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## State of the Anniversary

By Sophie Braccini



Mayor Ken Chew prepares a toast to celebrate Moraga's 40th birthday. Photo Cathy Dausman

The theme of the 40th anniversary State of the Town address was as poignant as ever: the more things change, the more they stay the same. For the 150 or so Moragans attending the Nov. 12 presentation by Mayor Ken Chew it was a theme that struck home as 40 years of the life of Moraga was reviewed.

The evening started out strong with a no-host bar and wonderful appetizers. Guests mingled and interacted with each other in an intimate and casual atmosphere. Many town volunteers and staff members were in attendance, along with current, past and future town council members.

Expectations and spirits were high when the meeting was called to order by the mayor, and everyone took their seats; the remainder of the evening was a composed affair. Contrasting the new with the old, Moraga's 40 years of cityhood was presented in all its glory.

Guests were treated to a presentation of pictures, documents and people that exemplified how Moraga became the semirural, limited government jurisdiction that it is. Among some of the most interesting contrasts were roads, buildings and landmarks. The Moraga Shopping Center has remained remarkably the same; "The Barn" went

from being a lonely train station, to a popular bar, to a LEED certified office building; and Saint Mary's College, which pre-dates the town, has grown from a few buildings in the middle of nowhere to a world-class campus.

Chew presented metrics that were equally compelling. It was interesting to see the pattern of development in Moraga. Approximately 72 percent of the homes in town were constructed in the 60s and 70s, and only eight homes have been added since 2010. As a result the number of town personnel has remained quite stable since the 80s, and the town continues to be operated with a modest annual surplus of about \$200,000 a year.

Notwithstanding the years of history, Chew turned the crowd's attention to how the town's leadership is laying the groundwork for the future. The mayor placed a heavy emphasis on road work and the recent improvements achieved through Measure K. He highlighted the fact that the sales tax increase is bringing in \$7.7 million so the town can start putting a dent in the \$25 million worth of delayed infrastructure maintenance. Chew, whose term on the town council is ending this year, added a word of caution to future councils and the audience that the storm drain system is antiquated and those repairs are unfunded at this time.

Chew then proposed a toast to Moraga and the crowd broke into a joyous round of "Happy Birthday" before indulging in cake.

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