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Moraga pioneers Leisure Sport Triathlon

By Sophie Braccini



Triathlons have grown in popularity and are attracting the most fit, as exemplified by the very successful triathlon in Moraga in April.

But now the city is trying something new. The Moraga Parks and Recreation Department has created a world premiere: The “Leisure Sport Triathlon” that combines disk golf, bocce ball and corn hole, to be held May 27. It’s based on the “Leisureman Triathlon” that ties together golfing, bowling and poker.

Moraga’s new sport is not only an excellent opportunity for fun for adults of all ages, but also teens and tweens.

Moraga has the perfect setting. The Moraga Commons Park where the competition will be held has one of the region’s most charming nine-hole disk golf courses, as well as bocce ball courts, and plenty of grass to play corn hole.

Clinton Calkins of the parks and recreation department says that when a resident came by to rent the bocce ball courts for a leisureman triathlon for a group of friends, the team took the idea and twisted it to offer something fun for adults in the area. “We have a lot of activities for seniors and for kids, but not that many for adults in between,” says the recreation coordinator.

The day of the event, Saturday, May 27, is earmarked as leisure, but it is also a competition, and the winning team will get a trophy Calkins says its members will be proud of. The competition is open to teams of four people of all ages. The three sports will have equal weighing in the totaling of points.

The triathlon will be an opportunity for people to discover the disc golf activity if they don’t know it already. Moraga has among the hills of the Commons one of best-designed courses in the area, according to players. The



Disc golf will be one of the three activities in the Leisure Sport Triathlon.

sport is played with special discs (don’t call them Frisbees), and the parks and recreation department will provide players with some if they do not come with their own. On a typical weekend day, residents of all ages are seen on the course, trying to get to the baskets in three-disc throws, the standard par for each hole.

Calkins says that he hopes to have enough volunteers to guide the teams on the course and that the point counting will be on the honor system.

Moraga also has very fine bocce ball courts under the oaks and by the creek in the park. There too volunteers will make sure beginners follow the rules, and the town will provide the balls that are used for that sport. Teams will be paired to play against each other; the winning team will be the first at 11 points. Calkins said that teams would be selected at random to form the duels.

The third sport is corn hole, a classic game of throwing a small sand bag in a hole, something anyone can figure out instantly.

The competition is set to start at 11 a.m. and finish around 3 p.m. The recreation department has scheduled a barbecue lunch in the middle of the competi-



Corn hole

tion. The Commons has tables and BBQ pits where meat and vegetarian options will be grilled for the competitors’ pleasure and refreshment after the efforts of the first part of the competition. Calkins says that Moraga will feed the players and quench their thirst, but that they can also bring their own snacks and libations if they feel like it.

The number of bocce ball courts available at this time limits the number of teams able to participate at 24. Registration ends on May 8 to allow the town to purchase the necessary equipment and food. The cost is \$40 per person, or \$160 for a team. It includes the lunch, a T-shirt, a commemorative glass, and leasing of equipment. Registration at moragarec.com.

Special Acalanes assembly shows consequences of drug use

By Pippa Fisher

Parents are encouraged to engage their children in conversation about the choices and consequences surrounding drugs and alcohol following a powerful presentation on the subject that their children had been shown earlier that day.

Acalanes High School offers the “Up2U” assembly, which is hosted in part by the Acalanes Parents’ Club only once every three years due to costs involved. The program is a collaboration between staff, students and parents.

The program’s host, Tim Barley, a chaplain with the Contra Costa County Fire Prevention District, introduced the speakers. Using real-life scenarios and live presentations to impart the far-reaching consequences of drug and alcohol abuse to teens, the students heard in detail from firefighter Chris DeMeo of his experience responding to an alcohol-related crash during which a local teen lost his life. He told in detail what it was like as he stayed with the fatally wounded student in his last moments.

The audience then heard from Granada High School student Travis Palma who explained how, at a time of his life when he was left virtually parentless and unsupervised, he was able to

steer away from negative choices. The young man said he decided to surround himself with positive friends and set challenges for himself as a real life cowboy, riding bulls, demonstrating that good choices don’t necessarily mean boring choices.

Finally, one mother described her heartbreaking discovery of their happy, loving and high-achieving son’s death from a drug overdose. Pam and Ken Rogers lost their son Scott, a student at Monte Vista High School, several years ago. Ken Rogers spoke of the far-reaching impact of the choices made by Scott and of the guilt carried by his son’s friends. He stressed the need to end the “code of silence” that prevents teens from getting help for their friends who might be in trouble.

Indeed, the main message to the students was to consider the choices and consequences of their decisions. And for the parents, the message was to “have the hard conversation.”

Following the parent presentation, a panel consisting of the speakers joined by school counselors Mary Threlkel and Allison Gans took questions. Several parents commented that their students told them that the assembly had been “very sad.”

Acalanes Principal Travis Bell made the point that the students had been encouraged to approach counselors following the presentation should they want to and said that the following day several students had taken advantage of that. He said that it isn’t unusual for teens to need time to process the information.

Although the irony of the presentation falling on April 20 was not lost on some parents – 420 has long been code for marijuana smokers – Bell pointed out that it was not deliberate, but that offering the program before Prom and during “Prom-Wise week” was deliberate.

With legislation that will legalize marijuana in California, parents were reminded of the dangers to the teen brain, including diminished IQ. Bell made the point that despite how culture celebrates its use, research is clear — marijuana is addictive and leads to cancer at five times the rate of cigarettes.

“We are so fortunate that we have the staff and parent support to run such an important program,” Bell said. “The need to challenge our students to pause and think critically about the effect their choices can have is of the upmost importance as we engage the whole child.”

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