

Civic News Lafayette

Last Chapter at Work for Lafayette Librarian

Susan Weaver

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Rumor has it she won't be keeping busy playing golf, possibly catching up on her reading and about a thousand and one special projects that have been on the back burner.

Weaver started her career with the Contra Costa Library system in April of 1995, spending the last six years here in Lafayette, with prior postings at libraries in Crockett and San Ramon. Skills learned working at detention facilities, also known as jails, in Martinez, Marsh Creek and West County years ago may have come in handy with the occasional overly-enthusiastic library patron.

"Extraordinary is not sufficient praise to describe

Susan. Include visionary, innovative, collaborative, dedicated, smart," said Kathy Merchant, Executive Director of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation. "Of course she'll say NOW I say nice things...and this is what I will miss most. She is, to use her phrase, 'hecka fun!' I've known that every day I walk in to the library, Susan will be there and we will share instant laughter. Everyone knows that when I tease that Susan is so difficult, they all understand I mean the exact opposite and that this has become a treasured personal as well as professional relationship. A rare gift for which I will always be grateful."

Historical Facelift for Plaza Park Shops

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The Pioneer Store dating from 1860, which is now A-1 Photo Lab, will have its historic gabled roof line restored, a new wood front porch and new windows. The owner is working with the Lafayette Historical Society to keep renovations true to the original form.

The Handlebar Toy and Plaza Way Cleaners buildings will receive similar, yet distinct historic improvements.

Parking for the area has been the subject of lengthy discussions, not only for this row of businesses, but for the Park Theater, just a stone's throw down the block. Ad-

ressing a comprehensive solution for parking is crucial for the success of this renovation on Plaza Way, along with Fenton's coming to the now vacant Park Theater.

The City Council has expressed support for preliminary plans for a consolidated parking area in the rear of the shops, encompassing not only expanded parking, but a comprehensive parking solution with a number of components. A subcommittee of city representatives is actively working on a solution for the area, and they are expected to produce Plaza Way Overlay in the coming months.

Restaurant Row Meets the Streets?

Asian street vendor-inspired restaurant proposes new location

Also on the May 29 Design Review agenda was a study session to get preliminary feedback on demolishing the existing building across the street from Chow on Lafayette Circle – home of the Art Room and the Lafayette Gallery, and build Boo Koo – a new restaurant that features fresh, healthy quickly-prepared southeast Asian street food. With a successful shop in Mill Valley, the owners are looking to expand in Lafayette and proposed a contemporary small café, with lots of outdoor seating to take advantage of the existing trees on the property. In general the Design Review Commissioners liked the project, but suggested additional fine tuning to integrate the indoor and outdoor spaces. Boo Koo is a spin on "beaucoup" meaning many, much, an abundance – referring to many sparkling flavors, as in their spicy ginger beef banh mi or pho ga. C. Tyson

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Civic News Moraga

Town Loses Another Staffer

Public Works' John Sherbert retires

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Sherbert said he had 5 very interesting years working in Moraga. He was recruited by Town Engineer and Public Works Director Jill Mercurio. "When I met with her, I shared my concerns over not being familiar with all of the aspects of the job," Sherbert recalled. "She looked at my resume and said, 'you should be able to handle what we are doing here.'"

Sherbert is an electrical engineer by training. He worked in the computer hardware and software engineering industry, before starting his own general contracting practice. But doing it alone was not his thing, and as a Moraga resident, when he read about the opening, he thought he could contribute to the Town in which he had raised two children. "I've loved the challenge and I've loved to learn," said Sherbert. "With the flexibility and support of my manager (Mercurio), it's been a wonderful experience."

"We've had some great accom-

plishments," he reminisced. First he started looking at the energy consumption of the Town, something that had never been done before. "When I saw that the energy grants were available and could help us reduce our energy bills, I immediately brought it to Jill (Mercurio)," he said. The rest is history: installation of led lights, replacement of old equipment that was energy-guzzling and insulation in divers public buildings were all conducted successfully. All these modifications translate today in dollars saved.

Sherbert added some of the Town's capital projects to his list of accomplishments. "The lights at Ascot went very well, as well as some of our pavement projects," he said. He also remembered those that didn't go so well, such as the resurfacing of Moraga Road that started to fail. "I'm just finishing the last paperwork on this project," he noted.

Speaking of State Regulations...

How one unfunded mandate is affecting this small town

The failure of the 2012 Community Clean Water Initiative doesn't mean that requirements for communities to clean up storm drains will disappear—it means that municipalities will have to find other funds to pay for the clean-up. "The mandate stays the same," said Moraga Staff Engineer John Sherbert, "and the new costs will have to be covered by (the Town's) General Fund."

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region, wants to improve the quality of the water in reservoirs and in the bay. Moraga's water run-off goes to the San Leandro Reservoir, which is a source of drinking water for a large part of the East Bay.

"Nobody would argue against clean water, but sometimes what we are asked to do is a little extreme," said Sherbert, who believes that it should not be "one rule fits all." For example, "We are required to have catchment devices in all of our storm drain entries, whether or not we have debris in our creeks," he explained.

Other requirements for clean water include holding three outreach events per year and sweeping the streets frequently. "We do it (sweeping) only twice a year because there is no trash in our streets," said Sherbert. "And the Water Board says that we should do it every week, every other week, or every day."

Sherbert said that a 2012 clean-up of the creek banks near the high school collected one cubic foot of trash. "And part of that was a paper banner that had blown from Campo," he added. Sherbert was hoping that the agency, after seeing these results, would loosen the mandate for Moraga. "We hoped that reasonable people would allow an exception, because we are burning up local agency resources for no real gain," said Sherbert.

The expected cost to the Town this year, to comply with storm water regulations, is \$324,239 – a 78 percent increase from previous years.

Sherbert acknowledged that Moraga does pollute its creeks, but said the source of the pollution is run-off from gardens that contains pesticides and fertilizers, and the new law has no way to measure or improve that type of pollution.

"This is one of the most outrageous examples of unfunded mandates that our towns and cities have to abide by," said Sherbert. Non-compliance can result in fines of \$10,000 per day. S.Braccini