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Photo Vera Kochan

From left, second-time event campers the Colhoun family; first-time event camper Andrew Sargent brought five boys; and first-time event camper Nathan Thoms

# Family Camp Out event brings a little bit of the wilderness to Moraga

By Vera Kochan

Rancho Laguna Park played host to another one of the summertime town events organized by the Parks and Recreation Department. Family Camp Out was held Aug. 14-15 for the sixth time. The annual event, like so many others, was skipped last year due to COVID-19 mandates.

Beginning at 2 p.m. on Saturday, families pitched a colorful array of tents, both large and small, set up folding chairs, and broke out the ice chests, while the kids played games on the large lawn nearby. This was Brady Cooper's first camp

out, and the excitement was clearly registered on the 10-year-old's face, having just played Hula Hoops and Cornhole with friends.

A per person fee of \$27 included dinner, breakfast the next morning, and entertainment in between. At last count, 59 families had registered at a total of 170 persons.

Parks and Rec Director Breyana Brandt was on hand to greet the attendees at the check-in table and see to all of the details for the event. Recreation Coordinator Donald Scully also served as jack-of-all-trades, in addition to spending the night in a tent in case of emergencies. "I just bought this

tent at Costco," he explained.

There were craft tables for the kids with opportunities to make headbands out of leaves or decorate a rocket and watch it launched by a staff member.

The majority of folks were experiencing Family Camp Out for the first time. One dad, Athan Bezaitis, brought his two daughters, Koralia, age 4, and Nikoletta, age 2, but he will switch places with his wife and she will camp overnight with the girls. "Someone has to stay home and watch my other two kids," was his tongue-in-cheek excuse.

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# Orinda moves to make restrictions on short-term rentals permanent

By Sora O'Doherty

Following a public hearing on Aug. 3, the Orinda City Council took the first step toward making permanent the urgency ordinance regulating short-term rentals that was adopted by the city in response to an incident in Orinda on Halloween in 2019 where multiple victims were shot and killed at a party in a short-term rental. In the wake of the shootings, the city council moved swiftly to enact an urgency ordinance that required, among other things, that short-term rentals could only occur when the host lived on the property and was present during the rental, that rentals must be for a minimum of two days, and that short-term rentals must be registered with the city. The urgency ordinance also restricted the number of guests allowed in short-term rentals. The city council approved the

first reading of a permanent ordinance, that will return to the council on Sept. 7 for the second reading.

The new ordinance not only adopts the restrictions imposed by the urgency ordinance on short-term rental (STR) units, but now had added restrictions that affect STR platforms, such as Airbnb. The staff report noted that since 2019, the major STR platforms have agreed to comply with local ordinances that require registration numbers with their listings, and prohibit transacting STR bookings if the address is found to be out of compliance with local regulations. The new Orinda ordinance has been modeled on recently-adopted ordinances in other California communities as well as incorporating the previous urgency ordinance.

If adopted in September, the ordinance will become effective on Oct. 7, with the exception of the provision for imposing additional rules on the hosting platforms which will take effect in January 2022.

The new ordinance would require hosting platforms to prompt hosts to include the city-issued registration number in their listings. If notified by the city that a listing is non-complaint, the hosting platform must cease any booking transactions for the listing within five days and may not resume until notified by the city that the property is in compliance with local registration requirements. Platforms would also be required to retain records documenting compliance for three years.

When the matter came before the planning commission, two commissioners voted against it, commissioners Brandyn Iverson and Lina Lee. When asked about this by Council Member Nick Kosla, Planning Director Drummond Buckley explained that commissioner Lee did not elaborate but commissioner Iverson raised an issue of being supportive of property rights and wanting to limit the amount of regulation.

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