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# Moraga Valley Kiwanis celebrates 50 years in the community

By Vera Kochan



Photos courtesy Stan Holcenberg

Bottom Row from left: Ashley Coates, Tim Freeman, Tom Westhoff, Cherie Grant, Graig Crossley, Larry Jacobs, Larry Beans, Kirpal Khanna, Leslie Engler, Rich Holden; back Row from left: Stan Holcenberg, Mike Metcalf, Scott Mitnick, John Burgess, John Lee, Barry Behr, Ed Beatson, Dick Olsen, Lee Hays, Ferenc Kovac, Lyla Lauren, Jon King, Sam Sperry, Sonny Tsuboi, Stan Oberg, Steve Woehleke; not pictured: Marty Aufhauser, Peggy Brown-Salazar, Bob Burnett, Ian Cook, Dick Courtney, Karl Davis, Linda Deschambault, Brian Dolan, Mike Donovan, Jose Guillan Avalar, John Haffner, Bruce Kornmiller, Chris McGuffin, Judy Murphy, Jim O'Brien, Claire Roth and Renata Sos

As the Town of Moraga celebrates its 50th anniversary, so does the Moraga Valley Kiwanis. Chartered on May 16, 1974, the Kiwanis Club is technically older than the incorporated town (Nov. 12) by almost six months.

To commemorate the occasion, the Club held a picnic at Moraga Commons Park that was attended by County Supervisor Candace Andersen who, along with other dignitary reps, bestowed proclamations to note the milestone anniversary. Many members have been with the organization for decades, including Mike Donovan and current Club President Graig Crossley, who have been with the Kiwanis for 45 years.

According to members Steve Woehleke and Stan Holcenberg, the Club initially met for meetings at Roncalli Hall on the Saint Mary's College campus, and now meets weekly at the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church. "These meetings provide excellent opportunities for social interaction and camaraderie among members, planning for club activities, and to partake

in stimulating presentations."

Moraga's Kiwanis is a local chapter of a much bigger picture that is known as Kiwanis International, which was formed in 1915, and has spread to over 80 countries. "The name "Kiwanis" derives from an American Indian expression that may be interpreted as "we build" or "to make oneself known", stated Holcenberg. "The Kiwanis mission is to improve the world one child and one community at a time."

Kiwanis prides itself on the many fundraising activities and services it consistently provides to the Town. Residents have benefited from their many yearly undertakings that the community has grown accustomed to, such as staffing the jumpees and assisting with food sales for July 4 and Pear Festivals; planting daffodils along Moraga's main roads; participating in Moraga Community Service Day; helping out at Moraga Library book sales; construction of the Rancho Laguna Park and Los Perales Elementary School playground structures; painting the Ha-

cienda de las Flores interior; rebuilding the Commons band shell; the annual holiday See's Candy sales; and more.

Their benevolent reach extends beyond the scope of Moraga to include distributing food at the Monument Crisis Center; harvesting pears for the Food Bank; winter and spring clean up at Orinda's Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center; pumpkin carving at Hope Solutions; and building a rodent barrier around John Muir Land Trust's Family Harvest Farm.

"Many donations are provided each year for educational groups and individuals, for children and family services groups, and for the Town," added Holcenberg. He noted some recent contributions, which include providing scholarships to outstanding local high school graduates; providing backpacks and diapers for East Bay nonprofits; supporting SMC's High Potential Program; providing gifts for foster kids; and supporting the Moraga Park Foundation and Moraga Community Foundation.

"Club members indi-

vidually and collectively participate directly in the operation of many of the organizations," Holcenberg explained. "Looking forward, the Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club is committed to continuing as a strong contributing member of the Lamorinda and surrounding communities."



Planting daffodils along Moraga Road



Members are working on the band shell in Commons Park

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