

When Art and Business Grow Hand in Hand

Allison McCrady Fine Arts Expands

By Sophie Braccini



Allison McCrady in front of her new space in Orinda's Theatre Square.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Allison McCrady, owner of Allison McCrady Fine Arts, is expanding her gallery at Theatre Square in Orinda, attributing her success to the combination of her business savvy and her artistic talent. "Good art at a good price" is her recipe for success, she says. She will celebrate the expansion into the new space with a reception featuring a collection of paintings by Sandy Ostrau, paired with a tasting of Rombauer wines from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, November 8.

McCrady's new space is directly

across from her old one, between Living Lean and Barbacoa. The new space is not much bigger, but it has a better configuration. The first space was slightly offset with a modest front, while this new location has a prominent all-glass storefront. McCrady refreshed the painting, using a very lively bright hue of aqua. "I picked up the color of the Theatre's tiles," she says. "I wanted something lively and fitting with the rest of the Square."

The gallery will make use of the expansive glass surface front – perfect for an art gallery. "I also plan to update the inside lighting," says McCrady. "It will be a beacon inside the Square."

McCrady is keeping her original space for now. She plans to paint and teach there, and invite her colleagues to come by as well. "I will change the exhibition in the new space every 60 days," says McCrady. "The paintings

of the other artists I work with will also be on display across the way in the old space."

McCrady has been able to grow her art business during the recession by working with and representing other artists. A former investment banker and Orinda resident for more than 20 years, McCrady decided that affordability was the key to her success. "Affordability is of course a relative notion," she says. "We try to keep our average price around \$900."

She works only with professional artists, such as Ostrau. "She has a wonderful mastery of colors," says McCrady. "Her creations are on the abstract side, but she is part of the family of artists I work with, people who are inspired by the California landscape and express it in pieces that are joyous in nature."

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

Pierce Named VP of Prudential Fine Homes Division

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Prudential California Realty announced that David Pierce, a long-time real estate professional, has been named the Vice President of the brokerage's Fine Homes Division. Pierce works with the company's Fine Home Specialists to promote the company's luxury and high-end residential real estate properties. Pierce has been in the real estate industry since 1987, and has been a top producing real estate agent since his second year in the business. He has been with Prudential California Realty since 1994. He lives in Orinda with his wife Ellen, is very active in his community having been the president of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, as well as a director for the Contra Costa Association of Realtors.

Moraga Employee of the Month, October

A popular Moraga employee who has served as the Town's Recreation and Facilities Coordinator for the past six years, Kimberly Nelson has been named the October Moraga Employee of the Month, an award sponsored by the Rotary Club of Moraga and the Chamber of Commerce. Nelson coordinates many of the Town's events and rentals for its facilities as well as associated recreation programming and administrative duties. "Kimberly always goes the extra mile to make sure both external and internal customers have a positive experience when working with the Town," said Jay Ingram, the director of parks and recreation. "She also provides staff support to the Moraga Youth Involvement Committee and the many activities and projects they complete annually." The Rotary and Chamber awarded Nelson a \$50 gift card to Safeway as well as a \$50 gift certificate to Michael's Ristorante in Moraga. Nelson was presented with her award and gifts at the Moraga Rotary luncheon on Tuesday, November 6.



From left, Frank May, Rotary president, Kimberly Nelson, and Jay Ingram, Director of Parks and Recreation
Photo provided

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Monthly Mixer from 5:30 to 7 p.m. November 14 at Orchard Nursery & Florist, 4010 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Ribbon Cutting at 5 p.m. November 15 for Venture Men's Goods at 3571 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Moraga

The California Independent Film Festival will be held November 8-11. Don't miss the many movies, documentaries, children movies, and the now local Iron Filmmaker competition at the Rheem Theatre, with selected films also at the Orinda Theatre. For a full program and tickets visit www.caiff.org.

No membership meeting in November for the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. Save the date for the holiday party from 6 to 9 p.m. December 4 at the Moraga Country Club.

Orinda

Vice-President Rick Kattenberg assumed presidency of the Chamber after Keith Miller resigned. "I know I speak for the entire chamber membership when I express my gratitude for Keith Miller's excellent service as president of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce," Kattenberg wrote to Chamber members. "We all wish him the very best and hope that he might be able to one day return to the Chamber. In his absence, we do plan to continue the good work that has always been the hallmark of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. We're proud of our part in helping to bring Theatre Square back to life, the Restaurant Tour, the Shop Orinda Campaign, the Live at the Orinda Comedy event, our involvement with the annual Orinda Classic Car Show, the Fourth of July celebration and parade, now a Lamorinda event." Kattenberg will not run for president in the future board election to avoid any perceived conflict of interest; his wife Candy has been serving as executive director of the Chamber, a part-time paid position for the past five years.

Save the date for the Hospice Tree Lighting ceremony December 1 at 31 Orinda Way, in the Bank of America parking lot. Every year, the Chamber and Hospice of the East Bay bring local school choirs and Santa together to welcome the holidays.

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

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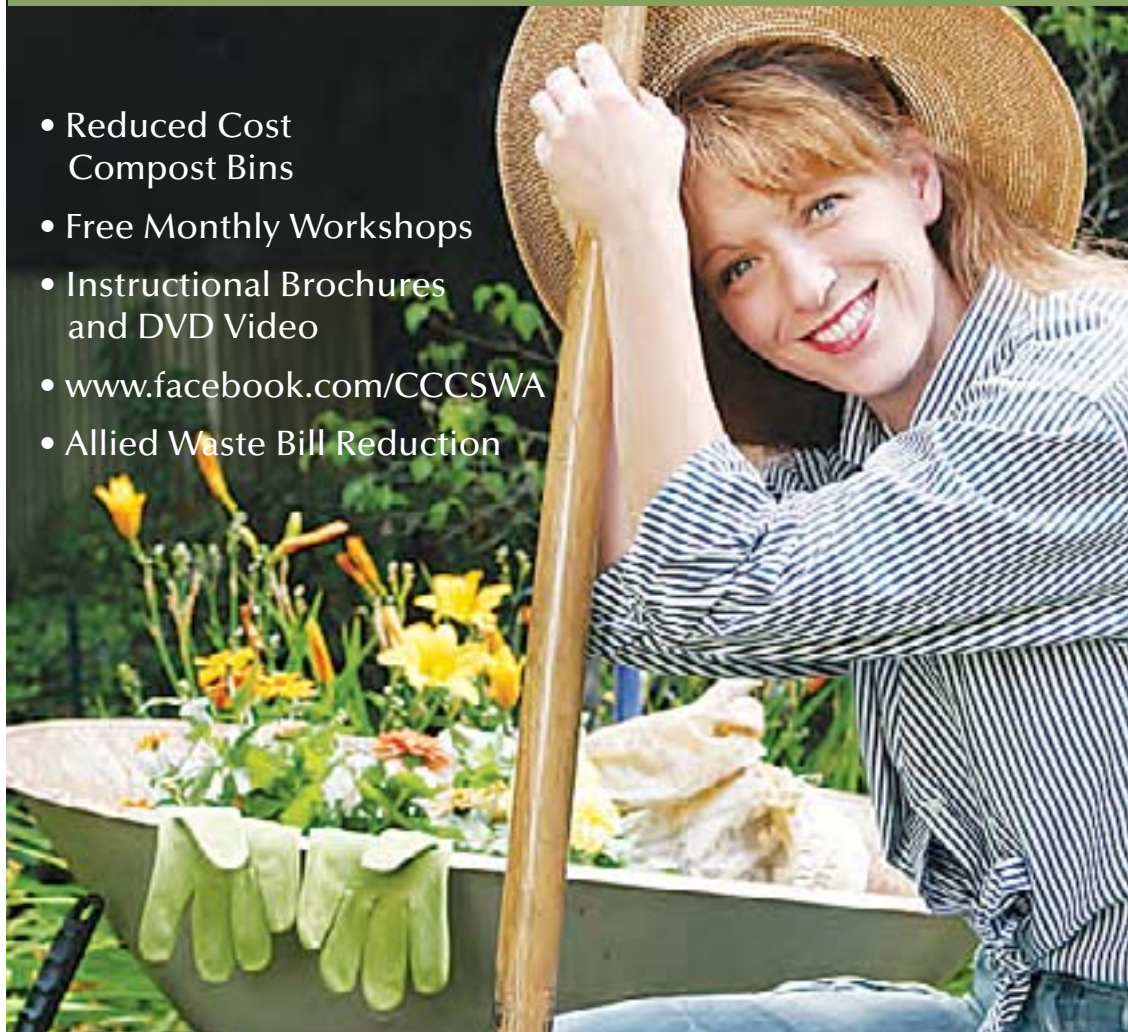
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