

# New town of Moraga website in the works

By Vera Kochan

Dissatisfaction from staff and town residents has led to a decision to revamp the town's current website. From a staff point of view there is limited functionality, a lack of modern advances and inefficient interfacing on the existing website. Residents have complained about the difficulty in navigation and information tracking.

Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt gave an update on the redesign and launch of the new website during the Nov. 13 town council meeting, noting that rather than have three separate websites for the town of Moraga, the Parks and Recreation Department and the Moraga Police Department, all will be located under the umbrella of the town's website.

After reviewing 10 responses to their Request for Proposals, staff agreed to contract with CivicPlus to design and develop the new town website. According to Brandt's staff report, "CivicPlus provides an integrated technology platform designed specifically for local government. The CivicPlus platform delivers web technology, website design, content man-

agement and mass notification communication tools. CivicPlus remains a prominent website service provider for local municipal websites in Contra Costa County with current customers that include the cities of Danville, El Cerrito, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon and Contra Costa County."

Parks and Rec currently uses CivicPlus - Civic Rec software for program registration and facility bookings. Additional benefits will include a government focused design; easy-to-use content management; accessibility; search engine optimization; secure hosting and ongoing technical support.

A one-time cost of \$16,813 covers the design and development. An \$18,000 one-time consultant services fee covers a projected 180 hours at \$100 per hour. Both costs are budgeted in the current fiscal year. Ongoing maintenance costs begin the second year and are estimated at \$3,775, an increase of \$575 from the current annual maintenance cost of \$3,200.

The projected timeline to initiate the new website begins in January. Various phases follow: analyze; design and configure; optimize;

educate and finally the projected launch phase in May. At some point in time, the public's input will be sought in the hopes that the end result will be very user friendly and meet a variety of needs.

# Moraga Chamber president provides free business mentoring to Lamorinda through SCORE



Photo Vera Kochan

Larry Tessler local SCORE counselor

By Vera Kochan

SCORE is a national organization that was established over 50 years ago to provide free small business counseling. The Virginia-based company utilizes the expert talents of 13,000 volunteers who counsel through local chapters. One of those volunteers is Moraga Chamber of Commerce President Larry Tessler.

"The Oakland chapter is No. 1 for the past year. I do most of the counseling in the area often meeting at our Moraga Starbucks. I also do the most counseling in the chapter," Tessler said. "I have served most every position in the chapter over the 20 years I've been doing this volunteer work. I currently serve on our executive committee, and I run our Facebook page."

SCORE's website (www.score.org) states that it has provided mentorship to more than 11 million entrepreneurs through the years, with the greater Bay Area boasting five chapters located in San Jose, San Francisco, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz and Oakland, and over 300 chapters nationwide. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, SCORE is a resource partner

of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Tessler estimates that he's mentored approximately 2,500 small business entrepreneurs during his tenure with SCORE. His business background goes back many years from working in the retail industry with stores such as Emporium-Capwell, Mervyn's and Rainbow Records. He became semi-retired when he and his wife, Carol, opened their own successful sign making business in Walnut Creek. After five years they sold the company and decided to spend their retirement traveling.

Tessler and his wife have long served the Lamorinda area through volunteer work. "We don't have kids, so our greatest satisfaction is seeing people succeed. I feel like I've played a small part in it," he said, adding, "I'm a little bit nuts. I like to remain busy."

He was approached by a friend to attend a SCORE session. "I came to a chapter meeting to see what SCORE was all about and was hooked." He was assigned a coach and began doing co-counseling.

Tessler gives clients business planning directions, general legal advice and patent related instruction. He keeps abreast of the latest trends by combing through online articles and taking seminars to keep up with concepts and techniques.

When seeking advice any potential client is matched with a counselor that meets their needs. While one-on-one counseling (in person, by email or phone) is free, SCORE does offer a variety of webinars and local events for a moderate fee. The workshops have different modules that deal with legal aspects, advertising, social media, retail basics, export/import, accounting, acquiring financial backing and opening a restaurant.

To contact the local East Bay SCORE chapter visit www.eastbayscore.org or call (510)273-6611.

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