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Moraga Garden Club celebrates 50 Years

Submitted by Linda U. Foley

The idea to start a Garden Club in Moraga germinated over coffee around a kitchen table 50 years ago. Three relatively new transplants to Moraga - Shirley Engstrom, Pearl Duncan and Mercedes Brewer - put their collective idea into action. They began by contacting the California State Garden Club for guidelines. The Holy Lutheran Church became their first meeting place and to everyone's surprise, 20 people turned up in response to fliers they'd distributed. Positions were filled effortlessly with Brewer becoming the first president of the Moraga Garden Club with her husband, a nursery owner, supportive in the wings. The nonprofit Club flourished, growing its membership exponentially.

Over the years, the Club planted Redwoods at Rancho Laguna and thousands of daffodil bulbs along Moraga's scenic corridors, donated daffodil bulbs and funds to the five schools, hosted a booth at the Pear Festival, planted a garden at the Hacienda de la Flores, maintained several sites at the Commons, the Triangle at the intersection of Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road, the urn fronting the Library, the Holy Trinity Cultural Center and the atrium at John Muir Hospital.

The Club also contributes to reforestation and Arbor Day, decorates a Christmas tree with natural ornaments for the Library and creates a monthly floral arrangement. It holds a fundraiser in the spring and a festive Christmas luncheon at Diablo Country Club.

MGC's work adapted to changing times and needs. The schools developed their teaching gardens; the daffodils propagated beautifully.

This fall, the Moraga Garden Club will join with the Kiwanis Club of Moraga in adding even more daffodil bulbs for the dazzling spring display Moraga has come to expect.

The long neglected urns on Country Club Drive have been restored. The garden at the Hacienda has undergone an amazing transformation near the Casita including a new picnic table. The Triangle is in the throes of a serious facelift working in conjunction with the town.

Typically, the monthly meetings held at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center are free and open to all. However, the coronavirus pandemic dictates that meetings are held virtually until it is prudent to meet again in person. Speakers this year will cover a wide range of subjects commencing with "Tips, Tricks and Tonics," presented by Cynthia Brian.

For information about meetings and projects, visit moragagardenclub.com.. Contact Membership Chair Jane Magnani at (925) 451-7031 for additional information.

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