

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

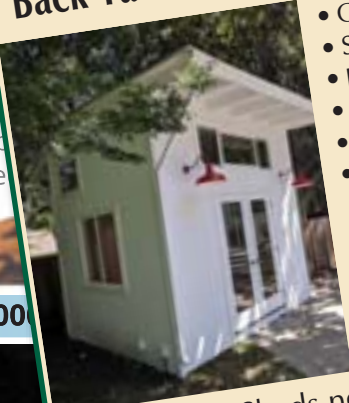
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An arch of jack-o'-lanterns light up this Lamorinda home's entryway.

Photo Sora O'Doherty

Parents hope for fun Halloween from the past

By Jennifer Wake

With many COVID restrictions still in place on Halloween last year, door-to-door trick-or-treating became almost non-existent. This year, however, is shaping up to be a bit more like those of Halloweens past.

Moraga mom Jennifer Pierce said her family stayed in their neighborhood and trick-or-treated with their neighbors last year and then had dinner outside and watched an outdoor movie. This year they are planning on going to a cul-de-sac gathering

the night before Halloween and possibly stopping by another costume house party.

"On Halloween night we will trick-or-treat with some friends in their neighborhood," Pierce said. "So, more back to normal somewhat."

Judy Sin also expects this year to be a bit more like normal versus last year when some Los Perales classes did a check point candy hunt (with map and a list of addresses around Corliss Drive) for Halloween.

Lafayette resident Eric Rubin and his wife last year put together a scavenger hunt throughout Burton Valley. "We made the boys (13 and 10 years old)

along with three friends each, split up into teams and we uploaded all the clues to an app that they downloaded. They got points for finding specific items (witch on a broom, three small black cats, the word boo etc.) and the first team to get to our friend's house was the winner and they got the choice of a huge candy bar or a huge bag of gummy worms. It was super fun and the boys loved it."

This year they're also going back to the previous way of doing things, with minor adjustments. "Door to door, masked," said Rubin, who is working on costumes that have built-in masks.

... continued on Page A10

Advertising



Letters to the Editor	A9
Not to be missed	B3
How to contact us	B3
Classified	C1
Shop Moraga	C3

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The clock is ticking to appoint a new Moraga council member

By Vera Kochan

When former town council member David Stromberg resigned from office on Sept 9 the remaining four council members agreed that it was prudent and fiscally responsible to fill his vacancy through an application, interview, and appointment process, with a Nov. 8 deadline, rather than hold a costly special election. Four applications were received by Town Clerk Marty McInturf by Sept. 30: Moraga residents Seth Freeman, Kerry Hillis, Kendall Langan and Sona Makker. The town council held a Special Meeting on Oct. 12 to interview the applicants and hopefully select a new member, who would serve through November 2022.

During the meeting, Freeman informed the council that he reluctantly needed to drop

out of contention due to a possible conflict of interest with the firm that employs him. Makker, a technology policy lawyer who has lived in Moraga for two years, looks to preserve open space as well as address the town's long-term infrastructure, fiscal, housing and retail needs. Hillis, a principal government and community relations representative for the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) and a four year resident, currently serves as the vice chair of the Moraga Planning Commission and vice president of the Moraga Community Foundation. The final applicant, Langan, a 68-year resident, is currently a commercial property owner within town who has been president and CEO of several companies throughout his career.

Vice Mayor Steve Woehleke opened the meeting,

saying, "We're trying to find the right candidate ... to serve the citizens of the town, and that's the way I look at it."

Woehleke went on to say that while he was impressed with Makker's enthusiasm and great promise, he was concerned about her newness to the town. With regards to Hillis, Woehleke appreciated his contributions to Moraga, but wished he had more experience in finance and fiscal responsibility, adding, "He tends to not be willing to change his position" after listening to all viewpoints. Referring to Langan, "I value his input," but he didn't provide a complete application for evaluation.

Council Member Teresa Onoda felt that Makker "has tremendous potential" and she liked her focus on transparency, call to action, and fact-based decisions. Onoda wanted Makker to get involved

with the understanding of land use and the planning commission. She appreciated Hillis' background and "how he's been active in the four years that he's been here. He's held lots of positions and given, I think, good guidance" while on the planning commission. When referring to Langan, Onoda commented, "A council is about showing up and doing the work, and if you can't put together an application, then in my book, that doesn't cut it."

"He knows the world of government and has been doing it virtually his entire professional career," said Council Member Renata Sos when speaking of Hillis. "He understands the decision making process; the public boards and councils." Sos said that Makker "has shown a commitment and willingness to learn quickly by how she's prepared for this in-

terview," and that being new to the town could be a strength. Sos felt that Langan's many appearances during public comment portions of council meetings where "he quite honestly berated our staff and disparaged individual council members" wasn't a good fit.

Mayor Mike McCluer said, "We need someone with a broad grasp of the town's issues and a deep knowledge of Moraga." While he was impressed with Makker's background and thought process, he felt she hadn't been a resident long enough, and although he appreciated Hillis for his "deep public policy experience in government," McCluer believed that he too, was a relatively new resident of the town at four years. McCluer agreed with the others when it came to Langan.

... continued on Page A4

Civic News A1-A10

Local schools focus on COVID and other safety issues - Page A6

Public Safety

Lamorinda Great ShakeOut a resounding success - Page A8

Life in Lamorinda B1-B5

Things that go bump in the night at THT in Lafayette? - Page B1



Sports C1-C2

SMC men's and women's basketball previews - Page C2



Our Homes D1-D16

Keeping pesky garden gremlins out of our yards - Page D1

