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## Lafayette Veterinarian Takes Holistic Approach

By Sophie Braccini



A poodle gets her acupuncture treatment Photo Sophie Braccini

Rumor has it that dogs drag their owners to her clinic. A doctor like no other in the area, Karen Rettig is a classically-trained veterinarian who only uses holistic medicine with her four legged patients. Acupuncture, Chinese herbs, chiropractics, energetic balance, bio-resonance therapy, and food therapy are some of her non-chemical, non-invasive techniques.

Rettig was born, and trained as a veterinarian, in Australia. She moved to the United States eight and half years ago and started practicing here. But soon she felt that

running a standard practice was not what she was supposed to be doing in life, so she started studying alternative medicines, acupuncture and Chinese Herbs, and joined a veterinary clinic in Walnut Creek. She recently decided that she wanted to have her own business, using only the holistic approach to treatment. "We are the only practice like this in all of the East Bay," says Rettig, "customers come from Livermore, Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill, Berkeley, El Cerrito, and of course Lamorinda."

Her office is a little cottage.

The rooms are bright, the atmosphere is peaceful, soothing, and there is a garden for outside consultations.

When we visited her, Linda Vendermeer of Oakland was there with her two standard poodles. The older one, a 14-year old female, suffered from two cancerous masses in her lung. Vendermeer said the dog is doing well after a few months of Rettig's treatment. One of the masses has disappeared, and she has regained energy and appetite. "She wouldn't be here without Dr. Rettig," stated Vendermeer, "and she enjoys life much more." During the appointment the doctor planted needles in the dog, along her spine, and in her legs. The dog was relaxed, laying on the floor and looking completely content. "She loves coming here," added Vendermeer.

In another room, Jackie Drucker of San Leandro was waiting for Dr. Rettig with Elliott, a five-year old show dog. The little dog's hind legs were paralyzed due to a prolapsed disc in his spine. Drucker said that through holistic treatment, acupuncture and bio-resonance therapy, Dr. Rettig was able to help him regain the use of his legs and he is back in the show. "I didn't want him to have surgery," explained Drucker, "I don't like all the garbage they put in their bodies."

"The idea is that a being that

is balanced can heal itself of most diseases," says Rettig, "we treat very different cases like arthritis, cancer, allergies, inflammatory bowel, and kidney failure." She puts a great emphasize on nutrition. One of her most recent feline patients displayed extreme nervousness, and smelled bad in spite of a normal hygiene practice. "Look at his tongue," she said, "it is red and dry, there is too much yin in this cat. He needs more wet food, mostly venison and fish, and no grain. Cats eat herbs in the wild, but no grain." The foul smell came from swollen glands that she released, and she prescribed calming herbs for his anxiety.

The young holistic practitioner plans to conduct free workshops in her office - the first one will be "Learn How to do T-touch on your Pet" with Patty Coggan on June 29th at 6:00 p.m. "T-touch is a way of communicating with dogs that combines massage-like touches, body wraps and physical manipulation to improve athletic performance, aggressive behavior, nervousness, fears, as well as medical problems and injuries," said Rettig.

Alternatives for Animals is located at 1042 Brown Ave, Lafayette; (925) 283-6160.

*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

### Cake Passion, Turned Tiny

Renie Gannett must have felt that she did not have enough to do raising three boys, so she decided to start her own business. A former science teacher at Los Perales Elementary in Moraga, Gannett started taking cooking classes and one day discovered cake balls, or cake truffles: small cakes that are bite-sized, come in all kinds of flavors and are presented with charming decorations. "It struck a cord in me," says Gannett, "and I decided to start a business with it." She started in her own kitchen, experimenting and using her boys and neighbors as taster-testers. "They have to be absolutely honest with me," she says, "that's how I progress." The cakes are a combination of cake and frosting, rolled in a melted chocolate coating. Each cake truffle is made by hand from scratch. The sweet treats come in a variety of flavors. Gannett started without a business plan and wants to see where it will take her. "I have had orders as large as 500 pieces for a church fund-raiser," she said, "and I think I would like to expand." To see what a cake ball looks like and find further information, go to www.tinytreatsbakery.com.

### Mike Lawrence Named Moraga's Business Person of the Year



Mike Lawrence at the Rheem Center CVS store Photo Sohie Braccini

"I just do my job," said the CVS manager in Moraga, who was surprised to have been nominated. Lawrence may work for a corporation, but places a priority on being part of the community. "I've been asked if I wanted to move, but I refused," he said. He has managing Moraga's two CVS (formerly Longs) stores since 2007. He joined the Chamber of Commerce and for the past year has been its Recording Secretary; he then joined the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley. The transition from Longs to CVS has been a bit rough for him and his team. "Transition is a work in progress," he says, "it's going to be a year and we are continuing to improve our selection." He promises that the office supply department will be brought up to par very soon. "I've been able to keep our local produce and many of our natural products," he says, "I listen to the customers and we do our best."

Lawrence can always be seen in the store, working or talking to customers. "The Business Person of the year was elected by the Chamber members," says President Edy Schwartz. "Mike joined the Chamber as soon as he arrived in town, he has championed major sponsorships from CVS for the Moraga Community Faire and has donated often to the local schools and organizations. Last year he and his CVS employees were instrumental in encouraging other storeowners to participate in the Season of Light, a day for Moraga citizens to Shop Moraga First for the December holidays. This past month Mike was the driving force in having the Town Council and Town Manager meet Chamber members at the May Chamber of Commerce meeting. No one deserves this recognition more than he."

### Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe Likely to Close 376-8399

"If Kimco does not come back with a better offer, I will close the store by the end of the month," said Jorge Quintero, owner of the Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe and the Lafayette Pet Shoppe. Quintero, who opened the store 18 years ago, claims that his store has been losing ground for the past two years and that he needs to make drastic changes in order to survive. The lease on the Moraga store expired in January and he does not want to make a new three-year commitment to the property owner. "The maintenance costs have been multiplied by three," he said, "every time Kimco does work at the shopping center they pass the cost to us, the small store owners." Quintero will continue to operate his Lafayette store (3517 Mt. Diablo Blvd., 284-5212), which will become home to the small animals in the Rheem shop's window that have fascinated Moraga's children for years. He hopes to keep the business name and start a delivery service for his Moraga customers.

### News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

- Green Committee Open Meeting on June 16th at noon in the Chamber meeting room.
- Entrepreneur's Club at Fuz Restaurant, 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd, on June 17th from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
- Ribbon Cutting at Fuz Restaurant, 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd, on June 17th from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Ribbon Cutting at Risk Concepts Insurance Brokers, Inc., 3732 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 375, on June 24th from 5:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

### Moraga

- Moraga Business Person of the Year dinner at Terzetto Cuisine from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Appetizers, wine and dinner sponsored by Mechanics Bank. Members and invited guests only. RSVP by June 21st to Yelena Mucovich, globalsecuritysystems@juno.com.

### Orinda

- Chamber After Hours Mixer, Hosts: Breedlove Insurance & Orinda Chiropractic Center, Thursday - June 10th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., 89 Moraga Way, Orinda.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com) or call the office 925-377-0977