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## Trans-Sierra Xtreme: Adventure for the Whole Family

By Sophie Braccini



Chris Casado at Geppetto's Cafe in Orinda Photo Sophie Braccini

Chris Casado was 14 the first time he climbed Mt. Whitney; he was accompanied by Mike Murphy, who had been his 5th grade teacher. The hike was such a great experience that he went back six times. This month Casado and Murphy started a new business, TSX (Trans-Sierra Xtreme) which will offer Lamorindans from middle-school to retirement age a chance for adventure.

"We take people that have the necessary mental toughness; that's what makes 80% of the strength," says Casado, "and we take them on the ultimate trans-Sierra trek." Casado is scheduling four nine-day, 75-mile mountain trips in July and August.

"This trek takes people over

the Sierra to Mt. Whitney on what I believe is the most beautiful trail," says Casado, "it is the best experience for high achieving teens and adults. Two of my siblings and I chose the experience as the subject of our college essays; it was a transformative experience for all of us."

Casado's mother, Valerie, was 40 when she made the trek with her family. "I was totally unprepared when I did it," she remembers. "One of my sons broke his toe and couldn't go, so I made the decision to replace him to be with my other son and 13-year-old daughter, three days before the departure! Aside from blisters caused by brand new shoes, she says, "It was hard but magnificent. You learn so much about the region you cross on the trail."

Now 57, she is considering doing it again this summer. "One of the great elements about this adventure is the mix of ages," she adds, "it was a great bonding experience with my kids and I made friends for life."

An Orinda resident, Casado is an energetic young man who quit his financial investment job a few months ago to start his own businesses. He has at least three projects going; one is a telecommunication venture, the second is an iPhone app that helps plan family dinners –he and his wife are the busy parents of a baby and a toddler – the third is TSX.

Mike Murphy, the co-owner of TSX, has been taking groups

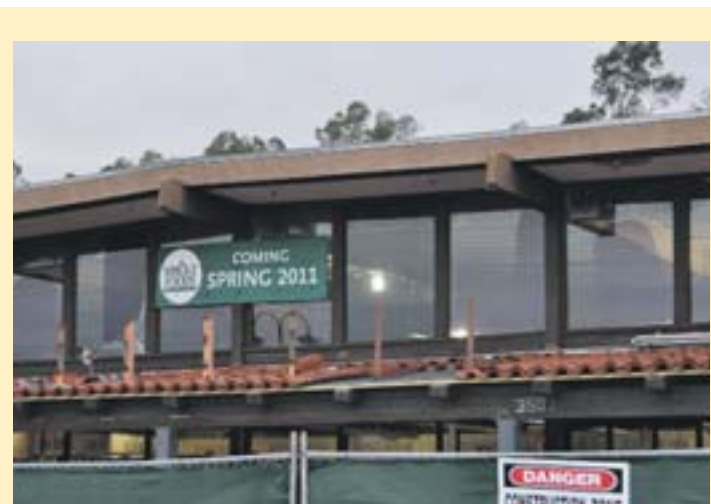
on the trek every year for the past 30 years. He is an experienced guide and holds a wilderness first responder certificate.

At \$1650 per person, the cost of the trip is not negligible. The price includes the loan of any supplies that participants don't already own themselves, such as utensils, backpacks, sleeping bags or mats. There will be an information session at 7:00 p.m. on April 7, at Bonfire Pizza in Orinda's Theater Square, or go to the website, [www.tsxchallenge.com/](http://www.tsxchallenge.com/).

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Whole Foods Market will open in May, according to the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. The new grocery store will hold a much-anticipated "Bread Breaking" Ceremony at 9:45 a.m. on May 18th.

## business briefs

### Stokes Named CIGA Retailer of the Year



Lafayette Chamber Director Jay Lifson congratulates Diablo Foods Ed Stokes on his Retailer of the Year Award. Photo Sophie Braccini

Ed Stokes, of Diablo Foods, has been named the 2010 Retailer of the Year by the California Independent Grocers Association (CIGA). The Award will be presented to him at CIGA's Installation Banquet on Saturday, April 14, in Sacramento.

### Caldecott Properties Comes to Lamorinda 370B Park Street, Moraga (Rheem Shopping Center) (925) 376-4000, www.Caldecott.com

Caldecott Properties recently opened a new office in Moraga, a few doors down from the Rheem Theater. Co-owner Andy Read and seven of the 30 Sales Associates currently live in, or are originally from, Lamorinda. Rob 'the Realtor' Jacobus is the manager of the Moraga-based office. "I've lived in Orinda for 22 years," says Jacobus, "I went to grad school at Saint Mary's College, and started my real estate career at Mason-McDuffie in Lafayette." According to the firm, the intent of establishing Caldecott Properties was to create a full-service brokerage specializing in sales, rentals and property management on both sides of the tunnel. Asked about retail in Moraga, Jacobus answered, "My opinion is that this is not the time to be too picky, the town has to be receptive to any and all. Moraga is a hidden jewel, people do not find it by accident; we need to be a little more friendly when they do." As far as residential real estate is concerned, he said that properties are moving, the inventory is down from last year at the same time, and the number of foreclosed home has increased but is still low.

### From Lamorinda Moms to Lamorinda Web www.lamorindawe.com

Tiraporn Olsen, Stephanie Kusinski, Lauren San Mateo and Holly Sonne met through Lamorinda Moms. The four are concurrently mothers raising children and professional women either in software engineering (Olsen and Sonne) or Marketing and Business Development (Kusinski and San Mateo). Olsen is an Open Source Web Developer at Strategic Social, and the founder of Moraga-based Happy Pixel Studio, LLC. For the past 10 years, she has helped many businesses with their online



(L to R) Lauren San Mateo, Stephanie Kusinski, Holly Sonne, Tiraporn Olsen Photo Tish Wetzell

needs. "I have seen how these small businesses and non-profit struggle to find affordable ways to spread the word about what they have to offer, or about their mission," she says. "As a parent member of Lamorinda Moms I also saw the need for communication between individuals and have questions answered. LamorindaWeb integrates the response to these different needs." The platform was launched on March 1st. Their first outreach campaign is geared to fundraising for the local education foundations. "LamorindaWeb.com will donate \$1 to benefit one of the three Lamorinda education foundations for every new person who joins the LamorindaWeb.com community between now and April 15," explains Kusinski, with a maximum of \$5,000 to be donated." Joining LamorindaWeb is free. The fund raising membership drive will culminate with the April 21 LamorindaWeb launch party to be sponsored and held at The New Rheem Theater, 350 Park St. in Moraga.

### Realtor Dana Green Recognized J. Rockcliff Realtors 3799 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 100, Lafayette (925) 385-2330

J. Rockcliff Realtors announced on March 21st that seasoned Realtor Dana Green has been awarded the company's coveted Top 1% honor. The award recognizes her outstanding performance as one of J. Rockcliff's top performing real estate professionals. Green is a resident of Lafayette and a second-generation Realtor. She works with a variety of local organizations, including the Lafayette Juniors, of which she is a past president and the founder of its popular Kitchen Tour event. She has been recognized for her work with local schools, and donates a portion of each transaction to Lafayette Partners in Education.



**Tri-Chamber Meeting – Make Your Movie**  
 Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda will hold a Tri Chamber Mixer at The New Rheem Theatre, 350 Park Ave, Moraga, on Tues-

day, April 26. Since the meeting will be in a movie theater, the Chambers are asking residents to shoot a video (three minutes or less in length) or create a PowerPoint presentation or slide show about how much they love their town/city. "I thought, we are in a theater and we are all proud of our city – and hey, let's have some fun," said Lafayette Chamber Executive Director Jay Lifson. Winners from each community will be shown on the big screen and win prizes. All submissions must be on a DVD. Please contact the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce for submission instructions, 284-7404.

### News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

- Join Lafayette Chamber and the A's for Meet, Greet, & Play Ball on Thursday, April 14 at the A's vs. Detroit Tigers game. Event Includes - Pregame, networking mixer in the Eastside Club (5:30-7pm), Appetizers and non alcoholic beverages included, and Discounted Field Level game ticket (\$21 - normally \$26). If the Lafayette Chamber group has the most members present at the event it will win a private suite for 18 to be used at a future game in 2011. Make sure that when you check in you mention Lafayette Chamber. To order your event tickets please go to [www.oaklandathletics.com/meet](http://www.oaklandathletics.com/meet) (Password: GREET.)
- Big Band Dance, Friday, April 8, 7:00pm at the New Rheem Theater, 350 Park Street, Moraga. Tickets available at Chamber Office.
- Shop Lafayette meeting, Tuesday, April 12, 12:30 in the Lafayette Chamber Conference Room.
- Monthly Mixer, Wednesday, April 13, 5:30pm at Lafayette Physical Therapy, 3468 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite B110.

### Moraga

The registration deadline for participation in the Moraga Community Faire is April 15. At the March 25 Chamber meeting, Community Faire coordinator Ellen Beans reminded local folks that there are three ways for them to participate: get a booth, purchase a space on one of the Faire's banners that will be displayed all around town for 3 weeks (of the 30 spots available, only seven are still for sale), or volunteer at the Faire on May 14. For more information, contact her at [ellen.beans@gmail.com](mailto:ellen.beans@gmail.com).

### Orinda

First Annual State of the City Address and Special Recognition Awards Luncheon on Wednesday, April 20, starting at 12:00 Noon in the Orinda Community Center, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. The event is hosted by Rotary Club of Orinda and Orinda Chamber of Commerce. It will recognize as Best Small Business in Orinda, Orinda Taxi/Julian Juricevic. The State of the Town Address will be given by Mayor Victoria Smith. RSVP: Required by April 15. Tickets are \$20.00 per person - to purchase tickets go to the Chamber's web site at [www.orindachamber.org/events.htm#AwardsDinner](http://www.orindachamber.org/events.htm#AwardsDinner).

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com) or call the office 925-377-0977