

Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Moraga

Shop **locally** whenever you can.

Only your support of our **local** businesses will keep them open!

- Calendar**
- City Council** 7:30pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School
1010 Camino Pablo
Wednesday, January 14
 - Planning Comm.** 7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room
2100 Donald Drive
Tuesday, January 20
 - Design Review** 7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room
2100 Donald Drive
Monday, January 12
 - Park & Rec** 7:30pm
Hacienda, Mosaic Room
2100 Donald Drive
Tuesday, January 20
 - Liaison** 8:00am
Fire Station
1280 Moraga Way
Friday, January 9
- Town of Moraga online:
<http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us>



Minor drinking, 12/31/08 Officers went to Camino Pablo School on a report of kids partying loudly. A 17-year-old, who police recognized from other encounters, was contacted. When asked if he had been drinking, he replied in the negative. Our frequent flyer was also asked if he had any contraband with him, he admitted to having a can of beer in his backpack. Then he 'fessed up that he actually had been drinking. The young man was cited for 'minor in possession of alcohol.' His parents were contacted and the cops were kind enough to give him a lift home.

Attempted commercial burglary, 12/30/08 Officers responded to an alarm from Longs Drugs, and during an exterior check discovered someone had forced open a door. Suspect(s) entered the building and forced open two interior doors to enter the pharmacy. Subject(s) left before officers arrived at just after midnight. It couldn't be determined if any drugs were taken at this time.

Pre-New Year's bash, 12/28/08 At 5:45 in the morning an anonymous citizen reported a vehicle collision on Scofield Drive. Upon arrival officers noted a black Toyota Avalon crashed into a utility pole - both the driver and passenger airbags deployed, but occupants were mysteriously not there. The driver was eventually located in Orinda and admitted to the crash. Why would they flee the scene?

Christmas Eve car burglary, 12/24/08 Looking for a pre-holiday workout, a woman parked and locked her car at the new 24-Hour Fitness on Rheem Boulevard at 8:30 in the morning. When she returned at 9:30, the passenger side window was smashed and her black suede jacket and leather purse were missing. Total estimated loss \$1,000.

Retail in Moraga: Fighting to Stay Alive

By Sophie Braccini



Andrea Lucacher carries out a burrito from Mucho Wraps Photo Sophie Braccini

The holiday season has come and gone. Moraga's retail business owners are checking their cash registers to see if the seasonal shopping was enough to compensate for an otherwise morose 2008. The results? Businesses that offered essentials for seasonal celebrating did well, while those whose wares are perceived as being luxuries or dispensable continue to have a harder time.

At the UPS store, Javier Galdon noticed that people waited until the last minute to send their packages, but they finally did. "We had a good year," he says, "and we are confident for the new year."

Hallmark in the Moraga Center had a great December as well. Liz White, the store manager, explains, "We had a ginger bread house that was very popular," she says, "as well as many stocking stuffers such as the individual tissue pack with a Christmas theme."

For the same reason, The Beauty Source reports a good holiday season. "Business was as good as ever," says Julia Kubik, "we had a rush just before Christmas and sold a lot of stocking stuffers." She believes that people in Moraga understand the Shop Moraga First concept and she keeps a positive outlook for 2009.

Susan Marconi from Across the Way shares Kubik's opinion. "The holiday season was very good for us, we offered very serious discounts to our customers and they appreciated it." She is happy that a good December has helped her to meet her sales goal. She notes though that the goals for this year had been lowered from last year and that her good results came at the expense of her profit margin. "We will have to stay very creative to ride out these difficult times," she adds, "We are entering uncharted territory."

Vivien Hart at the Moraga Art Gallery reported solid sales during the holidays as well and so did Jorge Quintero, owner of the Rheem Pet Shoppe. "We sold out of all our small animals," he says, "on the other hand, people didn't buy as many gifts for their pets as they usually do." Overall his December figures were the same as last year, but he anticipates a soft beginning for 2009.

Businesses offering non-essential goods are suffering more. Two purveyors of flowers, St Mary's Flowers and Gifts and King Florist and Gifts, both had a difficult 2008 and a disappointing holiday season. "These are luxury items," explains St Mary's Flowers owner Sandra Meily, "we did okay in terms of Christmas centerpieces but our

season results were 20% less than last year." For 2008 she recorded a drop of 60% in her sales.

Arlene Kohn, owner of King Florist, is not doing too well either. "We were down about 40% in October," she said, "in December we made about 15% less than last year." She has had to lay off two part-time employees and works six days a week herself. Neither Meily nor Kohn have a very positive outlook on 2009. "We had a similar period ten years ago and we went through it, we will do it again," says Meily; to boost her numbers she's planning a huge sale on all her gifts items.

Nail salons are in the same boat. Hanna Nails reports a slow season while Karen Binh at Dynasty Nails admitted that the season was okay, but not super compared to previous years. "This is a New Year and what better way to be happier than by getting a pedicure/manicure," said the perky storeowner.

To fight the tough times some are turning to the community in creative ways. Patrick Vahey of Pennini's proposed an innovative campaign to the Moraga Education Foundation (MEF).

"I give a lot to all the groups in town," says Vahey, "but I do not always know what the return is on these donations." So he offered MEF 10% of all sales made between now and the end of the school year as long as patrons sign "MEF" on their bills. "I will have special days as well with the other groups, so we can support each other." Vahey reports an even year for Pennini's, but his higher-end restaurant, Michael's, has shown some decline.

That same phenomenon is seriously affecting other town favorites, such as Amoroma. "The holiday season was not that good," said Amoroma co-owner Michele Lavecchia, "we were down 10 to 15% down from last year, which was much better than the very bad October and November." Lavecchia is concerned that there won't be any improvement for months; in the meantime, he hasn't touch his prices at all, "not to scare customers away!"

Roos Pal at Terzetto Café doesn't want to raise her prices either. The hard-working woman has seen a decline in the number of evening diners, about 30%, but an increase at lunch and breakfast. "Our New Year's Eve dinner was very successful," she said, "it was our first time and we will certainly do it again." Pal is not one to give up anyway. She is always bustling with new ideas and keeps a very positive outlook on 2009. "It is going to be a very good year," she says, "we will develop new products such as our catering that worked so well over the holidays, or the Art and Wine evenings that we will schedule monthly."

Chain stores like Tuesday Morning and Home Goods could not comment because only their distant headquarters know the numbers. Longs Manager Mike Lawrence is more independent and he knows how his two stores are

doing. "We want to thank the community for its support," he says, "if our numbers are lower in December it is by less than 1%. For us, there hasn't been a recession."

Tom Peterson of the Rheem Theatre was a bit disappointed by

the season. "We'll see what happens," he said, "Jim (his partner) and I know our business and we will offer great entertainment to Lamorinda in 2009." Like all the businesses, he plans to try to keep Moraga fun and alive.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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"Being involved in this church has given me the opportunity to use my gifts to serve God and others. The teaching is excellent, and helps bring me closer to God."
-Marcia Austin, Member

Willow Spring Church

Voted "Best Place to Worship" in Moraga
-The U.S. Local Business Association

Upcoming Sunday Mornings At WSC

- Jan 11: "How To Have Your Best Year Ever!" (Conclusion)
- Jan 18: "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Christians, Part 1"
- Jan 25: "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Christians, Part 2"
- Feb 1: "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Christians, Part 3"

Willow Spring Church

1675-1689 School Street
Moraga, CA 94556
www.willowsspringchurch.org
(925) 376-3550

Sunday Service Times:
Prayer.....8:00am
Traditional.....9:00am
Contemporary.....10:30am
Weekly Activities Include:
Wednesday:
Community Bible Study....10am
REVERB (youth).....7pm
Friday Night:
BLAST! Kids Club.....6pm
Saturday Night:
Catalyst(Young Adults)..7:30pm

Willow Spring Church is an evangelical, non-denominational, Bible-Driven church with a vision to:
"Work with God to build effective people who are inspired to excellence and committed to others."

"God loves us regardless of performance, and yet, we have been created not merely to be...but to become."
-Pastor Brad, GodThoughts, Vol.1, p.283*

"Willow Spring has changed my life by allowing me to belong to a caring community."
-Mark Punzal, Regular Attender



*Willow Spring Church is the home of the Internationally recognized "GodThoughts" Ministry serving more than 10,000 people daily in over 100 countries around the world.

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- River Rock Casino Trip, \$25, 1/13
- Gymnastics - ages 1.5 - 3, starting 1/7
- New Year's resolution? Moraga Treeline Triathlon 4/25
- Dinner Dances at the Hacienda
Dad/Daughter (2/20) & Mom/Son (3/20)
- New classes starting NOW for all ages and interests

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