

Business

Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe Follows New Trends

By Sophie Braccini



Jennifer Lenfestey in the Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe

Photo Sophie Braccini

It's been just over a year since Jennifer Lenfestey, a former employee, took over the Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe. The store, tucked in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center, could have continued to survive doing business as usual, but Lenfestey has given it new life by focusing on suburban pet trends like supplying chicken and horse feed, delivering hay and organic dog food, stocking cat furniture, and even finding homes for rescue rabbits.

A Camino Pablo Elementary, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate and Campolindo High School grad, Lenfestey is not new to Moraga. She returned to Moraga in 1992 after serving in the Coast Guard, where she was a master helmsman, and surveyed icebergs as part of the Ice Patrol. "This unit dates back to the post-Titanic era," she explains. "It was very interesting to map icebergs and predict their routes." After leaving the Coast Guard, she decided to find a job.

"I did all kinds of odd jobs," she remembers with a smile. "At the time I had a pet corn snake and was looking for live mice to feed it. I looked all over until I opened the door of the Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe." She found out that the store had the supplies she needed and that they were also looking for help. "That was 18 years ago; I have not left since," she says.

Lenfestey says she loves the at-

mosphere of the store, the customers, and the pets. "For me it was a stress-free job," says the business owner who likes a quiet life, "and when Jorge (Quintero) decided to sell the store, I thought that the best way for me to keep my job was to buy the business."

The congenial woman has been thriving as a business owner; she does not count her hours, but never feels overworked. She likes all aspects of being an owner, especially being her own boss and making the decisions she finds appropriate for the shop.

"Over the years the demand from customers has changed," she says. "People do not buy rats anymore, for example, and we've seen a great diversification in what people are looking for." She has seen the demand for specific non-GMO or organic pet food increase, and a growing number of people with suburban farm animals such as chickens ask for feed and accessories.

"The store's new policy is that if people want something we do not have, we will get it for them," says Lenfestey. "And if they want something bulky or in large quantity, we will deliver."

Chloe Gilmore, who's been working at the store for a few years, loves the atmosphere of the place. "It is very nice to work here," she says. "We are continuing to offer the middle school internship at the Canyon School and students in sixth to eighth

grade come and spend time with us learning everything from cleaning cages to ordering products or holding the register."

Cleanliness is very high on Lenfestey's list. One of the first things she did when she bought the store was to freshen it up, deep clean it, repaint and reorganize. She also called back longtime former manager of the store, Carolyn Green, to help. Green, who is heavily involved with the East Bay Rabbit Rescue, agreed to come back. The rabbits in the store are rescue pets in need of a good home.

"We continue to have guinea pigs that are wonderful as a first pets," says Lenfestey. "We also have aquarium and pond fish, aquarium plants and equipment, cat furniture (towers and scratching post), specialty litter, and all kinds of pet-related accessories."

When Moraga passed the 1 percent sales tax, a local TV station visited Lenfestey, asking if the new tax would hurt her business. Fortunately, she says it didn't and 2014 was a good year. "People who haven't been here in a while should come in and check it out," she adds. "We'll do everything we can to make them and their pets happy."

Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe
388 Park St., Moraga
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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

An App Helps Track Local Classes – TownCircle

TownCircle.us, ma.qianfan@gmail.com

Busy Moraga dad Melvin Ma was getting increasingly stressed when trying to keep track of the ever-changing recreation agenda of his 6- and 9-year-old boys. A professional app developer, Ma met with the Lafayette Parks and Recreation leadership and designed TownCircle. Through a quick scan of the Lafayette TownCircle barcode, the Lafayette Recreation's Winter Guide is available on the TownCircle app. Parents can then add their children's classes to their calendar with a simple click. "You'll never lose track of when a class starts or ends," says Ma who's happy to have simplified his life. To get started, Ma says simply download TownCircle mobile app from the App Store (Android version coming soon) and scan the Lafayette Recreation's TownCircle code. The entire Lafayette Recreation's Winter Guide will be stored on your smartphone. Pick the classes that you are interested in and add them to the smartphone's calendar. Ma plans to expand the availability of TownCircle to other municipalities.



New Living Lean Tennis Program

2 Orinda Theatre Square #140, Orinda

(925) 360-7051, www.livingleanprogram.com

Living Lean wants to be known as a company that helps clients become fit for life through personal training, nutrition programs and group classes. In addition to their currently offered spin classes, circuit training, TRX, abs and yoga classes, they are now offering tennis classes. In partnership with Lafayette Tennis Club, Living Lean will offer free beginner tennis clinics Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. and private lessons with World Class Pros at a discount. Clients will have the option to play on tennis teams appropriate for their level as well. Living Lean owner Sheena Lakhota feels that tennis will offer her clients another type of workout to complement the workouts they already do. She believes that tennis offers a fun, different, challenging, circuit type workout that, in combination with the other classes, will effectively help her clients to get to the next fitness level. "I recently added tennis into my weekly workout routine and have noticed my fitness level has dramatically improved," says Lakhota.

Beaubelle Group

An exceptional real estate team – all from Lamorinda

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

Orinda, 2 Theatre Square, Suite 211

(925) 254-1212, Glenn@TheBeaubelleGroup.com

In an industry that has seen real estate agents come and go with the rise and fall of the economy and the housing market, The Beaubelle Group, a real estate team at Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage's Orinda office, is a bit of an anomaly. Founded by Glenn Beaubelle, a Lamorinda native with 38 years experience in the local housing market. Beaubelle and his associates have sold well over \$1 billion in local real estate and have consistently ranked in the top 1 percent internationally for Coldwell Banker. The entire Beaubelle Group team hails from Lamorinda, including: Beaubelle's wife, Kellie Beaubelle, a 20-year real estate veteran and designer; Finola Fellner, a former local teacher who is the group's top producer with deep ties to the community; Nancy Stryker, a consistent top agent who has lived in Lafayette for nearly 40 years; Lynn Molloy, who has a strong background in customer service from her former retail management experience; and Cory Cook, the team's very capable real estate transaction coordinator. "We all have kids that are going through the local schools or have gone through the schools," Beaubelle said. "We're all involved in our local towns in so many ways, and really care about this area and are proud to call it home."



The Beaubelle Team from left Lynn Molloy, Finola Fellner, Glenn Beaubelle, Kellie Beaubelle, Nancy Stryker

Photo provided

Moraga Employee of the Month, Aaron Bates



Stephen Healy with Employee of the Month Aaron Bates, Kevin Reneau, Debbie Roessler and MOFD fire personnel.

Photo provided

Aaron Bates, a dedicated public servant who works as a firefighter and paramedic for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, was named the Moraga Employee of the Month for December. Bates has served the local fire district for the past four years, first as a reserve firefighter beginning in 2009 and eventually as a full-time employee in 2013. In addition to fire suppression duties, Bates also provides advanced life support as an EMT. "Aaron's skill as a paramedic is only matched by his compassion of others and the community he serves," said Fire Chief Stephen Healy. "Despite his skills and accomplishments, Aaron has remained humble and kind. He is calm and mature beyond his years." The Moraga Rotary and Chamber of Commerce will present Bates with his award and gifts at the Moraga Rotary luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

News from the Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Ribbon Cutting at Advanced Weight Loss and Wellness at 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 22 at 959 Mt. View Drive.

Coffee with the Mayor at 8 a.m. Friday, Jan. 23 in the chamber conference room.

Lamorinda Home Expo '15 begins at 10 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 25 in the Veterans Memorial Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Ribbon Cutting at Bay Sotheby's International Realty at 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29 at 3725 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Moraga

Save the date for the dinner honoring the 2015 Businessperson of the Year Diane Wilson, executive director of Moraga Royale, Tuesday, Feb. 24.

Orinda

Ambassador Breakfast at 8 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 20 at Shelbys for the ambassadors and those interested in becoming ambassadors. RSVP at TRomanceck@yahoo.com by Jan. 16.

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