

# Hop Sock Grand Opening Celebration at SusieCakes in Lafayette

By Sophie Braccini



Susan 'Susie' Sarich in front of her new SusieCakes in Lafayette

Photo Sophie Braccini

Once upon a time in Chicago, Grandma Madeline and Grandma Mildred had a granddaughter who spent most of her free time in both of their kitchens, baking with them. The little girl became so good at it that they nicknamed her 'Susie Cake.'

Fast forward 30 years. Susan (Susie) Sarich graduated from Cornell with a degree in hospitality, worked in that industry for 20 years, and then it hit her: She had carefully preserved her grandmothers' recipes; she wanted a business that would share the authentic American spirit of her

grandmothers, so she opened SusieCakes six years ago with bakeries in San Francisco and the Los Angeles area.

On October 27, Sarich invites Lamorinda to the opening of her eighth store, which is in Lafayette at 3598 Mt Diablo Boulevard, next to Pizza Antica.

When she opened her first store, Sarich had a precise idea of what her baking and business models were going to be. "I wanted to bake almost Betty Crocker-esque desserts," she said during a 'hard hat' visit of her new store, "what your grandmother

would have made, very mid-west, all-American cakes, where everything is straightforward and made from scratch."

Sarich looks for ingredients that are local and are of consistently high quality. Every month she gets 3,000 pounds of flour, 3,500 pounds of butter, 7,500 pounds of sugar (for batter and frosting), and 183,000 eggs from Chef's Warehouse in San Francisco and Los Angeles for the eight bakeries that prepare everything from scratch daily. What is not sold that day is given to local food banks.

"My other business objective was

to give women a place to work and blossom in hospitality," says Sarich. "I've seen a lot of great women leave the industry because of night and holiday work. That's why we're closed on Sundays and we're open only from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. That was intentional from the start to build our brand."

In the bakery, painted in her signature 'Susie-blue' that reminds her of her grandmother's mixing bowl, clients will see about 10 bakers working behind a large glass window with a choice of cakes, cookies, pies, and bars. Custom-made cakes are a specialty.

About 60 percent of SusieCakes' business comes from custom-made cakes for all occasions. "In each store, we employ a full-time Celebration Specialist who works with guests to plan their custom cake design for their wedding, anniversary, graduation, or any special event," says Sarich. There are examples of cakes online, but clients have to come into the store to create one. Prices start at \$33 for a 6-inch round. Cakes are

buttercream only.

"Our mission is 'Connecting Through Celebration,'" says Sarich. "If you're baking here for the people who live here, if you are also from the area, then you connect with the community." Giving back is also very important to Sarich. "Every year we give back \$150,000 of products to the community, school auctions, Girl Scouts, churches..." she says.

Sarich believes that people will come to experience the difference that 'back to basics' makes. "Life is so busy. What we offer is a simple place to just stop and relax with a friend or your child, sit down and have a cupcake, a cup of tea or coffee, and enjoy a simple moment of human interaction," she says.

The October 27 Sock Hop Grand Opening party will be from 1 to 4 p.m., with complimentary sweets. For information, visit [SusieCakes.com](http://SusieCakes.com).

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

## business briefs

### 10th Annual National Memory Screening Day

**Aegis of Moraga, 950 Country Club Drive, Moraga, (925) 478-7327**

Senior Helpers of Contra Costa in association with the Alzheimer's Foundation of America and Aegis of Moraga will hold free, confidential memory screenings from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 13 at Aegis of Moraga to mark the Alzheimer's Foundation of America's 10th annual National Memory Screening Day. The event is part of the foundation's annual initiative to conduct memory screenings to promote proper detection of memory problems, especially among seniors. No appointment is necessary, a memory screening averages between five and 10 minutes and consists of questions and tasks to assess memory. Educational materials will be available to help those who may require some follow-up help. "We are organizing this event as a tool families can use in determining whether their loved ones are showing signs of memory problems and whether they should possibly have a follow-up appointment with their family doctor," said Kevin Reneau of Senior Helpers. "It also helps bring attention to a condition that affects almost all of us, whether it be a family member, a friend or somebody we know."

### Juice Box Heroes Wins Best Picks, [www.juiceboxheroes.com](http://www.juiceboxheroes.com)

Local Dads Craig and Scott Coane, founders of the local group Juice Box Heroes, announced that their 3-CD Juice "Box Set" has won a Dr. Toy Award for Best Picks of 2012. The set, which features all three of their CDs (No Sugar Added, Loose Tooth and Raise Your Snack), has been their best seller this year. Juice Box Heroes records kids' fun songs with '80s tunes that appeal to parents. The quality of their work has led to a constant growth since they started the group in 2009. The CDs can be purchased on their website.

### Orthopedic Surgeon Expands in Lafayette, 3717 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, (925) 284 5300

Bay Area Development Company completed 504 funding for East Bay Shoulder Clinic and Sports Rehabilitation, Inc. in Lafayette. The financing allowed the medical practice of Kirk Jensen, MD, to purchase a 14,305 square foot commercial space on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Jensen began his surgical career at UCSF Hospital in 1995. In 2005 he opened his private medical practice in Oakland, specializing in the treatment of shoulder and sports injuries. In 2008 and 2009, Jensen opened two separate locations in Lafayette to help meet patient demand for his services, focusing on shoulder injuries and care, a rare niche in the area. As a result, his practice has grown considerably over the years, largely because of referrals. For the sake of efficiency and quality of care, Jensen wanted to give up his two leased locations in Lafayette and consolidate into one larger space where he can offer on-site physical therapy and x-ray services.

### Alain Pinel Realtors Adds to Orinda Team

**2 Theatre Square, Orinda, (925) 258-1111**

Alain Pinel Realtors (APR) announced the addition of Karen Richardson and the Karen Richardson Group to its team in the Orinda Office. Richardson joins APR from Coldwell Banker where she was named a member of their Diamond Society for the past eight years. Richardson has 10 years experience in real estate and specializes in the Lamorinda area and is a member of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, Contra Costa Association of Realtors, and California Department of Real Estate.

### News from the three Chambers of Commerce

#### Lafayette

Ribbon Cutting for Kathleen Burke Design, Inc. from 5 to 5:30 p.m., 3449A Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Coffee with the Mayor from 8 to 9 a.m. October 26 at the Chamber.

20th Annual Reservoir Run from 6:30 to 10 a.m. October 28. More info at [lafayettechamber.org/events/reservoir-run/](http://lafayettechamber.org/events/reservoir-run/). (See article page Ax)

Healthy Lifestyles Fair from 5 to 7 p.m. Monday, November 5 at Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd. The Chamber is partnering with Healthwise Chiropractic Center, LamorindaWeb and Oakwood Athletic Club to bring the first fair of this kind in Lafayette.

#### Moraga

Chamber Mixer at the Moraga Art Gallery from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Octo-

ber 30, 518 Center St, Moraga (next to TJ Maxx).

Julia Hoang DDS, Lamorinda Dental Care hosts an Open House from 4:30 to 7 p.m. November 1 in her new office at 533 Moraga Rd, suite 240.

#### Orinda

Chamber Luncheon from noon to 1:30 p.m. November 2 at the Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda. Guest Speaker: Amer Bata: California Department of Transportation Supervisor & Bay Bridge Engineer. Cost: \$30, online at [orindachamber.org/events.htm](http://orindachamber.org/events.htm).

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

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