

# Chop Chop Go and Uwithus – Two New Services for Busy Parents

By Sophie Braccini



Chop Chop Go founder Un Kwon at Whole Foods.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Two local entrepreneurs, and their friends, created online services geared toward making busy parents' lives a bit easier in the Lamorinda area, while creating more time for their own family lives.

Gary Hill, with friend Gregory Edelin, developed Uwithus.com which brings organization, coordination and efficiency to local kids' activity planning; Un Kwon, with the help of chef and high school friend Karen Eddy, launched Chopchopgo.com, a total shopping/meal-planning service for families who want tasty and healthy meals, but who don't always have the energy to plan for a week, create the menus, and do the shopping.

"I have two kids in preschool, live in Orinda and have a full-time job, like my husband, in San Francisco," says Kwon. "We wanted so much to eat healthy, but in the long run, with everything else in our lives, we just could not sustain the planning, shopping and cooking." Eddy is a personal chef with Kwon's same business knack and drive. It was a match made in heaven.

"Karen (Eddy) knows what people want to eat, she knows what's in season and can create menus using recipes that should not take more than a half hour for the novice [cook to prepare]," says Kwon. The user chooses recipes online, indicates the number of people who will eat the

meals, and the site generates a shopping list that is sent directly to Whole Foods; all of the ingredients are delivered to the user's door the next day.

"The shopping list is, of course, 100 percent customizable," says Kwon. "You can remove or add items, and specify whatever you want, such as organic only, a price range, or a brand." Kwon is partnering with Whole Foods, which already offers a personal shopping service for either pick-up or delivery.

"I was the tester of our first round of recipes," says Kwon. "I love the way Karen uses herbs and spices; it makes me feel like a great cook." Kwon is also discovering new products, such as Israeli couscous, that she

had never used before. "I checked my menu for the night and saw that ingredient. I reached into my cupboard and there was a little brown bag marked Israeli couscous, and it was just the amount I needed for my family."

Kwon says that the system eliminates waste, because some ingredients like fresh herbs are combined in different recipes throughout the week, so she gets just the amount she needs for her family, unless she decides otherwise.

The service is currently available online. It costs \$45 a month, plus the cost of food, to have the recipes and ingredients delivered within Lamorinda; it costs \$5 for a recipe alone.

"We plan to expand to other local stores for shopping, and add special dietary items," says Kwon, "it's just a matter of time."

With dinner in the bag, Lamorindans can turn to another online service, Uwithus.com, to help find great activities for their kids and friends. Gary Hill, a busy dad who works for The Motley Fool from his Moraga home, spent hours organizing his 8-year-old son Charlie's recreational life.

"One day I came across a basketball camp organized by the city of Lafayette. My son was interested, but he also wanted to do it with his friends," remembers Hill, "so I emailed about 12 of his friends' parents and after a series of back and forth emails, 10 of them registered for the class." Hill saw that everyone won: the kids were happy playing with their friends; the parents could organize carpools; and the city of Lafayette gained 10 new customers. "So I looked for a more systematic way to do this, a way to be more efficient at sending word-of-mouth referral and plan activities with my son's circle of friends."

Hill and Edelin developed Uwithus.com, a private social media network. "In the way that Pinterest has helped people collect, organize and share the things they love in one place online, Uwithus is focused on helping parents collect, organize and schedule (and keep a history of) their kids' activities, with the added benefit of being able to easily share and coordinate those activities with a select private circle of parents, all within the service," explains Hill. On Uwithus, parents create simple Pinterest-like "activity cards" for all their kids' activities (or find activities in the database), share their cards with their circle, track who's interested in the activities, and see, on their dashboard, what activities their kids' friends are planning to do so they can also join them.

Hill believes that the way for the service to grow is to partner with activity providers. "I started talking with Saint Mary's College's Adam Kennedy who is in charge of the summer camps," he says. "When you sign up your child, SMC can send an email to four of their friends. Our service is the same idea, just multiplied. We provide service providers a link, in the form of our logo, that people can click (as you would 'like' a site on Facebook) and refer that activity to their circle of friends in the form of an invite."

"What I needed was more organization and coordination in the planning of my first son's social life," concludes Hill, "so my wife and I can really just enjoy those years and get involved in their lives."

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

### New Taxi Service in Lamorinda: Taxi Bleu

Orinda  
(925) 849-2222  
www.mytaxibleu.com



Joseph Teman in one of his "Taxi Bleu" Photo Sophie Braccini

Just a few months ago, Joseph Teman started a new Lamorinda taxi service: Taxi Bleu, an Orinda-based company serving Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda and Walnut Creek. "This is a free country and the market is open to competition," says owner Joseph Teman who is partnering with long time friend Normand Plouffe. An Orindan for 22 years, Teman – who is originally from France – has lived in the United States for 24 years. His daughter graduated from Miramonte High School in June. All of his first three cars are hybrids, painted a bright blue (as opposed to the famous Taxis Bleus in Paris that come in all sorts of shapes and colors). Business has been good since he started a few months ago, says Teman, picking up people at BART and driving people to airports or to go about their business. "I also worked in the limousine business," he adds. "I want my drivers and I to offer the same excellent customer service." Teman is in the process of acquiring a minivan to serve large families and is always on the lookout for drivers with an impeccable record who can also provide clients with a friendly experience.

P & L Framing Location Correction  
1005 Oak Hill Rd., Lafayette  
(925) 283-4668



P&L Framing customer Mandy McManus (right) discuss framing with Tiphannie Ortman. Photo Sophie Braccini

In our July 31 business article, "Future Face Lift for Fiesta Lane," we wrote that the businesses in the Fiesta Lane building, off Lafayette Circle – The Storyteller, P & L Framing, and Treasure Trove – had all moved to the Lafayette Plaza, behind McCaulou's and Peet's Coffee. This is not true of P & L Framing, which had moved instead to 1005 Oak Hill Rd., across the street from Millie's

Kitchen, past Uncle Yu's restaurant. "This is our fourth location in 20 years," says Tiphannie Ortman, granddaughter of founder Lila Lomax, who now runs the store with her mother and manager, Sharon Evans. "She had a wonderful eye for things," says Mandy McManus, a returning customer who's been bringing her rare finds and family heirlooms to P & L for framing over the past 20 years. Ortman says that repeat business is one of P & L's strengths, as well as being able to frame anything of any size. "We even did a full size mannequin and a diesel engine," she says.

### Moraga Employees of the Month for June and July



From left: Moraga Rotary President Frank May, Nation's manager Jom Douangnaly, Nation's Executive Vice President Grant Power and Moraga Chamber Vice President Kevin Reneau.

Photos T.C. Andre



From left: Moraga Rotary President Nora Avelar, Vickie Devlin, Wells Fargo manager Catherine Saadeh and Moraga Chamber Vice President Kevin Reneau.

Jom Douangnaly and Vickie Devlin were named Moraga Employee of the Month for June and July, respectively. Douangnaly, the popular store manager of Nation's Hamburgers in the Rheem Shopping Center, began his career at Nation's eight years ago as a shift manager and was promoted to store manager in 2011. Douangnaly is noted for his superior customer service and his wide smile which greets all those who enter the restaurant. "We are blessed to have somebody like Jom in our company," said Nation's Executive Vice President Grant Power. "He's tremendously hard working, reliable as anybody in the company and continually challenges himself to improve and grow. What really sets him apart is his humility and teachability. He's always improving and growing and we're now using him to help train other owners in the area. He's just a great employee."

Devlin, who has been serving Wells Fargo bank customers for

the last 35 years, is a wealth advisor for the bank and also extremely active in the local community. In addition to many volunteer duties, Devlin is a past president of the Moraga Rotary and formerly served as a member of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce board of directors. She is a local product, having graduated from Campolindo High School. "Vickie is truly a local icon and a large part of the face of our company to the public," said Wells Fargo Manager Catherine Saadeh. "She has many loyal customers and is always quick to volunteer for community events. She truly represents Wells Fargo in her community outreach and we're proud that she has won this award."

The Rotary and Chamber awarded Douangnaly a \$50 gift card to Safeway as well as a \$50 gift certificate to CVS Pharmacy July 15; Devlin received a \$50 Safeway gift card and a \$50 gift certificate to Pennini's Restaurant on July 30.

### News from the three Chambers of Commerce

#### Lamorinda Community Picnic Tomorrow!

The three chambers and a number of Lamorinda associations have been cooking up ways for the three communities to collaborate on public events. First up is the Lamorinda Community Picnic beginning at 4 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 15 at the Moraga Commons Park. Bring a picnic or purchase dinner there. Old fashioned picnic games will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by a concert in the park from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. by Zebop! - the "Santana cover band." Free admission.

#### Lafayette

Entrepreneur Club at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 15 in the chamber conference room.

Save the date for the 18th Annual Lafayette Art and Wine Festival, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 21-22.

#### Moraga

Community Barbecue starting at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 27 in the Moraga Commons Park. Open to the entire community, this event is sponsored by Safeway and the chamber. To RSVP call Kathe Nelson, (925) 323-6524.

#### Orinda

The Orinda Chamber joined the Western Association of Chamber Executives This organization exists to guide and promote chambers of commerce in the western United States. The chamber will be accessing guidance from this organization to improve its service to members and enhance internal systems. For more information about W.A.C.E., visit: www.waceonline.com.

Mark your calendars for "September in Orinda," a series of classic local events. The Orinda Classic Car Show Weekend, Sept. 20-22, begins with the pre-show party Sept. 20, the Car show Sept. 21 and the Sunday Movie night on Sept. 22. More info and tickets are available at OrindaCarShow.com. Then on Tuesday, Sept. 24, Orinda will celebrate its restaurant row with the 6th Annual Restaurant Tour.

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