

Another Glorious Treeline Triathlon

By Lee Borrowman, Sophie Braccini, Andrea Firth, and Wendy & Andy Scheck

Race Director Carl Martin ordered up another beautiful day for the 2nd Annual Moraga Treeline Triathlon last Saturday. If there were any hitches at all, they were transparent to most of the participants. This year's Triathlon was a fine example of a tri-community event, drawing athletes from all three cities and surrounding areas. Lafayette City Council members and Orinda city employees competed both individually and in relay teams. Moraga officials were there to cheer everyone on.

At press time complete results were not yet available, but the top three finishers in each age group are listed on page 21. All results are expected to be posted on the Treeline Triathlon website within the week: <http://www.moragatri.com/>. Everyone who crossed the finish line received a medal in recognition of their effort. It was inspiring to see so many "ordinary people" out there challenging themselves, supporting each other and having a great time.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Moraga Women's Club, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School and other local organizations provided the valuable volunteers whose help made the Triathlon possible. CERT Coordinator Gordon Nathan said, "The cooperation between the Moraga Police, Parks and Rec and CERT was wonderful." The Moraga Country Club's (MCC) Frank Melon agreed with the importance of building community, saying, "It is one of MCC's goals to be an active participant in town, and we partnered with Kiwanis and the Town of Moraga to supply product for the event."

The Triathlon was sponsored by Village Associates, Moraga Parks and Recreation Foundation, Silicon Connections, Forward Motion Sports, Sharp Bicycles, Kiwanis International and the Lamorinda Weekly.

Five of us from your friendly neighborhood newspaper were involved in the Triathlon in one way or another; each with a very different perspective:

Sophie Braccini, CERT race course volunteer: 7:00 AM. I shiver in my jacket at the crossing of Camino Pablo, Fairfield and Larch. I was told that cyclists would pass by between 7:30 and 9:30, and was given a yellow jacket and a bright orange flag (almost as eye-catching as our new Lamorinda Weekly orange shirts). I'm there to make sure that cars don't slow down the competitors. I check the surroundings; I'm supposed to be at Fairfield, but the Larch crossing seems more dangerous to me, so that's going to be my main concern. A few minutes shy of 7:30 a meteorite in the shape of a cyclist passes me, the first of many. Anatomic helmet, high profile bike with a solid front wheel, he just zoomed by. The stream grows bigger, and I see a pair of orange shirts cruising along (Andy and Lee); "Go Lamorinda Weekly!" An older lady comes down Fairfield to watch, and passersby stop and cheer. Aside from one isolated incident, drivers are respectful of the racers. 9:15, the last athletes are passing by and I cheer them, they are so brave. As I pack my vest and flag, I feel a twinge of envy; I wish I had been one of them!

Andy Scheck, first-time Triathlete: When the first person jumped into the pool I thought 'it's going to be a long time before it's my turn to start the race,' but suddenly there were just a few people left in front of me. I had fun riding along Moraga Road without having to stop for traffic. As I approached Campo on the return I realized what I had signed up to do: swim, bike and...run! It was nice riding my bike on such a pleasant morning, but now I have to run 5K? At a moment like this, you have to think about how far you've come and not about what you still have to do. The Triathlon Training class that Carl Martin offered on all those cold Saturday mornings, the runs I took together with my wife Wendy - I knew I needed to finish the race because this is what it was all about! I want to say thank

you to Carl for the time he spent preparing a nice group of people for the race. Most of us did not know what we were getting in to, but I saw my classmates today in the water, on the bike or after crossing the finish line, and it felt good to be one of them. I really enjoyed the well-organized race day!

And finally, Relay Team Lamorinda Weekly:

In the world of pro cycling, the last place finisher is awarded the distinction of the title Lanterne Rouge (after the red lantern or tail light on the last car or wagon of a railway train, which signals that no cars have been lost). Cyclists in the Tour de France actually vie for this title, although seemingly a dubious honor, largely because nobody remembers the guy who came in second-to-last. Team Lamorinda Weekly was in the running for this title, seeded 12th out of 14 teams, and would proudly claim it in the knowledge that we spared everyone else from finishing last.

Andrea Firth, the swimmer: Rousing my two 13-year olds out of bed at 6 am on a Saturday to go to the Triathlon (they worked as volunteers) was surprisingly not that painful for them or me.

Having numbers written on my body with black ink, which now six hours later and post shower looks like it may be indelible ink, was pretty cool. It makes you feel like a real athlete when you have the number 163 on your arm and thigh. When the teenager applying the numbers asked to put my age on the back of my calf, and someone else explained that the information was for the paramedics if needed, the numbering felt a little less athletic.

I realize that I had the easy leg as the swimmer in the three-woman relay--10 minutes of swimming versus an hour biking or a half an hour running, plus there are no hills in the pool.

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Left to right: Dan Lorence, Janet Keeter, Dorothy Dickson-Dodds, Beverly Marshall, Michele Olsen, Monica Pacheco, John Cardone

Photo Tod Fierner

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Vice Mayor Don Tatzin, Council member Brandt Andersson, Mayor Mike Anderson

Photo Tod Fierner

Lee Borrowman, the cyclist: They made me wear an orange Lamorinda Weekly shirt. BRIGHT ORANGE! The things I do for this paper. It was hard to be motivated at 5:30am, but once I arrived at the race the air seemed to vibrate with excitement, which was highly contagious. Many athletes were looking very strong in their tri-suits as they discussed strategies and the last race. Orinda City Manager Janet Keeter appeared suspiciously innocent as she said humbly, "I'm going to try to do the whole thing." As people mingled before the start, I heard from many how cool it is to pass someone younger than you. When Andrea hit the water, I moved to my spot at the bike rack (where I caught my last glimpse of Lafayette Mayor Mike Anderson, who may have arrived home before Team LW even crossed the finish line). Andrea trotted up; it was a smooth transition. I settled into what my trusty computer told me was a pretty good pace; that lasted until the first uphill and I never really got it back. I think I managed to pass a little kid out for a joy ride and a gentleman at least two age groups older than me. I arrived back at the bike rack a bit later than I had hoped and passed the official Relay Bracelet to Wendy, who was off and running before I could say "Break a leg!" Congratulations to all of Lamorinda's amateur triathletes out there – you rock!

Wendy Scheck, the runner: It was wonderful to see so many friends and neighbors at the Triathlon. There were at least five of us participating from little old Birchwood Drive alone. It was low key but seemed fairly well organized; the 300 or so participants flowed through the event with no hassles. I have been to similar events before when everything seemed much more compact, with everyone on top of each other. I think staggering the swim start helped create a relaxed flow that remained throughout the event. The weather was perfect. I might be inspired to try the whole thing next year if I can find time to train a bit.



Finished Andy Scheck

Photo Tod Fierner