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Traditional Pear Festival In Moraga

By Sophie Braccini

The eleven year old Moraga custom will return on September 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Moraga Commons. The Pear Festival is a natural offspring of Moraga's past agrarian identity as a large pear producer. Not many of the century-old orchards are left standing, but there are enough to produce the 15,780 pounds of pears that were collected last month by volunteers from the orchards at Joaquin Moraga School and Saint Monica's Catholic Church and donated to the food bank.

At 9:30 a.m., a ceremonial tree will be planted by the Mayor to commemorate Arbor Day. Then starting at 10 a.m., the Festival will offer many fun activities for children, including a "jumpy" field (sponsored by the Moraga Women's Society), 4-H petting zoo, a coloring contest, snow cones and cotton candy. Food will be served around the day by Moraga Valley Kiwanis, Lions Club, Boy Scouts, Terzetto Cuisine, Ristorante Amoroma and Loard's Ice Cream. The Lamorinda WineGrowers Association and Parkmon Vineyards will offer wine sampling.

Visitors are encouraged to cook with pears and submit their creations to the Festival's culinary contest. Those not in the mood for cooking will be able to buy pear pies on the spot.

Musical entertainment will be offered during the day, including the "Supersonics" from Campolindo High School, finalists from the Orinda Idol competition, the Willow Springs Church Rock Band and Spookie Flowers. The Desert Moon Band will perform from 1-4, thanks to a donation from the Moraga Park Foundation. Many artists and community groups will have a booth to display their creativity and/or activities.

For more information contact Festival Chair John Haffner, (925) 330-9930, johnhaffner@comcast.net.

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