



EXPERIENCE MATTERS

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LINDA EHRICH



Movie Night 10/7 The Bad Guys – 7:30pm

Moraga
Commons



Town council approves \$250K contribution to JMLT for Harvey Ranch acquisition



Magnificent views surrounding Harvey Ranch Photo courtesy JMLT

By Vera Kochan

Hoping to preserve a 143-acre section of the Harvey Ranch in Moraga and create a 15,500-acre natural area by connecting the three protected landscapes of Las Trampas Regional Wilderness, San Leandro Watershed and Painted Rock Preserve (which includes Carr Ranch, Buckhorn Creek, and Rocky Ridge), the John Muir Land Trust has been tasked by property owner Charlene Harvey to help her fulfill a dream to preserve the location against development.

No stranger to launching land preservation campaigns, JMLT Executive Director Linus Eukel was happy to take up the mantle and fulfill Harvey's vision. The Save Harvey

Ranch Campaign is hoping to raise \$4 million by the Dec. 31 deadline. What's at stake is the loss of a sizable acreage of untouched land that could be a gateway to pristine wilderness; a new staging area with trailheads and trail connections; convenient access to the entire East Bay; quick access to amazing views and pathways; an enhanced buffer for wildlife; a protected view shed; and the preservation of land surrounding Saint Mary's College.

With the deadline to raise the \$4 million by year's end looming, the town council unanimously approved a \$250,000 contribution for the purchase of Harvey Ranch open space and an escrow instructions agreement with JMLT for the release of funds during its Sept. 14

meeting. This payment will come from Fund 100 – One-Time Developer Fees (Palos Colorados) and is included in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Adopted Budget.

There is every expectation that JMLT's purchase of Harvey Ranch will prove successful. However,

in the event that JMLT fails to provide a satisfactory Proof of Purchase to the town, or if JMLT informs the town and escrow holder that the purchase of Harvey Ranch will not be completed, the escrow holder will return the contribution to the town.

Although the escrow term is through Dec. 31, escrow may be extended for an additional three months, through March 31, 2023, by mutual agreement of the parties concerned via a written notice to that effect.

Town of Moraga submits letter for inclusion into county's Time Capsule

By Vera Kochan

About 60 years ago, Contra Costa County's then, newly constructed Administration Building at 651 Pine Street in Martinez had a time capsule placed in its tower. The time capsule was accepted during the Sept 26, 1964 dedication ceremony.

As the years marched on, the old building was deemed unsafe thanks to hazardous materials such as asbestos (making any renovations problematic and costly) and went through nearly a year of demolition beginning last November.

A replacement County Administration Building was built nearby at 1025 Escobar Street. A new time capsule will be placed in a previously constructed concrete receptacle area at the foot of the clock tower during the Oct. 4 Board of Supervisors meeting.

County Supervisor Candace Andersen has invited the town of Moraga to write a letter for inclusion into the new time capsule. Some suggested information might include town facts; current council members; population; top five issues of concern; and anything else deemed informationally significant.

"Greetings to Moraga's future citizens," begins the town's letter. "We are excited to share information regarding life in Moraga in 2022. The Town's population

is currently 16,700. We are a Town that prides itself on its semi-rural feel, scenic vistas, close-knit community and excellent public schools."

The letter goes on to mention a multitude of bullet points that make Moraga special such as: its farming history (pears and walnuts); open spaces and hiking trails; public school system and parental volunteerism; safe-city ranking; youth sports along with cultural and community programs; the many volunteer and service organizations; multiple parks offering a variety of amusements; Saint Mary's College; close collaboration with Lafayette and Orinda; effectiveness of a small staff on a limited budget; recent completion of Canyon Road Bridge replacement; and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

Also mentioned in the letter are some of the town's current challenges with solutions in the works: multiple wildfire mitigation projects and evacuation planning; traffic congestion during peak hours and alternatives; aging storm drains and infrastructural improvements through federal funding; and working to provide economically feasible housing opportunities for a wider range of income levels.

An additional request from Andersen was a group photo of Moraga's current town council members, which will also be included with the letter.



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