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Longtime Moraga employee Dan Bernie passes away

By Vera Kochan

Longtime employee for the Town of Moraga, Dan Bernie (62), passed away on April 22, two months after a brain tumor diagnosis. Bernie was on Moraga's staff for 35 years - 29 of them as Parks and Public Works Superintendent. He retired in 2014.

His time in Moraga began in the 1970s; he graduated from Campolindo High School in 1974. After a five-year stint in the U.S. Marines as a drill instructor, Bernie returned to Moraga in a job that kept him in tune with his love of the outdoors.

Bernie's former staff, current Parks and Public Works Superintendent Kyle M. Salvin, along with maintenance crew Ruben Ochoa, Jose Limon and Steve Riechhold had high praise for their former boss, colleague and friend. "He was very rank and file and was an enforcer of rules, but didn't mind breaking them at times," they recalled. "He pushed us as workers for our betterment, and always stressed to us the need to plan for our retirement, even to the youngest of workers. Dan always took the time to get to know his subordinates on a personal level and kept in touch with us after his retirement and would call us on our birthdays."

With his small crew, Bernie was responsible for maintaining all of Moraga's public buildings, the Hacienda de las Flores, the town's streets, parks, storm water drains, road median landscaping, street sign replacement, tree planting and the use of non-toxic weed eradication. He also orchestrated the Work Alternative Program in town for juvenile offenders from the Lamorinda area and hired Future Explorers to help keep the parks clean.

According to his former staff, Bernie was a man who loved his family and would do anything to help them or a friend. While he loved living in Lafayette and attending the annual Art and Wine Festival, Bernie often answered the call of the wild. "He was an avid outdoorsman that loved to kayak and travel the United States in his customized camper," they explained. "Dan loved to work hard and play even harder. He loved the nightlife and enjoyed good food and entertainment."

Bernie's hard work and love of Moraga is evident across the well-maintained town he left upon his retirement. "Dan was extremely outgoing and touched the lives of many people," agreed Salvin, Ochoa, Limon and Riechhold. "He will be missed, and we will do our best to carry on his legacy."

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[back](#)

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