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Children give Santa some drawings during the Dec. 19 Breakfast with Santa event at the Hacienda de Las Flores in Moraga.

Photo Vera Kochan

## Santa makes breakfast rounds in Moraga before the big day

By Vera Kochan

How many kids can say that they've had breakfast with Santa Claus? Thanks to Moraga's Parks and Recreation Department, on Dec. 19 a few more kids – and their parents – could check this item off their Bucket List.

The Hacienda de Las Flores, decorated for the

holidays, provided a breakfast of pancakes, sausages, bacon, fruit, mini-muffins, hot cocoa and orange juice catered by Sunrise Bistro and served by the Moraga Youth Involvement Committee disguised as elves. Starbucks generously provided the coffee.

Parks and Rec Director Breyana Brandt, her daughter Layla (12), and Recreation Coordinator

Donald Scully were on hand to keep things running smoothly during the three breakfast seatings. Approximately 150 guests enjoyed the festivities in either of two dining rooms decked out with red and white tablecloths and strategically placed red poinsettias. Over 120 people remained on the waiting list of the popular event that was skipped last year due to COVID mandates. ...continued on Page A10

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COMPASS

## Town council's reorganization takes unexpected turns

By Vera Kochan

The annual Moraga Town Council reorganization process on Dec. 8 ran much along the same lines of discord as the Oct. 12 and 13 town council (new member) appointment meetings. The final results were achieved with head-spinning debates and comments by current council members.

While still serving as mayor, Mike McCluer didn't waste time nominating Vice Mayor Steve Woehleke to the mayoral position. A second nomination came from Council Member Teresa Onoda in favor of Council Member Renata Sos.

This action prompted McCluer to speak on behalf of the norm. "The tradition typically is that you look at the second to the last election, and you take the top two vote getters, and those people are in line to be mayor. If you don't think they're fit, appropriate or qualified, sure you don't have to follow that,

but that is the tradition." He added, "And, the tradition has served this town extremely well, I think, because it's a natural rotation based on people's votes." Following that logic, McCluer noted that Woehleke should be mayor and Sos vice mayor.

Onoda pointed out that "our protocols are different than what you consider the tradition, and the tradition is not always followed. Our protocols say: 3.1 Election of Officers – The town council is encouraged to rotate the offices of mayor and vice mayor amongst the members of the council according to their order of seniority." Explaining that Sos "was appointed in October 2018, served until 2020, when she was elected with over 26% of the votes. That tally was 6,027, which is an all time high; so with our protocols she is to be the mayor."

Sos made her pitch as to why she would be an asset as the new mayor in 2022. The next year "is going to pose in-

credibly significant challenges, but also great opportunities for us as a council, because we're going to make decisions that will affect the look and feel of the community for years to come." She cited the Housing Element; the Bollinger Zoning; completing labor negotiations with staff; working with Orinda and Lafayette on updating the Lamorinda Action Plan (which addresses traffic, congestion and transportation alternatives); and working with town staff to achieve those objectives.

Being aware that people have alluded that it's Woehleke's turn to be mayor, Sos felt that based on protocol and the factors of seniority and number of votes received that she should be mayor. "Who has the skills and the temperament required to run productive and successful council meetings?" She added that her comments don't reflect any disrespect for Woehleke.

Council Member Sona Makker felt that she needed more information be-

fore casting her vote, as it was clear that hers would be the tie-breaker. After hearing Sos' comments she asked Woehleke, "What makes you suited to be an effective mayor?"

Woehleke replied, "I bring more town volunteer experience than anyone else – over 20 years – the Design Review Board, the Planning Commission, the Hacienda Foundation Board of Directors." In each of those instances, he reminded everyone that he was either the chair or president. He also felt that he has an excellent working relationship with town staff, and a strong background in the principles of decision-making.

With Woehleke visibly upset about veering away from the traditional method of town council reorganization in favor of protocols, McCluer reminded members that by following tradition, Woehleke would serve as mayor in 2022, and Sos would get her turn in 2023. ... continued on Page A4

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