

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, Jan. 16, 7 p.m.
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas.
Visit www.mofd.org



ConFire

Board of Directors
Tuesday, Jan. 15, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez. For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



MOFD and ConFire promote new operations chiefs



Matt Nichols



Photos provided

Chuck Stark

By Nick Marnell

Two veteran firefighters will run the operations divisions of the Lamorinda fire agencies in 2019, both men having been promoted in the fourth quarter of last year.

Matt Nichols took over as battalion chief, operations division, of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District in October. "I never really aspired to be where I am today," said the 12-year district veteran, who appeared quite at ease in the role he never aspired to. "You see how things go, you see a vacancy, you see a chance to put your own stamp on things." Nichols said he is putting his stamp on the district education policy, working to revise it to offer reimbursement for extra classes to all firefighters, whether they seek a promotion or not.

Nichols offered words of support to district residents and encouraged them to join

together. "It's great to depend on us, and we'll be there when the major disaster hits. But be there for each other," he said.

"MOFD is excited to have Matt Nichols serving as a battalion chief and I believe he hits the sweet spot of enough experience to know the district well, but new enough that he is not wedded to just maintaining the status quo. I have great confidence in his ability and high expectations for the work he will do to develop and refine our operational plans," Fire Chief Dave Winnacker said.

After the retirement of Ed Gonzales in July, the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District appointed Chuck Stark as interim assistant fire chief - emergency operations division. In December the district removed the interim tag.

"You get to be a part of things at the lower levels, but as a chief officer, you get to set the direction for the district," said Stark, who started at Con-

Fire in 2003. "I will be able to get more accomplished."

Both chiefs are preparing to reopen and staff rebuilt Lamorinda fire stations in the spring: Orinda Fire Station 43 and Lafayette Fire Station 16. "I remember when it closed," Stark said of the 2012 closure of the Lafayette station by the county. "The station will increase our capacity and lower response times." He added that "the station is going to be beautiful."

"Our assistant chief of operations is among the most critical positions in the district, with responsibility for ensuring our life- and property-saving operations are carried out flawlessly, each and every time our firefighters leave their stations," Fire Chief Jeff Carman said in a district statement. "I couldn't be more pleased to announce the promotion of longtime ConFire firefighter Chuck Stark to this position."

Moraga Police Department Incident

Summary Report

Dec. 18 - Dec. 31

Alarms	19
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	5
Traffic	60
Suspicious Circumstances	8
Suspicious Subject	5
Suspicious Vehicle	20
Service to Citizen	22
Patrol Request/ Security Check	23
Supplemental Report	15
Welfare Check	3



Vehicle violations

- Abandoned Vehicle
 - Moraga Rd./Via Granada
- DUI Misdemeanor
 - 700 Block Tanglewood Dr.
- Hit And Run Misdemeanor
 - Moraga Country Club
- Reckless Driving
 - Moraga Way/Moraga Rd.
 - Seven Eleven
 - Moraga Rd./Campolindo Dr.
 - Safeway
 - Sanders Ranch Rd./Camino Pablo
- Tc - Property Damage
 - 1100 Block Larch Ave.
- Traffic Hazard
 - Moraga Way/Viader Dr.

Other criminal activity

- Burglary
 - Library
- Fireworks
 - Los Perales Elementary School
- Grand Theft
 - 100 Block Donald Dr.
- Petty Theft
 - 10 Block Corte Santa Clara
 - 50 Block Lynwood Pl.
 - 2100 Block Donald Dr.

Nuisance to the Community

- Barking Dog
 - 200 Block Deerfield Dr.
- Disturbing The Peace
 - 40 Block Sanders Ranch Rd.
 - 100 Block Miramonte Dr.

Other

- Mentally Ill Commit
 - Campolindo High School
- Prom Shoot
 - Rheem Elementary School
- Unwanted Guest
 - St. Marys College

The Orinda police blotter will be published in our next issue. We are still awaiting reports from the Lafayette Police Department.

Former MOFD director Steve Anderson has not lost his passion

By Nick Marnell

Always one to willingly speak his mind, Steve Anderson – the district director ousted from the board in the general election – slammed the Moraga-Orinda Fire District board as dysfunctional, may or may not have helped rig its 2019 election of officers and under certain circumstances would again run for a board seat.

Anderson spent six years at the district helm, and though disappointed in the outcome, he understands what he could have done better in the election. "You've got to spend money and you need a campaign organization," he said of two strategies he eschewed.

His change of heart during the recent labor contract negotiations, which resulted in a 13 percent wage increase for the rank and file over three years, Anderson feels hurt him politically. "The pay raise went over what I would have given. I was prepared to vote no. But we would have gone into litigation over an unfair labor practice. It would have taken a year and we would have wasted a lot of money. Voting yes was the right thing to do for the future of the district."

Having learned how to organize a more effective campaign, would Anderson run in 2022? "If Danziger chose to run again, I would not. If he doesn't, I would consider it," he said, speaking of Division 3 Director Steven Danziger, to whom he lost.

Anderson thinks highly of the newly elected board members, and he spent time

mentoring them before they took office. Anderson neither confirmed nor denied that he explained to the three new directors how to disrupt the MOFD election process and secure the board presidency for newcomer Danziger. "I did mention to them how the order of succession works. But that in order to become an officer, you only need to be a director and get a majority of the votes. That's it. Did a light go off for them? I have no idea," said Anderson, barely hiding a smirk.

Anderson's frustration with the five-member board that he termed dysfunctional may have played a part in his mentoring of the new directors. "Two of the board members see MOFD as a commodity. It's not a commodity. It's a service organization that protects lives and property. Two directors do not understand that," he said. "Hopefully the board will not remain that way."

He ranks his top accomplishment as being part of a board that put MOFD on the path to fiscal sustainability. The hiring of Gloriann Sasser as administrative services director, improving the financial reporting and developing a long-range financial plan he calls the highlights of his tenure.

To that list Anderson adds the hiring of Fire Chief Dave Winnacker, beginning his second year with the district. "We gave him three years to bring MOFD into the 21st century. And he will do it. I have a lot of confidence in him. He didn't come on board to be a babysitter. He understands a mission and what it takes to

get it done," Anderson said of the Marine Corps veteran.

Anderson names fire prevention as an example. "The chief has more done in one year than in the five years prior. But fire prevention will always be a problem. Can more be done? Absolutely. Can we reduce the risk to zero? No. I think it's good that they're looking at it, but there are no easy answers."

As for the talk about Fire Station 41 and district headquarters renovation: "Yes, expand the staff work area and add a large conference room, but maintain the fire station. It is more than adequate, and is not in such a sad case of disrepair. Maybe move the training area to the pear orchard," said Anderson, speaking of the vacant lot abutting Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School.

Depending on the agenda, the former director plans to attend future board meetings. "If it's something I'm interested in I definitely will. If tax equity comes up, I'll present an analysis that will destroy the argument," Anderson said, though he did not tip his hand. The 2019 MOFD board meetings should be exciting enough, but if the Moraga-Orinda tax equity topic arises, that meeting figures to be a performance not to be missed.

"In my six years I learned a tremendous amount," Anderson said. "It enabled me to learn what the fire service really is, and it was a privilege to lead the outstanding men and women. To them, I owe a thank you."

Letters to the editor

Humility and graciousness lost

As a parent of three children in a community of competitive adults and children, I've tried to be diligent in teaching my children sportsmanship and how to win and lose humbly, graciously and respectfully and to know that winning is only sweet when they've known loss; health is only sweet when they've known sickness; connection is only sweet when they've known loneliness, etc. I've taught them to always remember to "check" their competitive nature, and be mindful and happy for the winner, even when the winner is their competition, because losing that day, was part of a bigger lesson in empathy and humanity which is so much bigger than the actual game.

Lafayette City Council had an opportunity to demonstrate that same grace, humility and wisdom, but the council members blew it. They've all run hard races. How could they not see themselves in Ivor Sampson? How could they not consider how they'd feel if they'd come in third place? What would their expectations and hopes be if the electorate had chosen them? Ivor is a person, a human being, with thoughts and emotions and was a strong third place finisher. His whole being is much more like the other Council members than

different. By not recognizing Ivor as a valid replacement for the late Mark Mitchell seat from a fair electorate standpoint (31 percent ahead of fourth place), it's clear Cameron Burks' harmonious speech at the beginning of his mayorship was only a facade. We should have no hope that the divide will in fact be repaired under his reign. His "new beginning" is lost forever.

Kristen Altbau
Lafayette

A sweet note of thanks

Thanks to the Lamorinda Community for supporting the Holiday See's Candies Shops run by the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley (KCMV). We're proud to offer quality See's Candies in conjunction with easy parking, short lines, customized gift wrapping and easy shipping options. All profits will be reinvested in local community charities, with an emphasis on children and families. This fundraising program, along with the upcoming March 30 Lobster Fest, is a significant contributor to the KCMV contributing approximately \$60,000 annually to local charities, focusing on children and families.

Ian Cook
Moraga

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