

# The New Buzzword is Entomophagy

Are you ready for cricket snacks?

By Sophie Braccini



John Heylin prepares cricket meal-based snacks in Canyon. Photo Sophie Braccini

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' 2013 report on future prospects for food and feed security, insects offer a huge potential for enhancing food security worldwide.

Young Canyon resident John Heylin, who is concerned about the future of our planet, does not want to be the last one to jump on the insect bandwagon and recently started a new company, Chirp Farms, that produces snacks incorporating cricket

meal as its source of animal protein. His recent appearance on Lifetime channel's "Supermarket Superstar" sent his sales through the roof and he is now considering raising crickets himself as opposed to purchasing them from a Louisiana farm.

While people from many tropical countries consider insects as decoration, entertainment, food and medicine, most westerners simply see insects as pests. "Yet this is far from the truth," says Heylin. "Insects pro-

vide food at low environmental cost, contribute positively to livelihoods, and play a fundamental role in nature."

The young entrepreneur explains that 10 pounds of feed are needed to produce 1 pound of cow protein, while crickets will gain 1 pound of weight for just 2 pounds of feed.

In addition, insects can be reared on organic side-streams and can help reduce environmental contamination. Insects are reported to emit fewer greenhouse gases and less ammonia than cattle or pigs, and they require significantly less land and water than cattle rearing. "As developing countries achieve greater wealth people want more meat, and this is unsustainable," he adds. "Soy protein takes a lot of land and has increased deforestation in Brazil (the main exporter of soy). So bugs provide a way to solve this problem."

Right now Heylin operates his snack making operations from Canyon. "I buy 10,000 crickets at a time (10 boxes, 1 foot by 5 inches)," he says, "I get them alive and put them in a freezer." In sub-zero temperatures the crickets go into hibernation before peacefully dying. Then

Heylin dehydrates them for a few hours at a low temperature before turning them into 2.5 pounds of flour meal.

The 'cricket-meal' is 65 percent protein, contains all 20 amino acids, vitamins, iron, etc.

"It's like eating a super lean steak," he says. The FAO's report indicates that the nutritional value of edible insects is highly variable because of the wide range of edible insect species. For example, the composition of unsaturated omega-3 and six fatty acids in mealworms is comparable with that of fish (and higher than cattle and pigs).

Heylin adds honey, flax seeds, sunflower seeds, crispy rice, dried apples, peanut or almond butter and chocolate chips to his bar. The cricket meal itself has a very pleasant, malty taste; the bar tastes like any healthy protein snack. Heylin also produces whole prepared beetles and crickets; this reporter had to overcome some initial hesitation before sampling them, but found that the crunchy treat tastes like the spice that was added by the cook.

"I want to stay away from the freak-factor," adds Heylin. "What we

are doing here is working on a next generation of protein that will be better for the environment, better for humans and does not involve the mistreatment of animals."

The biggest problem Heylin faces is cultural. Most people recoil at the idea of eating insects. Heylin, who graduated from University of Washington, spent two years in Niger with the Peace Corps on a sustainable agricultural project where he got a very different perspective on the urgency to find a worldwide solution for feeding people.

Heylin's next phase is to have an organic cricket farm. "They reproduce really fast and do not need a lot of space to live a normal insect life," he says, adding that he has been looking for a piece of land.

The cricket bars can be bought at www.chirpfarms.com. You can learn more about eating insects by watching Marcel Dicke on Ted Talks: [http://www.ted.com/talks/marcel\\_dicke\\_why\\_not\\_eat\\_insects.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/marcel_dicke_why_not_eat_insects.html).

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



*"Nothing makes me happier than to see you smile!"*

- Comfortable, Convenient Family and Cosmetic Dentistry
- Certified in Full Mouth Reconstruction

**Family & Cosmetic Dentistry** Providing Personalized Care through Quality Dentistry

**Scott D. Lothamer, DDS**  
Moraga  
925-376-4602  
1030 Country Club Drive

**\$40 off**  
mention this ad to receive \$40 off any dental treatment

Member:  
ADA • CDA • CCDS • AACD



## WHETHER YOU'RE MOVING OR JUST CLEANING...





**WHEN YOU NEED THE RIGHT SUPPLIES, 5A'S GOT THE ANSWER...**

- FILE BOXES W/LIDS • WARDROBE BOXES • TAPE
- SMALL, MED., LARGE BOXES • BUBBLE WRAP
- DISH PACKS W/INSERTS... **PLUS - GET A DISCOUNT COUPON FOR MERCHANDISE AT [WWW.5ASPACE.COM](http://www.5ASPACE.COM)**

**AND WHEN YOU NEED A PLACE TO STORE, 5A'S GOT SPACE!**

4 X 6 UNITS REG. \$82. NOW \$65.<sup>60</sup> PRICES HOLD 2 MONTHS! BUT UNITS ARE LIMITED, SO RENT NOW! EXP. 9/30/13

8 X 8 UNITS REG. \$159 NOW \$127

20% DISCOUNT ON SELECT ADDITIONAL UNITS

GIVE US YOUR OPINION!

Like us on Facebook | follow us on twitter | Blogger

USE OUR FREE VAN TO MOVE IN!



ASK FOR YOUR 2013 NEIGHBORHOOD COUPONS WHEN YOU COME VISIT US!



455 MORAGA ROAD, SUITE F  
**(925) 631-7000**  
[WWW.5ASPACE.COM](http://www.5ASPACE.COM)



## business briefs

**The Corner Book Shop Gets Artsy**  
3491 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette (corner of 1st Street and Golden Gate Way) (925) 283-1967 [friendscornerbookshop.com](http://friendscornerbookshop.com)

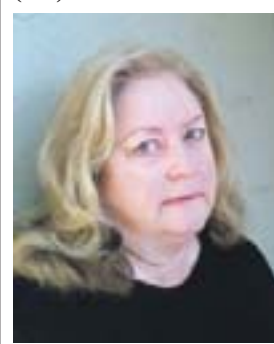
The Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center have created a deliciously colorful display at the Corner Book Shop to attract attention and delight library patrons. The Friends operate the shop where they sell gently used books.



Thanks to an all-volunteer staff and donated inventory, expenses are kept low. The bulk of the proceeds support the library. The Corner Book Shop has more than 25,000 books available for sale at unbeatable prices. The artful display will be on site for just a few days.

Friends Corner Book Shop temporary art installation. Photo courtesy Dana Green Team

**Nelson Named Moraga Chamber Executive Director**  
(925) 323-6524



Kathe Nelson  
Photo provided

Kathe Nelson has been named executive director of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, effective immediately. A seasoned sales professional with a career spanning nearly three decades, Nelson has served as Moraga Chamber's administrative assistant for the past three years. "Kathe has played a major role in our growth the past few years and her well-deserved promotion to executive director will assure future success for the Moraga Chamber," said Frank Melon, the chamber president. "Kathe will be the catalyst to facilitate the long term strategic plan for the Moraga Chamber of Commerce."

The chamber membership has grown by over 20 percent over the past three years and currently has 158 members. In addition to coordinating all chamber events, mixers and board of directors meetings, Nelson will be the primary liaison with city and regional governmental offices. In addition, she will assist with chamber fundraisers such as the annual Community Faire and summer golf tournament and head a new membership drive. During her sales career, Nelson served in senior sales management positions with companies such as Gillette, Pfizer, Schick and ACCO. She, her husband Walter, and granddaughter Jessica live in Moraga.

**New Broker at Better Homes**  
3701 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette  
(415) 505-3536 or (925) 284-9500, ext. 234, [homes@tomajtrenda.com](mailto:homes@tomajtrenda.com)

Better Homes Realty in Lafayette announced the addition of new broker and co-owner Tomaj Trenda, who has served hundreds of residential sellers and buyers during the past 10 years in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. He recently obtained his broker's license and passed the California Department of Real Estate exam.

### News from three Chambers of Commerce

**Lafayette**  
Chamber mixer at Blodgett's Abbey Carpet & Flooring from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 11 at 3291 Mt. Diablo Ct.

The 18th Annual Lafayette Art and Wine Festival will include hundreds of artists, five stages with live entertainment, wine, beer and a kid's zone from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21 and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 22. Free admission and free parking with shuttle service. Just one block from BART. For more information, visit [www.lafayettefestival.com](http://www.lafayettefestival.com).

**Moraga**  
The next Chamber general business meeting will be at 7:30 a.m. Oct. 25 at the Hacienda de las Flores.

**Orinda**  
Ribbon Cutting for Hello Tiara in Theatre Square at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19. The Orinda Classic Car Show Weekend, Sept. 20-22, begins with the pre-show party Sept. 20, the Car Show Sept. 21 and the Sunday Movie Night on Sept. 22. More info and tickets are available at [OrindaCarShow.com](http://OrindaCarShow.com).

On Tuesday, Sept. 24, Orinda will celebrate its restaurant row with the 6th Annual Restaurant Tour. For information, visit <http://www.orindachamber.org/events.htm>.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)