

Art Show to Benefit Open Space Preservation

By Sophie Braccini

On the morning of September 8th, a group of eight artists met on the side of Saint Mary's Road in Moraga. There were oil painters, watercolor painters and photographers, all striving to create an original piece of art encompassing the beautiful view of Bollinger Canyon and the adjacent Saint Mary's College. An additional twenty-two artists will join the group from 10am-5pm on September 30th for the "Preserve Lamorinda Open Space" Art Show on the St. Mary's campus, in the courtyard near the Hearst Gallery. The exhibition is a fundraiser for the non-profit organization that seeks to protect Moraga's undeveloped areas and ridgelines.

About seven years ago, Lamorindans concerned with the environmental impacts of the Palos Colorados Development Project got together to form Preserve Lamorinda Open Space. The group focused on preserving local wild areas and the application of more stringent environmental controls for projects like Palos Colorados. Suzanne Jones, a member of the original steering committee, needed to raise funds for the new organization. Moraga painter Teresa Onoda contacted Jones and told her, "I know exactly what to do." Onoda had been active in the Martinez Carquinez Regional Environmental Education Center (CREEC) and had helped raise money to restore the Carquinez Strait. She knew that motivated and concerned artists can be effective in raising money for worthy causes. Saving open space for Lamorinda was a perfect rallying point for artists concerned with preserving open space for current and future generations. Thus, the idea of an art exhibit was born.

The first art exhibition took place in Campolindo's multi-use room on a rainy day nearly five years ago. "It was quite an ordeal," remembers Onoda, "but my kids, who were students at Campo at the time, engaged their friends to help and they learned how one person can make a difference." Since those early days the art show gained considerable recognition and has moved to the Saint Mary's campus where the number of visitors has increased year after year. "People come for the beautiful paintings, photography, and jewelry that local artists have created through the inspiration of our beautiful surroundings," says Jones, "most know that 40% of the sales go to our non-profit. We use the funds to support the protection of Lamorinda's remaining open space and we use the services of experts such as lawyers, engineers and environmentalists to prepare our recommendations."

Jones and Onoda expect a big turn out at the art show again this year. Works by recognized local artists such as John Finger, Bob Chapla, Silvio Silvestri, Suzanne D'Arcy, Douglas Morgan, Chris Newhard, Onoda and many others will be there. This will be a great opportunity to check out their latest works, acquire interesting pieces of art and contribute to the protection of our local natural beauty. Children are welcome and admission is free. For more information call 925-878-9682.



Left to right, Suzanne D'Arcy (painting); Sophie Braccini and Teresa Onoda talking to Suzanne Jones
Photo William Hinshaw



George Ehrenhalf painting
Photo William Hinshaw



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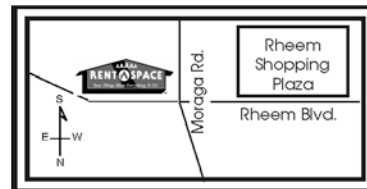


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