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**Business comings and goings in Lafayette amid the pandemic**



Photo Pippa Fisher

**Lace and Bustle, a bridal store located in the Clocktower opposite Postino's, will be closing before Thanksgiving.**

**By Pippa Fisher**

After eight months of varying levels of restrictions and closures in the area, Lafayette is

starting to see some businesses shutting down and, perhaps more surprisingly, still others opening. One of the first casualties

was Big O Cheese Steak, early in the pandemic. According to the Chamber of Commerce, other businesses now shuttered include Back to the Table, Sugi, Lemon, Jos A. Bank and Myara. Jennifer Perlmutter closed her original Lafayette gallery but retains her larger pop-up gallery. Others businesses such as Pappillon Gourmet Coffees have changed hands, and are still open for business under new ownership.

Lace and Bustle, Lafayette's bridal shop located in the Clocktower, will be closing its doors permanently the weekend before Thanksgiving, but the store's owner Victoria Hansen, while acknowledging the difficult times that all small business owners are facing, says the decision to close has more to do with her changing priorities. Hansen says she has de-

cidied to spend more time with family, explaining that her baby was just 6 months old at the start of the shutdown in the spring.

"It was a blessing to have the three months of closure, to have the time away from the hustle and bustle and to spend it with my baby," says Hansen, noting that the moments of reflection allowed her to see more clearly what her priorities were. "Life is short."

But the news is not all bad. Even as some shoppers change their habits in favor of online retail, new ventures are appearing including Reasonable Books (see story in the Oct. 28 issue of Lamorinda Weekly), Lemonade Piercing, The Main Kitchen, Emerson Grace Design, Germinate Kitchen, and Out of the Cave Foods.

And even as many holiday faires will not be taking

place this year, some are turning to the 'pop-up' model as a short-term solution for both the vendors and the empty storefronts (see related story about the Holiday Gift Collective below).

For Semira Moslem, owner of Sparkles & Joy – a weekly, curated ethnic foods, subscription-based delivery business – launching during a pandemic was a smart thing to do. "There is a strong appetite for this right now," she says.

Moslem says she identified a greater need to deliver food to customers as people were avoiding eating out and she says that any kinks she has encountered so far have been related more to the challenges of a start up, for example with hiring staff for the once-a-week deliveries.

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**Local artisans 'pop up' in Lafayette for eco-friendly holiday shopping**



Photo Pippa Fisher

**Hollie Lucas-Alcalay stands by her homegrown products at the new pop-up Holiday Gift Collective store.**

**By Pippa Fisher**

Following Lafayette's successful art gallery 'pop-up' model, and solving several problems in one go, comes another pop-up to the downtown – this one just in time for the holidays.

The Holiday Gift Collective, featuring seven local, all female artisans, has popped up next to Sideboard on Plaza Way, filling the otherwise empty, recently vacated space that was formerly the gift shop Lemon. They opened on Nov. 1 and will be there through the end of the holiday season.

"We are thrilled to be here," says Hollie Lucas-Alcalay, owner of Hollie's Homegrown, who runs a small organic farm in Mor-

aga, specializing in growing culinary and medicinal herbs, teas, and creating bath and body products.

Lucas-Alcalay, who will be familiar to many in the area from the Moraga Farmers' Market, explains that they are grateful to the city for allowing this solution, saying that they wouldn't otherwise have been able to find a space for their holiday sales, especially now that the Hacienda Holiday Faire is not taking place in person this year.

"We were desperate to find somewhere to sell during COVID," says Lucas-Alcalay, describing this temporary location as a "win-win."

The entrepreneurs all share a desire to encourage

the community to shop locally and, featuring a variety of eco-friendly and ethically sourced products, the green businesses hope to work together to fight climate change providing customers a chance to support the local community while reducing their carbon footprint.

The Holiday Gift Collective offers a range of home goods, jewelry, gourmet foods, and more. Additionally they plan to feature rotating local guest artisans each week.

Located at 3539 Plaza Way they are open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily through the end of the holiday season.

For more details go to: [www.instagram.com/holidaygiftcollective/](http://www.instagram.com/holidaygiftcollective/)

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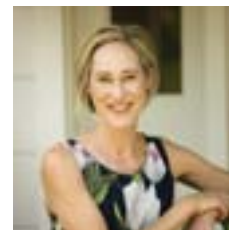
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