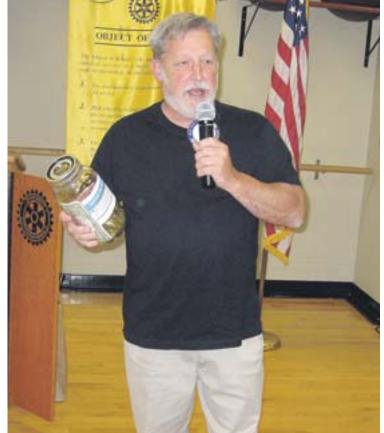
Synergies Harnessed: Lamorinda Presents Pushes to Change States of Mind

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By Sophie Braccini



Jay Lifson displays a jar waiting to receive fireworks donations at a recent Rotary meeting

unteers from Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda are working together across borders for the success of all Lamorinda events and for the pleasure of all residents.

The group calls itself Lamorinda Presents and its first public actions involved raising money for the Moraga fireworks and participating in the Lamorinda Fourth of July Parade in Orinda. The group has also started planning future events that will bring Parks and Recreation Director Jay Inthe three communities together.

The movement started in Orinda two years ago after Chris Laszcz- three cities Mason jars to collect Davis joined the Orinda Association. money at different businesses for the "I've worked in business internationally for many years, and I've never understood people not working together," she says. "What I found working with the OA was an incredible group of people, not only within Chamber and Moraga Citizens Netthe OA but in all the communities in terms of skills and resources."

lished six months ago, bringing to- in the float competition. A lot of begether Laszcz-Davis, John Fazel of hind the scenes work is also being the Orinda Roadrunners, and Jay Lif- done by people from all three comson, executive director of the munities. Lafayette Chamber of Commerce.

Photo John Sherry or the first time, a group of vol-tiatives of common community interest, events, celebration and value," says Laszcz-Davis. Members of the effort to offer this event at the Moraga group decided to support, both financially and with a physical presence, existing traditional events in Orinda and Moraga. According to Laszcz-Davis, the OA is raising money during the Orinda parade that will be split this year to support both the parade

and the Moraga fireworks. "This is super nice of them," says Moraga gram who also attends meetings. "The Moraga Chamber also gave the fireworks." (See the related story at http://www.lamorindaweeklv.com/arc hive/issue0708/Fireworks-Could-Fizzle-Lacking-Funds.html.)

For the first time the Moraga work will be part of the Orinda parade along with some Lafayette busi-Lamorinda Presents was estab-nesses, and Lifson is one of the judges

Lamorinda Presents is working They had so much fun that they de- with Tiraporn Olsen of Lamorinda cided to invite Moraga's Edy Web to develop a Lamorinda calendar Schwartz to participate. Others from to avoid important events taking place the three cities have since joined the at the same time, and to raise a larger group, including city staff, members awareness of what is going on in the of social groups, and business people. three cities. "What will be the net ef-"We want to support the three fect for all these events?" asks Olsen. communities, and collaborate on ini- "All the events need to be presented

side by side so people will have a choice."

"At the Art and Wine Festival in Lafavette we will have signs that say 'Don't Miss the Orinda Car Show' [which is happening at the same time]," says Lifson. And a sign promoting the festival will be at the car show. "As Tom Stack from Town Hall Theatre's board said, people will go out more if you give them a choice."

Organizing new common events will help to avoid ruffling any local feathers. One of the first ideas was to hold a celebration for the opening of the fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel.

The group reached out to Caltrans, the three town managers and council members got involved, but the politics and timing with Caltrans is still unclear, so the celebration will have to wait a while. "But we decided to organize a Lamorinda-wide family outdoor picnic as our first tricommunity event," says Laszcz-Davis. The group sees this as something similar to the Iowa Picnic in Long Beach, an all-inclusive event that builds community.

Lifson and Ingram are leading the Commons Park, starting at 4 p.m. Thursday August 15, just before the Zebop Latin rock concert. "We will have old-fashion park games for all ages. Just an excuse for the three communities to have a relaxing time together," says Ingram.

The scope of Lamorinda Presents is not yet defined; it could encompass tri-community endeavors or fundraising events. "We have no logo, no mission statement," says Laszcz-Davis. "We are a diverse talent pool who meet once a month, discuss projects and just go and do it."

Mark your calendar for the first Lamorinda Picnic Thursday, Aug. 15 and be on the lookout for more information in the months to come about the celebration for the opening of the Caldecott Tunnel's fourth bore.







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