

business briefs



New Arco gas station with car wash on Moraga Road Photo Andy Scheck

Arco Station Opens 425 Moraga Rd., Moraga

After many months of planning and permits, the new Arco gas station and carwash has opened in Moraga. Located at the south-east corner of Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard, the owners followed the Design Review Board recommendation to make the station appealing; they even added a water fountain in the garden in front of the station to improve curb appeal. The station's price signage is a bit smaller than that of its competition since the new owners had to abide by Moraga's most recent signage ordinance while the older stations' larger signs were grandfathered. The car wash will cost between \$6 and \$9, depending on the level of service. When the cars are being washed, doors enclose the vehicle so the operation is completely contained and does not create a noise nuisance for neighbors. The station also offers smog checks. Arco does not accept credit cards – a company business model that, it says, keeps prices low. PayQuick terminals are available for debit cards purchases, which include a 35 cent flat fee, and cash is welcome. Arco also provides pre-paid Arco cards. The community is invited to the Nov. 23 grand opening to enjoy food, music and \$3 carwashes with a minimum purchase of 12 gallons of gas.

Kiwanis Sees Candy Holiday Shop Opening Soon

Moraga Valley Kiwanis will open the 2013 See's Candy Holiday Shop beginning Nov. 22 through Dec. 24 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day in Moraga's Rheem Center (next to Starbucks). Other sales locations will include the Moraga Farmers' Market and CVS in Rheem. All the most popular See's chocolates, peanut brittle, and holiday novelties will be available at the same prices found in See's stores. Sugar-free items will also be offered. See's Candy holiday sales are the major fundraising effort of the Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club. All proceeds are donated to local charities, including Meals on Wheels, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano counties, Lamorinda schools' educational foundations, and many others.

Beall Named Prudential Regional Manager (925) 708-0800

Prudential California Realty announced that Mary Beall, previously the manager of the company's two Walnut Creek offices, has been named regional manager for the brokerage. Beall expands her leadership role gaining reach and authority in overseeing operations throughout the Lamorinda and Walnut Creek market.

DeFoe Named Moraga Employee of the Month for November



From left: Kevin Reneau, vice president of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, Safeway manager Bonita Vigil, Brenda DeFoe, and Moraga Rotary president Nora Avelar. Photo provided

Brenda DeFoe, who has been serving local Safeway customers for 22 years, has been named the Moraga Employee of the Month for November. DeFoe manages the customer service desk at Safeway and assists in several different areas in the local grocery store, including working as a checker when needed, doing price changes and managing the store's donations to local charities. Before coming to Moraga in 2009, DeFoe worked for 16 years at the Orinda Safeway store. The Moraga Rotary and Chamber of Commerce awarded DeFoe with a gift card to Safeway and a gift certificate to Mountain Mike's Pizza in Moraga at the Nov. 19 Moraga Rotary luncheon.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Ribbon Cutting for the new Lafayette Art Gallery at 5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21 at 3420 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite A.

The 35th Annual Community Thanksgiving Breakfast will be held from 7 to 8:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 22 at Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane. The breakfast will be catered by Dave's Cuisine (chef Dave Krider). The scheduled keynote speaker is SemiFreddi's owner Tom Franier. For reservations, visit the chamber website at lafayettechamber.org.

Save the date for "It's a wonderful Life in Lafayette" – a holiday celebration with tree lighting, food, drinks, music and entertainment, children's activities and Santa – from 4 to 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6 at the Lafayette Plaza. The event is sponsored by The Dana Green Team and Branagh Development.

Moraga

The chamber has an office. On Nov. 13 the Town Council approved the use of a small corner office (about 100 square feet) in the La Sala at the Hacienda de las Flores for use by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. After the first of the year the chamber will have office hours on Monday mornings (excluding holidays) from 8 a.m. to noon. After being named executive director, Kathe Nelson will finally have a place to put her computer and set appointments. The space was formerly a storage area for the Moraga Movers and the Hacienda Foundation.

Save for date for the Chamber's Christmas party from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10 at Moraga Royale.

Orinda

The 12th Annual Holiday Party is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 5. As in previous years, the chamber invites its members to gather on the first Thursday each December, which has been deemed by the city of Orinda as Hilton House Day. Everything will be on sale from 5 to 9 p.m. Free gift wrap, refreshments, music – and a lot of fun, too.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact
Sophie Braccini at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

'Tis the Season of Giving



Need Donations this Holiday Season?

During the holiday season, Lamorinda Weekly will accept and publish opportunities for local giving. Please send 100 words or less describing the cause, type of donation needed, and where to bring/send it. The organization collecting the donations, or receiving the donations, should be within our extended community. Submissions must be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com by Nov. 26 for inclusion in our Dec. 4 issue, and by Dec. 12 for inclusion in our Dec. 18 issue.

Community Service

Gold Award Focuses on Water Safety

Submitted by Kathy Biro



Juliana Biro

Photo provided

Alcalanes High School junior and Girl Scout Troop 31017 member Juliana Biro completed her Gold Award project this past May. Her project, "Water Wise: A Water Safety Program," in partnership with Lighthouse Community Charter School in East Oakland and the Downtown Oakland YMCA, provided 75 eighth-grade students instruction and offered activities about nutrition, sun safety and water safety. Students also had the opportunity to learn basic swimming skills. Water safety is a passion for Biro as she nearly drowned as a young child. As part of the Water Wise safety program, Biro organized a swim gear

drive to provide suits, goggles and towels for every participating student. She also led a coffee talk at Lighthouse School for the eighth-grade parents to explain the purpose of her event and the importance of water safety. Caitlin Leverenz, a 2012 bronze Olympic medalist, joined Biro at the Lighthouse Community Charter School to kick off the event by talking to the students about her Olympic experience and what a difference swimming has made in her life. With this project, Biro hopes to break the pattern of children not knowing how to swim because their parents never learned to swim.

Daffodil Planting in Full Swing

Submitted by Dale Walwark



Photo provided

Former Moraga mayors Margaret Depriester and Graig Crossley planted daffodils, along with members of the Kiwanis Club of Moraga (not pictured), Nov. 9 along Moraga Way. "Margaret started the whole daffodil thing years ago and Moraga now looks great every spring," said Dale Walwark. "For the first time, a group from Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church planted a bunch of daffodils recently along Moraga Road north of the skate park. The more the merrier."

Backpack and Art Supply Drive Benefits Refugees

Submitted by Anne Obsitnik



Photo provided

Fourth-grade Junior Girl Scouts from Rheem Elementary School Troop 31525 recently undertook a backpack and art supply drive for 120 refugee families arriving in Oakland from refugee camps outside their home of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Troop 31525 learned that these families were arriving (as part of

a U.S. State Department effort) with nothing but the clothes on their backs after fleeing their country. The troop contacted the International Rescue Commission, the organization responsible for settling the refugee families, to see how they could help. The IRC asked for backpacks and art supplies for the children, who in many cases have been living in tents in countries bordering the DRC for months or even years. They will be attending school for the first time in Oakland. This troop of 19 girls contacted neighbors, friends and family and collected 67 backpacks filled with art supplies and passed them on to the IRC for the Congolese refugees.

Cadette Girl Scouts Organize Camporee

Submitted by Kim Jinnett



Photo provided

Cadette Girl Scouts from Lafayette Troop 30072 organized Camporee Adventureland for Daisies, Brownies and Junior Girl Scouts at Twin Canyon Camp in

a broad range of girl scouts songs, made friendship bracelets and lanyards, decorated bandanas, played trust games and got physically active with parachutes and boomerangs. Before being tucked-in for the night in their tents, campers had a blast around the campfire with skits, songs and a dance party. The next day was filled with a big game of capture the flag and heartfelt goodbyes from campers and parents who attended. The Cadettes considered the opportunity to host the Camporee one of their favorite Girl Scout events of all time. They may even host a Camporee again as Senior Scouts.