

A company spokesperson spelled out the policy change: "24-Hour Fitness values the feedback we have received from our members and we have taken steps to communicate with them about our new club opening in Moraga. We have informed members who joined our club starting in late August 2007 that they will have full access to the new facility without any increase in their monthly dues. Members who signed up prior to this date can enjoy our new facility for either an additional \$9.99 per month or no more than a total of \$39.99 per month, whichever amount is less for their particular membership. The majority of these members will pay much less than \$39.99 per month under this arrangement. These members also will have free access to the new club for 30 days before deciding whether to upgrade their membership."

Perhaps the letter from attorney Victoria Smith, who is also the Mayor of Orinda and a disgruntled 24-Hour Fitness member, had some impact:

"I have previously expressed my frustration with the conditions to the staff who are working there, and have been assured by them that the problems would be remedied by the opening of the new facility, and that all current 24-Hour Fitness members would be able to use the new facility under their existing memberships. ...nowhere in any materials provided by the Club, or in any discussion with any employee of the Moraga Club, has it ever been stated that there would be an additional charge to existing members to use the new facility; in fact, quite the opposite has been represented."

She continued, "I am very upset that you have decided that existing 24-Hour Fitness members will have to pay an additional monthly charge to use the new Moraga facility, notwithstanding the fact that it does not have a pool or any additional sports courts. The new facility, while I certainly hope that it will have decent air conditioning, better equipment, and more space than the current substandard Moraga facility, should not be designated as a 'super sport' club, nor do I believe that any existing 24-Hour Fitness member should be required to pay more to use that facility."

Sometimes the squeaky, possibly muscular, wheel gets the grease.