



# MORAGA

See public meetings schedule on these pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements  
**Town of Moraga:**  
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**Chamber of Commerce:**  
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www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

## PG&E reps attend Town Council meeting to provide power outage updates

By Vera Kochan

In an attempt to update and console certain residential customers in Moraga and Lafayette who've experienced an inordinate amount of power outages within the past couple of months, Pacific Gas & Electric Company representatives came to Moraga's Aug. 23 town council meeting to explain and hopefully reassure customers that the problem is being addressed. PG&E reps planned to attend the Aug. 28 Lafayette City Council

Meeting, which occurred after press time. PG&E's Local Government Affairs Representative Sarah Yoell stated, "We understand the inconvenience that the outages have caused to the residents of Moraga and Lafayette, and we understand that the communication that was given to residents was not acceptable, and we're here today to respond to what was causing the outages - what we're doing, and we've done a lot of work to address the outages and improve the situation." Because Yoell's territory covers the Lamorinda region, she asked Aaron Johnson, PG&E's Vice President of the Bay Area Region to join her in addressing the town's concerns.

Johnson apologized to residents and the town's leadership for the slow communication regarding the many outages and mentioned that many of PG&E's executives live in the Lamorinda area and are aware of the customer dissatisfaction.

"We have not found the challenge with the Rossmoor 1108 circuit," stated Johnson when referring to the problem in question, "and we're pretty frustrated with that. Within a month-ish period there have been over seven outages on that circuit, many of them concentrated together, and we have done everything that we know how to do to find the challenge on that circuit."

Johnson enumerated several measures that PG&E has attempted in order to fix the

problem. They've reconfigured the circuit to remove some customers to other circuits; done full inspections of the circuit; vegetation teams have made inspections; they've added 14 fault indicators to the lines; added a sectionalizing device (a circuit breaker on the grid that breaks down into smaller sections), and more.

"We continue to search for the challenge - the gremlin in the grid," Johnson said. "We believe there's a very small defect somewhere on the circuit, and it's hiding, and it's not showing itself, because the fast trip setting that we have to have the circuit on turns off so quickly that it's basically hiding that fault from us. It is turning off before we would usually see a hot spot."

Public comments were many and came in a variety of grievances: Misinformation given; no response at all; customers felt like they were talked-down to; on hold for lengthy periods; no email as an alternative form of communication; would like some type of credit on future invoice statements; how does PG&E expect to handle the demands of the future; what about an intentional overload of the circuit to expose the problem; customers are tired of the 800 number and want to call a direct line; students, doctors and the work-from-home labor force were greatly affected by the continual outages.

Council Member Steve Woehleke wondered how reli-

able the Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings (EPSS) program was with so many false alarms, while Council Member Kerry Hillis asked how long customers had to wait before a more aggressive solution was explored. Vice Mayor Teresa Onoda would like to see EPSS outage notifications; and Council Member David Shapiro wanted to know why PG&E should expect customers to trust anything the electric company tells them given their track record.

Johnson acknowledged that PG&E has a long way to go in order to earn trust back from their customers, and with regards to an invoice credit, those aren't given out for outages lasting less than 24 hours. He explained that having a dedicated phone line to handle a large volume of phone calls wouldn't be practical, but pledged that PG&E would be proactive as far as contacting customers. He added that the company is already thinking ahead with a 10-year plan for future electrical needs, but that attempting to purposely overload the system to expose "the gremlin" would just invite bigger problems. Johnson stressed the importance of customers signing up for outage alerts by visiting: www.pge.com/notifications.

Mayor Renata Sos asked PG&E for a return visit in the near future, with the expectation of a more positive update in regards to the issue at hand.

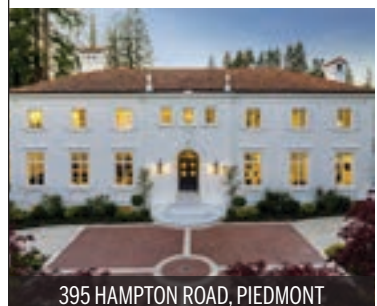
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## This year's abundant crop keeps Pear Harvest pickers busy

By Vera Kochan

Originally scheduled a week earlier, but postponed because the fruit wasn't quite ready for harvesting, the Aug. 19 Pear Harvest had pears literally falling off the tree without any help from the pickers. What a difference a week makes!

The annual community event, co-sponsored by the Moraga Park Foundation and the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley, took place on properties owned by the Moraga School District (next to Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School) and Saint Monica Catholic Church, stated MPF's man-in-charge, John Burgess. Thanks to the heavy winter rains, the pear trees were loaded with fruit meant to be delivered to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

Several community groups were on hand between 8:30 a.m. and early afternoon to volunteer their services, including scouting troops, church groups, the National



Photo Vera Kochan

**Volunteers hard at work on Aug. 19 picking pears for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.**

Charity League and Teens and Parents Volunteer Services (TAPS). An impressive amount of Moraga residents came, many with their children, who worked just as hard as the adults did.

Posted at the check-in table were pear-picking rules for rookies or anyone who

needed a refresher course from last year, like how to properly pick pears and warning folks not to climb the trees. The pears picked at the event will be stored at the Contra Costa and Solano Counties Food Bank for a week or more before being distributed to families.

## EBMUD conducts extensive illegal trash dumping cleanup

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The most recent Aug. 16 cleanup, in another section, exposed an additional three vehicles, one of which was determined by crews to have been a blue Volkswagen Karmann Ghia built between 1955-1975. The Karmann Ghia was pulled up from the depths nearly hidden by trees using tow truck cables, arriving to the top in two pieces, with one section having a tree growing out of the wreckage.

EBMUD estimates that this month's cleanup will produce more than 10 tons (20,000 pounds) of trash that will be pulled up in nets by a crane from 12 dump sites on watershed land. Anything from mattresses to construc-

tion debris, a bag full of firearms and old furniture has been uncovered. "The rangers always patrol the watersheds looking for dump sites," said Rodriguez. "If they find vehicles, we call in law enforcement to investigate in case there's a body inside or the vehicle was involved in criminal activity or stolen. We've put up signs and fences to dissuade people from dumping, and we're looking into putting up barricades down the hills to catch the garbage before it reaches the watersheds. If we can prevent this [the dumping], it would be ideal."

Rodriguez asks homeowners to hire a reputable disposal company that will go through the proper channels

to dispose of junk. "Pay the company half of what you owe them, and give them the second half when they come back with a receipt."

EBMUD Senior Public Information Representative Andrea Pook asks citizens to "report illegal dumping and any identifying information to local law enforcement non-emergency [number]. In Contra Costa County report at 1-800-No-Dumping or (925) 646-2441. In Alameda County report at (510) 670-5480 or by using the Mobile Citizen app."

Pook added, "Lamorinda residents are some of the biggest users of this road, so we're hoping they spot dumping and report it."

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Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community. Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorindaweekly.com



**Town Council** Wednesday, Sept. 13, 6:30 p.m.  
**Planning Commission:** Tuesday, Sept. 5, 6:30 p.m.  
**Park and Recreation Commission:** Tuesday, Sept. 11, 7 p.m.