

## Contemporary Art in Downtown Lafayette

By Sophie Braccini



Jennifer Perlmutter in her studio.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Jennifer Perlmutter paints. Standing in front of a large 48 inch by 60 inch frame, armed with a big brush, she applies strokes of color on the canvas; it is a very physical process, a dance between her, the thick paint and the image that forms. The process is long, weeks, months; and layer upon layer, the vision that transcends the painter materializes as fine art. Perlmutter invites people to come and see her work. The young Lafayette resident opened an art gallery in February, located at 3620 Mt. Diablo Blvd. – in the back of the gallery is the studio where she paints and teaches.

“When we moved back to northern California, and Lafayette, five years ago, I started working in a studio in Berkeley,” says the artist, “then I realized that my son was growing up in the community, but not me; that was weird.” She left the Berkeley studio and looked for a large enough space to work in Lafayette. When she found the place on Mt. Diablo Boulevard (where the Soccer Post used to be), she knew she’d found her new home. “At first I was just looking for a place to paint, but here I have both, an artist-run gallery and a studio,” says Perlmutter.

The gallery is luminous with white walls and Perlmutter’s large,

feathered out and now I’m craving a lot of brush strokes.” As an artist she wants to push herself and when something becomes too familiar and comfortable, she has to start exploring something else.

Perlmutter also invites other artists to her gallery to display their work for a few weeks. “There is no reason that people should have to go to San Francisco to find quality art,” she says.

She is planning to invite artists around a specific theme. Poetry reading with Amy Glynn and an exhibit of Shelly Hamalian’s photography will be combined in the gallery on April 19. From June 7 to July 19, the gallery will feature painter Carol Aust and sculptor Laura van Duren. “The exhibit will explore home, belonging and our place within it all,” says Perlmutter. “We’ll display figurative oils and interactive installations of sculpture.”

Perlmutter also teaches in her Lafayette studio, mostly individual lessons for now but she may offer group classes in the future. “Most of what I know, I learned through my work,” she says.

Perlmutter studied communication in college, with a specialty in television and film production, and went to work in the film industry in Los Angeles. There she discovered that she had a talent working with her hands and started making props, then furniture. “Maybe it comes from my German ancestry, but I first saw art as something that had to be useful,” she says with a smile. As her confidence developed so did her ability as a painter. “I am very fortunate that there are forces outside of myself that are coming through me to create,” she says, “so I get out of the way so my muse can express itself.” She does not think that she is in control; she might have a vision of where she is going, but has to pay attention to what it is telling to her as she creates.

For more information about events and classes go to [www.jenniferperlmuttergallery.com](http://www.jenniferperlmuttergallery.com).

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abstract, mixed media pieces immediately attract attention. “I owe gratitude to my community because when I told my friends last October that I had rented this place, they all started to come out and help,” she remembers. There was not a day that she came to the studio and did not have help scrubbing the floors, painting the walls, and choosing the lighting system – the biggest investment, but a must in an art gallery. She describes it as “a barn-raising project!” On Feb. 1 she opened the gallery doors and celebrated with a party for everyone.

In the gallery, Perlmutter shows her own work and that of guest artists. Different periods of her maturation as a painter are recognizable. “I’m working in series,” she explains. “A series can be 10 to 12 paintings, and it’s only complete when it evolves into something else.”

On the wall hang very large and much smaller pieces of non-figurative mixed media. Her vision is bold and warm, with a palette of colors that is bright but not shrill. There is also a series of landscapes; smaller, more figurative, but as seen through a dream. A large green and blue painting with brush strokes does not incorporate any collage. “This is a new series I am starting,” she says, “before, everything was softened and

## business briefs

### Passionate About Our Roots: MY Genealogy Services 3752 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 193, Lafayette (510) 381-2975, [www.mygenealogyservices.com](http://www.mygenealogyservices.com)

MY Genealogy Services is a new full-service genealogy company offering family research, document retrieval, and family trees suitable for framing. MY Genealogy Services is collaboration between Karla Henderlong and Madeline Yanov, who have more than 30 years of combined experience in researching family histories. Their geographical area of expertise is Europe, Russia and the United States.

### Lamorinda Massage Envy to Open in Moraga 558 Center Street, Moraga (925) 376-3689

A new franchise of the 12-year-old Massage Envy Spa is getting ready to open its doors in Moraga. The Massage Envy group employs 21,000 licensed massage therapists nationwide—it is the largest network of massage and spa franchises with more than 950 locations. The business model is making massage services more affordable with a membership-based structure. There are about 50 locations in the Bay Area, with the closest in Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill. The opening of the new franchise is set for April in the Rheem Shopping Center.

### Lafayette Resident to Head Kaiser Service Area

Dr. Ken Grullon of Lafayette has been chosen as the new co-physician-in-chief of Kaiser Permanente’s Diablo Service Area. Grullon replaces obstetrician/gynecologist Dr. David Niver who retired last month from Kaiser Permanente after nearly 35 years of service. Grullon will serve alongside surgeon Judy Lively, overseeing a team of more than 800 Kaiser Permanente physicians in central and east Contra Costa County and the tri-valley area of Alameda County.

### Moraga Employee of the Month



From left: Nora Avelar, Rotary president; Chief Bob Priebe; Lieutenant Jeff Price, Moraga Employee of the Month; Kevin Reneau, Chamber of Commerce president.

Photo provided

Lieutenant Jeff Price was named the Moraga Employee of the Month for March, as announced by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Moraga. Price began work with the department in October of 1981 and is scheduled to retire this month after a distinguished career. In addition to patrol duties, Price has trained almost 45 new officers. “Jeff has been instrumental in our effort to keep Moraga safe over the years and he deserves a lot of credit for his fine service,” said Moraga Police Chief Bob Priebe. “His work history has been exemplary in all facets and his retirement will be a huge void for our department.” Price received a gift card to Safeway and a gift certificate to the Golden Palace restaurant at the Moraga Rotary luncheon held March 18.

### News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

Young Professionals Meet-Up from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 26 at the Round-Up Saloon in Lafayette, for 21- to 39-year-old professionals. The Young Professionals group from the Lafayette Chamber promotes professional development, intellectual discussion and fun. Go to [www.meetup.com/Young-Professionals-Group-Lafayette-CA](http://www.meetup.com/Young-Professionals-Group-Lafayette-CA) for more information and to join the group.

Ribbon cutting ceremony for new chamber member, Caroline’s Salon, at 5 p.m. Thursday, March 27, 33 Lafayette Circle in La Fiesta Square.

Chamber mixer at Byron Park from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 9, 1700 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek.

### Moraga

Shred event from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 29, next to 5A Rent A Space. \$5 per banker box benefits local AAUW Tech Trek grant sending middle school girls to tech summer camp.

### Orinda

Orinda Trivia Bee sponsored by the Chamber and the Orinda Rotary Club at 5:30 p.m. Friday, April 25, at the Orinda Masonic Lodge, 9 Altarinda Road, Orinda. Entry fee is \$360 per team, dinner included (up to six people per team). For more information call Candy Kattenburg at (925) 254-3909. To reserve and pay your team entry fee online go to the chamber’s website, [Orindachamber.org](http://Orindachamber.org).

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

## Civic News Moraga

### Traffic Committee No More

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council did a bit of spring cleaning at its March 12 meeting. After closing the café that has been operating temporarily at the Hacienda de las Flores, council members said goodbye to the Traffic and Safety Advisory Committee.

Former TSAC chair John Valentine could not convince the Town Council of the need for this public forum for two main reasons—town staff wanted to see the committee sunset, and Valentine is virtually the only volunteer, with a possible second, for the five seats on the committee. The Town Council also did not support the idea of a pedestrian and bicycle committee proposed by staff.

In his presentation of the topic Edric Kwan, town engineer and public works director, told council mem-

bers that traffic issues brought up by residents could be handled by him and the police chief, and they did not need TSAC anymore.

Robert Priebe, chief of police, said that TSAC was nice to have but that there might be some burnout among volunteers in town. He added that there were fewer requests from residents now than in years past and that there was more and better staff capable of handling the issues that are raised.

The Town Council acknowledged the good work of TSAC and particularly the development of the calming guide that will remain the guideline for traffic issues. Councilmember Mike Metcalf believed there was a need for the committee, but he was outvoted 4 to 1 and TSAC was dissolved.

## Moraga’s Citizen of the Year Nominations

Nominations are being accepted for Moraga’s Citizen of the Year. The designated outstanding citizen will be honored with a banquet event on Friday, May 2 at the Soda Center of Saint Mary’s College.

Nominations with detailed information concerning the individual’s community activity may be addressed to Wendy Scheck, associate publisher, Lamorinda Weekly, at P.O. Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94556, or by email to [wendy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:wendy@lamorindaweekly.com).

Sponsors for Moraga’s Citizen of the Year event are Lamorinda Sun, Saint Mary’s College, Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis of Moraga Valley.

## Civic News Orinda

### Out Smarting Criminals with Technology

Orindans now have another weapon in their anti-crime arsenal – Nixle. Orinda’s new police chief, Mark Nagel, recently announced that the Orinda Police Department is joining Lafayette and Moraga in partnering with the breaking news messaging system to enhance public safety across Lamorinda, and strongly encouraged residents to sign up for the “opt-in communication service.”

Explaining that Nixle enables OPD “to instantly notify citizens via text and email of road closures, police activity, wanted subjects, missing persons,” accidents, construction detours, and other events impacting the

safety of Orindans, Nagel added, “This is another way for our department to stay in contact and inform the community of incidents that may require their attention.”

Once a resident opts in, Nixle’s technology uses that resident’s location to send relevant alerts. With customized subscriptions, each user dictates how much information to receive – and by what method: email, online via login to the Nixle website, or by SMS/text message (which will incur standard text messaging charges). Go to <http://local.nixle.com/city/ca/orinda>. *L. Snyder*

## Glazer’s Assembly Campaign Officially Opens



Steve Glazer at the opening event Photo Ohlen Alexander

It’s official. Steve Glazer is actively running for election to the California Assembly. The current vice mayor and two-time former mayor officially opened his campaign headquarters at 23 Orinda Way during a reception March 16. Attendees included elected officials, business leaders and residents from Orinda, Lafayette, Moraga, and beyond. Re-elected to his third Orinda City Council term in 2012, Glazer hopes to replace California Assembly Member Joan Buchanan, who is terming out as the representative for the 16th District covering Lamorinda, Pleasanton, Dublin, Livermore, and portions of the 680-corridor and Walnut Creek. Other candidates in the 2014 race include: Newell Arnerich, Tim Sbranti and Catharine Baker. For more information, visit the California Secretary of State’s website: [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov). *L. Snyder*