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Moraga Country Club faces unusual public turmoil

By *Sophie Braccini*



A landslide blocking access to the trail Photo A. Scheck

Three seats are up for renewal on the Moraga Country Club's board of directors, a matter that is usually not heard of outside of the club. But recent turmoil has created a climate of unrest for some homeowners and recreation members alike and the confusion has uncharacteristically crossed from the private to the public domain.

MCC homes represent about a tenth of all homes in Moraga, and adding in all the sports members, MCC impacts close to a fourth of the residents of the town, including youth involved in the popular swim and tennis activities.

The matters of what happened between swim team coaches who were let go, the director of aquatics, and volunteer parents managing the program weave a complex web of rancor, disappointment and misunderstanding that seems to have escalated over several months. Now Leslie Mortimer, the board's president, says that all is under control and she'd rather not share specifics with the public. She said the swim team committee is working very hard to have a successful season, hiring coaches, and moving forward.

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Turmoil also affected the tennis team, with the departure of a popular coach, with all parties involved blaming each other. The matter of the landslide that has forced two club's families out of their homes may also have contributed to a perception of opacity coming from the board. Mortimer, explains that the club is tangled in a lawsuit over the landslide responsibility and that open communication is therefore impossible, as recommended by the club's legal counsel.

An example of the difficulty in sorting out the situation is exemplified by what is happening with the club members whose homes have been red-tagged, but still find themselves having to pay Home Owner Association dues. The board declined to suspend their obligation to pay their dues, but on the other hand the general manager says that a Go-Fund-Me account was started to support these families.

Mortimer insisted that the issues affecting the club were private and should not be reported publicly. She added that in her opinion a few disgruntled people were using social media to spread inaccuracies. Her three-year term on the board will end next year.

The ballots for the election have already been given to voters and have to be returned to the MCC before March 20.

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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