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Crab Feed & Dance

Saturday, February 4, 6:00 – 11:00 p.m.
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Music provided by popular DJ.
Dinner & Dance \$50

Cocktail Hour 6 – 7 pm, Dinner 7 – 8:30 pm, Dance 8:30 – 11 pm
New & Exciting This Year: Live Dessert Auction!
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Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga.



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Dinner tickets MUST be
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No admission to dinner without a ticket!



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7-Eleven Owner Saleh is Moraga Business Person of the Year

By Cathy Dausman



Samir "Sam" Saleh doing what he loves best. Photo Cathy Dausman

Samir "Sam" Saleh is nearly a blur behind the counter; quickly bagging purchases, counting out change, greeting incoming customers with a cheery and personal, "What's going on?" or "How 'ya doing?"

The owner of Moraga's 7-Eleven was recently named Moraga Business Person of the Year, an honor he won "overwhelmingly," said Moraga Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kathe Nelson. "He's so quiet about how he goes about his work," she said, yet he remains personable and very supportive of Moraga. "We (the chamber) have sponsored many events," Nelson continued, "and he is always there."

Saleh returns the compliment

abundantly. "I feel safe (in Moraga)," he said, adding "this (store) is (my) family." He calls himself "outgoing" and says he laughs "a lot". His customers obviously feel similarly; seeing Saleh involved in a conversation, one started to dish up his own hot dog, while others will make the store a fresh pot of coffee when needed. "I've trained them," Saleh smiles.

Saleh also knows his regular customers so well he inquired if a certain reporter was new to town. Of course his franchise offers Slurpees, coffee, candy and lottery tickets, but it also features hot foods, a new trend Saleh says, and one which Nelson says fills a void given the closure of some Moraga fast food outlets.

Saleh has owned his Moraga franchise for more than 16 years. During that time he has seen multiple lottery winners, including an \$89 million winner in 2001 and a \$174,000 winner around the time of the Moraga sinkhole last spring. "I think it might have been a PG&E worker," he confides, saying that none of his regular lottery players admitted owning the winning ticket.

How many hours does the driving force behind the counter actually work at a store which is open around the clock? Saleh replies, "About 50 hours a week. I try to take Saturdays off, and usually end up getting three out of four (off)."

Realizing his latest customer forgot his change, Saleh cut short his conversation to call after the man. "If I kept the change people forgot I'd make more than I do (in salary)," he laughed.

Saleh will be honored Feb. 28 at a dinner held at Moraga Country Club, 1600 St Andrews Drive. Reservations are required and can be made online at kathe@moragachamber.org; the cost is \$55 per person.

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

Business Bites

By Paula King



Lindsay Pirkle

Photo Wendy Scheck

Moving close to home: As an avid baker and world traveler, Lindsay Pirkle was immediately drawn to Orinda's Republic of Cake while managing the Orinda Theatre. When the opportunity to buy the quaint bakery in Orinda Theatre Square recently presented itself, she jumped at the chance.

"I liked the atmosphere of Republic of Cake immediately because it reminded me of the charming little bakeries that are found all over France," Pirkle said.

After seven successful years in Orinda, Republic of Cake won't change much under the new ownership, according to Pirkle. She noted that regulars will still find their favorite cupcakes and there will be an expanded selection of assorted baked goods in the near future.

"Republic of Cake is so well-known in the Lamorinda area and we use all-natural ingredients," she said. "We bake fresh every day. We don't even own a freezer. It is hard to find bakeries today that bake everything fresh daily."

To reach Republic of Cake, visit www.republicofcake.com or call 925-254-3900.

Coming full circle: Dr. Richard Filinson returned his family medical practice limited to homeopathy back to Lafayette last fall after starting his career here in the late 1970's. Filinson spent many years working on the East Coast and in Marin and decided to come back for his fondness of the Lamorinda area.

Filinson noted that homeopathic doctors treat all of the same conditions as traditional physicians but use homeopathic medicines only.

"My pleasure comes in finding the remedy," he said. "The real challenge is getting to the underlying root of their problems."

To reach Filinson, call 925-283-6348.

Tax Rates Down: As of Jan. 1, shoppers may have seen a tiny relief at the cash register, as the statewide sales and use tax rate decreased one quarter of one percent (0.25 percent) from 7.50 percent to 7.25 percent. The decrease in the statewide rate is effective for all cities and counties in California; however, in many jurisdictions in California the actual sales and use tax rate may still be higher than the statewide rate due to the addition of district taxes.

To find the correct rate in your city or county, visit <https://maps.gis.ca.gov/boe/TaxRates/> and enter the address as prompted. Additionally, a listing of sales and use tax rates for each city and county is available on the California City and County Sales and Use Tax Rates website, <https://maps.gis.ca.gov/boe/TaxRates>.

A retailer who continues to charge and collect the higher statewide sales and use tax rate after Jan. 1, must either refund the excess tax collected to their customer or pay the excess tax to the Board of Equalization. If the excess tax collected has been paid to the BOE, the retailer may request a refund on behalf of their customer by completing form BOE-101, Claim for Refund or Credit, -www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/boe101.pdf.

Chamber Music

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

www.lafayettechamber.org (925) 284-7404

Mark your calendars: With spring approaching, home improvement and renovations are on the minds of many homeowners. The Lamorinda Home Expo on Jan. 29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. will feature designers, contractors and landscapers who all service this area and want to help guide those projects. The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce is one of the expo's sponsors. It will take place at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Check out www.homeexpoevents.com for more details.

MaidPro Lamorinda will have a ribbon-cutting event on Feb. 9 at 5 p.m. The professional home cleaning company is located at 3375 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette.

Moraga Chamber of Commerce

www.moragachamber.org (925) 323-6524



From left, Kevin Reneau, Rotary president, Jun Ybanez, Ron Schumacher, Wendy Scheck, Chamber president.

Photo provided

Going the extra mile: Seasoned auto mechanic Crescencio "Jun" Ybanez of Moraga Motors was named Moraga Employee of the Month for December by the Moraga Rotary and Moraga Chamber of Commerce.

"He's worked here for 13 years and has never missed a single day. He's great with our customers and always goes the extra mile to get the car done right and on time," said Moraga Motors owner Ron Schumacher.

Known for his fine diagnostic skills, Ybanez is an Automotive Service Excellence certified mechanic. He will be honored at a Rotary meeting in February with gifts cards to Safeway and Peninni's.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce

www.orindachamber.org (925) 254-3909

If you have a business brief to share, please contact storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com.