

business briefs

UPS Store Expands – to Barcelona, 480 Moraga Rd Ste I, Moraga, 376-4480

Javier Galdon, owner of the Moraga Center UPS Store, will move to Spain this month or next. There he will open his second UPS Store. "This kind of business is still developing over there," he noticed during his last trip there, "it's the right time for me to move back to the old country." In the meantime, his wife will stay in Moraga to manage the local store. Maybe Lamorindans will get a good price on their shipment the next time they visit Barcelona?



Javier Galdon in his Moraga UPS Store Photo Sophie Braccini

Take One Video Moves One Mile East, 284-3140

The Take One Video store that used to be located near Handlebar Toys moved over the holidays about 1 mile East to 3400 Mt Diablo Blvd, across from Jack in the Box. The store hours are 10 a.m. to 10 pm on Saturday, noon to 8 p.m. on Sunday and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the week.

Rheem Theater Offers Great Mid-week Deal, 350 Park St, Moraga - 376-0885

You don't have to be a kid or catch a matinee to get a great bargain on new movies. Tom Peterson has announced that tickets for all shows will be discounted at \$6 each Monday-Thursday starting January 6th.

Coping Strategies in Difficult Business Times

Business owners in Lamorinda are preparing their businesses for a hibernation period. Strategies vary, but most are centered on cost cutting, either in terms of hours (and labor) or inventory. In Lafayette, Contra Costa Stationers at 3643 Mt Diablo Blvd has been cutting back on their inventory to reduce cost. "People aren't shopping right now," says store owner Chris Lane, "and putting my money on the shelf will just put me out of business." Lane keeps the basics in his store and customers special order other items that he gets within a day or so. Lane has cut down his hours of operation a bit as well. He has been in business for sixteen years and doesn't plan to retire any time soon.

The Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe in Moraga has applied the same strategy and cut its inventory on big items by 15%. Jorge Quintero, the owner, now closes the store on Sundays to reduce his labor cost. Quintero himself works 6 1/2 days a week. Having another store in Lafayette allows him flexibility in his cost rationalization, hopefully without losing any customers.

The owner of Moraga Hardware decided to close the store for a few days to cut costs. Owner Bill Snider had reduced staff to the minimum, working 75 hours a week himself, and he reduced his inventory some months ago. Snider may cut his early hours and further reduce staff to stay in business. All his variable expenses are being revisited and he plans to start discussions with his landlord and his suppliers.

Others are trying the same tactic, but the suppliers are hurting too: King Florist's Arlene Kohn has seen many growers going out of business and Quintero never got the rent reduction he asked from the owner of the building that harbors his Lafayette store. Susan Marconi from Across the Way believes that suppliers will have to invent new ways of doing business if they don't want to lose all of their retailers.

The Alameda Small Business Development Center offers free classes to business owners.

In Oakland:

e-commerce & Web Marketing Seminar in Oakland on Tuesday, January 27, 2009 from 2 to 5pm
Buying or Selling A/Your Business Seminar in Oakland on Thursday, January 29, 2009 from 2 to 5pm

In San Ramon:

Accessing Capital for Small Businesses and Start-up Companies in San Ramon on Wednesday, February 4, 2009 from 9am to 12pm

For a complete list of classes go to www.eastbaysbdc.org.

News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

2009 Predictions by Chamber CEO Jay Lifson: "None of us are sure what 2009 will look like for our local businesses or residents, but we want you to know that the Chamber will be here for you. Be sure that you are making the most of our services. And we can promise you that we will have an aggressive Shop Lafayette program in 2009. Let's all join together and get through these rough times."

- Wednesday, January 12 at Noon, Green Committee in the Lafayette Chamber Conference Room.
- Wednesday, January 14 at 5:30 p.m. Chamber Mixer at Urban Suburban, 3328 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Thursday, January 15 at 8:30 a.m. Entrepreneur's Club in the Lafayette Chamber Conference Room.

Moraga Chamber of Commerce

- Chamber Mixer, Friday January 30th starting with coffee at 7:30 a.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce

- Mayor's Luncheon, Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2009, Noon to 1:30 p.m. The Orinda Rotary Club and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce will host the Mayor's Luncheon. This event will introduce our new Mayor, Sue Severson, who will be giving the State of the City Address. The event will take place in the Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. The cost per person is \$20.00. Purchase your admission online by going to the Chamber's web site: orindachamber.org/events.php

LW Staff Celebrates Milestone and Its Editor

Edited by Jennifer Wake



Lamorinda Weekly Editor Lee Borrowman with her son Shayan and daughter Ava Photo Andy Scheck

This week's paper is Lamorinda Weekly's 50th issue and 1,000th page published – a milestone, certainly. It is also the 1,000th page edited – an achievement that did not come without much sacrifice and at the hand of a talented individual we in "the biz" call Editor.

Our editor's name? Lee Borrowman.

Without Lee, (as well as the Schecks, of course), the paper you read every other week would likely look much different, or quite simply, may not even exist. Near the paper's inception, Lee made sure to guide us in the right direction when it came to content and overall vision, would stay up into the wee hours of the night making final edits before going to press, and would even write the majority of the stories as we built up our staff – all while continuing her full-time job.

Lee encompasses what every great editor should: she is magnanimous, patient, knowledgeable, and is a great writer. A superhero, in some respects, at least to us staffers.

Staff writer Andrea Firth describes Lee as someone who is "never afraid to tackle the tough story."

"She remains cognizant of the value of the news content and steers clear of stories that aim only to shock. She is exceedingly fair and won't let a story slide without both sides being told," Firth says.

"While she is adventurous and loves stories that make us laugh, she is sensitive to the fact that we live in the community that we report on and write about, and she deftly helps us to strike the right balance."

Never applying a heavy hand and always ready with her sense of humor, Lee has kept the Lamorinda Weekly team of writers a happy bunch.

"She knows how to charmingly elicit the writer to produce the best story possible," says staff writer Cathy Tyson. "I recently received this e-mail commenting on a story I was working on with a colleague:

"Not complaining, would throw myself in front of a speeding Humvee for either of you, but this really needs clarification!"

She was right - it did, so I pawned off the adjustment on my colleague."

Sophie Braccini, a "non-native English speaker," says she gave Lee a lot of editorial work.

"Lee claims that now it takes her only a few minutes to review my prose, but if I have indeed improved, I owe it to her patience and guidance," Braccini says. "Lee exhibits the mane of a lion but remains a soft spoken diplomat. Of course there have been challenging moments, like when she refused an editorial I had written: 'We do not publish our opinions,' she said. "Our paper stays neutral and that's what people like about it." . . . And there are all those wacky article

ideas I come up with."

"She is sometimes a hard sale, but is always open-minded and ready to encourage and improve on ideas as they are thrown around," explains Braccini. "She empowers and inspires us to give our best. Every other week, Lee spends days, including the weekend to review, improve and put together, with Andy and Wendy Scheck, the Lamorinda Weekly."

"Dealing with deadlines, juggling her kids' school schedules to attend editorial meetings, and giving up every other weekend to work late into the night is not everyone's idea of a good time," Tyson adds. "But despite the challenges, she remains ever steadfast in what is appropriate for the paper and deciphering the occasional gray area between news, opinion and advertising."

Writer Jean Follmer finds it particularly rewarding to hear the many positive comments about the paper each week, and is grateful to Lee for bringing the paper this far.

"She is so reliable, responsive, helpful, and honest. I know it wouldn't have been possible to reach this milestone so easily without Lee at the wheel," she says. "She is tremendously valued by all of us and her efforts are clearly paying off."

From all of us at Lamorinda Weekly, the photographers, the reporters, the interns and everyone in between, we thank you, Lee. You are truly the best.

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