

Published August 8th, 2018

Changes at Orinda Chamber of Commerce and Lamorinda Weekly

By Sora O'Doherty



Sophie Braccini Photo Andy Scheck

After serving as the executive director of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce for the past two and a half years, Sophie Braccini is leaving to take up a position with UC Berkeley. Braccini, who has been a staff writer for Lamorinda Weekly since its beginning 11 years ago, will leave her duties as civic reporter for Moraga, but will continue to contribute occasional feature stories about life in Lamorinda.

Prior to 2007, Braccini worked in translation, localization and functionality on technical brochures, games, and computer applications, making sure that translations into French were not only literally correct, but culturally appropriate as well. She and her husband raised a son and two daughters, all Campolindo graduates.

"Both jobs had a deep impact on my life. I've met so many diverse and wonderful people," Braccini explained. "I knew some business people because of the stories I wrote for the paper," she continued, "but I now have increased respect for business owners and the challenges they face every day."

The executive director position is the only paid position at the chamber, and its role is to make businesses more visible.

Braccini enjoyed building relationships with other entities, such as Rotary, the Orinda Association, and the Orinda Community Foundation. She particularly enjoyed her role as an advocate to the city of Orinda, and working with City Manager Steve Salomon, whom she describes as "an individual of great quality."

"As a resident of Orinda, I appreciate the time that (Sophie has) spent keeping residents informed about everything that is going on in our cities/towns, and I have especially always enjoyed (her) coverage of the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority and all things concerning recycle/reuse and garbage," said former Orinda Mayor Victoria Smith. "As a member of the Chamber, I thank (her) for all that (she has) done to make our community vibrant and informed, and to really build a sense of community in Orinda."

Orinda Chamber President Roy Hodgkinson said that Braccini "has expanded the services to our Chamber member businesses, their owners, staff, and families with initiatives such as the Non-profit Forum, Senior Health Fair, and through her strong relationships with the city of Orinda."

While Braccini notes that she will miss her job and the people she's been interacting with, she is excited to try something new. Anyone interested in the job of executive director should contact Hodgkinson at president@orindachamber.org for more information.

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