

Life in LAMORINDA

Filippi Academic Hall Opens at SMC New Home to the Kalmanovitz School of Education

By Andrea A. Firth



Courtyard view of Filippi Academic Hall the new home of the Kalmanovitz School of Education at Saint Mary's College in Moraga. Photo by Gary Ng, SMC Department of Architecture

"This building has been a long time coming," notes Nancy Sorenson, now in her eighth year as Dean of the School of Education at Saint Mary's College. "The planning started with the former Dean." Filippi Academic Hall—the new home of the Kalmanovitz School of Education at Saint Mary's—will celebrate its official opening later this month, but staff and faculty are already making themselves at home and at work on the second floor as the final touches to the interior and landscaping are completed. Several years and over \$23 million later, Saint Mary's students, faculty, and staff will continue to learn about learning in a building that is three times larger than the previous facility with ample centralized office space and technology-equipped classrooms.

The 600 to 650 students enrolled in graduate level course work at Saint Mary's helps to meet the continued demand for well-qualified teachers in the East Bay. "Many of

our graduates have taken positions or hold positions in schools in the nearby area, certainly in Contra Costa County—our big draw area," explains Sorenson. In the prior few years, the Education Department at Saint Mary's saw substantial growth in enrollment. "We have actually surpassed the projections that were made when they first started planning the building," notes Sorenson. "The building is quite a bit larger than the original plans that I first looked at. We certainly have room for expansion, and we have several programs that we want to target to expand."

The 37,000 square-foot building is located in the southwest corner of the campus adjacent to Augustine Hall and across the street from the baseball field. A central courtyard featuring a large Valley Oak complements the classic architecture of Filippi Hall, which is named after longtime college supporters Frank and Olivia Filippi. The mature Oak tree was

moved from the opposite side of campus near the sports pavilion. "(Preparing the tree to be moved) was actually under way for quite some time and we weren't paying much attention," notes Sorenson. "Then someone pointed out that this was the tree that they were moving, and we were quite amazed."

The opening of the Kalmanovitz School of Education in Filippi Academic Hall will be celebrated with an expert panel discussion entitled The Future of Education in California: Closing the Achievement Gap followed by an open house reception. Current students, alumni, and members of the communities and school districts with whom Saint Mary's partners have been invited to inaugurate the Education School's new home. According to Dean Sorenson they are expecting a good crowd and an interesting day. "In the final analysis people who have spent any time in the building are pretty pleased with what has been produced."

The Treacherous Information Highway continued from page 1



Shirley Krohn, senior assembly member for Contra Costa County and elder abuse prevention advocate, addresses a group of seniors about financial abuse at the Lafayette Community Center. Photo Jennifer Wake

Although Bowles is very careful about not opening any e-mails from anyone she does not know, she still fell victim to a scam.

Last month, while reviewing her bank statement, Bowles came across a strange copy of a check for \$29.99. The writing on the check was nearly impossible to read and the check's date was Nov. 27, the same day she and her husband had taken a long flight and were not writing any checks.

"I went to the bank and told them I didn't know what this was," she said. "They made an enlarged copy and with a magnifying glass we could make out 'Market Billing' on the check. The person at the bank googled the name and found six pages of people caught in this national scam. They had an electronic signature of mine on file and had all my bank information." Although Bowles never places outgoing mail in her mail box, somehow a criminal got one of her checks.

In addition to changing her bank account, Bowles had to change a number of documents and financial accounts linked to the checking account. "It was a nightmare," she said. "We now don't pay by check and pay by

computer, but that opens another can of worms."

According to the FTC, in 2005 Consumer Sentinel – the complaint database developed and maintained by the FTC – received over 685,000 consumer fraud and identity theft complaints: 63 percent were fraud, 37 percent were identity theft.

Last week at a seminar on how to avoid financial exploitation hosted by Lafayette Senior Services, Shirley Krohn, senior assembly member for Contra Costa County and elder abuse prevention advocate, passed around copies of dozens of e-mails she had received in just one day – all of which were potential scams. One e-mail even stated it was from the Internal Revenue Service, asking to click on a link regarding a \$240.34 refund.

"It's doubtful the IRS would be sending e-mails to people so they could get their refund," she said. "It's hard enough to get money out of the IRS. Never click on a link inside an e-mail or give out personal information."

"Many elders are too trusting and are easily duped by official looking (or sounding) communications such as e-mails," said Jenefer Duane, CEO

and executive director of Elder Financial Protection Network. "Also, elders who are more isolated may respond to an e-mail without asking around or checking out a bogus request for account (or other) personal financial information."

The best defense is awareness and education.

"I generally tell people to always be sure you know who you're talking to," Detective McCormack said. "You should have the most updated software, have firewalls, spam filters, all the latest features."

For information on how to protect yourself from cyber criminals, visit On Guard Online, hosted by the FTC, at <http://onguardonline.gov>.

If you think that your personal information has been stolen, visit the Federal Trade Commission's Identity Theft Resource Center at

www.consumer.gov/idtheft/index.html for information on how to file a complaint and control the damage.

A Blinding Flash Can't Clear Away Clutter continued from page 4

In addition, she kept, apparently, every scrap of newspaper and magazine she had ever received. She was a writer, after all; they were grist for her mill. They might be useful someday. I understood perfectly.

Paths between stacks of paper led to the corner fireplace and to the kitchen where she cooked on a wood stove. Another path led to her bedroom.

The bewildered Vietnamese and the elderly settler exchanged a few polite phrases in French. But further symbiosis was not to be. They were city people. She was not.

In a blinding flash, I saw the future, my future, and resolved to reform.

But in spite of my good intentions, reformation is slow work. For the most part, my books and papers are still confined to the bookcases. The papers do not, in general, interfere with foot traffic, or if they do, only for a finite space of time.

But I have taken a small step ahead. I firmly dropped the list of New Year's resolu-

tions in the recycling bin instead of tucking it away for future reference. It might have come in handy sometime.

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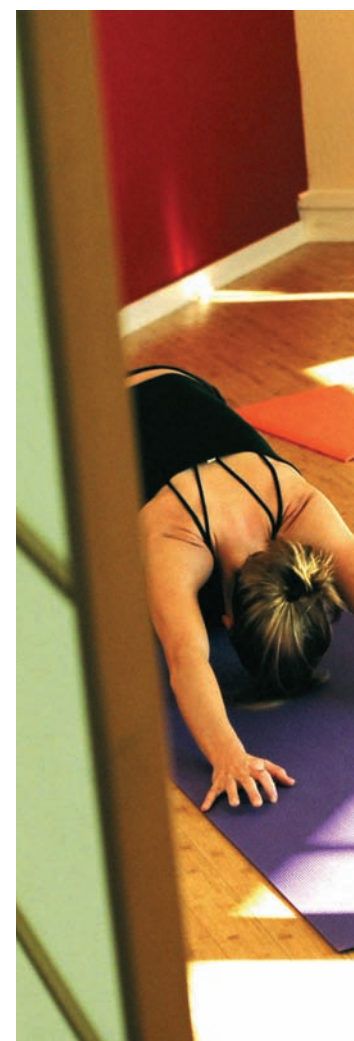


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