

Life in LAMORINDA

Too Sweets Says Goodbye

By Sophie Braccini



Marcy Wheeler in her Lafayette bakery

Photo provided

Emily Sabatte is quite distressed. For eight years now the Lafayette mom has been buying her daughters' birthday cakes at Too Sweets in Lafayette and now that the shop is closing, she doesn't know another local bakery that would offer the same quality and creative conceptions.

The bakery has been located at 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd. for thirteen years. "We started our first business in Berkeley when we were very young," remembers Marcy Wheeler, the bakery's owner, "our first place was The Edible Express on College Avenue, and the first Too Sweets in Berkeley supplied the café on College."

"We have been customers of theirs since the Edible Express days," recalls Connie Chiba of Moraga. She used to take her toddlers there (they are now adults), "and we were so delighted when they moved to

Lafayette in the 90's."

Creating cakes was always Wheeler's forte. "Marcy created a most delicious and beautiful cake for the baptism of my first daughter," remembers Sabatte, "her decoration was delicate and dainty."

Wheeler's ability to create unique decorations was one of the Sabatte's favorite features. "Marcy always added something special and for my daughters the arrival of the pink box was the real beginning of the celebration."

When Wheeler's son reached 6th grade, the family moved to Lafayette. "It was a perfect solution for me," she explains, "I worked and lived here, the kids and their friends helped at the bakery during the holidays, it was part of our identity."

Now that her children are grown, Marcy says it's time to retire from the bakery. "When you're young you feel that you can do it

all," she says. But last year she hurt her shoulder transporting heavy trays and after she underwent surgery, she realized that something had to change.

Behind her Lafayette bakery, she's been renting a studio with the Lamorinda Arts Alliance where painters meet, work, interact and also offer art classes for adults.

"I felt we needed a place to work together, not only a location to sell," says Wheeler, "and this is why this studio came to life." She adds that if she didn't have her painting, leaving the bakery would have been much harder. "Art is my number one passion and I've had to make choices," confesses Wheeler.

Wheeler and her husband have sold Too Sweets' lease to a frozen yogurt business; she thinks that this is a hard time for high-end bakeries and it might be the right time for her to retire anyway. "People go to Safeway or Costco because it is cheaper," she acknowledges, "but by doing so they make choices that will kill the independent businesses that live in their community." She believes that a movement like "Try Lafayette First" is a great initiative to raise people's awareness about the importance of shopping locally.

Over the years, she created or modified hundreds of recipes. "I'd love to have the recipe for her pecan pie," says Chiba, "and her Boston cream cake, and her tarts which were so excellent."

Wheeler plans to create a

recipe book that will be available for purchase on blurb.com. She would like her customers to send her emails indicating what recipes they are most interested in; her email address is: marcy@marcy-wheeler.com.

Lafayette Police Officers were regularly spotted having their morning oatmeal at Too Sweets. Wheeler says: "I know it sounds silly, but the recipe most people have asked for lately is for our oatmeal. Sometimes it is those little 'tricks' that make the difference!"

Too Sweets Oatmeal

Bring 2 cups water to a rolling boil. Add a pinch of salt and 1 cup Quaker Oats Old Fashioned Oatmeal.

Stir only briefly. Turn down heat to low.

Continue to cook 5 minutes, and then turn off heat and let sit for 3-5 more minutes.

Letting the water boil first and not over-agitating the cooking oatmeal helps keep the structure of the individual rolled oat. You just can't get that texture with instant, or if you beat it up with a spoon as it's cooking. Having the water already boiling before adding the oats helps set the shape. Brown sugar, raisins, cinnamon, cream...that's all up to your preference.

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Lamorinda's Diverse Talents Help East Bay Deaf Children

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(LtoR) Jill Ellis, Linda Barton, Ray Hilsinger, Joshua Gottschall, Carol Lettko holding child Sunnan Mushtaq, and Kim Burke-Giusti (teacher of the deaf) Photo courtesy of CEID

External components of the cochlear implant include a microphone, speech processor and an RF transmitter. The therapy that follows the surgery is the key to the success of the intervention.

"When children are implanted, they don't automatically make sense of these new sounds they are hearing," explains CEID

speech/language pathologist Carol Lettko of Orinda.

"Our philosophy at CEID is to use signs and spoken words simultaneously, so they are seeing and hearing at the same time."

Ideally, a child should be diagnosed at birth, a first hearing aid should be given at 3 months so the hearing nerves get stimulated, and for severely impaired

and deaf children the cochlear implant surgery can be performed as early as twelve months.

After the surgery, it takes them nine months to make sense of sounds and start producing sentences. "The signing bridges the gap," adds Lettko, "my job as a speech pathologist is to teach them language and I see the children four times a week in individual sessions." CEID provides toddler and pre-school programs as well where the children learn language through play and structured activities.

The Kaiser team usually never sees the children after the surgery. Gottschall commented that he meets the children prior to the surgery, on the day of surgery, and for a follow up appointment, "but to see these children almost one to two years later and to see the progress they are making is just amazing. It is really wonderful to see how the

children flourish after implantation, which in large part is due to the nurturing environment CEID provides."

The Kaiser team observed their young patients within their educational environment and during individual speech and auditory training sessions. "I really liked the way the CEID staff worked with the children within a group setting in the classroom and then during a one on one individual therapy session," said Hilsinger, "we really enjoyed our visit and were particularly impressed with the progress our patients have made."

The cochlear implant surgery is not a miracle cure and results vary depending on the children. Some can rejoin mainstream schools, others continue in specialized environments, every child is different and parents make that decision.

For more information go to www.CEID.org.

Trombonist Steve Turre - An Exciting Night of Jazz

By Andrea A. Firth



Jazz trombonist Steve Turre Photo provided

Born and raised in Lafayette, Turre attended Lafayette Elementary School where he got his start on the trombone. He and his (also very musical) siblings took lessons at Campana Music and participated in the music programs at Stanley Intermediate School as well. A graduate of Acalanes High School, Turre often returns to the Bay Area to visit family, conduct classes for middle and high school students and to perform before devoted fans in the local jazz scene.

Turre has been a member of the Saturday Night Live Band since 1984, teaches at the Juilliard School, and maintains a full schedule of international touring. He has worked and played with such jazz greats as Ray Charles, Woody Shaw, Art Blakey, Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Hancock, Tito Puente, Van Morrison, Horace Silver and Max Roach. His diverse musical style has also been influenced by the Latin, blues, Afro-Cuban and pop music worlds. Turre also uses self-designed conch shells to make music, an instrument that his ancestors in Mexico also played.

Tickets are \$25 for general admission; \$20 seniors (65+); \$12 Saint Mary's College faculty, staff and non-SMC students; and \$2 SMC

students. For more information or to purchase tickets, please call 925.631.4381 or go to www.stmarys-ca.edu and click on "Arts."

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