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Dine and dance to help purchase the Joaquin Moraga Adobe

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Featured band Los Arribenos de San Francisco.
Photo provided

The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe, a local nonprofit, is holding its sixth annual Fandango Aug. 24 at the new Art and Garden Center at Wilder in Orinda to help meet its 2021 goal of purchasing the historic 1841 Moraga Adobe. Last year the Friends had hoped that their event would be the first at the new Art and Garden Center, but unfortunately the building was not completed in time.

All proceeds from this benefit event will go toward the purchase and restoration of the Moraga Adobe, located in Orinda - the oldest original structure in Contra Costa County and the original Mexican land grant home of the Moraga Family. It is listed as a California State Historic Landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places. Since 1841, this Adobe has been privately owned, but now, the community has the opportunity to preserve a part of California history for all to enjoy.

Fandangos were an important part of life for families in the Rancho period of California history and the Moraga family was no exception. Fandangos were occasions when neighbors would come to visit, eat, dance and have a good time. FJMA is carrying on this tradition by hosting a fundraising evening with an historic 1850s theme. The Fandango will include a dinner catered by local Orinda chef Charles Vollmar, authentic Hispanic music by Los Arribenos de San Francisco, dancing demonstrations, a silent auction, a wine talk by Captain Vineyards of Moraga, and a handmade textiles exhibition.

Guests may feel like they are back in the Rancho days as a group of local elementary and middle school students demonstrate historic Hispanic dances such as the El Borrego, and the Jarabe (the Mexican Hat Dance that has been around since the 1700s.)

Guests will also be able to find out about another "mystery" adobe that was also part of the Lamorinda area. Greg Smestad, Bernal descendant and author of the National Park Service's "Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail Guide," will speak about Rancho culture and have a display at the Fandango.

Thanks to the generosity of community groups and individuals, The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe thus far have raised over \$215,000, but they still need to reach the total purchase price of \$500,000 by September 2021 to complete the transaction. As part of the agreement with the developers, J&J Ranch, FJMA will buy the Adobe and over two acres surrounding it by partly funding the restoration. The developers will restore the Adobe to its 1848 configuration, and FJMA will open the Adobe to the public as a museum and learning center.

The sixth annual Fandango will take place from 6 to 9 p.m. Aug. 24 at the Art and Garden Center at Wilder. Tickets cost \$100 per person and may be purchased at www.MoragaAdobe.org.

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