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## Dog Days are Back

*Petition stops suspension of off-leash hours at Rancho Laguna Park*

By Sophie Braccini

Dogs will continue to romp freely, during scheduled hours, at Rancho Laguna Park. A petition bearing 1,800 signatures—roughly 18 percent of Moraga’s registered voters—asking that the park’s off-leash hours not be suspended was delivered to the Town of Moraga June 6.

On May 9 the Moraga Town Council passed an ordinance suspending off-leash hours at Rancho Laguna Park, until and unless a fenced dog area is constructed. The ordinance was set to take effect June 9.

Under the California Election Code section 9235-9247 (www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html), if a petition signed by a minimum of 10 percent of registered voters is filed against an ordinance within 30 days of its approval the ordinance is automatically suspended and the Council must decide whether to repeal the ordinance or put it to a popular vote.

Town Clerk Marty McInturf said that once the signatures were counted by the Town, the application of the ordinance was suspended and signage at the park

indicating off-leash hours would end was immediately removed.

The petition was sent to the County for signature verification June 8. “The County can take up to 30 business days to verify the signatures,” said McInturf.

A group of about 100 volunteers went door-to-door to gather enough signatures to stop the implementation of the ordinance. “It took us less than two weeks to gather enough signatures,” said Tina Briar.

The suspension of the ordinance is another chapter in the multi-year saga of the Town’s attempts to implement the physical separation of dogs from other park users at Rancho Laguna Park. After the signatures have been verified by the County, the Council must reconsider the ordinance. There are only two actions it can take: repeal its own ordinance, leaving off-leash hours in place; or go to the ballot and ask voters to decide the issue.

The deadline for a referendum to be included on the November ballot is in July, so it is unlikely that the question could be posed to Moraga voters before 2013.

## A Community-Built Playground

By Sophie Braccini

The Town of Moraga recently purchased playground equipment to replace the aging play structure that was removed last year from Rancho Laguna Park. Volunteers began the assembly and installation of the new structure on Monday. Construction will continue throughout the week and the Town is hoping that more volunteers will come forward to help.

This Saturday, June 23, after a light morning of work, the Town will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony and a community picnic to thank the volunteers – and the

new playground can be put to use by young guests.

The bulk of the \$97,000 bill for the playground was paid from the Town’s East Bay Regional Park District Measure WW funds. The Moraga Junior Women’s Club also made a donation towards the new equipment.

“This will be the best playground in the area for kids age 5-12,” says Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram. The structure has multiple slides, a climbing wall, a Burma bridge, a climbing pole, a vine and a braided climber, a fenced tower

and more.

Volunteers from the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley, Moraga Rotary, and Boy Scout Troop 254 are already hard at work at the park. “We need more volunteers on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday,” says Ingram. “People of all ages and abilities are encouraged to sign up for one, or more, half-day shift.” Residents who want to help are also asked to bring their own tools, such as shovels. To register for a shift, email Ingram at jingram@moraga.ca.us, or call (925) 888-7034.

## An Open Letter from the Moraga Town Council

The members of the Moraga Town Council publicly express our admiration for Kristen Cunnane and our gratitude for her demonstrated courage. As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, her bravery has not gone unnoticed. Sadly, many victims never report incidents of abuse. Kristen’s courage in reporting will help to provide encouragement for others to do the same. Her public story

will undoubtedly serve to support other victims and to give them hope for a more positive future. Kristen may never know just how many adults and children have been helped by the telling of her story, but for bravely sharing her experiences with others, we commend and thank her.

Moraga Town Council

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