

# Two Lamorinda Beehives Part of National Study on Colony Collapse

By Amanda Kuehn



A pollen trap was installed at this hive entrance to collect pollen for the study. Photo Andy Scheck

There's been a recent buzz about bees. According to annual reports issued by the USDA, honeybee loss has averaged at 29.6 percent over the past eight years, a rate that the U.S. government deems economically unsustainable. Bees are responsible for pollinating a third of all crops, making them crucial for agriculture.

"It's called colony collapse disorder," said environmental toxicologist Joseph Sullivan. "Nobody really un-

derstands what's causing it." This mystery has led to a number of new studies, one of which involves local hives.

The study, directed by the University of Florida and funded by Bayer Crop Science, will evaluate pollen and nectar samples taken from hives in urban and suburban areas. Selection was a tiered process based on interest and location. One of the 15 Bay Area hives selected is located in Mor-

aga, another in Orinda.

"I've kept bees about seven years," said Mike Vigo, local bee keeper and owner of The Bee Ranchers, LLC. Vigo feels the urban/suburban area is ideal for honey bees. "Generally speaking we're not using pesticides," he noted. "Four of my aviaries [including the two in Lamorinda] are part of the study. I'm very much looking forward to the conclusion."

Sullivan will collect samples using a pollen trap. "The pollen will indicate what sort of pesticides the bees are bringing back," he said. Pollen samples will be sent to a lab in North Carolina. Nectar samples will also be collected and sent to the USDA for analysis. "The goal is to identify what lawn and garden pesticides might be in pollen and nectar," said Sullivan.

The first samples were collected in mid-July and will be collected once a month for a year. Results should be published sometime afterward next fall.

## Community Service

We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions can be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

# Moraga Boy Scout Troop 212 Alaska Canoe Trek

Submitted by Dick "Dr. T" Terry



Photo provided

Thirty scouts and dads from Moraga Troop 212 went on an incredible 12-day canoe and fishing trek on the Swan Lake and Swanson River Canoe Trails on the Kenai Peninsula near Anchorage, Alaska. This lake system is one of two premier National Canoe Trails in the United States. Besides canoeing on over 14 lakes, including over 22 portages with 70 pound packs and carrying

canoes, the group did plenty of fishing – on one lake, they caught 30 fish in 40 minutes. Catch-and-release was the plan until dinner, when a few beautiful Rainbow Trout or local Dolly Varden were cooked over an open fire for a special treat. In all, they caught over 250 fish, several scouts catching their first fish ever, many in the 20-inch range. On the final day, the group took three

float planes, flying over an immense glacier out to a large lake, fishing for Sockeye Salmon at the outlet of a stream. They had to share the spot with a total of 12 Grizzly bears that fished for themselves, often only 15-20 yards from the boats. The group was very successful, eventually shipping home over 250 pounds of frozen salmon fillets.

# Lafayette Resident Runs Marathon in Memory of a Friend

Submitted by Scott Rubenstein



Scott Rubenstein (left) smiles with teammate Greg Kiryakakis, who is a two-time survivor of Acute Myeloid Leukemia. Photo provided

In 2011, there were an estimated 302,800 people living with leukemia in the United States. For Lafayette resident Scott Rubenstein,

however, it took one to motivate him to help fight it. That single motivating person was a close family friend and former high school star football ath-

lete, David Freedman, who died in 1987 from Chronic Myelogenous Lymphoma. A graduate from the University of Arizona, Rubenstein is a 35-year-old metal recycling buyer who has joined Team In Training of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the world's largest voluntary health agency dedicated to blood cancer that raises money for blood cancer research and support while training athletes to run marathons. Its mission is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and myeloma, as well as improve the quality of life of patients and their families.

Rubenstein is training for the 26.2-mile Bank of America Chicago Marathon in October and has pledged to raise a minimum of \$2,400 by the marathon date, but his goal is to raise \$10,000. As of now, he has raised \$6,600. Even though the running makes him anxious, meeting his goal makes him more worried. "It's a lot of money to fundraise, but I have a lot of generous friends," he said. To learn more about Rubenstein's involvement, visit <http://pages.teamintraining.org/gba/chicago14/rubenstein>.

For more information on LLS, visit [www.lls.org](http://www.lls.org). For more information on Team In Training, visit [www.teamintraining.org](http://www.teamintraining.org).

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# Siblings Support One Another to Pursue Their Dreams

By Amanda Kuehn



Brother and sister, Dan and Katie Batlin, at Buono Vino. Photo Amanda Kuehn

Moraga native Katie Batlin has realized some pretty lofty dreams. Longtime basketball player, and graduate of Miramonte High School and Saint Mary's College, she has recently returned from an international adventure.

After playing a final year of college basketball with San Francisco State University, Batlin was recruited to play professionally with the Southern Peninsula Sharks in the Big-V League in Victoria, Australia. After five months away, she's back in California and standing by her brother Dan Batlin's side, helping him to realize the dream he's been chasing ever since an extended stay in Italy: to open an Italian-style retail tasting room.

Buono Vino, located in downtown Walnut Creek, is exactly what Batlin had hoped for: an establishment created to "change the way Americans enjoy wine." A 2004 graduate of Campolindo High School, Batlin boasts strong Italian roots and has honed his wine prowess in both Tuscany, Italy and the Napa Valley.

After four years at Chico State, where he majored in business and Spanish, Batlin left his job at Lafayette's Pizza Antica to stay with family friends in Florence. "That's where I first encountered this kind of shop," he said, referring to the retail tasting room. "I said to myself, 'One day I'm going to do this in America.'" And so he has, and he's brought his sister along for the ride.

"Katie has been with me from day one," said Batlin, who has always wanted to start a business. "She brings the creativity."

Katie Batlin, who majored in sports and recreational management at Saint Mary's, took additional classes in business and Italian while she was at San Francisco State. Having fulfilled her dream of playing professionally, she's now all about supporting her brother.

"Dan and I are really proud for each other," said Katie. "It gives us a special connection." She recounted a time when she was struggling with her situation in Australia and Dan encouraged her, stating, "If it were easy, everyone would be

doing it."

The siblings have been in this together from the start. "We would drive around in Dan's car, checking out different places and asking, 'Are these the kind of people we're trying to target? Can we see them walking into our business?'" Katie recalled. The Batlins looked at over 100 different places. Dan negotiated on 10, all of which fell through. Buono Vino made its first appearance at the Walnut Creek Wine Walk back in September 2013, and moved into the shop on Locust Street shortly thereafter.

Dan opened Buono Vino April 11, 2014. Katie joined him as soon as she returned from Australia, where she had already been working on the company's social media promotion. Both brother and sister credit their friends and family for being extremely supportive. "I don't think I could adequately put into words how incredible our family is," said Katie Batlin. "[Our parents] made it safe for us to pursue our dreams and encouraged us to take risks. ... Pursuing our dreams is a testament to that."

Much like the Batlin family, Buono Vino is one of a kind. "It's a tasting room," Dan explained. "Not a bar, not a kitchen." Clients can stop by on their way to a party or as they're coming home from work, sample a few of the wines and select one for the evening. The Batlins will fill the bottle right there in the shop. There's also a large back room available for special occasions. It has already seen quite a bit of traffic.

Dan's primary objective is to pair people with wine, giving them something they can take home and enjoy. "It's about relaxing, family and friends," he said. "All of my favorite things."

Dan and Katie could go on for hours discussing their aspirations and mutual excitement. "We've always been a part of each others' dreams," said Katie Batlin. And now they're inviting the entire Bay Area to join them.

You can find Dan and Katie Batlin at Buono Vino from 12 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays at 1545 Locust Street. Stop by and sample a dream turned reality.