



Rosewood House.com
FINE FURNITURE & ASIAN ANTIQUES SINCE 1969

CONCORD 4700 CLAYTON RD. (925) 827-9588
OAKLAND 2523 BROADWAY (510) 451-7373



LGA DESIGN-BUILD License #777236

- Remodels
- Additions
- Custom Homes
- Kitchens
- Baths

FREE Professional Design Consultation
Client-focused quality, value engineering and responsive delivery.
Just ask our clients!

Call 925-323-6582
email: nlgionet@lga-db.com www.lga-db.com



SUGI FINE BEDDING & GIFTS
Japanese style & comfort

Gifts, Hand-Crafted Futons
Solid Hardwood Frames
Tatami Platforms & Mats
Custom Comforter Covers
Shoji Screen & Laterns

Mon-Sat 10-6pm, Sun: 12pm-5pm
961-A MORAGA RD. LAFAYETTE • 925-299-0882 • sugi-store.com

Social Media for Small Businesses

By Sophie Braccini



Robin S. Fox presenting at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center

Photo Sophie Braccini

Last month the Lafayette and Orinda Chambers of Commerce sponsored lectures on new electronic ways for small businesses to reach their customers. Orinda offered a 'brown bag lunch' presentation on blogging with Marissa Berger, and Lafayette invited the community to a morning presentation on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn given by Robin S.

Fox. Some local success stories are indicative of a trend that is likely to grow.

According to Marissa Berger, a consultant with MB/I, blogs for businesses can have different spins. It can be a product blog; "That type has soft sale spin, answering questions about the product," said Berger. Other types of blogs can get visibility for the brand. "Microsoft, on the community part of their web site, has hundreds of blogs," she said. "It helps to interact with the market, raises the awareness in the community." Blogs can also serve as an after-sale tool or knowledge base. Berger believes that a blog can be a real plus in terms of credibility. "If a company has a blog with a lot of interaction and interesting information, it gives it an edge," she said.

Berger demonstrated that blogs appear at the top of the list in a Google search. "Google loves blogs," she said, "it's content that's fresh, updated frequently and relevant." For example, she searched for the terms, "what is 'flash' used for," and her company's blog showed up in fourth position in the Google listing, way before some much larger companies. "We use our blog to constantly offer tips to the public," she says, "a blog is not a tool to sell things, it's a place to

increase your presence in people's minds."

Robin S. Fox, the Social Media Coach invited by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce to talk about Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, sought to demystify the electronic tools for the audience.

Fox, an entertaining speaker, offered a snappy and fun presentation. During the short hour she delivered three messages: Social media is an opportunity with a low cost factor; you can do this; and small steps are okay. Fox explained that social media is all about communicating your story, creating your social network, and building awareness.

Several Lamorinda businesses have been using social media tools very successfully. "We definitely use Facebook for advertising our events," says New Rheem Theatre manager Beau Behan, "we have a following of fans on our Facebook page, where we post updates about tickets and events."

Teenagers are certainly big Facebook users but they are not the only ones. New restaurant Table 24, in Orinda, had over 200 fans before it even opened – and not all of them were Miramonte students. According to restaurant co-founder Michael Karp, the restaurant will

use Twits to send 'specials' to kids in the area and attract them to the restaurant.

But Twitter is not everybody's tool of choice. "I am not very active on Twitter, it is very momentary news," says Dave Simpson, owner of the Lafayette Bookmobile, "Facebook is good to indicate what we will be doing the next week." Simpson says that he has about 400 'fans' of his business on Facebook, which he uses to inform people of where the bookmobile will next be located.

For these business owners, becoming good at using this media

had a learning curve. "Like anything else there are trials and tribulations at the beginning," says Behan, "it's just a matter of finding out how to entice your customers; you have to have the pulse of your market."

"I did not get Facebook marketing at first," adds Simpson, "the power of Facebook is when people interact with it, so your postings have to ask a question or be provocative or fun, and then people will comment."

For Behan, Facebook is a tool to reach the younger market segment that does not read newspa-

pers or newsletters, "it's allowed us to cover all our bases," he concluded.

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce says it may repeat the 'Blogging for Business' presentation because of its very informational content. Fox will offer a class, called Facebook for Business 101, during two Wednesday sessions on October 20 and 27 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 Saint Mary's Road. The cost is \$42 for both days. Sign-up are through the Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department, www.lafayeterec.org.

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

Winery Receives Sustainability Award

Captain Vineyards of Moraga has received a Sustainability Award from the non-profit Sustainable Contra Costa; the award "honor[s] businesses, government programs, community groups, non-profits, and individuals who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to sustainable practices," according to the organization's website. Captain Vineyards was selected from a group of ten business nominees, and received formal recognition from the California Senate and Assembly for its efforts in utilizing green and sustainable practices in its operation. "We feel a responsibility to produce the highest quality wines, and respect our neighbors and environment," says co-owner Susan Captain, whose business also recently became the first and only certified green winery in Contra Costa County and received the Water Smart Business award given by EBMUD (recognizing the vineyard's dry-farming efforts). "We are doing what we believe in, namely conserving our precious resources, and we're fortunate enough to be recognized for those efforts," says co-owner Sal Captain. For more information go to www.captainvineyards.com.



(From left): Susan Captain, Sal Captain and Matt LeBel receive Contra Costa Sustainability Award Photo Gustavo Fernández

Local Businesswoman Wins Award 3451 Golden Gate Way, Lafayette - 962-9177 - www.vivaelespanol.org Margaret Grover-Roos, founder and director of the local non-profit organization ¡Viva el Español!, has been named 2010 Entrepreneur of the Year for Lafayette/Orinda by bay area non-profit Women's Initiative for Self-Employment. The organization recognizes female business owners who have been successful despite the barriers that exist for women, exemplify how business ownership and leadership is beneficial for women, have a positive impact on the local community, and advance their business through innovation. A total of 587 women were nominated throughout the Bay Area and nearly 50 women were honored with the award. The Lafayette school offers classes in Spanish language and culture for ages 1-adult.

Fastframe Relocates 1020 Brown Avenue, Lafayette 283-7620, email fastframe229@astound.net Fastframe of Lafayette, a mainstay in downtown Lafayette for 19 years, recently joined the many small businesses who call Brown Avenue home. Fastframe opened in 1991 on Moraga Road, moved to the Clocktower Building in 1997, and was purchased in 1999 by original employee Anthony Ruiz. "Management of the Clocktower opted not to renew our lease, which turned out to be a blessing in disguise," says Ruiz, "We found a wonderful new location on Brown Avenue, across the street from The Forge Building and Artisan Bistro. We have our own parking lot and are easily accessible from Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Deer Hill Road." Ruiz, an art lover, hopes to plan exhibitions with local artists in his new location.

Hudson & Axelrode Orthodontics recently held their annual client event faire in their parking lot at 1016 Country Club Drive. The event was a huge success, attracting elementary school children as well as teenagers. The partners offered fun activities for all of their young clients, with jumpies of all shapes for the youngest ones, a climbing wall and huge elasto-trampolines for the older ones. The annual event is a way for Drs. Doug J. Hudson, Mark G. Axelrode and Eric L. Axelrode to thank the community for their continuing support. More information at www.hudsonandaxelrodeortho.com.



Hudson & Axelrode Orthodontics hold their annual client event faire in Moraga Photo Sophie Braccini

News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

- October 15, Big Band Dance at the Veterans Memorial Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. Tickets are available at Lafayette Chamber Office, cost is \$10.00. For more information call 284-7404.
- October 16, ribbon cutting at the re-grand opening and customer appreciation day at the Wells Fargo branch at 3525 Mt. Diablo Blvd from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- October 20, Optimizing LinkedIn for Local Business Networking Workshop from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. at the Lafayette Library & Learning Center. Presented by Robin Fox, Social Media & Inbound Marketing Coach. Reservations recommended by email at workshops@lafayettechamber.org or call 284-7404.
- October 20, open Green Committee Meeting at noon in the Chamber Conference Room.
- October 21, Entrepreneur's Club at 8:30am in the Chamber Conference Room.
- October 21, ribbon cutting ceremony for Fastframe of Lafayette's new location, 1020 Brown Avenue, starting at 5:00pm.
- October 22, Business Issues-Governmental Affairs Meeting at 8:00 a.m. in the Chamber Conference Room.
- October 31, 18th Annual Lafayette Reservoir Run. Registration online available on the Chamber web site at lafayettechamber.org/events/reservoir-run/.

Moraga

October 19, evening program, "The Pulse of the Moraga Business Climate" from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Soda Center, Saint Mary's College. Abundant appetizers and wine included. No charge to participants. Sponsored by Mechanics Bank. (See article page A)

Orinda

October 21, City Time Capsule Ceremony & Community/Council Reception at City Hall, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. This community event is part commemoration of the City of Orinda 25th Anniversary.

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



FASTFRAME
EXPERT PICTURE FRAMING

WE'VE MOVED!

After 19 years in downtown Lafayette, we have moved less than a mile away! Visit our convenient new location on **BROWN AVENUE** with ample free parking!

925-283-7620

FASTFRAME OF LAFAYETTE
1020 BROWN AVENUE
(Next to Rosie's Consignments)

OPEN MON-SAT 10-6

Find us on Facebook
www.fastframe.com



Fall 2010

Express Oil Change & Tire Center

One Stop Convenience - Service You Can Trust

Do some oil change shops make you feel...iffy?

Not all oil change shops are created equal!

Are you getting your money's worth?

Trust the shop that thoroughly checks your vehicle every time we service it!

Call 925-254-8989

Orinda Motors Inc. - Express Oil Change & Tire Center
63 Orinda Way, Orinda, Ca., 94563 www.orindamotors.com