

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Photo Andy Scheck

Lafayette experienced a small town moment for a big town cause on Monday, December 1st. Lafayette business owners, all wearing matching "Try Lafayette First" tee-shirts and carrying signs bearing the names of their businesses, rallied to demonstrate their solidarity and desire to convince Lafayette residents of the importance of supporting local business.

From the Lafayette Park Hotel, to Smith's Shoe Repair, from Valhalla Automotive to Bank of the West, from Mt. Diablo Nursery to Toots Sweets, from Diablo Foods to Curves and from Oakwood Athletic Club to Gigi, more than 100 businesses have signed up to be part of the "Try Lafayette First" campaign and a large percentage of them came to the Lafayette Plaza on December 1st to join in the excitement about the coming holiday business season.

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 See page 15 for a "Try Lafayette First" shopping map.

"Try Lafayette First!"

Kicks Off in Unity and Uniform

By Sophie Braccini

Severson and McCormick Next to Lead in Orinda

By Andrea A. Firth

Orindans came out en masse and packed the Library Auditorium for the City Council meeting last Tuesday. Good news and celebration were the order of business as the Council recognized and thanked several worthy citizens for their services, awarded grants to seven valuable community groups, and selected the next Mayor and Vice Mayor to lead Orinda through 2009 and 2010.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce President Keith Miller kicked off the evening with a brief Chamber update followed by the introduction of the new and improved Shop Orinda bag, the "gold version", which is deeper and has

a hard bottom. The message was clear—spend more and spend it in Orinda.

The City Council then moved on to recognize some of the City's finest volunteer worker bees and fundraisers. The Council thanked Chip Herman, the founder of the Orinda Classic Car Show, for the fun community event that he coordinates each year and the money that he raises in support of the Seniors Around Town volunteer transportation program. Council Member Amy Worth noted the growth and success of the Car Show, which raised \$16,000 for the cause this year.

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Sue Severson, Orinda's new Mayor for 2009



Tom McCormick, Orinda's new Vice Mayor for 2009
 Photos Andy Scheck

LAMORINDA WEEKLY
this week

Meet Lamorinda's Parks and Recreation Directors

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COLDWELL BANKER

Acalanes Valley and Ridge Neighborhood Closes in on Goal

By Jean Follmer



Oliver Rotundo completes the walk-a-thon
 Photo provided by Lynda Rotundo

In 1969, 87% of all children who lived within one mile of their school either walked or biked to school. "Today, 60% of children that live within a mile are driven and 20% take the bus," said Acalanes Valley resident Lynda Rotundo. "An impacting factor (in the change) is the concern for safety," she added. Championed by Rotundo, the Acalanes Valley and Ridge Neighborhood Association has taken safety into its own hands.

The neighborhood, located behind Acalanes High School, boasts beautiful views and a resulting steep terrain. Rotundo realized the need for more safety within the neighborhood about five years ago. She said it was an incident that involved a new driver and the death of a dog that caught her attention.

The young driver saw some girls playing basketball in the

street and was able to avoid them. However, some other kids were walking their dog off leash in the street, the dog ran in front of the car and the driver was unable to stop in time.

Rotundo said it's not uncommon for people to walk in the street in the neighborhood because there aren't adequate sidewalks or pedestrian lanes. "I realized something had to be done to keep these kids safe. I realized we needed to get this going so I started a petition to get folks to slow down," said Rotundo. There is repeated speeding and reckless driving within the neighborhood. In response to a fatal car accident last winter, "residents of Acalanes Valley and Ridge approved a ballot measure to make neighborhood streets safer for our children and all pedestrians."

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