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## Turning Gold into a Good Deed

By Cathy Tyson



From left, Cathy Tyson, Wendy Scheck, Mary Bruns, Norine Helms, driver extraordinaire Eddie Carvalho, Esther Sprunger, Bill Brochier and Cathy Dausman. Photo Andy Scheck

Like most journalists and publishers, Lamorinda Weekly staffers had some extra gold and silver lying around the house. Thinking that we could do a little recycling – precious metals cause such clutter – and make some money to donate to a worthy cause for Christmas seemed like a terrific idea. So with a box of fairly tarnished silverware, a gold dental crown (without the tooth of course), a necklace, a ring and a couple of funky silver tea pots, yours truly headed to Goldfellow in downtown Lafayette. No – it's not an old James Bond movie, it's a relatively new business that buys gold, silver and platinum.

Although I may know the best place for a grilled cheese sandwich in Lafayette, I was a little hazy on the price of an ounce of gold. The market price continually fluctuates, but lately it's over \$1,700 dollars per ounce for pure 24 karat gold, so I'm feeling confident we can make a huge donation. I had a couple of lessons to learn, however. The Goldfellow folks pay by the penny weight, \$29.46 per pennyweight – and there's twenty pennyweight to a troy ounce. After testing, grading and weighing, our acceptable goodies were 14 karat gold, meaning 14/24 pure. The

teapots and tarnished silverware were silver plated, so Goldfellow wouldn't take them. Helpful Assistant Manager Yecenia Rosano suggested I could still try to sell them at a consignment store.

"It's an easy way to recycle," said Rosano, "This is the perfect place to come with items you don't know what to do with," like a single earring or that circa 1983 gold chain that will never again see the light of day.

After taking down information from my driver's license and my filling out a brief Pawnbrokers Dealer Form – complete with thumbprint – soon I was walking out the door with a check for \$197 that will go to the Spirit Van program. Because the Lamorinda Weekly covers Lafayette, Orinda and Moraga, we wanted the "found" money to go to a cause that served the three locations.

With fifteen walk-in offices, and roughly double that number open by appointment only, business is good. Rosano was recently at a couple of selling parties - think of the reverse of a Tupperware get together. Instead of asking guests to buy containers, they can sell unwanted treasures. Goldfellow even works fundraiser parties for sports teams - it's the same idea as a private party but a team

hosts the event and earns ten percent of all purchases. Potentially way more profitable than a car wash.

Although it's not a huge donation, Spirit Van Coordinator Mary Bruns was very happy to receive it. The Spirit Van serves seniors with and without disabilities, helping them live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. The van takes them to medical appointments, and to run errands, and drivers offer door through door service – helping seniors bring groceries or packages from the van to their homes.

Last Thursday, the Spirit Van picked up regular lunch customers Esther Sprunger and Bill Brochier at Chateau Lafayette to take them to the café at the senior center in Walnut Creek. Esther, at 93 years old says she, "feels terrific," and adds, "this is the best lunch you can imagine for \$2." They both enjoy the meal, camaraderie with other seniors and the opportunity to get out of their respective apartments. Donations to the Spirit Van are always welcome, tax deductible checks can be made out to the City of Lafayette, write "Lamorinda Spirit Van" on the memo line, or call for more information (925) 283-3534.

## A Windsor in our Midsts

A Lamorinda resident recounts a day with Prince Richard

Submitted by Paul Martin



From left: Hayden Wells (Stanley Middle School), HRH Prince Richard and Will Martin (Campo class of '14) at Grace Cathedra Photo provided

Imagine my surprise when I, a resident of the relatively placid "shires" of Lamorinda, was asked to give a senior member of the British Royal Family a tour of San Francisco in early November.

Prince Richard (His Royal Highness, The Duke of Gloucester, Earl of Ulster and Baron Culloden) arrived in San Francisco on November 3rd to preside at the annual Investiture ceremony of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem at Grace Cathedral.

Shortly after his arrival at the

Mark Hopkins, we were whisked away to our first stop, St. Mary's Cathedral. The prince, who studied architecture at Cambridge, showed a keen interest in the innovative Nervi design and was delighted with the tour given by Monsignor John Talesfore.

After visiting the cathedral, we were driven to the Legion of Honor, Lands End and the Golden Gate Bridge. It was one of those characteristically beautiful late fall afternoons and the prince marveled at the world-renown vistas and natural beauty of the Golden Gate and sur-

rounding headlands.

During his four day stay in the Bay Area, the prince also visited Pixar, Dolby Labs, UC Berkeley's School of Environmental Design, the Cable Car Museum and the Getty manse.

My vivid and lasting impression of this senior member of the House of Windsor was his warmth, insatiable curiosity and wicked sense of humor.

On Saturday, November 5th, His Royal Highness presided over the ancient Investiture ceremony of the Order of St. John at Grace Cathedral where 80 people from across the USA were invested or promoted into the international order of chivalry founded in the 11th Century to offer medical care and security to pilgrims in the Holy Land. Resplendent with pomp and beauty, the ceremony was attended by over 500 members and guests and honors were bestowed on 80 new and existing members of the Order, including Frederick Rutledge of Orinda.

The American Priory of the Order of St. John raises approx \$1M a year for the St. John Eye Hospital in East Jerusalem and satellite West Bank eye clinics in Gaza and Hebron where eye diseases are 10 times higher than in developed nations.

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