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Moraga Pear Festival: All-Volunteer, All-InclusiveBy *Sophie Braccini*


Pear Festival Sept. 27th
Moraga Commons Park 10 - 4

- Live Music • Great Food • Wine • Beer • Artists Booths
- Pear Treats of all Kinds • Jumpies for the Kids • Crafts

Town of Moraga

This year, had it not been for John Haffner, a venerable and tasty Moraga tradition might not have graced the Moraga Commons. No Pear Festival? Perish the thought! At a meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission the Town, faced by budgetary constraints, raised concerns about the expense. Haffner, who serves on the Commission, offered to chair the event and make sure the Town would not spend more than the budgeted \$2000. With the help of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce and other volunteers, Haffner brings the beloved Pear Festival back to Moraga on Saturday, September 27. Moraga was "Pear Central" in the 19th century when its orchard shipped the Bartletts all over the planet. Of this long gone history survives three events: the pear harvest for the local food bank in August, the pruning of the remaining orchards in December/January, and the Pear Festival, an all-town party where cooks and bakers square off, competing to prepare the most fabulous pear creation, while children bounce around and residents mingle amongst the booths staffed by local organizations. This year being election year, the organizing team decided to open a "Pear Political Pavilion" where the six candidates for Town Council will have the opportunity to meet their constituency. Supporters of the two competing land use measures, J and K, will be present, as well as the "No on Both" group. For residents, this is a perfect opportunity to do some political shopping.

Have you ever experienced a strong earthquake? Don't miss the chance to live through an 8.0 shaker in total safety! CERT, the emergency preparedness group, has rented a "Quake Cottage™", a mobile earthquake simulator, in the hope of encouraging residents to get ready for "The Big One." But the Festival is primarily about families and fun. The younger crowd will leap and swirl on the jumpies set up by the Moraga Women's Society, and a petting zoo brought to town by the Lamorinda 4-H Club will be available for their delight. Local artists will show off their newest creations, more than 20 local organizations and groups will present their achievements, and food will be served from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Besides the traditional hotdogs and hamburgers offered by the Kiwanis and the Lions and the snow cones sold by the Boys Scouts, Terzetto will sell blueberry ricotta blintzes in the morning and chicken curry at lunch time, and live music will fill the air throughout the day.

Christine Pivacek from the Parks and Recreation Foundation will head the pear recipe contest. Adults and children can bring their dishes by 10 a.m. to the judges' tent. The pear-centered recipes can be appetizers, jams, desserts, entrées or soups. Winners will get prizes from Amorama, Terzetto, Chef Chao and the Rheem Theater. A pear-coloring contest will showcase the talents of the younger crowd with prizes from Loard's Ice Cream.

Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram encourages all to come: "There will be something there for everyone, enjoy the 2008 fest!"



John Haffner, Parks & Rec. Commissioner



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