

# Families Are Good for Business

By Sophie Braccini

There are people in Lamorinda who refute the idea that one should never mix business and family. Colleen McCormick and her uncle, Stevie Coyle; Lane Nemeth and her daughter, Tara Nemeth, have found motivation and synergy working together. The mother-daughter team started a new jewelry company, The Ultimate Sparkle, while McCormick asked her uncle to join in the expansion of her business, adding access to high-end luthier-made acoustic guitars to Lamorinda Music with the opening of Mighty Fine Guitars next door. The family ties, made of common roots and values, are helping the businesses grow.

When McCormick opened Lamorinda Music in Lafayette three years ago, she said that music was a family trait. At the time she didn't mention her uncle, Stevie Coyle, singer and

co-founder of the Americana band the Waybacks, who released his solo album Ten-In-One in 2010. But when her business expanded and the property owner said McCormick could have more space, she thought of Coyle.

"We expanded our studio to be able to offer more classes, but there was definitely room for more, so I contacted Uncle Stevie (Coyle)," says McCormick. The musician was getting ready to settle down a bit. He lives in Marin and his lifestyle over the past 20 years had been "on the road again."

"I felt it was time for me to anchor somewhere and go further into my passion for beautifully made guitars and for teaching," he says.

Coyle's new spot, Mighty Fine Guitars, is adjacent to Lamorinda Music. The musician consigns and

sells unique acoustic instruments. He believes that the passionate musicians who crowd the Healdsburg Guitar Festival every two years will like having a Bay Area store that carries the treasures they seek.

Coyle's new space includes a completely soundproof lesson studio. "I've been giving fingerstyle guitar lessons for years and years and I still find that hugely satisfying," says Coyle. Four additional soundproof studios were also added as part of Lamorinda Music's renovation, as well as a beautiful performance room, The Big Room, where Coyle recently performed.

"We can have gigs in that room, and it will also be used for performances by Renee DeWeese and Rena Wilson who operate the Lamorinda Theater Company (see the business article in the May 9 issue) above us



Stevie Coyle and Colleen McCormick

Photo Sophie Braccini

and with whom we also partner," adds McCormick. This part of Lafayette Circle is really starting to become a small performing arts quarter.

### Family Jewels

While McCormick expands her business with her family connections, Nemeth wanted to create something new with her daughter, Tara. The business woman is not starting her first venture with jewelry and The Ultimate Sparkle. An early childhood educator by training, she started Discovery Toys in 1978 and sold it to Avon in 1997. The distribution system used then for toys is the same for jewelry now: direct sales through a network of consultants who organize parties to present the merchandise.

"We wanted to do something that would be creative and fulfilling together," says the mother. "We've traveled everywhere to find the right jewelers who could create the exclusive jewelry that we love and that women will love."

The collection is unique and very diverse, made of metal with semi-precious stones, wood or even fabric. Some pieces are quite striking and or-

nate, while others are more modern and simple.

"We have something for everybody," says Nemeth's daughter, Tara, "and the prices are in the \$20 to \$80 range." As they display the pieces on a long table in her mother's home in Lafayette's Happy Valley, the two women share their joy and passion for enhancing women's glamour with necklaces, bracelets and earrings and rings.

The mother-daughter duo started their new company a few months ago, and they are in the process of building their network of consultants. They are also looking for local ladies who would like to host a 'Jewelry Party' - a nice way to have a fun moment with friends and get jewelry pieces at a discount.

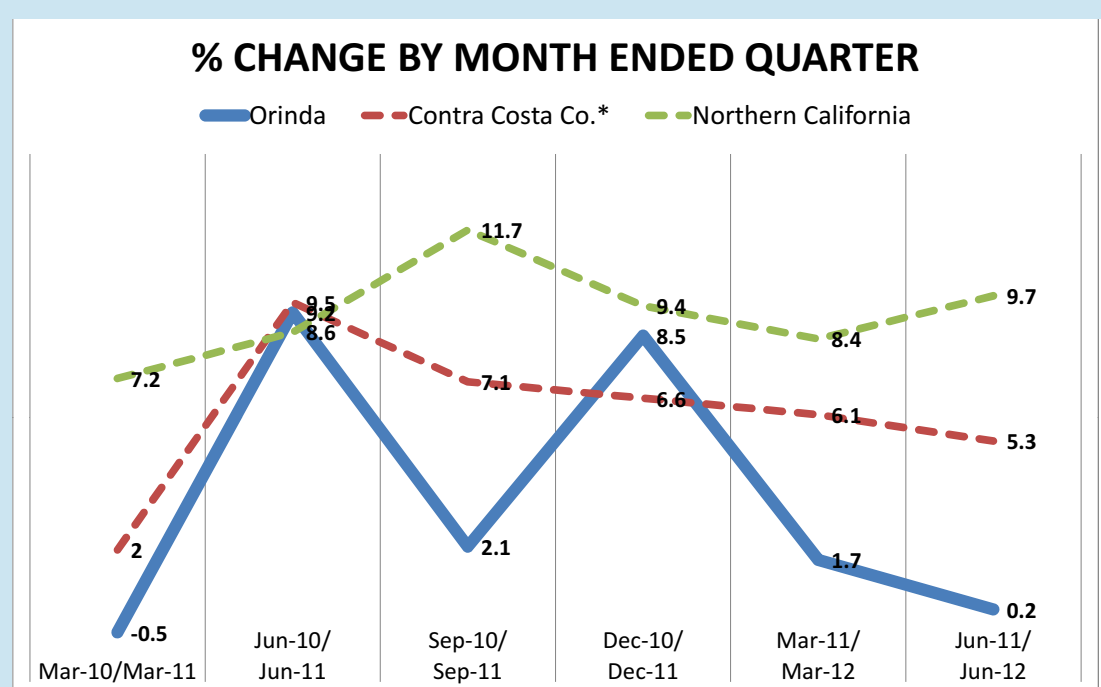
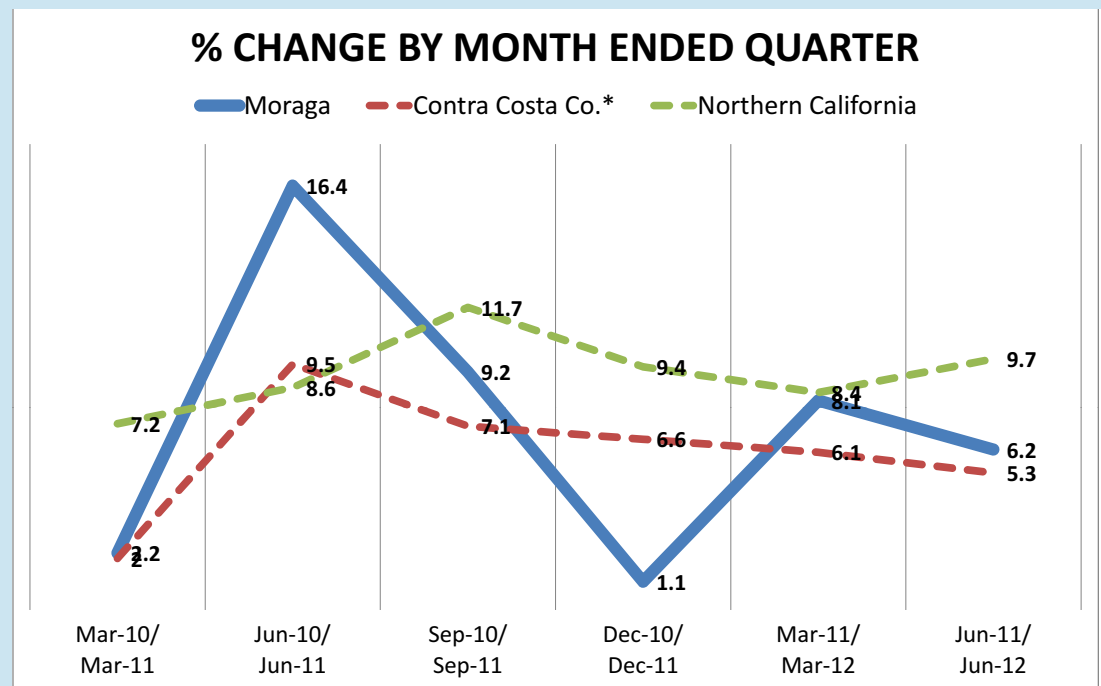
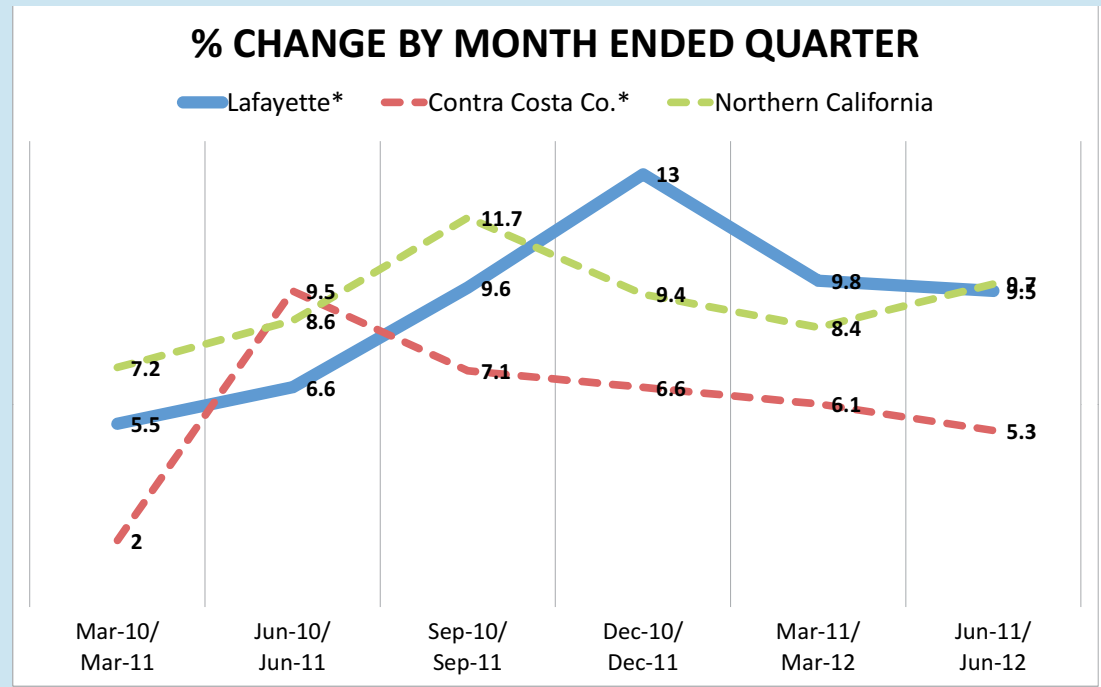
For more information about The Ultimate Sparkle, you can visit TheUltimateSparkle.com. For more information about Mighty Fine Guitars, contact Stevie@mightyfineguitars.com.

*Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.*

## Sales Tax Increases in Lamorinda

Even with a sizable portion of the downtown sidewalks ripped up, Lafayette recorded substantial increase in sales tax figures from prior reporting periods, according to Muni Services, LLC. Tax amounts reported for the three Lamorinda municipalities are noted in the charts below; the blue lines indicate which town, red dashed lines represent Contra Costa County sales tax and the green dashed lines represent Northern California's sales tax. Comparing the last four quarters ending in June of 2011 with the following four quarters ending in June of 2012 - Lafayette showed a 10.4% increase, more than Orinda (3%) and Moraga (6.2%) combined. C. Tyson.

FISCAL YEAR TO DATE			
	Jul-11 thru Jun-12	\$ Chg	% Chg
Lafayette	\$2,556,597	\$241,684	10.4%
Moraga	\$983,298	\$57,565	6.2%
Orinda	\$906,403	\$26,450	3.0%
Contra Costa County	\$127,403,980	\$7,538,049	6.3%
Northern California	\$2,266,348,329	\$201,651,737	9.8%



Source: MuniFinancial

## business briefs

**Floral Arts in Lafayette Has New Owner**  
3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette (next to Douglah Design)  
www.floralartsflorist.com, (925) 284-5765

The floral store was established in Lafayette more than 40 years ago and was managed by Sally Houston, the same owner, for 40 years. After a second person owned the store for a short while, Neşe (pronounce Neshe) and Ed Ganch, a young couple from Walnut Creek, purchased the store and hope to stay as long as Houston. "I moved from Turkey years ago where I helped manage a linen family business," says Ganch. "I also worked in interior decoration and was looking for a flower business when Floral Arts, a business with a great reputation, became available in this lovely community." Ganch buys her reasonable flowers twice a week in San Francisco and has loved working with the lively and bright colors of the summer. "I am also looking forward to the fall colors to make our arrangements," she adds. About 70 percent of Floral Arts' business comes from fresh flower arrangements. Ganch hopes that customers that choose arrangements on the internet still leave the florist the freedom to use freshly picked flowers. "We will of course accommodate the colors or special flowers people want," she says. Floral Arts can also do large arrangements, such as for weddings. Ganch carries a nice selection of orchids and house plants and plans to expand her business with decorative objects. "In Turkey we produce lovely brass and copper decorative objects," she says. "I will slowly expand the business by adding imports from my country of origin."

**Roger Poynts Moves to Moraga**  
1100 Moraga Way, Suite 208, Moraga  
www.udi-tetrad.com, (925) 210-1541

Poynts & Associates, Civil Engineers & Land Surveyors, just opened their new office in Moraga. "We were in Walnut Creek before in a larger office," says Poynts. "Given the state of our current economy, I decided to downsize and move closer to home. I've lived in Moraga for 25 years and have always commuted somewhere else to work. I will relish the shorter commute." Poynts & Associates specializes in surveying and mapping, community planning and civil engineering.

## News from the three Chambers of Commerce

**Lafayette**  
Save the date for the Annual Art & Wine Festival: Saturday and Sunday, September 15 and 16. Sponsorships available: Contact the Chamber for more information.

**Moraga**  
Chamber BBQ at the Moraga Commons from 6 to 9 p.m. August 28.

**Orinda**  
"Hot August Nights" Networking Mixer from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, August 16 at Oak Spring Pool, 39 Spring Road, Orinda. Free.

Chamber Ribbon Cutting Event for Care Indeed at 4 p.m. Thursday, August 23, 61 Moraga Way #9, Orinda. For information, call Dee Bustos or Amrita Sanyal at (925) 317-3080.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)