

~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Moraga resident has tree stump turned into a work of art



Photo Vera Kochan

Owner Dolores Austin is dwarfed by her new redwood eagle sculpture

By Vera Kochan

Over 60 years ago, in a brand new subdivision of Moraga, property owner Dolores Austin decided to plant the beginnings of a redwood tree. What seemed like a good idea at the time turned into a structural nightmare as the eventually massive tree's roots began to encroach on the house's

foundation.

Austin was resigned to the fact that the tree must go, but not before she did some research into creative possibilities. While visiting family members near Lake Almanor in Northeastern California, she noticed many examples of carved tree stumps resembling eagles, bears or other forms of wildlife. She discussed her

ideas with the tree landscaper she had chosen to cut down the redwood. He in turn, recommended a wood carving artist he knew from previous jobs.

Having her heart set on an eagle carving, six months ago Austin consulted with sculptor Glen Sievert who has been creating art out of dead or dying tree stumps for over 25 years. His company, Chainsaw Art (chainsawtreeart.com), has created masterpieces throughout Northern California. Sievert's website explains, "When a tree must be taken down, it can leave a noticeable absence. Glen specializes in re-imagining that space and carving tree stumps into new, unique pieces of art."

According to Austin, Sievert met with the tree removal team to discuss how much of the stump to leave before they did their part of the job. "It was all done with chainsaws, and he brought his own tools," she explained. "It took him a couple of days to do it. Except for the marble eyes, it's all tree." The work of art stands approximately 8 to 9 feet in height with a base circumference of about 6 feet. The tree is still alive, as is evidenced by the new branch growth sprouting near the bottom of the sculpture.

With an added touch of whimsy, Austin has placed solar lights resembling an alligator and a frog looking up at the eagle with expressions of awe. Her neighbors most likely first had the same look on their faces, because she remarked, "They all love it!"

Racers compete for charity in JF Kapnek Fun Run



Photo Casey Scheiner

The Chinyakare Ensemble performs during the JF Kapnek Fun Run at Moraga Commons.

By Casey Scheiner

Local running enthusiasts descended upon Moraga Commons Aug. 28 to participate in the JF Kapnek Fun Run, a 5-kilometer event to raise money for food and education for children of Zimbabwe.

The first JF Kapnek Fun Run since 2019, the race saw many modifications during its hiatus, including a location change from Miramonte High School to Moraga Commons and the addition of a carnival with games, a bouncy house, and a rock wall. The original charitable spirit of the race – to reduce poverty and mortality and improve education and health for the children of Zimbabwe through the JF Kapnek Trust – plus other traditions such as a kids run/walk and an arts and crafts table with face painting, is what has kept altruistic joggers coming back since 2003.

"We're a fundraising arm for the Kapnek Trust in Zimbabwe, which improves child health by establishing preschools that give kids vaccines, medicine and food," JF

Kapnek Executive Director Daniel Robbins said. "The Fun Run is a cornerstone of our fundraising efforts. It helps raise community awareness to increase donations. Plus, this event alone generates enough money to refurbish and run two preschools."

In addition to raising money for Zimbabwean kids, the 5K highlighted Zimbabwean cultural customs. Most prominently, it featured the Chinyakare Ensemble, an Oakland group dedicated to performing traditional Zimbabwean music and dance. "Music is a universal language, so we love to share it," DeLisa Branch-Nealy, a member of the Chinyakare Ensemble, said. "We've performed at the Fun Run since it began."

The music enthralled many younger participants, as an abundance of kids danced to the tunes. Additionally, the children enjoyed the new additions to the Fun Run. "We wanted to add more activities for the kids, so we started a carnival with sports games, a rock wall, and a bouncy house obstacle course," race organizer Amy Campbell ex-

plained. "It allows us to connect with a wider range of people."

"I've been doing this run since I was in elementary school," Mackie Hall, now a sophomore at Campolindo High School, said. "I love that I get to run for a good cause."



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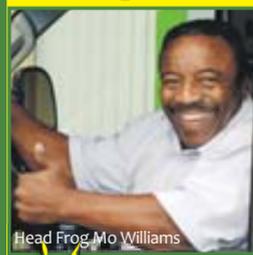
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