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Support Your City: Buy Your Gas Locally

By Sophie Braccini

When Sue Breedlove's gas tank is nearing empty, she usually goes to a service station in the town where she works. Breedlove, the President of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, is not the only one. Jay Lifson, Executive Director of the Lafayette Chamber, does the same and so does Edy Schwartz, President of the Moraga Chamber.

For them it is second nature; they just shop local. "I'm trying to practice what we preach," says Breedlove. Looking at the numbers, it seems that only half of the population does the same. Bringing the gasoline business back home would add significant sales tax revenue for each local government.

Let's look at the numbers. In Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, about 1/2 of the population get their gas outside of their city. (Source: Muni Services report - Lafayette 48%, Moraga 49% and Orinda 52%). Municipalities get back only a fraction of the sales tax that is paid on gas within their boundaries, but at the end of the year, it adds up: between \$130,000 and \$210,000 depending on the city. This amount could be added to a city's General Fund if everyone committed to buying their gas where they live. "I would love that," commented Orinda Finance Director Emily Hobdy.

"I buy my gas at Costco, it is cheaper there," said a Lamorinda res-

ident who didn't want to be identified. What makes the price of gas? According to Moe Mojaddidi, who runs the Chevron station at the corner of Moraga Way and Moraga Road, it is the brand owner that sets the price. "They charge each station a different price, depending on the rent they pay to the property owner and the distance between the station and the refinery," he says. Stations that don't sell brand name gas can shop around for the lowest price. Mojaddidi believes that the additives in brand name gas equate to better engine performance and are worth paying a bit more for.

"Buying local is what we are about," concludes Orinda Chamber Executive Director Candy Katten-

burg, "and I am looking forward to stopping at the new Flying A gas station that Orinda Motors is opening where the Valero station was."

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

Gas Stations Come and Go:

In Moraga, the Shell station that was located at 1405 Moraga Way lost its lease and moved out its equipment, including the only car wash in town. Over by Rheem, the gas station located at 425 Moraga Road (northeast corner at the intersection of Moraga Rd and Rheem Boulevard), that was entangled in a complex financial situation, is now under contract by a new owner, William Nasser of Walnut Creek, who received approval from the Town of Moraga to modify the convenience store and add a car wash. According to real estate broker Dave Schnayer, the transaction could be complete within 45-60 days. The station will re-open while the improvements are in progress.

In Orinda, Allen Pennebaker, the owner of Orinda Motors, is getting ready to open a new Flying A gas station on September, near the Theater Square onramp to Highway 24. "This is full circle for Orinda Motors, which had a gas pump in the '70s," says Pennebaker, "with the addition of this new station we will be offering a complete range of services— everything that involves cars," including detailing service. According to Pennebaker, Flying A, based in Santa Rosa, is making a comeback in the Bay Area.

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business briefs

Lafayette Makes National News

On August 11 CNN aired a news video comparing the city of Lafayette and its low 4.0% unemployment rate with the city of Delano and its 37% unemployment rate. It can be viewed online at: www.trylafayettefirst.org/cnn_lafayette/.

In the news clip Lafayette Council Member Don Tatzin and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson share their ideas about what makes Lafayette such a heaven for employment. "Education is the greatest discriminating factor," believes Lifson, who also adds that the large number of entrepreneurs in the city makes a big difference. According to monthly labor force data released in California for Contra Costa in June of 2011, Lafayette has one of the lowest rates (along with Kensington), followed by Alamo at 4.1%, Orinda at 4.2%, San Ramon at 4.6%, Danville at 5.9% and Moraga at 6.6%. The City of Clayton's unemployment rate is 2.7%.

working for one of the finest Clubs in the country," said Davis, "this club was developed in the golden age of golf clubs, there is a legacy aspect to this organization. This is a very special place to work." Davis graduated from the University of Oregon in Finance, while competing in the international amateur golf circuit. He was the General Manager at North Ranch for 7 years before he applied for the Orinda position. "My focus in Orinda is to assist the Board of this member-owned club to make sure this place continues to be one of the best in the country," says Davis. His task is to manage the day to day operation and assist the Board in making strategic planning for the long term. "We try to create a really fun recreational experience for the members as well as providing them with interesting social activities," says the new manager, "there are a lot of little things that go into that mix, and I pay attention to all of them." Davis and his wife Trish are in the process of selling their southern California home and plan to be able to settle in the Orinda area soon.

Familiar Lamorinda Personality Keith Miller Starts His Own Brokerage Company

216-8046, www.EBResidential.com



Keith Miller Photo provided

After years of management in the real estate industry, Keith Miller decided to get back to what made his career in the first place, buying and selling homes. "I'm going back to the essence of business," says the Lafayette resident and Orinda Chamber of Commerce Board member. "I'm going under my own license and creating my own Lamorinda-based brokerage firm, East Bay Residential Realty." Miller declares that his wealth of both sales and management experience will permit him to offer a more personalized real estate experience. "My clients will receive the highest level of professionalism in term of market exposure, skilled buyer and seller representation, and they will benefit from my experience and knowledge of the residential real estate industry from the top down."

Orinda Country Club (OCC) has a new General Manager

Greg Davis arrived in Orinda a month ago from the North Ranch Country Club in Southern California to manage OCC. "This is a privilege to be

Israeli Celebration At Shish Kabab Show

376 Park Street, Moraga
388-0538
Shish Kabab show, a middle eastern restaurant in Moraga, will celebrate its roots with music and dancing on Sunday, August 21, starting at 7pm and going well into the night. The Israeli music band More and Yniv will get everyone dancing and surprise belly-dancing performances should delight customers. Call for reservations.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

- Lafayette**
- Entrepreneur's Club, August 18th, 8:30-9:30 am in the Lafayette Chamber Conference Room
 - Movies in the Park, Finding Nemo, August 18th, 8-10 pm
 - Rock the Plaza, The Floorshakers, August 19th, 6 pm;
 - Tall Shadows, August 26, 6 pm

Moraga

Annual Chamber BBQ, Tuesday, August 30, 6-8 pm at the Moraga Commons Park. Everyone in Moraga is invited to the Annual Moraga Chamber of Commerce BBQ sponsored by Safeway. Celebrating and re-launching the Shop Moraga First Campaign. RSVP to Kathe Nelson by August 22, kathenelson@gmail.com

Orinda

After Hours Mixer on Thursday, August 18, 5:30-7 pm at Orinda Motors, 63 Orinda Way, Orinda

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If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com