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Beyond the State of the Town Address

By Sophie Braccini



Mayor Karen Mendonca and Brother Ronald Gallagher, President of Saint Mary's College. Photo Sophie Braccini

This year's State of the Town address featured the traditional updates on the budget and potholes, but the most memorable moment for the hundred or so people who attended the annual event may be when Mayor Karen Mendonca asked those who volunteered for the town, its schools or its service clubs to rise - not surprisingly, everyone in the audience stood up; and found themselves cheering in support of each other. The message the outgoing mayor conveyed to all of the volunteers was, "Thank you for making Moraga a special place to live, work and play."

"Marty McInturf (the Town Clerk) suggested that we include a volunteer recognition in our State of the Town event and I thought it was a great idea," said Mendonca. Appetizers and wines were offered at Saint Mary's College Soda Center the night of November 16th, and the first 45 minutes of visiting and mingling were particularly cheerful.

In her address, Mendonca talked about the definite strides made toward the 18 goals that were defined a year ago, in spite of the difficult economic climate.

The mayor outlined the outreach campaign that has begun to inform the community about the state of the roads, and pointed out the new businesses that are

repopulating the Rheem Center, noting that the planning efforts for that area are continuing. Mendonca reminded the audience that the Town continues to be frugal and to present a balanced operating budget.

The Town's new web site was one of the highlights of Mendonca's comments regarding improved communication between the Town and its residents, along with the successful 'Ask the Mayor and Town Manager' monthly open meetings that she initiated last May.

Finally, the venue itself, at Saint Mary's College, illustrated Mendonca's goal of enhancing partnerships.

The mayor also rejoiced that Council meetings had, by and large, remained civil even when animated.

Mendonca added an image-filled list of the events that bring residents together, and showed a short movie by Grant Stubblefield, of Neighborhood Computers, which he entered in the Chamber of Commerce's video contest - Why I Love my Town. His message was simple, "Why we love Moraga? It's the people!"

The movie served as a natural transition to the volunteer recognition ceremony. "The last time this was done was in March of 2009 during a separate event," said McInturf, "so it was time we recognize the past service of our volunteers." Council members took turns calling up the volunteers who served on the Town's committees, commissions, task forces, and teams. Each of them received a certificate provided by the office of Supervisor Gayle Uilkema.

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