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Moraga's 'First Lady' for the Third Time

By Sophie Braccini



Mike and Sharon Metcalf in their Moraga home Photo Sophie Braccini

It was no surprise when council members elected Mike Metcalf for the third time as mayor of Moraga on Dec. 9. The unwritten local tradition that rotates the leader's seat according to the number of votes obtained was followed to the letter. His wife, Sharon, was in attendance, approving of her husband's long commitment to the town. After seeing her husband serving the town, free of charge, for almost 20 years, one would think that the former architect and engineer would be ready to see him cut back on his volunteer engagement, but Sharon Metcalf is happy to see Mike Metcalf happy. She says as long as he wants to serve, she will make the little life adjustments that make it possible and pleasurable for the two of them.

"Mike's engagement with the town started very shortly after he retired from Chevron," she says. "He was first on the planning commission, then after he timed out, he ran for town council." This will be his 12th year at the dais. "I don't think that he has decided yet if he wants to run again or not." Sharon Metcalf knows that the newly elected mayor has transferred his passionate commitment

to a job that took him all over the world, to the management of Moraga's affairs, and that he sometimes wonders what else he would be doing if he was not on the council. "He would not be one to sit around," she says. "We are always doing something, either together or separately. There is not much TV watching in this house."

Besides spending hours studying town documents and participating in meetings, Mike Metcalf and his wife make furniture for family and friends in his woodshop in Guerneville. "One of the differences the year he is the mayor is that there is much less furniture making," says Sharon Metcalf with a smile, acknowledging that during that year, the workload is much greater. She will also make sure that their trips are scheduled outside important meetings.

She says that the two of them do not discuss town politics a lot together, but she reckons that her perspective has changed on some topics because she sees the greater good. "When Rancho Laguna II project was proposed, I saw that it would have an impact on our view," she says, "but I also know that this town needs some development in order to revitalize its retail." When the Metcalf family moved to Moraga some 30 years ago, there were three grocery stores and a kids shoe store, she remembers. "Young families were moving in and were shopping in town."

Sharon Metcalf has had her share of volunteering for the town as well. She was on the board of the Hacienda Foundation for four years and worked with Judy Dinkle to complete many improvement projects; she also did her part to support the 1 percent sales tax measure, hosting meetings.

Now, as she prepares her home for the holidays and her children's visits, she knows that this year's responsibilities will not leave a lot of free time to her husband to give her a hand. But that does not faze her. She is used to it.

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[back](#)

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