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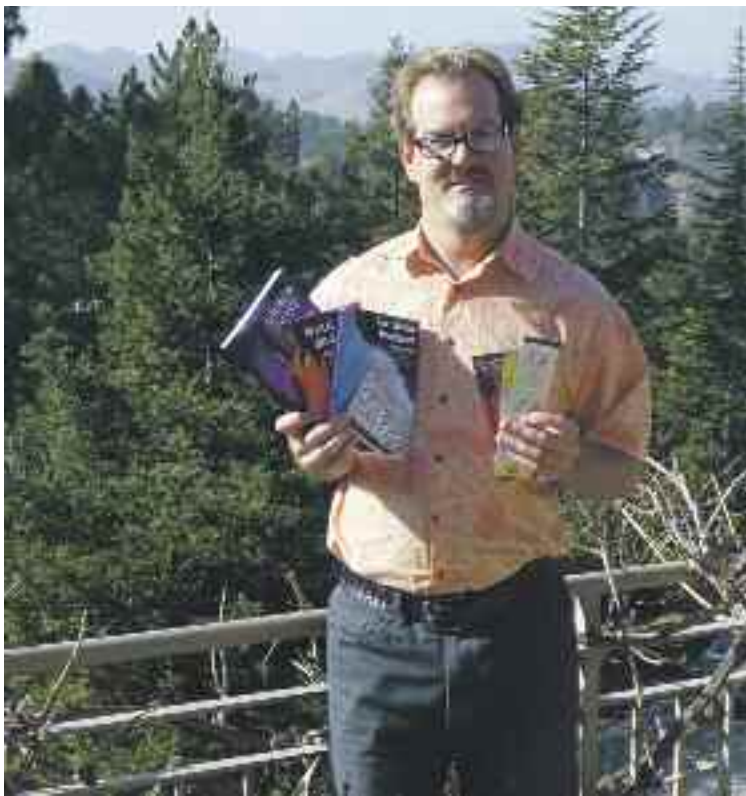
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Tapping Technology

Two Orinda businesses utilize technology in different ways

By Sophie Braccini



Andrew Benzie with some of the books he's published. Photos Sophie Braccini



Jack Jorgensen

Orinda recently saw the addition of two new communication ventures at different ends of the media spectrum: Jack Jorgensen, a 15-year-old Miramonte High School sophomore, launched Elite Bulletin, an online classified ad service centered in Lamorinda; and Andrew Benzie started his publishing company, Andrew Benzie Books, which takes books from manuscript to finished product utilizing 'on-demand' printing and book publishing software – two generations, different media, aiming at supporting local endeavors.

Benzie wants to put an end to the stigma of self-publishing. When looking at a book published under the 'ABB' label, nothing differentiates the self-published work from any other book distributed by the larger, more traditional publishing companies.

"My original business is graphic design and creation of collateral marketing material," says Benzie. "When my father retired, he decided to write a murder mystery and with my tools and experience I helped him self-publish it."

When a client comes to Benzie

with a manuscript, he digitizes it into the right format, creates the design for the book – the interior, the cover and back – gives it an ISBN number, and electronically publishes it on Amazon as an e-book. For printed copies, Benzie sends all the ready material to CreateSpace, a subsidiary of Amazon that prints on demand for a few dollars a copy.

"People can immediately put their book on Amazon and CreateSpace will print by the copy as it is ordered; it is not necessary anymore to get a thousand copies printed," he says.

Benzie, who is also a professional musician, compares what is happening to books nowadays to what happened to music with MP3s in the '90s. "Anyone can get published now," he says, "this is very liberating."

So far Benzie has published six books from local authors. "Mara-caibo Oil Brat," a biography by Moraga resident McClurg Berman, "Amber Dust," a mystery and love story by Lafayette author J.L. Plummer, "Contract Year," a baseball and romance novel by Moraga former mayor Bee Hylinski, and other biographies and non-fiction books by East Bay authors.

"I can also help authors with their marketing, creating a website, bookmarks ... and defining a promotion strategy. This new process is very exciting and many talented authors are going to be able to get noticed." You can find books published by Benzie at Orinda Books in the local author corner.

Jorgensen started the community site Elite Bulletin to provide local job connections for Orinda residents. The Miramonte sophomore comes from a

family of entrepreneurs – his step-mother is the president of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce – so when he was looking for a job, his first inclination was to create one himself. "I was always interested in the business world," he says. "I read a lot about Jeff Bezos, about start-ups, and these people just fired me up." The idea came to him to create a site that would help other teens find jobs, and adults find the babysitters, house sitters, gardeners or other service providers they might need.

Jorgensen brainstormed business ideas with his extended family and reached out for advice from the brother of Miramonte's associate principle, who started the website Notice.com. Jorgensen also conducted a lot of research on his own, finding ways to save money in the process.

"Originally I was going to file my fictitious business name online for \$200, but I found out that by going to Martinez and doing it in person it costs only \$35," he says. He opened a personal bank account with Mechanics Bank, where he saved all of his birthday and Christmas money, to self-fund his business; a business account would have required him to be an adult.

Jorgensen created the first version of Elite Bulletin with help of an online website builder; he is teaching himself html to improve his second version.

On Elitebulletin.com people of all ages can list their skills for free. The categories include music teachers, housekeepers, yard workers, drivers, event helpers, and volunteers. People looking for help can browse the profiles available or post a job offer themselves. The site includes lists of local restaurants and shops with direct links to their sites. It also offers the opportunity for businesses to advertise.

Jorgensen spends about 20 hours a week working on the site; it is a real passion. He knows that his big challenge is to drive traffic to his site. "I had some postcards printed that I distributed to all the local businesses," he says. "I also spend a lot of time on social media sites such as Next Door." Jorgensen plans to add more services such as things for sale and to expand the site geographically.

For information about Elite Bulletin, visit www.elitebulletin.com. More information about Andrew Benzie Books, visit www.andrewbenzie.com or call (925) 253-7790.

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

Orinda Theatre Square Welcomes Michael Friedes' New Design Showroom
 2 Theater Square #135
 (510) 366-0660, mf-da.com



Michael Friedes (center) at the grand opening of his new store in Theatre Square in Orinda Photo Rob Lucacher

Michael Friedes is an accomplished interior designer with over 20 years of experience. A native New Yorker, Friedes ran his own interior and product design firm in Manhattan before moving to Oakland. Friedes and his team are said to have cultivated an aesthetic that blends the cosmopolitan sophistication of New York with the casual graciousness of California. The Theatre Square space, the first store front the designer ever opened, will display examples of his style, including custom designed furniture and unique finds. Hours: Mondays and Tuesdays, by appointment only; Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1 to 5 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays from 1 to 6 p.m.

Big Game Fishing Moves to Lafayette
 624 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

(800) 458-2879, www.biggamefishinginc.com

Chris and Kip Adam recently moved their company, which has been taking vacationers fishing to the Baja, Mexico area for over 30 years, to a new office location in Lafayette. Since 1978, Big Game Fishing, Inc. has been a premier fishing travel company that works with large to small fishing groups and individuals, according to the company's website. The company specializes in the Baja fishing areas of Cabo San Lucas, San Jose del Cabo, the East Cape/Sea of Cortez, Loreto and La Paz, helping clients catch blue marlin, striped marlin, wahoo, tuna, yellowtail, roosterfish or dorado. Chris Adam is also a well-known water aerobics instructor at the Moraga Country Club.

New Insurance Company in Moraga: Filice Insurance
 1150 Moraga Way, Moraga

(925) 385-5300

Filice is an employee benefits consulting firm serving businesses throughout California. The insurance company provides a complete suite of business insurance products, including domestic and international employee benefits, individual and family plans, retirement services and financial planning, workers' compensation, and personal commercial insurance. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony at 2 p.m. Friday, Feb. 14 in the new office.

New Realtors at Alain Pinel
 2 Theatre Square, Suite #215, Orinda
 (925) 438-2014

Alain Pinel Realtors announced the addition of Mary Staten and Irene Steslow to the Orinda office team. Staten joins APR from the retail franchise, Papyrus, where she owned the Lafayette location. She will specialize in the Lafayette, Orinda, and Moraga market and is looking forward to bringing her same professionalism and client dedication to her career at APR. Steslow joins APR with 20-plus years as a marketing and advertising executive. She will be bringing her business acumen and marketing skills to the geographic areas of Walnut Creek, Lafayette and Orinda.

Bollinger Nail Salon Opens New Location

960 Moraga Rd., Lafayette

(925) 284-7700, contact@bollingernailsalon.com

Bollinger Nail Salon, a company with nine locations in the East Bay, opened a new salon in Lafayette. The salon is opened seven days a week.

Happy Anniversary!

Saklan Valley School Turns 60 and is Looking for Alumni

1678 School St., Moraga

(925) 376-7900, www.saklan.org



Christine Kuckuk, Kay Long-Martin, and Head of School Peter Metzger Photo Sophie Braccini

The Moraga school that teaches children from preschool to eighth grade is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Originally named the Gertrude Nielsen Learning Center and located in Lafayette, the school was funded as a preschool in 1954. The school moved to Moraga in 1966, and Nielsen sold it to Mary Elena Straub-Dochterman who expanded classes to the fifth grade under a new name, the Carden School. In the mid-1990s it was expanded to include middle school grades and became a non-profit under the name Saklan Valley School. Since then the school has developed a unique curriculum aimed at nurturing the entire student by focusing on each individual child. The school attracts a diverse student body from all over the East Bay. At this time, the 60th Anniversary committee is collecting memorabilia and stories from alumni and their parents. Kay Long-Martin and Annie Barendregt are the co-chairs of the project. "We want to gather as many memories from the community as we can," says Long-Martin. "We would love to hear stories, and see pictures that will be on display during the celebrations." A big birthday party with the children is scheduled for the last Wednesday in August, an alumni celebration will take place during the summer, and a gala is planned in October. Send stories or photos to 60years@saklan.org or call (925) 376-7900 to share information.

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

Celebrating an Anniversary?

If your business is celebrating a significant anniversary (5, 10, 20 years or more ...) send us a photo of your business, the owner(s) or the staff with specific information about your business and what you're celebrating, and we'll include it in an upcoming issue.

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