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Lafayette entrepreneur creates unique jewelry inspired by love of water

By Kara Navolio



Resin jewelry designs by Marisa Tashima

Launching a business takes planning, smarts, creativity, and an entrepreneurial spirit. It's rare to find all those qualities in a 21-year-old. But Lafayette resident Marisa Tashima has done it with her own brand of jewelry, which she designs and creates herself.

Tashima's business name, Kainoa Designs, is Hawaiian for "endless sea." As a former Walnut Creek Aquanaut and synchronized swimmer for Stanford University, many of the designs are inspired by her love of the water and her family's connection to Hawaii.

The 2013 Acalanes graduate studied product design engineering at Stanford and graduated with her bachelor's degree this past June. Her major, which combines art and science, allowed her to take art classes as well as courses in manufacturing, engineering and design. She has always loved making things.

"I am passionate about sharing my artwork with a larger community," Tashima said. "I love creating jewelry and am inspired to see my craft worn and admired by others. Starting my own business was a daunting idea at the beginning, but once realizing that I could conquer it little by little, I was excited to face the challenge."

The pendants and earrings are made of resin, a type of substance that starts out as a liquid, then hardens into a clear plastic over a 24-hour period. Tashima embeds different materials in the resin to create unique looks. She usually starts with a background color by adding acrylic paint; then she layers things like iridescent paper, glitter, metal leaf, tiny shells, charms, and even candy sprinkles. With her Etsy shop and personal sales, she has sold over 100 pieces. Lafayette resident Mary Ilyin, who purchased a pendant, said, "The piece I pur-

chased was beautiful and the packaging was clever and creative."

Tashima was inspired by fused glass jewelry and liked the vibrant colors and designs, but working with fused glass takes an investment in equipment that was prohibitive. She found that she could get a similar look using resin and taught herself to use it.

She plans to continue designing and making jewelry even as she pursues a career with a consumer product company in product design.

Her products can be found on Etsy (an online shopping website of handcrafted items) and retail for \$22-\$28.

Lafayette resident Carol Escajeda is a fan. "I gifted the rainbow earrings to my sister who lives in Iowa," she said. "On a recent visit she wore them every day, and I could see why, they're very eye-catching!"

Business symposium focuses on 'getting back to basics'

Submitted by Kathe Nelson

Four distinguished panelists will examine various trends, challenges, solutions and opportunities in the current retail and business environment at a free business and community symposium sponsored by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 14 at the Saint Mary's College Soda Center.

Sneha Patel is the operations manager with The UPS Store, Inc. supporting franchisees in Northern California and Nevada based in Sacramento. The UPS Store is a leading franchise and has over 5,000 locations with one each in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. Sneha is a former franchisee and focuses on growing top line revenue and bottom line profits, while increasing efficiency.

Jay Kerner, the president and CEO of U.S. Realty Partners, a

regional commercial real estate operating company which is the new owner of the Rheem Shopping Center, will share his experience creating successful high-quality retail shopping centers and his vision for revitalizing the Rheem. A UCLA grad, Kerner has almost three decades of experience in acquiring, operating, developing and leasing major retail and mixed-use properties.

Tom Frainier is CEO/president of Semifreddi's Bakery. He has a BS and MBA from UC Berkeley's Hass School of Business and spent seven highly successful years at Clorox in finance and accounting before joining his sister and brother-in-law at Semifreddi's in 1988. Semifreddi's fresh bread is a staple in Lamorinda. Frainier, a Moraga resident, will share the philosophy and vision that keeps it all hum-

ming.

Lena Waters, vice president, integrated marketing with DocuSign leads cross-functional teams that orchestrate digital and in-person experiences that drive demand for sales teams, build brands, grow revenue and delight customers. Lena and her family live in Moraga.

"The Customer Experience" symposium will begin with refreshments at 6:30 p.m. followed by the formal program at 6:45 p.m. There will also be an opportunity for the audience to submit questions to the panelists. The event is a Lamorinda-wide tri-chamber event presented by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce and is made possible by generous sponsorships from Saint Mary's College, Republic Services and Wells Fargo Bank.

Planning Commission has doubts

... continued from page A5

A first version of the text had proposed that any place along the scenic corridors be used to check the 35 percent undeveloped rule, but instead, staff proposed that certain specific vantage points be defined around town from which the views will need to be protected. Clark explained that this approach made it more predictable and fair to developers.

The commissioners also discussed the maximum height permitted on a hillside lot. Currently the maximum height for a building is 35 feet measured from the top of the highest part of the building to the grade below that part, and a 45-foot aggregate, measured from the highest point to the lowest point of the foundation. The new maximums would be 32 feet and 37 feet for the aggregate.

The commissioners were concerned, however, with a rule that would limit in perpetuity development in high-risk areas to one home per 20 acres, even if the developer

remediates the site to a non-hazardous status. Until now, if a developer amended the site, it would become eligible for a one home per 5 acres rule. Staff indicated that this change would be compliant with the Moraga Open Space Ordinance that was approved by voters. Commissioner Steve Woehleke said that this would be non-compliant with the General Plan and could not be supported by the commission. Chair Christine Kuckuk agreed and was followed by most of the other commissioners present.

Several property owners and developers spoke in opposition of the new text. David Bruzzone, whose family owns most of the open space undeveloped in Moraga, said that the process was destructive to the future of the community, that it would create a more convoluted process for developers, and that the only certainty was that the town would have to face a lawsuit. He added that these changes

would preclude development in the downtown as well.

Michael Carradine, who also owns a lot in a MOSO area, asked the town to stop the process. He said that in 2008 the residents rejected at the November ballot strengthening the open space development regulations, and that staff or elected officials had no mandate to change what the voters did not want to touch.

Other residents expressed their support of the change, including Suzanne Jones for the Protect Lamorinda Open Space and former mayor Lynda Deschambault.

New commissioner Karl Davis wanted to study the proposed regulations de novo, but his colleagues did not support his request. The commissioners approved forwarding the proposed amendments to the town council, adding that a majority did not support changing development density rules in high-risk areas.