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Fall Fun in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



Trent, Madison and Kim Watkins of Moraga enjoyed the Pacific Coast Band during the Pear Festival beneath the shade of an umbrella. Photo Lee Borrowman

the lawn.

2010 being an election year, you may have noticed the "Pear Political Pavilion," a recent tradition in Moraga. Incumbent Council member Dave Trotter had a table where supporters were handing out an informational flyer while the council member mingled with the crowd. Challenger Seth Freeman staffed his booth himself, along with his campaign manager - his son, Matthew. The challenger-duo, Dennis and Eleni Wanken, were expected but did not make it. "We had planned to go, but somebody ran into our security gate last night and we had to stay home waiting for the repair company," said Wanken by phone. The candidate believes that the damage was probably the result of an accident rather malevolence. Mayor Ken Chew opened the Festival and then walked around meeting residents.

Oktoberfest!

The next opportunity for genial family fun in a gorgeous setting will be the annual Moraga Oktoberfest at the Hacienda de las Flores on Sunday, October 10, from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Live music will be provided again this year by Big Lou's Polka Casserole band - the name alone piques the curiosity. Bratwurst and other sausages from Saag's, plus authentic German foods and beverages, will be available for a nominal charge. Activities for children will include inflatables, pumpkin painting, and chalk drawing.

It was the Hacienda Foundation that first envisioned the Moraga Oktoberfest; the Foundation is a volunteer organization that raises money and works for the improvement and beautification of the historic Hacienda. "We invite the Lamorinda community to come enjoy the festivities and to see the recent improvements that have been made to the Hacienda," said Foundation president Claire Roth. "The facility is truly the Crown Jewel of Moraga, and it is wonderful to see it used so happily by the community."

The Hacienda de las Flores is located at 2100 Donald Drive. Free parking will be available in the Rheem Shopping Center on Moraga Road, and a free shuttle will take Oktoberfest visitors between the parking lot and the Hacienda.

As everyone in Moraga knows, the Pear Festival is as much about having a great time in the park as it is about pears. Although the harvest is long past, you can buy pear pies and set your best pear recipe against the competition, but what really counts is the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful Moraga Commons Park, listen to good music, meet old friends, eat good burgers and watch the kids jump themselves silly in the inflatables sponsored by the Moraga Women's Society.

Walking the festival this year, you might have discovered a piece of beautiful local art, or joined the recently incorporated Lamorinda Dogs, Inc., founded to promote off-leash activities in Moraga, or met the candidates for the upcoming Town Council election; while the Pear Prince, Festival chair John Haffner, drove by in his golf cart-like vehicle. It was all good fun under a blazing sun; you could feel the pulse of the community.

Emerging at the Festival was Moraga's next hot crop, wine grapes; the Lamorinda Winegrowers Association poured wine by the glassful, giving people a taste of the local vintage.

Many seemed to enjoy the Pacific Coast Band, composed primarily of Lamorinda residents, which played super hot 80's pop rock while parents listened from their camp chairs and kids danced joyfully on



Lamorinda Dogs Photo Ohlen Alexander

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