

A Community of Musicians Moves to Lafayette

By Sophie Braccini



First jamming session in Lafayette with Jonathan Freeman playing lead guitar and Patrick Bradley to the right.

Photo Sophie Braccini

According to Patrick Bradley, his music school is as much about community as it is about music. The young man who recently moved his business and his home from Concord to Lafayette is a professional musician who decided to trade some of his career as a performer to become an educator, with a creative and empowering way to transmit his passion of music. He recently moved Bradley School of Music to a charming cottage at 1042 Brown Avenue in Lafayette because he needed room to expand and fell in love with the central location.

The first jam session was held May 20 in the Brown Avenue cottage. Early in the afternoon, the younger players were invited to come and the energy of the place rose quickly. "I started performing at jam sessions a month after I began learning the guitar," says 9-year-old Nate Elwood after his first performance in the new Lafayette studio. Monthly jam sessions are a key component to Bradley's method.

The roomy cottage opens to a large room

with a stage. Facing it, the audience sits at high and low tables. On the night of the jam session, staff served snacks and drinks in the back, and the high ceiling reverberated nicely with the music. Twelve-year-old Jonathan Freeman played lead guitar, supported by teachers on the bass and drums. Freeman's been learning the guitar with Bradley for three years and his mastery was impressive. Other young students, more and less advanced, kept following one another to the stage, playing different instruments or singing. Jamming time was from 4 to 6 p.m. for the younger students, 7 to 9 p.m. for the oldest.

"Playing in front of an audience is an integral part of the music experience I want to give to my students at any level and age," says Bradley. "I am a professional musician and we also do jamming here that's very advanced. But the beginners love it, too; it gives them a goal and the satisfaction of really being a part of a supportive community, and that's highly motivating." Bradley sees his school as a commu-

nity first; a community that happens to be teaching music.

Bradley also invites celebrity artists like Orestes Vilato, the 2009 Latin Grammy Award nominee, to teach master classes and partake in the jam sessions. "We teach all ages and all levels," he adds. Professional musicians, like Kenya Baker, come to take lessons because they want to continue to improve.

Bradley may be an artist, but his left-brain is very active, too. When students become members of the school, they get Bradley School of Music's highly structured instruction manual that takes them on "a step-by-step path to proficiency." Students define short- and long-term goals with their instructor and monitor their progress, even online if they prefer.

Monthly memberships include the method and a weekly lesson. Part of the program involves the monthly Jam Week with the live performance, a group jam class on Sunday night with all the stage equipment, and counseling sessions on Tuesday, where students can work with an instructor on a topic of their choice, and even jam with other drop-in students or teachers.

Students can learn piano, percussion, guitar, bass, voice, mandolin, drums, banjo and ukulele. Classically trained and professional musicians teach all the classes.

Bradley School of Music is also offering summer camp sessions through the Moraga Recreation Department: Intro to Music, which allows young students to experiment with a different instrument each day; a guitar and bass camp; and a ukulele camp. Others who want to be part of the school will be assessed by Bradley and included in a summer group.

For more information about the camps, visit www.moraga.ca.us. For more about Bradley School of Music, visit bradleyschoolofmusic.com.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

business briefs

Design 4 U Opens Retail and Teaching Business

3370 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Unit B, Lafayette

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Design 4 U Owner Ruby Chen knows everything about jewelry: how to make it, sell it, repair it, and even teach about it — she even offers free classes for seniors. A graduate gemologist, Chen has worked in the jewelry industry for 15 years, from manufacturing to wholesale and high-end retail (including Tiffany in Walnut Creek). She moved to Lafayette in 2009 with her four children and owned a wholesale jewelry business, but is now opening her first retail/teaching business. "Some of the pieces I sell in my store I made," she says. "Others,

I buy." When she was in the wholesale industry she went all over the world and was trained to spot the nicest pieces. "Now I can design any custom piece clients might want," she says. Her brother is a goldsmith and his expertise can be used if necessary. "I can also repair any piece of jewelry, including high-end watches," she says. As for the classes, Chen says, "We have free beading and wiring classes for seniors on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and over the summer we will have ongoing classes in the morning for children and teens." Chen also offers appraisals. "This job is so fulfilling for me because all the customers who come here are happy," she says. Chen also hosts parties such as birthdays or mother/daughters events, and plans to feature other local jewelry makers. She also donates 5 percent of her sales to the charity chosen by her clients. Design 4 U is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. The business will be closed June 14-25 to arrange a jewelry event.



Ruby Chen during a jewelry mother-daughter party at Design 4 U.

Photo provided

Where's the Town?

The Moraga Chamber of Commerce put up signs during the Saint Mary's College graduation festivities to let visitors know where to go to 'find the town.' "We had a sign made, we mounted it to Bill Snider's truck, and parked it across the street from the entrance to the college," says

Kathe Nelson. "There was no sign code violation!" Other signs were also posted at the corner of Saint Mary's Road and Rheem Boulevard. Non-permanent signs need a Design Review Board permit before being installed, but Nelson noted "they were up for less than 24 hours." She says the chamber will seek legal authorization from the DRB in the future to post such signs again when events attract out-of-area crowds to the campus.



Moraga Chamber promotes local businesses at SMC graduation. Photo Cathy Dausman

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Mixer at Mason McDuffie Mortgage from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 12 at 999 Oak Hill Road.

Ribbon Cutting at Floral Arts from 5 to 5:30 p.m. Thursday, June 13 at 3584 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Azure Moon kicks off this year's 'Rock the Plaza' on Friday, June 14 at Lafayette's Plaza Park at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road. The headliners start at 6:30 p.m. and are presented free of charge. (See article page Ax)

Moraga

Membership business meeting at 7:30 a.m. June 28 at the Hacienda de las Flores. Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Read will update the business community on future developments of interest.

Save the date for the Second Annual Moraga Chamber Golf Tournament and Dinner Party on Monday July 22, with a dinner only option for non-players. More information coming soon.

Orinda

Orinda Chamber members had a great time enjoying wine and appetizers at the Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening Party for Land Home Financial Services, Inc. May 31 in Theatre Square.

Moraga Employee of the Month for May

Susan Marconi, the general manager of Moraga Hardware & Lumber and Across the Way, has been named the Moraga Employee of the Month for May. Marconi has served in various roles for the two local businesses for the past 12



From left: Frank May, Susan Marconi, Bill Snider and Frank Melon

Photo provided

years and is strongly involved with the Moraga community. A Moraga native who attended Campolindo High School, Marconi is the businesses' primary liaison with the local community. She has worked directly with the Moraga Community Faire, garden clubs, local service organizations, the MEF, the Moraga Juniors and others. "Susan is a huge part of our operation," said owner Bill Snider. "She really has a knack of bringing in new products into both stores that our customers love. The customers love her and we really value her contribution to our business." The Rotary and Chamber will present Marconi with a \$50 gift card to Safeway as well as a \$50 gift certificate to Ristorante Amoroma at the Moraga Rotary luncheon June 18.



Photo Susan Wood Photography

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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