



Moraga

Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, April 13, 7:00 pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, April 4, 7:30 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Design Review

Monday, April 11, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Liaison

Friday, April 8, 8:00 am
Fire Station, 1280 Moraga Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



Police Report

Indecent Exposure, 3/23 A 22-year-old Saint Mary's College student was arrested for allegedly exposing himself to two five-year-old children while he was working in the child care center at 24 Hour Fitness. He was booked into the Martinez Detention Facility. Residents with additional information are encouraged to call Lt. Jeff Price at (925) 888-7049.

Full circle karma, 3/21/11 On Monday of last week, this reporter was walking her dog down a quiet residential street when she spotted a visa card in the gutter. Hmmm - rather unusual. After asking neighbors and fellow dog walkers to no avail about ownership, I dropped it off at the police department. On the same day, my son, home from college on spring break lost his wallet. Just a couple of days later, a young man and his dad found the wallet on the street near Campo with cash, drivers license and debit card and came by our house to drop it off. Thanks again, Henry!

Kids with booze, 3/19/11 Cops observed four juveniles running away from the back of the Rheem Center and possibly leaving a bottle of Captain Morgan rum on the ground. The foursome was later found inside of Burger King, where none of the kids admitted that the booze was theirs. However an empty bottle of Malibu Rum and a homemade "bong" was found inside of one of the kid's backpacks. Parents were called and kids were picked up.

D.U.I., 3/17/11 Just after midnight cops pulled over a car for failing to signal when turning onto Rimer Driver from Camino Pablo. The 45-year-old, who clearly should have known better, had an open bottle of beer in his lap. "You caught me drinking one," he said. Surprise, surprise - he showed objective signs of alcohol intoxication. Turns out he had a suspended driver's license for a prior D.U.I.

Teenager scammed, 3/10/11 A 17-year-old reported that he was looking for a used Apple laptop and found a willing seller in the United Kingdom. The young man sent \$500 as requested but the product was never delivered.

Speeding teenager, 3/10/11 It was just before 8:00 a.m. when a 16-year-old was pulled over for speeding on Calle La Mesa. Possibly late for school? She was issued a citation and was offered the option of participating in the Moraga Police Department's Juvenile Diversion Program, Start Smart, in lieu of the citation. Way cheaper insurance with the S.S. option. In addition, she will be contributing several hours to community service.

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Moraga Bans Outdoor Pot Plants

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council recently acted to ban medical marijuana dispensaries in town. While the issue was on the table, Police Chief Robert Priebe suggested adding a related ban. "Marijuana plants when grown outdoors, especially as they mature prior to harvest, often produce a strong, distinctive odor that can be detectable and offensive beyond the border of the property on which it is grown," said the Chief.

A resolution that not only bans dispensaries but also prohibits the outdoor cultivation of marijuana was approved by the Council on March 23.

Since the State passed the Compassionate Use Act of 1996 (which became the Medical Marijuana Program in 2004), individuals that have a Medical Marijuana Identification Card could not be asked by police to pull their home-grown supply. However, the legislation permits local jurisdictions to regulate against additional criminal activities. On that basis, many cities have passed ordinances prohibiting not only marijuana distribution facilities, but also the cul-

tivation of the plant.

"We will not be patrolling looking for violations," said Priebe. "If we come across a violation during the normal course of business, or if we receive a complaint, we will act."

During its pre-examination of the ordinance the Planning Commission raised concerns about the indoor cultivation of marijuana, suggesting that could have adverse impacts on neighboring properties in the same way as outdoor cultivation - especially related to vented release of odors and possible criminal activity. Priebe did not support that position. "My comments on the marijuana ordinance dealt with my reluctance to get into a situation where the Town has to inspect and monitor residential ventilation systems," said the Chief, "That is actually a code enforcement issue, not a police issue."

In addition, the Planning Commission expressed concern about the exclusion of criminal penalties as an enforcement option. That option was examined by the Council as well, but the Town Attorney did not recom-

mend that path because other cities that passed such terms have been challenged in court for consistency with the two State laws on medical marijuana. However, Moraga's ordinance does include a provision that allows the Town to recover the cost of enforcing the ordinance, including but not limited to staff time and expenses.

The Council voted unanimously in favor of the ordinance, although Council Member Howard Harpham noted, "It grieves me that we can't protect our children," he said, "with great misgiving I'm going to reluctantly say yes, and I am outraged at the complicity of the medical profession in this issue."

Moraga Police on the Cheap

Moraga Police Chief Robert Priebe recently announced that the Moraga Police Department is #1 in Contra Costa County as far as cost per capita is concerned. In Moraga, residents pay \$122.61 per person for their police services; the cost is \$164 in Clayton, \$223 in Orinda and \$416 in Kensington, among others. "What people do not get as a result of our budget are specialty items like a K-9 officer, a dedicated traffic officer, or a school resource officer," said the Chief, "Also, because our staffing is minimal, we can't always provide a dedicated detective position. We make our equipment last longer than most agencies and are always aware of costs and looking for efficiencies. We are still providing the services we always have, but cutbacks have required that our management staff, me and the lieutenant, have to do work previously handled by civilians in addition to our regular duties." Priebe believes that the main reason why his department's cost per capita is the lowest in the county is the very low retirement and benefits cost as compared to the other agencies. "That, along with our willingness to share responsibilities and an unorthodox approach to police management allows us to maintain full services at a lower cost," he concluded.

S.Braccini

Hacienda Foundation Receives Champion of the Community Award

By Sophie Braccini



Jay Ingram, Hacienda Foundation VP Sharon Metcalf, President Claire Roth, and past president Judy Dinkle in the recently renovated Ladies' Lounge at the Hacienda de las Flores. Photo Sophie Braccini

Claire Roth was caught completely off-guard when she was told she was going to Sacramento on March 11 to receive the Champion of the Community Award on behalf of the Hacienda Foundation. Roth, the Foundation's president, was not aware that Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram nominated the Foundation to the California Park & Recreation Society (CPRS). As for Ingram, he thought that the Moraga non-profit would compete with parties coming from same-size jurisdictions, and he was pleasantly surprised to hear the Foundation won one of only 10 awards given in the state regardless of size.

Founded in 1946, CPRS is a non-profit, professional and public interest organization with more than 4,000 members. The Champion of the Community Award goes to an individual, agency, community organization, foundation, business or educational institution chosen based upon their significant efforts to influence and improve the quality of their community through parks, recreation and community services. "The Hacienda Foundation of Moraga brought com-

munity-wide events back to the Hacienda, truly creating community," said Ingram, "To observe a small board of dedicated individuals that do so much for the community has been a true joy." Ingram said that in 20 years in the profession he has never seen such a dedicated and creative group.

The Hacienda Foundation was created in 2006, but saw its operations really take off in 2009. Its mission is to "Enhance, Protect and Preserve the Hacienda de las Flores." Ingram believes the Foundation has made a real difference in the town's perception of the Hacienda. "The building was always considered the jewel of the community," he says, "but it was too much of a 'hidden jewel.' Many residents didn't know it existed, or where it was, and they never came here."

Ingram recalls that at the last Breakfast with Santa, organized by Parks and Rec, he heard a father enticing his kids out of the car on the cold winter morning, "You know this place," said the father, "it's where we come for Cinco de Mayo and Oktoberfest." Right then, Ingram knew that the Foundation was fulfilling its mission and making the Hacienda a real community center.

To support the yearly events that attract hundreds to the grounds of the Hacienda and have become Lamorinda traditions, the Foundation mustered hundreds of volunteers. The 12-member Board also took charge of major renovations to the public property.

Using labor provided by the Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club, the Foundation renovated most of the lower level of the community center, including the Dance Room, Fireside Room, and Ladies Lounge (where brides prepare for their special day.)

As the Foundation starts preparing for the next Cinco de Mayo, new renovation projects are getting underway to the unisex bathroom, the floors throughout the ground floor, and La Sala.

Other improvements are needed for the facility - some of them are of very large scale, such as a drainage upgrade to the grounds around the Pavilion which is needed to fully develop the potential of that elegant building. The area that once served as the Town's corporation yard has been vacated; it offers direct access to Moraga Road and will be fitted out as an overflow parking lot.

With so much to do, the Hacienda Foundation is continuously on the lookout for help. For more information, go to haciendafoundation.org.

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