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## Meet Officer Mandy Smith

By Sophie Braccini



Photo provided

Where Mandy Smith comes from, police work is about arresting drug dealers and stopping gang violence. Moraga's newest officer arrives from Patterson, a city of 21,000 people in Stanislaus County, where the crime statistics do not resemble Moraga's in any way. The young officer said she wanted to move to the Bay Area and work in an environment where prevention would be bigger than repression. She thinks she found her niche in Moraga and plans to stay here forever.

"I'm looking forward to serving the community and interacting in a positive way, instead of reacting to crime," said Smith. "What I want to do is work hand in hand with residents, preventing crime and keeping the statistics low."

By the time she was six years old, Smith knew she wanted to be a police officer. "There was no one in my close family in the police," she said. "I just knew that's what I wanted to do." She was born and raised in Modesto, earning an associate degree

in administration of justice from Modesto Junior College and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice management from Union Institute & University. She started her career as a deputy with the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department in 2004 where she worked for three years in the jail and over six years on patrol, including municipal policing in Patterson.

"Let me say how thrilled I am to have her join our department," said Robert Priebe, chief of police. "She is very skilled and her experience will be a great asset to our department and community. She really wants to be here and looked for an opportunity to come here for a long time. As (she said) at the council meeting, she wants to spend the rest of her career here and we hope to provide a work environment that will encourage just that."

Smith said she did not come to Moraga for the salary, but for the environment—a choice that is reassuring to a police chief who has been struggling with high turnover rates.

## Library to Open on Sundays

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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 ap-

proved \$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](http://ccclib.org/locations/moraga.html) for details.

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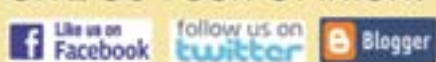
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