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business briefs



Albert Lee cuts the red ribbon of the new home for his Supreme Tutors, Smartlounge in Orinda
Photo Sophie Braccini

Supreme Tutors Open Shop in Orinda

1 Orinda Way, Orinda, 918-2882, www.supremetutors.com

On January 10th, Supreme Tutors founder Albert Lee cut the ribbon of the Smartlounge, the first brick and mortar location for his growing tutoring service. A Cal graduate, the young man started tutoring students from 6th-12th grade five years ago and recruited fellow graduate students along the way as demand grew through word of mouth. "We have high standards for ourselves and our students," says Lee, "we expect students to focus and work on assignments. Lee hopes that Smartlounge will be used as an alternative to going to students' homes, and "since it is located right next to the Orinda BART station, it makes it convenient for tutors who would like to take public transit," adds Lee. Subjects currently available are math at all levels, chemistry, physics, statistics, biology, economics, history, English, foreign languages and writing. The group is developing SAT prep classes as well. The rates are \$65 for individual sessions and \$35 for groups.

New Restaurant to Replace a Lafayette Favorite:

Goodbye, Gigi – Hello, Artisan, 1005 Brown Ave., Lafayette

Gigi, a sophisticated and high-end restaurant that opened about two years ago in Lafayette, is closing the doors of the cottage on Brown Ave. for financial reasons. Jeff Amber, the young chef who had created there his first personal venture, had met previously with success and praises running successful places such as Moose's and XYZ in San Francisco as well as the three Chow's. The spot will be taken over in mid February by another Bay Area favorite chef, John Marquez of San Francisco's Fringale. Fringale has a reputation as a reasonably priced French bistro offering Basque-inspired cuisine. The new restaurant will be called "Artisan."

Bellingham Painting Moves to Moraga, 247-0092

After 22 years of business in San Francisco, Mark Bellingham has moved with his family to Moraga and is looking forward to providing painting services at a fair price to Lamorinda residents. Bellingham provides the following services: Interior and exterior painting, Waterproofing, Wood deck cleaning and restoration, Water damage repair, Light carpentry. The company paints entire buildings but can be hired to do just a room, a wall or a ceiling. Bellingham prides himself in providing highly personalized service, he is a working owner and maintains control of the job to insure quality work.

"Try Lafayette First" Update:



Fast Frame's Anthony Ruiz is pleased with the results of Shop Lafayette First Photo Andy Scheck

The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce promised to give out \$1000 worth of gift cards and prizes to one lucky Lafayette resident who pledged to Try Lafayette First for their holiday shopping. As it turned out, merchants were so excited about participating in the program and thanking their customers that they donated \$2000 worth of gift cards. "We got so many gifts from our merchants that we will probably be able to draw another winner," says Chamber CEO Jay Lifson. The first "Try Lafayette First" campaign was a winner as well for the 100 or so merchants who participated in the campaign. "I got 14 new clients who came just because of the campaign," said Antony Ruiz of Fast Frame. Handle Bar Toys believes that it's thanks to the campaign that they had the best Christmas season ever. "This drive was just a first step," said Lifson, "and we are working on other ways to get more business to our local merchants, as well as training them to be better business persons and improve the Lafayette shopping experience." One of these next steps

will be working with "Yelp," an online referral business service.

News from the Three Chamber of Commerce

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

- Tom Courtright, Orchard Nursery, 2009 Business Person of the Year, will be honored at the Installation & State of the City Dinner on Friday January 30, 2009, starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. Tom bought Orchard Nursery in 1971. He was Lafayette's Citizen of the Year in 1989. "Tom has not only managed a very successful business in Lafayette," says Jay Lifson the Chamber's CEO, "he has been given his time, money and energy to help make Lafayette a place where people want to live, work and shop." Call 925-284-7404 for reservations. Registration forms are available on the chamber website www.lafayettechamber.org.

Moraga Chamber of Commerce

- Chamber Mixer, Friday January 30th starting with coffee at 7:30 a.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores. This meeting will feature Stu Carty, Regional Development Director of Constant Contact, an email marketing program, who will come to speak to Chamber members. The Chamber wants to help its member get through this tough economic time and a good marketing plan helps. Carty will speak to how email marketing can help you reach more people with your message, create email campaigns that get results, get your emails opened and read and more. Carty will speak twice, once at the chamber regular meeting on January 30th and once at a workshop in mid February. At the workshop in February Carty is going to focus on getting started with Constant Contact. He will give specific (product) training. Each lecture will cover different information.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce

- Wednesday - Jan. 28, 2009 Noon to 1:30 p.m. Mayor's Luncheon. The Orinda Rotary Club & the Orinda Chamber of Commerce will host the Mayor's Luncheon. This event will introduce Orinda new Mayor, Sue Severson, who will be giving the State of the City Address. The event will take place in the Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. The cost per person is \$20.00. Purchase your admission online by going to the Chamber's web site orindachamber.org/events.php

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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