

Triathlon Lures 372 Athletes, One Bagpiper

By Chris Lavin



Canyon bagpiper Scott MacLeod serenades athletes at Canyon Road and Camino Pablo in Moraga for the 7th Annual Moraga Triathlon. He was inspired by the Boston Marathon bombings to play "Chariots of Fire" to the passing cyclists. Photo Chris Lavin

Moraga's streets were filled with competing athletes April 27 for the 7th Annual Moraga Triathlon, but the energy was especially palpable at the intersection of Canyon Road and Camino Pablo where bagpiper Scott MacLeod serenaded participants on the bicycle leg of the race with the song, "Chariots of Fire."

"I'm doing it as a contribution to honor the ceremony of the race," said MacLeod, a Canyon resident who heard about a bagpiper who had played the same song to encourage runners in the Boston Marathon last month. Inspired by the story, MacLeod adopted the idea. "Bagpipes are ceremonial. They are played during funerals, weddings, important occasions. I did it (in Moraga) in remembrance of the craziness in Boston."

Three hundred seventy two athletes from throughout the Bay Area and beyond participated in the triathlon this year. It started with a 400-meter swim at Campolindo High School, where swimmers – wearing electronic ID tags for automatic tim-

ing – jumped into the pool at staggered intervals. Out of the pool, participants ran to their bicycles for a 14-mile ride west to Canyon, back to Moraga, up to Sanders Ranch and back to Campolindo for a 3-mile run before crossing the finish line.

MacLeod chose to serenade the bikers from a pear orchard, a spot he said represents his message of peace and courage.

That meant a steady stream of athletes for MacLeod's pipes, and he played for the entire race. Cyclists on the way to the turnaround at Canyon School saw him going and coming. Dozens gave MacLeod thumbs up or holloed their thanks.

"It was wonderful," MacLeod said afterward. "I felt fully engaged, and I think the cyclists did, too."

Jay Ingram, director of Moraga Parks and Recreation, called the event a big success. "Just seeing the smiles on people's faces said it all," he said. Putting on the triathlon each year means hundreds of hours of work on the parts of volunteers and department staff, Ingram said, including Kim-

berly Nelson and Kim Burrowes, as well as this year's Saint Mary's College intern, Angelica Tabuena.

The youth divisions, in which 5-7 and 8-11 age groups participate on a smaller scale, have particularly grown, Ingram said.

The event also brings in enough money to fund local Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) programs, Ingram said.

Bagpiper MacLeod said that because marathons are such an old tradition, bagpiping twins well with the ancient art of playing the pipes, especially in light of the tragedy in Boston. It also fits MacLeod's life pursuit: He founded World University and School, a learning institution where anyone can teach or take a course.

At World University, one may even learn to play the bagpipe, at http://worlduniversity.wikia.com/wiki/Bagpipe_Tutorials.

More photos and a list of top finishers can be found in Sports, page Cx; for complete Moraga Triathlon results visit www.moragatri.com.

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Mothering a Mama Duck

By Cathy Dausman



'Papa Duck' Dan Brunicardi stands next to the storm drain where it all began. Photo Cathy Dausman

This is a Mother's Day story about a man ... and some ducks.

Dan Brunicardi's Lafayette neighbors used to call him "The Mayor" because he looked out for his fellow residents. Apparently, he'll do that even when those residents can't speak, or they waddle when they walk.

Now Brunicardi has a new title, given to him by neighbor and author Pauline Reif, who captured the true story of Brunicardi and his duckling rescue in her first children's book, "Papa Duck." The book was illustrated by Eugenie Huard, a neighbor of Reif and Brunicardi.

The story began two summers ago, when Brunicardi stepped out his front door to walk his dogs. In a neighborhood lush with trees, he wasn't surprised to see a brown duck standing curbside, but he was surprised when it wouldn't budge even when he approached.

Brunicardi detoured around the self-imposed mallard roadblock, but became concerned when he returned half an hour later, and she was still there. Locking the dogs in his backyard, Brunicardi said he confronted the duck, gently asking her "What's wrong?" The mallard seemed to be guarding the storm drain, from which peeping could be heard.

Looking down the drain, Brunicardi noticed nine fuzzy black ducklings floating in circles two feet below street level, unable to escape. Although Brunicardi said he is "not a strong man," he lifted and slid the storm grate out of the way. Then, lying in the street on his stomach, Brunicardi corralled the ducklings with cardboard and picked each one up, housing them temporarily in a five gallon bucket, where he said they showed their exuberance "by jumping like popcorn."

Mama Duck seemed most grateful. By then, a neighbor or two was watching, as were at least three bats

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