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Library to Open on Sundays

By Sophie Braccini

Starting this fall the Moraga library will add an extra afternoon to its hours of operation. The new hours, from 1 to 5 p.m. each Sunday, are made possible by a donation from the Friends of the Moraga Library, supplemented by the town of Moraga. The group views the new hours as a gift to the whole community-Moraga is the only library in Lamorinda to be closed on Sunday and, according county statistics, Sunday is a very popular day to spend time at your public library.

"We always assumed that it would be too expensive for us to fund additional hours for the library," says Friends' president Nancy Hom, "but when I asked the county how much it would cost to add four hours every week their answer was '\$25,000 a year.' The board discussed it and we decided to go for it."

The Friends of the Moraga Library is a volunteer group that counts 400 household members. They raise money through membership dues and the popular book sale they hold on a regular basis. The Friends fund programs at the library, buy books, and now will also support four hours of staff time per week. Hom came to the Town Council meeting June 26 to ask the town to pick up the tab for incidental costs, such as utilities, amounting to \$4,500 a year; \$3,750 for the first partial year.

This was the meeting at which the Town Council would give final approval to the town budget. On the table for the council's decision were two extras: a proposed \$3,000 bump in support of the Spirit Van; and the request for \$3,750 from the Friends of the Moraga Library. Council members Mike Metcalf and Phil Arth argued that both should be approved. The other three council members preferred to not raise the town's contribution to the Spirit Van from \$9,000 to \$12,000 per year. The council approved \$3,750 for the Friends.

"It will take about six weeks for the county to organize staffing for the additional hours," said Hom. "We plan to start the Sunday program in September. We believe that these afternoon hours will be used by residents of all ages. On hot days it can be a welcome cool break to read a book or a magazine; it will be a great destination for families on rainy Sunday afternoons, to come and borrow a movie, read together, etcetera."

"I will present a report to the Town Council before the next budget cycle," said Hom. "The continuation of the program will depend on how well attended the Sundays are." In 2012 the Moraga library had 102,000 individual visits that resulted in the borrowing of 192,000 books and materials, a big number for a little library.

The Moraga library is currently open Tuesday through Saturday; daily hours vary, visit ccclib.org/locations/moraga.html for details.

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