

business briefs

SewNow! Supports Lee National Denim Day, Raising Money for Breast Cancer Research

960 Moraga Road, Lafayette, 283-7396 www.sewnow.com
 Since 1996, Lee Jeans has supported Lee National Denim Day, an event that has raised \$70 million by inviting companies to "go casual for a cause" and encourage their employees to wear their jeans to work in exchange for a \$5 contribution. SewNow! Fashion studio will join in on October 3rd and invites their customers and the community to participate by wearing denim and making a \$5 donation. The studio will serve coffee, tea and treats all day and will be providing free services and special discounts. Anyone in the community who would like to participate on the 3rd is also invited to join the Lafayette Juniors project to create "comfort pillows" for local breast cancer patients. This project is on going and hosted at SewNow! for the day.



Lafayette Juniors Sewing "comfort pillows" for cancer patients
 Picture courtesy of SewNow

"Wall Street and the 2008 Elections"

Free seminar from J. Rockcliff Realtors and the Lafayette Business Networking Alliance. On Thursday, October 2, a stimulating and informal seminar will offer attendees the opportunity to discover how the 2008 elections may impact the economy from a non-political point of view. The seminar will be conducted by George M. Noceti. Noceti is a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley. "This is both an exciting and frightening time in American history," said Barbara Corsi of J. Rockcliff Realtors. "George will be offering a unique insight into how five important current topics have an effect on the nation's economy as well as how they may impact the financial pictures of seminar attendees."

The topics that Noceti will examine include the uncertainty of congressional control, the lack of a presidential heir-apparent for the first time since 1928, issues with the federal budget situation, questions about the impact of the Alternative Minimum Tax on middle-class Americans, and the short and long term impact of the nation's deficit.

The seminar will be held at the Lafayette Veteran's Hall from 6 to 8:00pm. Refreshments will be served. The Lafayette Veteran's Hall is located at 3780 Mt. Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette.

"Communication Is The Key To Success" - Do you make contact, but not really connect?

Are your relationships thriving or stagnant? How do you rate your personal and professional communication skills? This workshop can change your life. Learn how to become a skilled communicator and increase your business and enhance your relationships. Presented by Marian Woodard, business coach and partner in The Quantum Business. October 8, 5:30-7:30pm (light meal included), Orinda Library - Garden Room, \$10.00. Sponsored by: Women's Business Connection of Lamorinda. For more information call: 925.283.7546.

From the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

- Monthly Mixer - Wednesday, October 8 - 5:30 pm - Lavande Spa - 3589 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Coffee With The Mayor - Friday, October 10 - 8 am - Chamber Conference Room

Moraga Chamber of Commerce

- Nominations for Chamber Board: The Moraga Chamber of Commerce will be selecting new board members in October. The Board of Directors meets one Wednesday a month from 8:00-10:00 am. It is a two year term. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Board of Directors or if you would like to nominate someone, please contact Yelena Mucovich: globalsecuritysystems@juno.com, 925-376-6850; or Wendy Scheck: wendy@lamorindaweekly.com, 925-377-0977.

Orinda Chamber of commerce

- The Chamber organized the first restaurant Tour on September 30th. Thanks to the community for making the event a success.

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

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The Orinda Chamber of Commerce Meets at Historic De Laveaga Estate

By Sophie Braccini



Chamber members tour the grounds

Photo Andy Scheck

A very serene Martha de Laveaga Stewart greets her guests in front of the beautiful mansion that was built by her great grand-father in the late 1880. Her poise and charming demeanor is in perfect harmony with the beauty of the historical estate. A member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, the Marriage and Family Therapist was happy to host the September Orinda Chamber reunion on her property. The house was designated as an historical landmark by the City of Orinda some years ago; it is a testimony of the dream of a family who came to Orinda, fell in love with its comeliness and became significant actors in what it was to become.

Jose Vincente de Laveaga emigrated from the Spanish Basque country to Mexico where he was very successful in silver mining and banking. He had six children; one of the boys was Miguel de Laveaga, Martha's great grand-father. During a trip, he landed in San Francisco and liked it so much that the family decided to stay there. Their banking and financial investments met with great success and their wealth increased. In San Francisco Miguel met Marie De Bretton, they married and had three children. They owned a lot of property in San Francisco, Santa Cruz (which today is deLaveaga Park and golf course), San Mateo and San Benito County.

They also owned the prop-

erty on the north side of the "Crossroads" in Orinda. Miguel and his wife liked it so much that they decided to build a summer home there. Marie built the first catholic Santa Maria church. Their 3 children were Vicente, Julia and Edward, who was to become a significant developer of the city of Orinda.

October of 1971. Martha remembers how on Sunday mornings, after church and pancake breakfast, they had to work two hours in the garden before they could do anything else.

As she shows her guests the original furniture, stain glasses, hunting trophies, and pictures, Martha is aware of the honor she



Martha deLaveaga Stewart in front of the family house Photo Sohie Braccini

Edward and his wife Delight lived there mostly in the summer months. The house was completely destroyed by a fire at the beginning of the century, but rebuilt exactly the same. The couple moved permanently into their Orinda home in the early 1920's when Edward decided to develop the property. He started to subdivide the land and established the village where it is now. He built Peretti's, the first general store, and riding stables. His big dream was to construct the country club, the lake and San Pablo road. Edward lost everything in the 1929 depression. He took lots back from people who couldn't pay anymore and he was left owing the bank great sums of money. The bank took everything but he was able to salvage the old home on Bien Venida ("welcome" in Spanish).

The family has kept the property since. When Edward's wife Delight died in the early 60's the family got together to decide what to do with it. There were 5 living children and their families. One of his sons, Ned and his wife Alyson, had young children and Ned had his business in town. So they moved in. "It's been wonderful for our children to have the privilege of the heritage, and to work out in the garden and to live in the house," wrote Alyson in

enjoys, but weights the challenges that the maintenance of the place presents for its owners. When her parents, Ned and Alyson, died, once again the family gathered to decide the faith of the property.

The four children made each other the promise that the estate would stay in the family, whatever the cost. "It is a blessing to have this beautiful place for all of us," says Martha, "last year we had a big de Laveaga reunion with cousins coming from Mexico. All our marriages are celebrated here, the children and grand-children come for the summer, they know it is their place, and what it means."

Keith Miller, President of the Chamber of Commerce, was delighted to be there, "It is such an historic estate, it is very generous of Martha to have opened her house for us, it is a great venue to meet and network." As they enjoyed the buffet prepared by Barbara Llewellyn some of the more senior guests talked about Ned de Laveaga who was the owner of the downtown Chevron station and long time President of the Rotary Club. "Ned was quietly behind anything that was happening in town," remembered Ken Woznack. "The town should do something for that family," he added, "like a de Laveaga Boulevard in one of the new developments."



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