

## **Marin Ace Hardware**

Owned by Jeff and Michelle Leopold

180 Merrydale Road, San Rafael CA 94903

[www.MarinAce.com](http://www.MarinAce.com) or [www.MarinAceHardware.com](http://www.MarinAceHardware.com)

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### **Introduction**

Our plan is to occupy the building at 180 Merrydale Road (formerly 3725 Redwood Highway) ourselves and operate a unsurpassed hardware store experience, Marin Ace Hardware in San Rafael. There has been a huge need for a family run hardware store in this market area, since there are no other hardware stores from this location north to Novato, nearly 9 miles away. The need is even greater now after the 2010 departure of the (run-down and poorly stocked) Pacific Lumber across 101. There are many large companies, including Autodesk and the Marin Civic Center, just a few blocks away, and we are confident that the local companies, contractors, and consumers all will welcome Marin Ace to the community and will be happy to shop locally with local owners and well-trained, service-oriented employees. We have built our success at our existing store in San Francisco on outstanding customer service, and of course this will be our focus in Marin as well. We will also embrace and support the local community in and around San Rafael as we do in San Francisco.

At Marin Ace, we plan to create an environment that is inviting to customers. We want it to be a destination that not only looks good but feels good. The improvements we plan to make will not only bring customers to our store, but also add value to the property and the surrounding properties. We will make a beautiful grand new entrance on the Merrydale side using warm wood and stone. And once they arrive at the store, they will receive outstanding customer service, and will be able to shop an enticing variety of competitively priced items for all their hardware and houseware needs.

## About the Owners

Born in San Francisco, JEFF LEOPOLD is a graduate of Mills High School in Burlingame and is a UCLA Bruin alum. After graduation in 1988, Jeff followed in his father's large footsteps by joining the management team of Standard 5 & 10 in Laurel Village. He married fellow Bruin Michelle Saeveke in 1995, who quickly began lending her marketing talents to the family business. In addition to running Standard 5&10 Ace in San Francisco, Jeff is a charter officer of the San Francisco Locally Owned Merchants Association (SFLOMA), and past president of the Laurel Village Merchants Association. In his spare time, Jeff is often playing, hiking or biking with his sons Trevor and Parker and dog Kirby, (and assorted frogs, fish, guinea pigs, crickets, and other creatures in the Leopold zoo.) Jeff is currently serving on the Kentfield Schools Foundation Board, and has been an active Den Leader and adventurer with his two sons' Cub Scout Dens. Jeff enjoys playing the stock market, drinking martinis or microbrews, and going fishing.

MICHELLE LEOPOLD was born in Alameda, graduated from San Ramon Valley High School in Danville, and is also a UCLA alum. Michelle has worked in varied marketing capacities, starting at Grey Advertising after college, then at The St. Francis Hotel for 9 years. She has lent her marketing, leadership, and organizational talents to numerous organizations, including Bay Area Bruins, the San Francisco Historical Society, the Ross Valley Mothers Club, Kentfield Schools PTA, the Kentfield Schools Foundation Board, and Rodef Sholom Tzedek Circles steering committee. She loves to garden with her kids, and helped implement the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Gardens program at Bacich Elementary. Michelle is responsible for the marketing and charitable contributions at Standard 5&10 Ace, and will do the same outreach for Marin Ace in San Rafael, (with the home field advantage.) In her free time, Michelle loves going to the movies, reading, and baking.

Jeff and Michelle are both proud to be native Northern Californians, life members of the UCLA Alumni Association, and former officers of the UCLA Bay Area Bruins Alumni Club, where they met. They love to ski and travel; the family escapes to Tahoe Donner whenever they can.

The Leopolds live in Greenbrae, and have two boys, Trevor, starting 5<sup>th</sup> Grade at Kent Intermediate in the fall, and Parker, entering 4<sup>th</sup> Grade at Bacich Elementary in August. They have a zoo-full of animals: Kirby, a black lab mutt, guinea pigs Two Face and Brownie, and pet rats Twooie and Gizmo. They are members of Rodef Sholom in San Rafael, and are active participants in the temple's many charitable efforts. The family loves to cook, grill, and entertain together – Parker, Trevor and Michelle are famous for their Orange Chocolate Chip Cookies, and Jeff makes a tasty ceviche.

**Sister Store:****Standard 5&10 Ace – “Your one-stop variety store” - since 1939**

The Leopolds are the owners of Standard 5&10 Ace in SF’s Laurel Village Shopping Center, and are responsible for the day-to-day operations of this 72-year establishment. Standard 5&10 remains a variety store to this day (although we joke that everything’s \$5 or \$10 now instead of a nickel or dime), and has been affiliated with the Ace Hardware co-op for over 40 years.

Standard Stores at one time had several variety stores in San Francisco and one in Tiburon. The California Street store is the only Standard Store remaining today, but the five-and-dime is alive and well in Laurel Village. The store boasts a loyal customer base, many of whom shopped at the 5 & 10 as children, and now bring their own children to the store. The store’s employees are the key to the 72 years of successful customer satisfaction; most have been with the 5 & 10 for over 5 years, several for over 15. The store remains family-owned and operated this day, starting with the Kapstein family 70 years ago, and now with the Leopold family who own and operate the store 362 days a year.

The Leopolds have a wealth of retail experience from operating Standard 5&10 Ace that will surely benefit Marin Ace Hardware in San Rafael. The Leopolds will continue to operate Standard 5&10 Ace in San Francisco while operating Marin Ace Hardware, with the assistance of their outstanding management and sales team.

**About Ace Hardware:**

Each Ace store is independently owned and operated by local entrepreneurs – hard-working, passionate business owners who are involved with and often reside in the communities where their stores are.

Ace stores offer a wide variety of hardware and fix-and-replace type products, as well as niche items and services relevant to your community. And every Ace store offers our famous, friendly, expert advice and service that sets Ace stores apart from all the rest.

Founded in 1924 by a small group of Chicago hardware store owners, Ace changed the retail landscape by allowing individual stores to purchase merchandise in bulk to save money and buy at the lowest possible price. This partnership enabled even the smaller stores to compete effectively at retail despite larger stores in their market.

Marin Ace Hardware looks forward to benefiting from the brand recognition of Ace, and will provide the outstanding selection, value, quality, and customer service found at every one of the varied 4,400 Ace Stores in America.

### **Planned Benefits to the City of San Rafael**

Creation of new jobs: Marin Ace Hardware plans to employ 12 full-time employees.

Positive work environment: Marin Ace Hardware will provide a living wage/salary commensurate with sales experience. Employees will have full health benefits and 401k.

Sales tax revenue to the City: with \$1,800,000 of projected annual sales, San Rafael will receive an estimated \$9,000 annual revenue to the city from the .5% sales tax

Cleaning up an eyesore: The former Sizzler building at 3725 Redwood Highway has been vacant for two years and is in need of updating

Benefits to nearby retailers and restaurants: the increased traffic to the neighborhood by Marin Ace Hardware's new customers will surely benefit the many establishments near the store.

### **Additional Benefits to the City of San Rafael Because Marin Ace Hardware is a Locally Owned Business:**

- As research has proven, locally-owned businesses reinvest in the local economy at a 60% higher rate than chain and internet retailers. The owners of Marin Ace Hardware live, shop, eat, and pay taxes in Marin County, not in Arkansas.
- Marin Ace Hardware will support other local business professionals and retailers -- attorneys, bookkeepers, accountants, architects, web designers, printers, and restaurants, to name a few -- that chain and internet retailers don't. This helps grow other local businesses as well as the city tax base.
- One-of-a-kind businesses are an integral part of San Rafael's and Marin's distinctive character. Even the other Marin members of the Ace Hardware co-op have distinctly different characteristics: Goodman's Building Supply and General Hardware Company in Mill Valley, Jim Corbet's in Larkspur, Fairfax Lumber Company in Fairfax, Rafael Lumber and Jackson's Hardware in San Rafael, and Pini Ace Hardware in Novato vary greatly, compared to the sameness of any big-box store such as Home Depot.
- Customer service is better: Local businesses often hire people with more specific product expertise for better customer service. Marin Ace will pride themselves on outstanding customer service.
- Competition and diversity leads to more choices: A marketplace of tens of thousands of small businesses is the best way to ensure innovation and low prices over the long-term. A multitude of small businesses, each selecting products based not on a national sales plan but on their own interests and the needs of their local customers, guarantees a much broader range of product choices.
- Reduced environmental impact: Locally owned businesses can make more local purchases requiring less transportation and generally set up shop in town or city centers as opposed to developing on the fringe. This generally means contributing less to sprawl, congestion, habitat loss and pollution.
- Public benefits far outweigh public costs: Local businesses in town centers require comparatively little infrastructure investment and make more efficient use of public services as compared to nationally owned stores entering the community.
- Encourages investment in Marin County: A growing body of economic research shows that in an increasingly homogenized world, entrepreneurs and skilled workers are more likely to invest and settle in communities that preserve their one-of-a-kind businesses and distinctive character.
- Non-profits receive greater support: Non-profit organizations receive an average 350% greater support from local business owners than they do from non-locally owned businesses. Marin Ace will be a huge source of support for Marin's many non-profit organizations, just as

our sister store in San Francisco is an active participant in many charitable fundraisers.

### **Contacts**

Owners: Jeff and Michelle Leopold, Greenbrae

J: 415.314.9990, [Leopold@standard5n10.com](mailto:Leopold@standard5n10.com)

M: 415.302.4055, [marketing@standard5n10.com](mailto:marketing@standard5n10.com)

Architects: Pacific Design Group, Larkspur

Ed & Richard: 415.927.9500, [architects@pacificdesigngroup.com](mailto:architects@pacificdesigngroup.com)

Store Manager – Richard Wu

Former Store Supervisor at Standard 5&10 Ace

### **Timeline**

November 23 – Complete hiring of all team members

November 28-December 14 – Training

December 15, 2011 – Soft Opening

February 10-12, 2012 – Grand Opening Celebration