



Moraga

Civic News
Public Meetings
Town Council Wednesday, June 22, 7:00 pm Wednesday, July 13, 7:00 pm Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, 1010 Camino Pablo
Planning Commission Tuesday, July 5, 7:30 pm Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd
Design Review Monday, June 27, 7:00 pm Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd
Liaison Friday, July 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

Scary fellow, 6/16/11 A Paseo Del Rio resident noticed a man walking on the sidewalk pushing a lawnmower, allegedly staring. The subject may have noticed that he was being watched because he left the mower on the lawn and walked away. The concerned woman called police because the vintage fellow hadn't returned to retrieve the lawnmower. Officers were unable to locate the lawnmower owner.

Hit and run, 6/13/11 An unknown woman was driving a tan or gold Honda and caused moderate damage to a parked Ford Explorer on Ascot Drive. Fender bender become hit and run – not much of a good neighbor. Witnesses were unable to provide any further information.

Dude, where's my car? 6/06/11 A Larch Avenue woman reported that she is the owner of a business with employees that use company vehicles. After firing an employee, the boss requested her car back. Disgruntled ex-employee hung onto the car for a couple of days and said he was owed money and going to place a lien on the car until he's paid. When the police got involved, the ex-employee decided he'd return the car asap.

Stolen car found, 6/09/11 Moraga police officers were contacted by the Oakland Police Department about a Buick Century that was stopped for traffic violations. Turns out the vehicle was stolen from a Camino Peral resident. The driver was arrested and the car was returned to its rightful owner.

Checking up, 6/10/11 Police went to check on an elderly Ashbrook Place resident. The 87-year-old woman appeared lost and disoriented while driving in the Orinda area earlier in the day. Someone gave her directions back home, but was concerned to see if she made it. Although she did make it back – she didn't have a driver's license, cops attempted to contact family members with an update.

Pranksters, 6/03/11 Several 13 and 14-year-olds were attempting to mix Mentos candy with soda pop behind Safeway. The kids admitted they were attempting to create a chemical reaction, but denied making an explosive device. They were given a presumably stern talking to on the explosive properties of mixing these ingredients and were later released to a parent.

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New Rheem Theatre Anniversary Celebration

Festivities to be held this Saturday

By Sophie Braccini

The New Rheem Theater will celebrate its first anniversary on June 25th with a party that will include food, celebrities and, of course, movies. The event will crown a full year of endless activities that have marked the renaissance of a theater that, a year ago, was closed with not much hope of ever reopening. The transformation is due to a new business model – a community-supported theater – and the very hard work of the team behind it all. Attendance is up, but renovating a theater is costly; the ongoing support of the community will be the key to success.

When the theater closed in early 2010, who would have guessed that Moraga could become a local cultural and entertainment center? Although many interested organizations rallied to save the theater, no one could come up with a way to salvage and reinvest in a movie theater plagued by old equipment and declining attendance.

Since the theater was reopened by the California Independent Film Festival Association (CAIFFA) the theater has become an integral part of

Moraga's cultural and recreational landscape; quite the makeover for a location that could have become a parking garage.

"The Theatre has done more to bring people together in this community for something positive than anything else," says long-time Moraga resident and Theater supporter Caroline Wood. "People here used to get together only to fight over land issues. Here we have something positive we can all embrace and that has created a whole new cultural environment for the town."

What makes CAIFFA different than previous operators? CAIFFA is a non-profit association, supported by members, which in addition to screening movies also presents events that serve the entire community. Beau Behan and Derek Zemrak have been the increasingly familiar faces of the New Rheem Theatre this past year. "I would like to thank the Moraga community for embracing and welcoming both the California Independent Film Festival and New Rheem Theatre to this wonderful

town," said Zemrak, "A neighborhood theatre needs the support of the community to succeed and grow. So much has happened in one year, including but not limited to a successful 13th California Independent Film Festival, four new 35MM projectors, new seating (sofa, love seats and theater-seating rockers), new paint, new lobby counters and so much more." One of the movies that will be

shown at the anniversary celebration is *The Majestic*, a film about a community coming together to reopen their local movie palace. "Sounds like Moraga and the New Rheem Theatre!" notes Zemrak.

The anniversary event will pull double-duty as a fundraiser for a new sound system and renovations to the elevator.

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New Rheem Theater Supports Fireworks Fundraising Effort

The Moraga Parks and Recreation Department is currently raising funds to offset the cost of the town's 4th of July fireworks; \$23,000 must be found. This year, the New Rheem Theatre is supporting the fundraising effort by showcasing donors on the big screen. "People who send a check to support the fireworks can add a message that will be displayed on the big screen at the theater," says Mary Coe of the Moraga Economic Development Team, "it can be a birthday message, a love note, or a few words of support or congratulations. It will be displayed in a slide show that appears before the movies." To support the fireworks and have your message of ten words or less appear on the big screen, send your check, made payable the Town of Moraga, to: Moraga Parks and Recreation, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, CA 94556.

Rheem Center to Get Specific Zoning

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Economic Action Team figures the Rheem Shopping Center's commercial zoning should be different than that of the Moraga Center – more restrictive, some would say more directed, the Team's proposed new zoning aims at encouraging specific businesses to set up shop in the Rheem Center. The draft retail ordinance will be finalized at an upcoming meeting and then move to the Town Council, which will have to approve the ordinance before the new rules can be applied.

During its June 15 meeting the Team reviewed business types that will be included in the retail ordinance as 'permitted uses.' "We want to create a list of permitted uses for the businesses we want to encourage in the Center," said Economic Develop-

ment Team Renée Zeimer, "this is a way to shape the vision for that center from the ground up and encourage synergies." Potential businesses of the type listed as permitted use can essentially obtain business permits over-the-counter.

Members of the Team wondered if it was lawful to have different commercial zoning in each shopping center. "It is the prerogative of a municipality to define zoning," answered Planning Director Lori Salamack, "and the uses that will not be listed as 'permitted' will not be prohibited, but will be required to comply with 'subject to findings' or 'conditional use' rules." Town Manager Jill Keimach added that it makes sense for the Moraga Center to have more permitted uses since the area belongs

almost entirely to a single property owner who can manage its synergy, while the Rheem Center belongs to multiple owners who do not necessarily share a common retail strategy.

The Team's selection of permitted-use businesses appears to encourage a diversified retail experience at Rheem; one that is conducive to more entertainment opportunities and shopping. Restaurants (including wineries and microbreweries), with the exclusion of drive-thru operations, are on the list; as are grocery stores and food retailers, but not discount grocery stores; general retail stores are permitted, but not single price point retailers such as Dollar Tree (existing business would not fall under a new ordinance). Certain businesses, such as hotels or outside retail sales would be

welcome in town, but the Team decided to require a permit subject to findings, a procedure that will allow the Town to control such elements as the esthetic of the project. Other uses, such as car wash, indoor and outdoor amusement facilities, auto repair, or hardware store would have to satisfy the requirements of a conditional use permit. Only a few business types were listed as prohibited, including fire arms stores and adult video or bookstores.

At its next public meeting, possibly on June 29, the team will also work in sub-groups on the different aspects of economic revival, such as increasing the synergy with Saint Mary's College, or considering a new sign ordinance.

Fun in the Sun at Sun Valley Swim Club!

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