

Life in LAMORINDA

SMC's Children's Theater Production—Whose Porridge is too Hot?

By Andrea A. Firth



Michael Cook (left) works with sophmores Michael Matar (center) and Blaine Badasci as they build the set for SMC's stage adaptation of Goldilocks and the Three Bears
Photo Andrea A. Firth

Each January, Saint Mary's College faculty member Michael Cook puts himself and a handful of students on a "theater production treadmill" as they race to build sets and learn lines, songs and choreography for the annual performance of a classic children's fairytale. Part of Saint Mary's January term course offerings—Creating Theater for Young Adults—presents a musical adaptation seen by over 2,700 area children. "It's more like Summer Stock. It's down and dirty," explains Cook. "The students re-

turn from their holiday break and hit the boards running."

Over the past several years, the productions have featured well-read children's fairy tales such as The Princess and the Pea, Cinderella, and Hansel and Gretel. Cook starts the process by taking the two-page fairytale and crafting a 45-minute stage adaptation. His wife, Jeffra, a musician and composer, creates original music for the play that is written for the individual actors. The course is open to any undergraduate student and usually

draws a handful of theater majors along with several students who little or no theater experience.

Cook, who is also the Technical Director of LeFevre Theater, spends half of each school day during the course working with the group of students responsible for building the set and props. Prior to taking the class, many students have no experience using power tools, so Cook makes safety as a priority and leads his crew to the completion of a professional-looking set that he has

designed. The remainder of each day is spent in rehearsals. Rehearsal time is condensed to two weeks versus the eight weeks of practice that theater students are accustomed to for productions done during the regular school year.

Saint Mary's has established a strong relationship with schools in Lamorinda and throughout the East Bay with their Children's Theater performances, and local school groups return year after year for these charming productions. In addition, Theater Coordinator Sharon Cahill works with teachers whose students will attend the shows to extend the learning experience. "We provide the teachers with a list of vocabulary words that the students will hear in the play that may be new to them. Examples might include words such as metaphorically, landlord, or tenants. Teachers can then review the meaning of these words with their students prior to the show."

Almost all of the 10 performances for this year's production—Goldilocks and the Three Bears are sold out. However, you can still catch the show on Thursday, January 31st at 4 pm. Tickets are \$8 per person. Reservations and advance purchase are requested; call 925-631-4670.

Moraga Center Specific Plan: Will The Dream Ever Come True?

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When her turn came to express her thoughts, Joan Bruzzone talked about the history of Moraga and the vision that her husband, the late Russell Bruzzone, had for the town. "Since the original concept was for Moraga to accommodate 60,000 people, my husband planned the shopping

center to handle that anticipated population. At that same time, the original plan was to have access to two freeways going through Moraga, which would account for that scope of thought."

She later reflected on the process itself. "The idea of soliciting architectural designs was

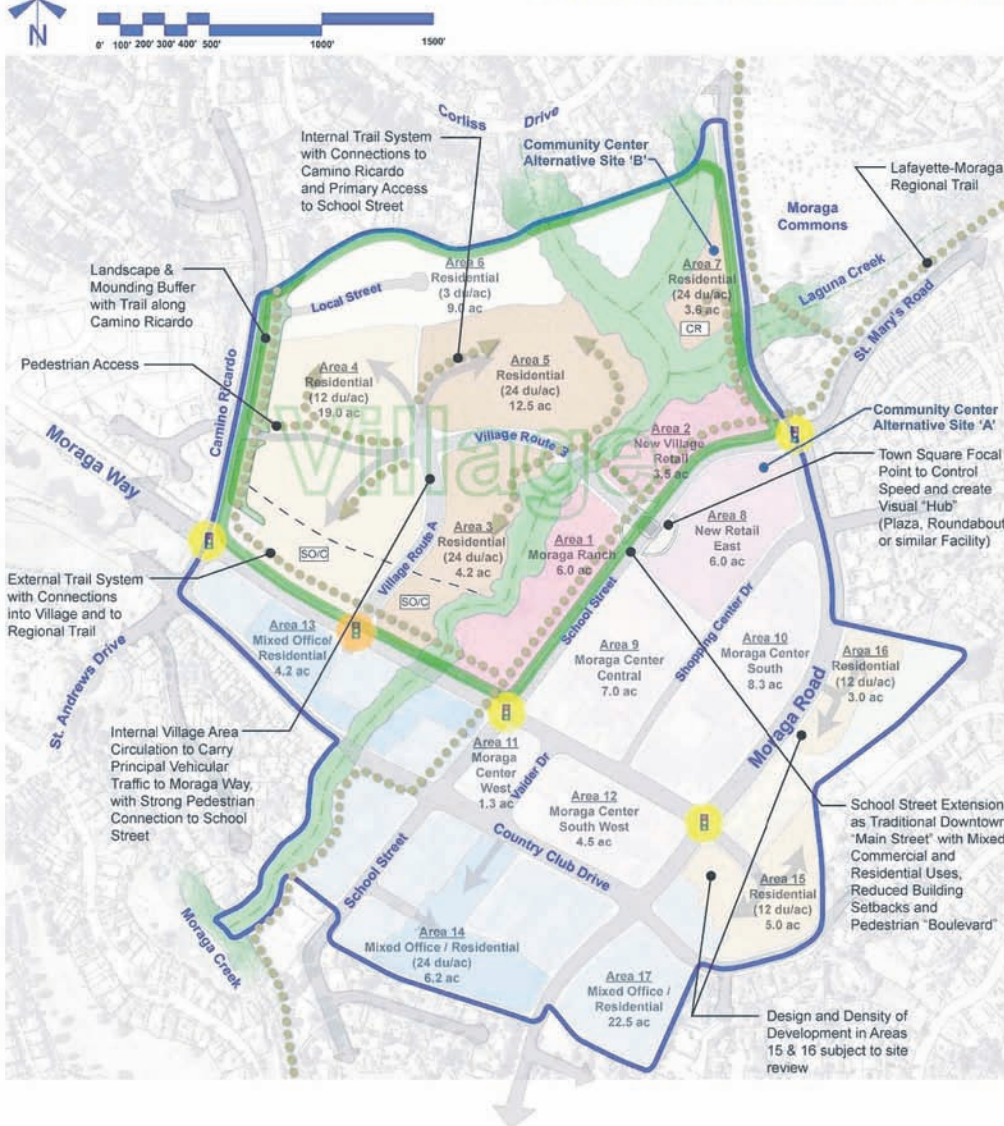
not approved by us, only by the Town," she said, "which I consider a very unique situation. I find it most unusual for the Town to preempt the prerogative of the property owner to make the initial architectural presentation and to solicit the town's participation before that of the property owner. It has always

been my naivete that the property owner still maintained at least a modicum of legal as well as private property privileges, other than to pay real estate and parcel taxes. I would certainly hate to have been mistaken all these years."

On January 23rd, the Council will hear public comments and decide which firm should be awarded a contract to create a visual of what the downtown area could become. Mayor Deschambault has been advocating this approach for months: "In all things, there is a need to move forward and at the same time seek compromise and buy-in from all the stakeholders involved," she says, "if we do not do them all simultaneously than that is when nothing happens. This charette was a new approach and I am optimistic about continuing the discussions. I am excited that we can begin to see visual presentations of what this might look like. I hope the landowners will continue to express their interests, their concerns, and their dreams."

MORAGA CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN

Illustrative Land Use and Circulation Plan (05.30.07)



LEGEND	
	Community Commercial
	Mixed Commercial / Residential (12-24 du/ac)
	Residential (12-24 du/ac)
	Residential (6-12 du/ac)
	Residential (3-6 du/ac)
	Public Facilities
	Open Space
	Suburban Office / Residential
	Trail System
	Village Policy Area
	Modified Signal
	Approximate Signal & Intersection Location
	Creek & Setback
	Residential Base Density with Suburban Office/Commercial Overlay
	Residential Base Density with Commercial Recreation Overlay

Note: Acreages shown for 17 sub-areas reflect usable land area. See Land Use Summary Table for additional details. Specific Plan Land Use Element to provide policy on mixed-use development. Aggregate development totals to be consistent with Table 1. All roadways and improvements approximate in location.

This map is part of the Draft-EIR and can be found online at The Town of Moraga's web site: http://www.moraga.ca.us/moraga_planning_department.php



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