

# ConFire captain honored for 40 years of service with the district

By Nick Marnell

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, its board of directors and the ConFire Advisory Fire Commission recognized Capt. Gil Caravantes in December for an almost unheard of 40 years of active service with the district. "There is no 40-year pin. We had to special order one," Fire Chief Lewis Broschard said.

Caravantes signed on with ConFire in November 1979, and he worked his way through the system becoming

one of the district's first paramedics in 2002, an engineer in 2003 and captain in 2010. He has also worked in various district special programs, like the Hazmat unit and the Critical Incident Stress Management team. Caravantes also served as vice president of Local 1230 of the firefighters union. "There hasn't been a station, except the new Station 16, that Gil hasn't worked at," Broschard said. "But there's still time, and I'm sure he'll end up there soon."

A few notable incidents over the years sum up the

essence of Caravantes.

"I was his captain on a house call around the holidays," fire commissioner Tom Chapman said. "An elderly woman lived at the house, which had flooded, and her water heater was seriously damaged. The next day, on his own time and out of his own pocket, Gil brought a new water heater to the woman's home and installed it."

When 9/11 hit, Caravantes, who had friends in the New York fire service, took vacation time and flew back to the city the next day. He spent two weeks assisting New York in recovery efforts, mainly at the center of the destruction. "I would dig and find a picture of a family, maybe from someone's desk, and I'd realize that I wasn't going to find anything that looked like what was in that picture," Caravantes said at the time. He attended more funerals of first responders than he could count. "It took me about five years to get through the national anthem," he said.

A decision the captain made in 2013 as he ran an engine company out of Lafayette Fire Station 17 illustrates his concern for people over bureaucracy. Caravantes' crew responded to an emergency medical call in the city, and based on his analysis at the scene, Caravantes requested mutual aid from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District to transport a young, choking patient to the hospital. The captain's action was in violation of the ConFire contract with its ambulance provider, which relayed that its ambulance was 20 minutes away. "I wasn't comfortable with that," Caravantes said. "We're



Photo courtesy Steve Hill, ConFire

Capt. Gil Caravantes, center, with Fire Chief Lewis Broschard, left, and fire commissioner Tom Chapman

all about care and safety first." MOFD arrived in 10 minutes and rushed the boy to the hospital. Despite having not followed district protocol, Caravantes said at the time he would do the same thing again "in a heartbeat."

Even with so many years of service, Caravantes shows no signs of slowing down, as

he continues to run calls out of one of the busiest stations in the district, Fire Station 5 in Pleasant Hill.

"Thank you very much for employing me for the past 40 years," Caravantes told the board. "It's the greatest job in the world."

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### Fire District Public Meetings

**Moraga-Orinda Fire District**  
Board of Directors  
Wednesday, Jan. 8, 7 p.m.  
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas.  
Visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)



### ConFire

Board of Directors  
Tuesday, Jan. 21, 1:00 p.m.  
Board Chamber Room 107,  
Administration Building  
651 Pine St., Martinez.  
For meeting times and agendas, visit [www.cccfpd.org](http://www.cccfpd.org)



## Designs 2 Consign – a fashion consignment store opens in Rheem



Photo Vera Kochan

Designs 2 Consign comes to Rheem Shopping Center

By Vera Kochan

Looking for the perfect outfit for the holiday season? Try Rheem Shopping Center's newest store Designs 2 Consign located at 522 Center Street, Moraga.

Owner Lisa Karp's consignment store occupies the space previously held by the Moraga Art Gallery, which moved to the north end of the center.

The grand opening on Nov. 21 was a bustling success with a business model aimed at offering women's clothing and accessories, along with a nod to boys and girls between 12-18 years looking for semi-formal/formal wear.

Karp's business skills come from managing a cousin's store, outside of Moraga, for two years. She decided to try her hand as an owner and moved to Moraga. "We have a need for more stores, and there's no store like this in town," Karp said. "I bring a focus on high-end, offering a carryover from T.J. Maxx type of clothes. I ultimately want to cater to the middle section and Saint Mary's College women." At this point in time, her boyswear offers blazers,

jackets and belts.

Business ownership is in Karp's DNA. Her great-grandfather came from Germany and opened Koster Grocery in San Francisco. Sadly, it burned to the ground during the 1906 earthquake. She's also shared ownership duties at two eateries in Orinda – Table 24 and Fourth Bore, saying, "Brick and mortar is in my blood."

Karp fell in love with the Moraga location in September and was able to begin moving in during October. Not much has changed to the space except that the back room was turned into dressing rooms. While she was touring the art gallery, she admired artist Pamela Murray's paintings. Karp contacted the Orinda artist and struck a deal with Murray by offering to continue selling her art at the store.

Karp plans to also sell items on her website. The focus will be on handbags, jewelry and high-end clothes.

"Commission percentages will be based on the value of the items. It's a partnership between me and the consignee. It's about what we can make together," Karp said, adding, "At the end of the consignment period, which is two months, you would let me know if you want the item back, if you want to donate it to the store, or to Hospice of the East Bay, at which point you'll get a donation receipt from Hospice."

Designs 2 Consign store hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Consignment transactions are by appointment Tuesday through Friday. Website: [designs2consign.com](http://designs2consign.com) or phone (925) 247-5623.

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