

Orinda Chamber's New Board: Pushing Forward with Professionalism

By Sophie Braccini



Orinda Chamber board members at their June 18 meeting, from left: Dina Zapanta, Paul Koenig, Tonya Gilmore (city liaison), Roy Hodgkinson, Sylvia Jorgensen (president), Patti Camras (secretary), Chris Flum, Candy Kattenburg (executive director), Susan Martin (vice president), and David Cronin. Not pictured: Carlos Rangel, Richard Westin, Nora Harlow, and Jim Breedlove (ambassador chair). Photo provided

With a mix of returning and new members, the new board of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce is getting fired-up under the leadership of its new president, Sylvia Jorgensen. A senior financial advisor with Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, the Orinda resident brings to the board years of professional management of a chamber of commerce. Before joining the financial world, she worked as the membership director of the large San Leandro Chamber of Commerce. With executive director Candy Kattenburg serving as the anchor of the group, the board is structuring its

and existing programs to enhance its mission of serving its members, the Orinda business community, and the chamber community (some members are not Orinda businesses).

"Our objective is to grow our membership by 25 new businesses this year," says Jorgensen. "We have about 220 members now." The new president and her board are trying different ways to reach that goal. One of their first actions was to produce a new chamber directory more frequently, now every 16 months. "This new version is very emblematic of the Orinda community, in terms of editorial content and esthetics," says Jor-

gensen.

The board is looking into developing new events such as a 'Senior Moment' event similar to an event facilitated by the San Leandro chamber. "This event featured a chamber member who serves seniors," says Jorgensen. "David Cronin is looking into it." The board does not want to repeat what the Moraga or Lafayette chambers are doing in Lamorinda, but may partner with them.

The Orinda chamber also plans to reach out to other chambers and participate in their events to broaden the exposure of its own members. The board entered a Team Trivia Night

last April with the Emeryville, Berkeley and Albany chambers of commerce. "We had a great time and made a great showing there with two tables," says Jorgensen, "and I've been talking with Sue Breedlove from Rotary to do something similar in our community because it is great fun."

As part of its outreach efforts, each month the chamber will donate a Shop Orinda Bag, filled with items donated by chamber members to raffles outside of Orinda to entice people to shop in the city.

The chamber is also continuing to reach out to in-home business owners. "The first reception on February 5 was a great success," says Jorgensen. "Some of these businesses became members and we involved them in our Ambassadors program." Jim Breedlove chairs that program, which he says is a great opportunity for people to participate in an event and make new contacts.

"Our events and mixers are great 'shmoozetunities,'" says Jorgensen, "an opportunity to schmooze and the ambassador role helps build instant camaraderie while having fun."

The effort to professionalize the chamber will manifest in different ways. "We are joining the Western Association of Chamber Executives (WACE) that offers great training and opportunities for chambers of commerce," says Jorgensen. Kattenburg

will be the first to be sent this year to the WACE academy that Jorgensen went to herself when she was working for the San Leandro chamber.

Other actions have been set in motion to formalize certain processes such as establishing criteria for the designation of the Business of the Year. In addition, "Paul Koenig and Roy Hodgkinson are working at crafting and drilling down our message to communicate across different platforms with our constituency," Jorgensen says.

Hodgkinson is also working on a premiere package chamber sponsorship with Nora Harlow for those large businesses that want to support the chamber at a higher level.

The board continues to work on signature events such as the Orinda Restaurant Tour, scheduled for Sept. 24 this year. "We have asked all the restaurants, especially the smaller ones, to give us feedback on what we are doing right and can improve for this year," says Jorgensen.

"The board we have now, with its mix of new and seasoned professionals, is full of energy and ideas," says Jorgensen, whose term lasts three years. "This is a great time to be a part of it."

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

Local Realtor Makes Top National Ranking (925) 339-1918

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Every year the Wall Street Journal publishes a list that summarizes the top 1,000 real estate professionals in the nation based on the dollar amount of



Dana Green

Photo provided closed transaction volume that year. Lafayette's Dana Green ranked 82 on the list for 2012. She is the only realtor in the top 250 from Lamorinda and the only one from Contra Costa County in the top 125. "No surprise, the list mostly includes top performers in American cities known for high property values – New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco – and their most popular suburbs, as well as resort destinations," said Green on her website. "My 2013 REAL Trends national ranking is really a testament that Lafayette is an amazing place to live and that keeps our real estate market strong." Green represents buyers and sellers in Lamorinda, but the bulk of her business remains in Lafayette, where she's lived all her life.

Lafayette Gallery's Artist Markets 50 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette (925) 284-2788

The parking lot of the Lafayette Gallery will be transformed into an inviting outdoor marketplace

with artists displaying and demonstrating their art from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, July 20 and Aug. 17. Photographer and show coordinator Warren Rice states, "At each market we will feature the art of as many as seven gallery artists, with additional invited artists participating. The public will have a wide range of work from which to choose." Visitors can browse among displays of original photography, jewelry, paintings, collage work, sculpture, pottery and fine art prints. For more information, visit www.lafayettegallery.net/exhibitionsevents/artistsmarkets.html.

Fedderson Receives CRS Designation 3799 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 100, Lafayette (925) 550-2353

www.TroyFedderson.com

J. Rockcliff Realtors announced that Troy Feddersen, a broker associate of the company's Lafayette office, has earned the prestigious Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) designation. It recognizes professional accomplishments in both experience and education. Only approximately three percent of real estate sales professionals nationwide have earned the CRS designation. In addition to the CRS, Feddersen has earned numerous other professional designations including Certified Nego-



Troy Feddersen

Photo provided

tiation Expert, Accredited Buyer's Representative, Certified Probate Real Estate Specialist, and the real estate technology-oriented ePro Realtor designation. Recent past president of the Lafayette Rotary Club, Feddersen lives in Lafayette with his wife, Denisa, and their three boys.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Seven Chambers Mega Mixer!

Super Mixer with the Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, Walnut Creek, Hispanic, Pleasant Hill, and Concord chambers from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 10 at the Veterans Memorial Building in Lafayette, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Each chamber will present a restaurant from their constituency. The Foodie Fare Favorites will be selected by the attendees. Cost: \$5 per person. All proceeds will be donated to the Lafayette Veterans for our troops.

Lafayette

Pinterest for business workshop from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, July 17 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Social media coach Robin S. Fox will discuss how to leverage this easy-to-use image-based platform to help your business meet 2013 goals. Limited seating; reservations recommended. Free for Lafayette and Moraga chamber members. General public: \$15 (at the door). Online registration at bit.ly/LafayetteChamber.

Moraga

Second Annual Moraga Chamber Golf Tournament and Dinner Party on Monday July 22; check-in from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m., shotgun starts at noon. This is the chamber's largest fundraising event of the year. The party includes fun and prizes including foursomes at local golf courses, dinners at local restaurants, wine baskets and much more. Space is limited to the first 100 golfers, cost for golfers \$175. Non-golfers can come for dinner for \$60. Contact Kathe Nelson at (925) 323.6524 or kathe@moragachamber.org to register.

Orinda

Orinda Fourth of July Parade & Events. Since 1984, July 4th is an Orinda tradition started by the Orinda Association as a way to celebrate not only Independence Day, but also to celebrate "community." Thousands of citizens gather on this special day to not only watch or participate in the parade, but also attend the numerous other events available throughout the day. On July 4 there are events for every age group starting with the annual pancake breakfast, flag raising ceremony, fun run, parade, live music, food, games and booths in the park following the parade. Everyone is invited to participate in the parade, host a booth in the park, or just come and enjoy the events. Don't miss the chamber's hot dog booth, known for its tasty hot dog treats in true Independence Day fashion.

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

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