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Candidates Night 2022 welcomes Moraga School Board hopefuls

By Vera Kochan

Moraga Citizens Network and Saint Mary's College co-sponsored Candidates Night 2022, on Oct. 3 at the SMC campus. Besides town council and Moraga-Orinda Fire Districts 1 and 3 candidates, the in-person and Zoom broadcasted event featured three Moraga School Board hopefuls Larry Jacobs, Hen King, and Martha White. Candidate Kristen Kraetsch (an Orinda mother, employment attorney, and co-director of Lamorinda Moms) was not able to participate due to an illness. There are three seats to fill on the MSD board.

White is a 20-year resident of Moraga with four children in the school system, whose duties as an SMC administrative assistant for biology, chemistry, EES, and health professions/ health sciences is managing budgets. She believes in following the mission of the school board and in putting the students first by making sure that they feel safe - physically, emotionally, mentally - and are reaching their full potential. White feels that COVID's learning loss was difficult in the district and that the state's test score results later this year will be a good indicator of progress made (especially with Special Education students). She knows that the Universal Lunch program had some issues and with Universal Busing on the horizon, she's hoping that the two programs become streamlined. White has done a lot of volunteering on various school committees in the past, but feels that her seven years working a variety of jobs at Camino Pablo Elementary School has given her valuable experience.

Jacobs is a 16-year resident of Moraga with two children. He has been a local realtor while serving on several school councils and was appointed to the Moraga School Board in 2020. He believes that the school board has an obligation to the kids to make certain they receive quality education and that the schools continue to exist with the help of teachers, staff, parents and the town. He believes it is also the schools' responsibility to provide quality education to all students, regardless of their circumstances. The schools need to teach how to learn; not just what to learn and get back to pre-COVID levels as far as learning loss, he said. Jacobs would like to continue summer school to help this process and include diversity and equity programs. By serving on various school committees, he has gained a lot of experience along with his past two years already on the school board. Jacobs believes in collaborating with his colleagues and showing respect through listening to each other.

King has lived in Moraga since 1984, and is a small business owner in the field of transportation technology. As a parent of one son, King feels that the needs of the teachers and the community are very important and must reflect the needs of the students. Most importantly, King said school bullying must be addressed, adding that all kids need to be heard within the school system in order to make it a safe and caring space and that placing a Wellness Center in each of the schools could help. Also a priority to King is how to alleviate traffic during school drop-offs and pickups - the MSB needs to look into more public transit usage or staggering start times among the various campuses, King said. Experience as a resident advisor in college has taught King how to work with people and gain leadership experience and a belief in collaboration with colleagues by being respectful and a good listener.

To view the Oct. 3 Candidates Night, visit <https://moragacitizensnetwork.org/candidates-night-oct-3/>

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