

Vicki Nakamura, Broker
Better Homes Realty

Experience counts when considering home ownership or considering a move up or a move down

Experience counts when advising clients as the market recovers after the crash

Experience counts when closing all the hurdles. Negotiation. Financing. Appraisal. Inspections. Consumer Regulations

Happy Thanksgiving!

Call today for private consultation
925-708-1915 Visit www.VickiNakamura.com




Breedlove Insurance Services
Life, Health, Long Term Care

Even Superman needs help with Medicare!

It doesn't cost a penny more to work with your Medicare specialists in Lamorinda.

info@breedloveinsurance.com
925-254-6262

89 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563 • www.breedloveinsurance.com



Randy Bennett Talks to Moraga Movers

By Lou Fancher



From left: Randy Bennett, Phil and Gretchen Arth Photo Lou Fancher

Saint Mary's College basketball players aren't the only people with some hustle in the town of Moraga. The Moraga Movers, a 35-year-old club for residents age 55 and older, has picked up the ball and plans to run with it.

"At one point, there were 500 members," said Julie Fisher, a member and wife of former Moraga Mover's President George Fisher.

"In 2006, our members dropped below 200," George said, describing in dark tones the lowest point in the group's history.

On November 8th, 2010, at a sold-out luncheon held on the Saint Mary's College campus and featuring guest speaker Randy Bennett, the head men's basketball coach, it was hard to believe. The group stands at 423 members and has a full roster of events; from bocce to book clubs, and from Panama Canal cruises to day-excursions to Napa wineries.

In their spare time, Moraga Movers support the New Rheim Theatre, volunteer at local events, and hold monthly luncheons.

"It was the name change,"

George says, when asked what has caused the booming attendance. Formerly known as the Moraga Hacienda Seniors, the Fishers and other members realized the group needed a "marketing mindset."

During a meeting with a Moraga Parks and Recreation official, Julie came up with the name. "It was just alliteration: Moraga Mmm...Movers!" she said, recalling the moment. With a new moniker, and George's knack for making every person he meets feel like family, Moraga Movers was on its way.

Phil Arth, the outgoing president of the group, explained why he will step aside for incoming president Bob Foxall. "I'm going to be the Grand Poo-bah of SIR (Sons in Retirement)," Arth jokes, "so next year I'll only have to find speakers for one group, instead of two."

"We encourage term limits," George said. "We want an influx of new people with new ideas."

The speaker on November 8th was the perfect finale to Arth's term. "Randy (Bennett)

lives across the street from me," Arth said. "I left a message in his mailbox—didn't even put a stamp on it—asking if he'd speak to the group. He's an engaging speaker and everybody in Moraga's interested in the Gael's and what their prospects are for the next season."

Indeed, Bennett had a rapt audience as he reflected on his 10 years at the college and what he hopes to achieve going forward.

If numbers tell a story, then certainly, Bennett's numbers describe success as a college coach. Season ticket holders were at 180 when he arrived. Today, he said, they number a couple of thousand. The team is 46-4 in the home court. ESPN will broadcast 10-13 of the Gael's games this season: ten years ago, none of the games were televised.

And, there's the Sweet 16. The tournament has set the bar for Bennett and his players. "All our focus is to prepare ourselves to get in that tournament," he said. "Last time, we were the slowest team in the country, but this year we're quick—and grittier on defense. Every game matters."

In 2009, Bennett said he had a great group of guys, both players and assistants. He described them as "selfless," calling special attention to Omar Samhan and Ben Allen. "Allen was willing to sacrifice personal moments to do the right thing for the team," he said. "Omar, he never gave up. Any time a NBA person came to watch another player, he'd ask, 'What can I do to be an NBA player?'"

The Gael team is not about building stars, according to the coach. "I'm not into the star deal," he said, answering a ques-

tion from the audience. "We want our guys to be pros, but not over the good of the team. We teach them: appreciate what you have and give back. At the Special Olympics camp recently, when we talked away, we were thinking, *those kids gave something to us.*"

Bennett said the team trained hard over the summer and that 6 of the 8 players from last year have returned. "More than all that, we've had an experience you can't simulate: we've been to *The Tournament.*"

Recruiting is a job skill Bennett handles with finesse. He has found players in Australia, where the Australian Institute of Sport exposes the best young athletes to rigorous training. "They don't know the difference between Saint Mary's and UCLA, and we don't tell them," Bennett said, getting the biggest laugh of the day.

There's no joking when it comes to his answers about graduation rates and Gonzaga. He said he tells players not to come to Saint Mary's if they're not interested in getting a degree. The program boasts 30 graduates out of 35 during his tenure. And Gonzaga? "They'll be up for us this year. I don't think they like the way that one ended last year."

A year from now, if the Gael's get a sweet repeat of last season, and if the Moraga Movers' ambitious, energized membership continues its rapid expansion, they may need to hold the November luncheon in a larger venue. Perhaps the McKeeon Pavilion Gym?

- IN HOME HELP -
for you or your loved ones

- Medical Appointments - Medications - Transportation
- Shopping - Errands - Banking - Bill Paying - Forms
- Record Keeping - Insurance - Technology & Computers
- Meal Planning and Preparation - Pet Care - Referrals

Lamorinda Comforts of Home
925.285.6272
Local - Bonded - Insured
www.lamorindacomfortsofhome.com

You'll Like What You Hear

Orinda resident Al Koorji of Summit Hearing has been quietly helping Lamorinda hear better for the last 10 years.

Al is inviting you for a complementary:

- Consultation
- Hearing evaluation
- 30 day trial on a hearing aid - no obligation
- Hearing aid check & cleanings-all models

Prepare to hear better for the holidays.
Call Today!



Summit HEARING CENTER 355 Village Square, Orinda (925) 254-6960

Anne Grodin Takes a New Direction

By Andrea A. Firth



Anne Grodin Photo Andy Schreck

About every ten years, Lafayette resident Anne Grodin makes a shift. "I believe in moving on and trying new things," says Grodin—a familiar name and face in Lafayette where she has lived for 27 years with her husband Marshall.

Grodin spent the 1990's as an elected volunteer serving two terms on the Lafayette City Council and acting as Mayor in 1994 and 1998. Over the course of the next ten years, Grodin was a tireless fundraiser simultaneously working on three capital funds campaigns for the Lafayette Community Fund, Cal Shakes, and the John Muir Health Foundation.

And with the dawn of a new decade, Grodin has signed on as Assembly member Nancy Skinner's Field Representative for Lamorinda and Pleasant Hill helping the 14th District representative stay connected with her constituents on the east side of the tunnel. Skinner's District also extends west into Alameda County and includes Albany, Richmond, Berkeley, and Emeryville.

"The District is so diverse," notes Grodin, "The unifying thread

is Nancy's commitment to the environment," she says, adding, "I understand how residents in Lamorinda feel about open space, hills, and creeks. It's really important and they want to preserve this lifestyle."

Grodin joined Skinner's team in June and was immediately thrust into the nebulous world of the State budget process. "I quickly learned a lot about school finance which comprises a significant portion of the State budget," says Grodin. As part of Skinner's outreach efforts, Grodin attends many local meetings and events both with and without the Assembly member.

It's been an interesting transition for Grodin, who seems to have the Midas touch when it comes to raising funds for the community and the arts. "Raising funds is its own art. You have to ask people face to face," says Grodin, adding, "We are very fortunate here. We live in a community that really understands philanthropy."

Often attributed as the founder of the Lafayette Community Foundation, Grodin is quick to point out, "You never accomplish anything like this by yourself."

What she brought to the process, says Grodin, were connections to people that knew how to fundraise, which in turn helped the Foundation to raise over \$12 million for the construction of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. The Foundation has grown to serve as a vehicle for philanthropy for the City of Lafayette.

Grodin was a quick study when it came to fundraising, and she soon found herself working on two other highly successful campaigns for Cal Shakes, which raised over \$8 million for upgrades to the Bruns Amphitheater, and the John Muir Health Foundation, which has raised \$50 million so far for new medical facilities and renovations at the Walnut Creek and Concord health care campuses.

Reflecting on these successful fundraising efforts that are now winding down, Grodin remains committed to these causes, "Every campaign that you do is so interesting." But she is also energized and enthusiastic about her new venture. "Working with Assembly member Skinner is a good way to try something very different," says Grodin. "The job is different everyday."

Grodin encourages Lamorinda residents to take advantage of Assembly member Skinner's mobile office hours Pleasant Hill where Grodin and other staff are available to meet with residents to answer questions about State issues, gather feedback, and assist with issues involving a State agency. Appointments can be scheduled by calling (510) 286-1400 or by walk-in. Mobile office hours are held at Pleasant Hill City Hall, 100 Gregory Lane in the small conference room, every fourth Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. starting in January.

DIABLO FLOORING, INC \$250 Off*
*Minimum 1,000 sq. ft. Exp. 12-31-10

CARPET • HARDWOOD • LAMINATE • TILE • VINYL

Diablo Flooring Inc. is here to bring the best possible pricing with the most beautiful and complete installation to the Bay Area. We are a small store which lets us give you the attention needed for a more professional experience. We cater to residential & commercial customers, designer, contractors, and developers.

FREE ESTIMATES

(925) 426-RUGS (7847) (925) 988-WOOD (9663)
5600-D Sunol Blvd, Pleasanton, CA 94566 1813 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

VISIT OUR SHOWROOM OR Shop@Home WWW.DIABLOFLOORING.COM
License #898787 • Bonded • Insured up to \$2 Million

BEDELL Celebrating 35 Years in Business!
investment counseling
Achieve your financial goals with our help

A Relationship of Trust Since 1975

Portfolio Management
Individual Stocks and Bonds
Old Fashioned Customer Service

www.bedellinvest.com 800-783-0344



Michael Frazier
Vice-President, Portfolio Manager and Moraga Resident

House Sitting Services
\$25 a day



We'll love your home as much as you do!

First day FREE for new customers

925-235-0171
www.getagofer.com

Get a Gofer