

# Moraga to Dedicate Veterans' Memorial

By Sophie Braccini



John Haffner, Tony Knox and Jay Ingram indicate the site of the new Memorial Rock.

Photo Sophie Braccini

On Veterans Day, the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I, the Moraga Town Council will dedicate a Memorial Rock to all the men and women who served our country in the armed forces and were exposed to acts of war. The three-foot high granite boulder, bearing an engraved plaque honoring the seven uniformed services of the United States, was the idea of Moraga veteran John Haffner. The project was completed by Tony Knox, as his Boy Scout Eagle project. The ceremony will be held at the Moraga Commons Park, close to the flag pole, on November 11th

at 11:00 a.m. All residents, veterans and individuals wanting to honor them, are invited to join in.

"Last May, Herb Lederman from the Aklan District (Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda) of Boy Scouts of America asked me why we didn't have a Veterans' Day celebration in Moraga, and I told him that the reason was that we had no special place for it," remembers John Haffner, President of the Military Officers Association of America, Contra Costa County Chapter. "The next morning, at a Kiwanis breakfast, Annette Knox told us that her son Tony was looking for an Eagle Scout project - this was the per-

fect opportunity."


Knox said that one of his motivations to complete the project was to honor the memory of both his grandfathers, who fought in WWII. Supported by Scout Master Jeff Baldwin, the Campolindo High School junior set the ball in motion. He soon discovered that the project required more work than he thought, but everyone was very supportive. "I had never worked with so many adults at once," says the soon-to-be Eagle Scout, "many decisions had to be made and Town's protocol had to be followed."

Jay Ingram, Moraga's Parks and Recreation Director, made sure that the process followed standard procedure. "The project had to meet the current Memorial and Donation Policy as well as the Public Art Donation Policy," said Ingram, "since all the elements were compliant, the project was approved by the Parks and Recreation Committee, before the proclamation that is scheduled for the November 10 Town Council Meeting."

The rock, three feet tall and four feet wide, will be set by the public trail that crosses the Moraga Commons Parks, just west of the parking lot. A brass plaque with an engraving identifying the seven uniformed services of the United States (United States Army, United States Marine Corps, United States Navy, United States Air Force, United

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# Public Outreach to Address Infrastructure Quandary

By Sophie Braccini

At his last regular Town Council meeting, outgoing Town Manager Mike Segrest gave an hour-long presentation advocating a year-long plan to inform, quiz and listen to Moraga residents regarding the town's lack of adequate funding for the maintenance of its infrastructure. The Town Council approved the multi-phase plan that will ultimately determine what revenue enhancement measures should be put on the November 2011 ballot.

During the spring and summer of 2010 the Revenue Enhancement Community Outreach to Neighborhoods Program (RECON) conducted focus groups and an online survey to assess how

much residents know about Town finances. One of the results was that, even if the general perception is that times are hard, the population in its majority does not have a clear grasp of the facts.

"What is the state of the Town's finances-trends, projections, reserves? How do we compare in taxes, expenditures, staffing, salaries, etc., to other similar towns? Is the Town being run as efficiently as possible? What are the Town's unmet needs? Those are some of the questions that the focus group participants asked," said Segrest, "and they want to know the answers so they can make informed decisions about the future of the town."

The Manager suggested that a document, which answers all of the questions, be prepared and distributed to the focus group participants; once the text is refined based on focus group feedback, he recommended the town begin an outreach program to Moraga's 17,000 residents, or at least those of voting age.

"We will need volunteers to become involved in that outreach program," added the Town Manager. His proposal to the Council included the creation of a speakers' bureau to train volunteers who will complete the outreach talks in the Town, talking to organized groups, but also knocking on doors and engaging everyone.

Once the outreach program is complete, Segrest believes that the Town should conduct a formal professional survey of residents to determine their preferences regarding projects and service improvements, as well as revenue enhancement options.

"Finally, the Town Council will make a decision regarding which improvement programs should be chosen, and the financing strategy to implement those improvements will be put to the ballot," concluded Segrest. The plan would take a full year to implement. "This is a very ambitious plan, but it is doable," commented Segrest's successor, Jill Keimach, who will take charge on November 1st.

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