



MORAGA

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Town Manager submits notice to retire at end of calendar year



Photo courtesy Town of Moraga

Moraga Town Manager, Cynthia Battenberg

By Vera Kochan

Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg officially submitted a written notice to the town council on Oct. 4, advising them of her impending retirement.

An excerpt from the letter states, "Thank you for the opportunity you have given me to serve as Moraga's Town Manager for most of the past five years. I have found the experience incredibly rewarding, and I am very proud of what we've accomplished together during that time." Battenberg continued, "Thus, it is with mixed emotions that I now submit this letter of resignation to you as part of my plan to leave full-time city management at the

end of this calendar year to pursue other career interests."

Battenberg noted the numerous challenges that Moraga has faced and overcome in recent years such as: climbing its way back to financial solvency; identifying unfunded infrastructure needs in order to invest in the town's storm drain system and other public assets; completing construction of the new Canyon Road Bridge; improving the condition of the town's streets; finishing legacy development applications and implementing the 2010 Moraga Center Specific Plan; working on the completion of the Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative towards future town development; activating the

Hacienda de las Flores for greater community usage; creating recreation and after school programs; and more. So many of these achievements were accomplished in the midst of COVID-19 county mandates.

During the Oct. 12 meeting, council members expressed their sadness and dismay at Battenberg's leaving, while also acknowledging the many undertakings that she and her small staff have completed in such a short amount of time.

The task at hand is to find a replacement for Battenberg's position, and the council has agreed to the services of an executive recruitment firm and has formed a Town Manager Recruitment Ad Hoc Committee

through Oct. 26 while interviewing firms to bring a recommendation to the council for their next meeting.

"I am confident that I now leave you in good hands, as Moraga's team of capable and dedicated Directors will continue their exceptional work on the numerous projects and initiatives currently underway," Battenberg's letter added.

"Moraga Town employees have an unwavering commitment to serving this community, and it has been my sincere pleasure to serve with them.

"I wish you and the Moraga community all the best in the years to come. Thank you so much for your partnership over the years!"

Campo's new principal is no stranger to Moraga

By Vera Kochan

Campolindo High School's new principal, Pete Alvarez, officially took over the reins on July 1 from John Walker, who was promoted to Acalanes

Union High School District Associate Superintendent of Educational Services after a 10-year run at the school.

Born in San Francisco, Alvarez is Bay Area home-grown, going to high school in Napa. His first stint in Moraga came

when he attended Saint Mary's College, earning a BA in history and an MA in educational leadership. Before coming to Campo, he spent 12 years as the principal for a high school in Colorado.

"I never thought that I'd be back here," Alvarez commented. "Nothing much has changed, but I was surprised to see that the bowling alley was gone." While at SMC, he took a bowling class that was worth a quarter of a credit.

Commenting on the rest of Moraga, Alvarez stated, "It's relaxing and offers a lot of the things people are looking for, especially the schools. When I was coming back from Colorado, I wanted to find a school that was special and Cam-



Photo Vera Kochan

Campolindo's Principal Pete Alvarez with his extensive "Mr. Potato Head" collection

polindo was it." He also believes in challenges, and after 12 years he felt it was time for a new one.

Speaking of challenges, Alvarez contracted COVID his first week on the job. Once he was able to assume his duties, he set about gaining the trust of the community and getting to know his students and staff. Uppermost on his mind was, "Campo is so high-performing, how do you get the needle to move higher?"

When asked how receptive the students have been to him, Alvarez replied, "The students have been awesome. I've been a principal for 19 years. I like to be around students, and staff, and parents. I feel incredibly blessed and am building relationships more and more every day. I love high school!"

Alvarez has plans to initiate some new programs at Campo. "One of the things that I'm looking at is, what are our needs? I want an increased and improved peer tutoring program. I also want every family to be able to participate in every program that Campo has to offer regardless of their financial status." He also wants to expand the Woodshop Program to offer a focus on engineering to give kids an added career benefit from the class. Another item on his wish list is to expand the school's Wellness

Program in order to meet the social and emotional needs of the students.

Looking to build trust with the students, Alvarez spends as much time as possible in and around campus and being accessible to them. In the works is a Principal Advisory Group that will include 16 students who are tasked with the job of being the pulse of the student body and sharing their findings through conversations with Alvarez. By doing this, he hopes to become aware of what his campus' needs are and what is important to the kids.

Expect to see Campo's students become more visible in the community through philanthropic efforts such as their Leo Club and the more recent Moraga Community Service Day.

Alvarez got to exercise his acting chops recently with his appearance in "Campo Night Live" (a spoof of TV's "Saturday Night Live"). Admitting that he was terrified, he added, "It was my first time on the stage. I had a monologue with my black lab, Steve, about our journey from Colorado."

All in all, Alvarez's excitement is evident and infectious. "It's great to be back in Moraga. It feels like coming home, and with the education level - it's still a special place."



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Town Council: Wednesday, Oct. 26, 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Nov. 9, 6:30 p.m.

Planning Commission: Tuesday, Nov. 1, 6:30 p.m.,
Park and Recreation Commission: Monday, Nov. 21, 7:00 p.m.,
Moraga School District Board Meetings: Tuesday, Nov. 8, 6 p.m. www.moraga.k12.ca.us.