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Longtime editor is leaving Lamorinda Weekly

By Diane Claytor



Jennifer Wake Photo Sora O'Doherty

years at the helm.

Warm and humble, Wake laughs easily and treats everyone with equal respect. She has calmly encouraged and supported the writers to become better at what they do. Vera Kochan, who covers Moraga for the paper, says, "I have no doubt I was able to grow as a writer over the years thanks to Jen."

"The job of editing is so minor compared to what the writers and columnists do," Wake says. "We have such great writers, it's amazing what people have been able to put together." She also notes how impressed she is with Lamorinda residents. "It's incredible all the things Lamorindans have done and how so many of them give so much of their time to help others without ever expecting anything in return."

As editor, Wake makes many decisions on a regular basis - from what stories to write to who should write them, which photos to use and what headline is best. She recently made one of the more difficult decisions of her professional life: after all these years, Wake is leaving the paper; this is her final issue. "It blows my mind that I've been here this long," she wrote when announcing her departure.

Married with two adult children, the former Moraga resident has several aging family members and she will now have more time and flexibility to help them. She will, however, also continue writing, most likely as a freelancer. "I don't want to lose that part of myself," she states. "I need that creative outlet."

"I'm definitely going to miss working regularly with all the writers and columnists and being part of this fantastic team," Wake continues. And the writers and columnists are all going to miss working with her. Since her announcement, the accolades have been plentiful.

Longtime garden columnist Cynthia Brian called Wake a "remarkable editor" and "the sweetest woman," noting what a joy she has been to work with; Susie Iventosch, who writes the food column, echoed Brian's comments, noting it has been "a pure pleasure to work with Jen," who is the "most wonderful editor."

Wendy Scheck, associate publisher, who was instrumental in hiring Wake in 2007, comments that "she is the backbone of our editorial team . she has a talent for managing the mix of articles for every issue and has a keen creative eye for photos. . She also worked hard to keep, expand and nurture our pool of writers."

Sora O'Doherty, who covers Orinda for the paper said, "In addition to being a highly competent editor, Jen is a person of great sensitivity and compassion, whose warmth and understanding kept the staff together and happy."

Kochan perhaps said it best: "Jen is like the great and powerful Wizard of Oz behind the curtain; .she has masterfully orchestrated so much of what our readers have come to enjoy and has done it with a gracious guidance. . I will miss her encouraging words, her sense of humor and her calmness under stress."

As is often the case, when one exits, a new one enters. And in this instance, Jaya Griggs has been selected to replace Wake as the Lamorinda Weekly editor.

Griggs was raised in Moraga and grew up with the newspaper. As the Schecks' daughter, Griggs was there from the very beginning and has had a variety of roles and assignments over the years. She's illustrated stories, edited, proofread, and worked on the paper's layout. She's even written articles occasionally. "The Lamorinda Weekly is a family-owned, family-run, family-oriented publication," Griggs notes, and she's

Almost 17 years ago (March 14, 2007 to be exact), the Lamorinda Weekly published its very first issue. Among the early writers was Jennifer Wake, who wrote stories about Saint Mary's College happenings. With a degree in media communications from Cal State, Sacramento, and work stints in a San Francisco PR firm as well as serving as PR Director at Saint Mary's, this was Wake's first foray into newspaper writing. Apparently she liked it because she's been at the paper ever since.

Wake began writing about SMC before moving into writing more Life section stories. From there she became sections editor, associate editor and then, in 2014, was promoted to editor.

Editors are the backstage workers; they're quietly in the background, doing so much but receiving little credit. This describes how Wake has happily spent the last 10

excited to become more involved in the family business. At 29 years old, with this new expanded assignment, she'll unquestionably bring a young, fresh perspective to the publication.

An avid reader and graphic artist, Griggs graduated from the California College of the Arts. She says there may be some changes in the paper eventually but nothing immediately. "I need to get my feet wet," Griggs states. "Once I'm more comfortable with how it all works, I may suggest some changes." In the meantime, she looks forward to getting to know all the writers and their different styles.

Both Wake and Griggs are wished the very best of luck in their new endeavors.



Incoming editor Jaya Griggs Photo Susan Loenneker

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