

Moraga Shows Off at Contra Costa County Mayors' Conference

By Sophie Braccini



Great evening for all (top down, left to right): Rhonda Basore, Dave Trotter, Darlene Colaso, Jay Ingram, Lynda Deschambault, Ken Chew, Jill Mercurio, Lilinoe Kekoa
Photo Sophie Braccini

In many parts of the world, May 1st is a day to rest and protest, as in much of Europe and South America, or to reflect on the Chicago strikes of 1886 to obtain an 8-hour work day, but in Moraga, May 1st was a day to show off the beautiful Hacienda de las Flores, where Contra Costa County's nineteen mayors gathered. The mayors have met monthly since the mid 1950s to exchange information and ideas.

Moraga Mayor Lynda Deschambault had titled this month's meeting "Gowns, Gowns and Grounds," to highlight three elements of the community: the wedding gowns that can be seen at the Hacienda, the graduation gowns of Saint Mary's College and the beautiful grounds of the Town, now free of pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

The meeting took place in the pavilion of the Hacienda. The U-shape meeting table was set in the elegant courtyard of the neo-classic building that used to be the pool house of the Donald Rheem mansion. Assemblyman Mark DeSaulnier (D)

from the 11th District was the guest speaker. His talk revolved around issues arising from the California budget crisis.

DeSaulnier explained that as of today the State faces a budget shortfall of \$20 billion. "The way Democrats want to solve the problem is by making \$10 billion worth of cuts, while supplementing revenue by the same amount; not with new taxes, but by eliminating loopholes and restoring some tax rates to the levels of the Wilson administration." The assemblyman cited the examples of the "yacht" exemption and a proposal to change the dependent deduction.

County Supervisor Gayle Uilkema acknowledged the impact of the State budget on her constituency and showed particular concerns for Medicare and senior services.

As night closed in, mosquitoes started to become more assertive in their own quest for dinner. "The Integrated Pest Management policy has been a priority of our town," said the Mayor, "Public Works does not use pesticides, herbicides or chemical fertilizers on any of the Town's grounds." But the insects were growing more aggressive, and some in attendance might have yearned for the old insecti-

cide spray bottle. "We are close to a creek, and not much can be done," said the Mayor.

The group moved to the Courtyard where tables were set to accommodate more than a hundred guests around the fountain. This attractive setting is one of the elements that makes the Hacienda de las Flores such a favorite spot for weddings. Guests enjoyed a buffet prepared by Terzetto Catering and wine-tasting courtesy of Moraga wine maker Dave Parker. With the help of good food, good wine and patio heaters, conversations were carried on late into the night.