



MORAGA

See public meetings schedule on these pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
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Town Council Meetings:
 Wed., Aug. 28, 6:30 p.m.
Planning Commission:
 Tuesday, Aug. 20, 6:30 p.m.
Parks and Recreation Commission:
 Mon., Sept. 9, 6:30 p.m.



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Moraga National Night Out 2024 shared venue with Hacienda Nights

By Vera Kochan

It's hard to tell who enjoyed Moraga's National Night Out more – the residents or the police officers. Held on Aug. 6, the event took place at the Hacienda de las Flores along with the summer's final Hacienda Nights food truck gathering. An additional get-together was held in the Campolindo neighborhood.

National Night Out was first introduced nationally in August 1984. It included law enforce-

ment agencies, state and regional crime prevention associations, neighborhood watch groups, civic groups, and volunteers. It is estimated that the initial event involved 2.5 million neighbors in 400 communities throughout 23 states.

Through the years, National Night Out evolved into something more than just getting an up-close look at a police car. Neighborhoods had block parties and cookouts. Cities developed festivals, parades and other community events that included safety demonstrations, seminars, and youth activities.

There was always one common goal in mind when it came to National Night Out: to strengthen the relationship between the public and its local law enforcement personnel. On Aug. 6, in California alone, 367 cities participated in some type of activity dedicated to this intention including Moraga, Lafayette and Orinda.

The Moraga Police Department (MPD) brought a contingent of representatives to the Hacienda and set up a table overflowing with



Moraga Police Department celebrates National Night Out Photo Vera Kochan

MPD giveaway items for young and old alike. Eye glass cases, pens, key-chain flashlights, notepads, and junior police badge stickers were just some of the items available to the public.

On hand to mingle with residents were: MPD Chief Jon King, Detective Craig Walker, Officers Michael Dreyfuss, Fabiola Hernandez, Jeffrey Yang, Kurt Eriksen, and Support Services Coordinator Cathy Ghiselli. Later in the evening MPD was joined by an

officer with the California Highway Patrol who drove his motorcycle onto the Hacienda patio for optimum viewing enjoyment.

King prefers it when National Night Out is held in neighborhoods, noting that the country-wide event is usually held in October. "We've resisted doing it in big gatherings, because it gives neighbors a chance to get to know each other and us. It works for the officers. It's a bad time of year for this

[many residents are still away on vacation], that's why they did this on Hacienda Nights."

Looking on the bright side, King added, "We love any opportunity to visit with the community. It's important for me that they [the residents] know that we are here to keep them safe. It's equally important for my officers to meet the folks.

"This is a great community. I'm blessed to be the chief."



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Upcoming elections trigger new concerns and assurances over ballot security

By Vera Kochan

With the 2024 elections just around the corner, government sources are attempting to ease voter concerns when it comes to the security of the entire process. Skepticism, to say the least, has almost become a watchword with regards to the many ways voters might assume their ballots could be tampered with or altered to reflect a different outcome.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the FBI issued a July 31 joint press release addressing potential Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks during the 2024 election cycle. The purpose of the public service announcement was to raise awareness to the possibility of cyber attacks on election infrastructure or adjacent infrastructure that supports election operations that could interfere with the public's access to election information.

"With Election Day less than 100 days away, it is important to help put into context some of the incidents the American public may see during the election cycle that, while poten-

tially causing some minor disruptions, will not fundamentally impact security or integrity of the democratic process," stated CISA Senior Advisor Cait Conley. "DDoS attacks are one example of a tactic that we have seen used against election infrastructure in the past and will likely see again in the future, but they will not affect the security or integrity of the actual election. They may cause some minor disruptions or prevent the public from receiving timely information."

On a local note, Contra Costa County has partnered with CISA to implement resources for securing all aspects of its election infrastructure, describing it as 48 steps for a secure election. There are four major safeguards that include these steps: securing networks, securing facilities, securing processes, and securing people.

Voters can rest easy knowing that system software and equipment is not connected to the internet. Contra Costa County (CCC) takes many layers of steps to insure that technology isn't tampered with, such as

"voting systems are tested multiple times before each election to ensure accuracy, stand-alone voting system and tabulators are never connected to the internet (nor do they have modems or hardware in them that could be remotely 'activated'), the voting system is physically restricted under lock and key and only authorized personnel are allowed access."

Additional safeguards include "locked USB ports prevent unauthorized access, layers of cybersecurity measures (multifactor authentication, password policy, staff training) are in place, limited access to key assets by designated staff, network hardening with vulnerability testing, constant and comprehensive scanning for cyber hygiene and penetration testing, firewalls with network segmentation and active monitoring with intercept software, robust backup and patching protocol, strict physical security and chain of custody protocols for all voting technology software, as well as firmware and hardware, and finally, the trusted build of system

(the certified version of the software and firmware) is reinstalled before each election."

CCC makes it difficult for anyone to tamper with ballots thanks to limiting access to high-security areas, ID badges and key cards, and 24/7 video surveillance and alarms. All staff must go through rigorous background checks and the proper training to protect ballot security and voting equipment. There are always two people with ballots and equipment at all times.

The public is welcome to observe the preparation of tabulating devices, vote-by-mail processes, central count and election night, canvass procedures, and 1% manual tally. The public is also allowed to apply for the Certified Election Observer Program, which gives behind the scenes access to the election process and ensures that CCC operates with transparency. This program is held in advance of elections, and participants attend classes and tours to observe the processes.

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