

business briefs

Zeta Gallery

A new exciting place for contemporary crafts and art of Africa

3437 Mt. Diablo Boulevard,
www.zetagallery.com, 283 6011

Evelyn Fulgado-Taylor invites the Lamorinda community to her gallery opening on Saturday, November 15, to discover the opening exhibition during the reception from 3 to 7 p.m. The opening exhibition will showcase sculpture by Robert Cantor, ceramics by Margo Scarpulla, paintings from Kevan Bean, fine photography by Allan Mendez as well as singular fine jewelry by Leila Fulgado and Evelyn Fulgado-Taylor. In addition the gallery will feature a unique collection devoted to the art of Africa. "It has been my lifelong dream to open an art gallery," says Fulgado-Taylor, an artist herself, "I'm looking forward to being part of the art community of Lamorinda."



Mbuya Mask Pende Tribe D.R. Congo Photo courtesy Zeta web site

New Restaurants in Lamorinda:

In Orinda:

Turquoise Mediterranean Grill, 70 Moraga Way, Orinda, 253-2004

The family-owned and operated restaurant across from Pete's Coffee offers steaks, kebabs, falafel, hummus, dolma, tabouleh, in plates or wraps and sandwiches. Great food for the meat-eating and vegetarians alike.

Village Pizza, 19 Orinda Way, Orinda, 254-1200

Village Pizza is now under new ownership.

In Lafayette:

Knox will replace Per Tutti at 3576 Mt Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette.

New management promises friendly family dining in a fun atmosphere. More information soon.

Keenan Heinz Co. is Moving to Concord

Still in Lafayette until the end of November, 3454 Mt. Diablo Bld.

"The whole corner is going to be torn down," says Joe Heinz, who has been running the store for ten years, "This is a heartache, we've made a lot of friends in Lafayette, it was a funky place, that worked well for us." The property was sold to Merrill Garden, a development corporation based in Seattle, which plans to re-develop the whole corner.

Ten years ago Heinz and his wife started a frame shop with a bit of retail. It evolved to become retail-only after four years and prospered. More than a year ago the couple looked for a place to open a second store and found the Concord location at 1700 East Street. It took months of renovation but they are now ready to occupy the new space. "We are looking for a new place in Lafayette as well," says Heinz, who doesn't want to give up on the city he loves.

"Green" Business Events Becoming a Tradition

Sustainable Lafayette and Sustainable Moraga have been sponsoring regular networking and entertaining events in the community, supported by the three Lamorinda Chambers of Commerce. The last event was on November 11th, the fourth Lamorinda "Green Drinks", at Pizza Antica. Lamorinda Green Drinks is an informal opportunity for local businesses and residents that are interested in green practices and sustainability to socialize, network and learn from one another. Location and town changes every month.

VoiceMedia/Susan & Friends Casting Gets Fun International Activities Going

283-6446, susansvoicemedia.com

Susan McCollom has a full service recording studio and voice-over training company in downtown Lafayette, where she's lived for 20 years. The studio audio engineer, Michael Bruce, is also a Lafayette resident. Recently one of Susan's students, Josh Snyder, booked a job for AXE Body Spray. The client was in a recording studio in Argentina and directed Josh over Skype phone lines while Michael recorded Josh in the Lafayette studio. Since the client was Spanish speaking and VoiceMedia is not, they had another studio in Miami online acting as interpreters. Who knew such international excitement could take place in Little Ol' Lafayette?

Small Business Administration Seminars

The Chambers of Commerce recommend taking advantage of the free seminars offered by the Small Business Administration in the East Bay. Of particular interest in these times of difficult financing is "Accessing Capital for Small Businesses and Start-Up Companies in Hayward on Tuesday November 18th from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. For more information and to register go to www.eastbaysbdc.org

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

100 Lafayette Circle, Suite 103, www.lafayettechamber.org, 925-284-7404

- Congratulations to new Board Members: Dave Simpson, Lafayette Book Store; Debbie Cooper, Mechanics Bank; David Watson, Professional Automotive. Elected to a new term: Larry Blodgett, Blodgett's Abbey Carpet & Flooring; Caesar Perales, Caesar Perales, CPA; Steve Cortese, Cortese Investments; Tony Eichers, Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa; Polly Bernson, Diablo Rapid Print; Steve Palsa, Minuteman Press of Lafayette; AJ Nisen, Bank of America Mortgage. Returning to the Board: Dennis Garrison, Oakwood Athletic Club; Barbara Townsend, Future's Explored; Sandi Mitchell, Empire Realty; Budd MacKenzie, Budd Mackenzie, Attorney; Larry Duson, Bank of the West; Edward Zeidan, Nerd4Rent.
- The GREEN Committee Wed., Nov. 19 12 noon, Chamber office.
- Community Thanksgiving Breakfast Fri Nov 21 at 7:30 a.m. at Temple Isaiah 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Join city leaders, residents, and the business community for breakfast that is a 28 year tradition. The 29th Annual Community Thanksgiving Breakfast will be held on Friday, November 21, from 7:30am - 9:00am at Temple Isaiah, 3458 Mt. Diablo Blvd. (just off Risa Rd.). Breakfast will be graciously prepared by Susan Foord Catering. Reservations can be made by calling the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce at 284-7404 or download a registration form at www.lafayettechamber.org. Cost is \$15 per person.

Moraga Chamber of Commerce

- Congratulations to the elected Board Members: Ellen Beans, Friend of the Chamber; Dimitry Brokman, Manager Union Bank of California; Tim Farley, Director Community & Government Relations Saint Mary's College; Mike Lawrence, Manager, Longs at the Rheem and Moraga Shopping Centers; Walter Nelson, Realtor Caldwell Banker; Yelena Mucovich, Global Security Systems; Ravi Singh, Owner Rheem Automotive; Edy Schwartz, Friend of the Chamber; Wendy Scheck, Associate Publisher, Advertising, Lamorinda Weekly; Larry Tessler, Score.
- State of the Town Address, Wednesday, November 19th starting at 7:00 p.m. in the Rheem Theatre. Come and hear the address by Mayor Lynda Deschambault, a wrap-up of town events for this past year. The Business Person of the Year, chosen by the Chamber, will be announced. The Chamber co-sponsors this event with the Town.
- The next Chamber meeting is Friday, November 21st, 7:30 a.m. coffee and muffins, meeting from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. at the Hacienda. David Gill, Saint Mary's professor, will speak on business ethics.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce

- The first Orinda restaurant tour at the end of September was a success beyond expectation, generating \$2,230 for the Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO), 1/3 of the total tickets proceed. EFO and the Chamber celebrated their collaboration on October 14th.
- Next Chamber General meeting will be the annual Christmas Mixer, Thursday, December 11, 2008 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Mechanics Bank, 77 Moraga Way, Orinda.

• LAMORINDA Business •

Is it a Good Time to Buy or Sell a Business?

By Sophie Braccini



Ken Tom

Photo Wendy Scheck

Ken Tom wants to sell his business because he wants to retire. "I have a customer base and a viable business, but not the energy to go after new contracts," says the Moraga entrepreneur, who provides satellite communication systems primarily to Federal Government Agencies and emergency services. Tom's situation is not uncommon and many Baby Boomers, reaching retirement age, are looking for a way out of the business they developed. If the supply of businesses for sale is steady, it should be a good time to buy, but the credit restriction our economy faces is the biggest challenge that potential buyers have to overcome.

"We still have a lot of potential buyers and sellers," says Jim Rusconi, a local business broker with Bluekey Business Brokerage, "the entrepreneurial spirit is high and people want to control their own destiny." Rusconi identifies financing as the biggest challenge: "The Small Business Administration (SBA) has tightened its rules to approve loans," says the broker. Like any

other institution, SBA is looking to minimize its risk and is requiring potential business owners to prove their professional expertise in the same field as the business they want to buy.

Is a closely related business experience a necessity for success in buying a business? "We believe that a key to the success of any transaction is how the deal is structured and how long the previous owner is ready to be available to train the new owner," says Julie White, another Bluekey broker who has been in the business for many years.

"A business owner can help with the financing," says Didi Cooklev, who is also a local business broker, "that way they show confidence in their own business and they help in this difficult economy." Cooklev has seen owners financing 33 to 50% of the price of their company, "everything is negotiable," she says, "the price is important but equally important is how you are structuring the deal."

Potential owners have to be creative as far as pulling re-

sources together. "One solution, once you have asked all your family members and friends, is to tap into your 401K," says Rusconi, "using that money is possible without penalty and we see more and more people using that resource."

Using retirement money requires a high degree of confidence in the endeavor buyers are ready to commit to. "When you buy a business you need to check its margins and the quality of its cash flow," says Rusconi, "your best bet is to assemble a team to help you with your due diligence." Besides an experienced business broker, Rusconi recommends working with a Certified Public Accountant and a business lawyer.

In this time of slow economic growth, the sector of investment will be crucial too. Both Rusconi and Cooklev recommend the health care industry, senior related businesses, professional services, and manufacturing.

Finally, locating a business that is for sale is not as easy as finding a home. There is no Multiple Listing Service for businesses as there are for homes. The names of the business for sale most of the time stay confidential since owners do not want to scare employees and clients. "There are sites on line that can be good resources," suggests Cooklev, "the listings are blind and will not even provide a precise location, but it can help to narrow down a search." Among others she cites bizben.com and Bizbuysell.com.

Jim Rusconi can be reached at 631 0132 and Didi Cooklev at 377-6700.

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