



The three Youth Committees met at the Hacienda de las Flores in Moraga

Photo Sophie Braccini

Tri-City Youths Bubble Up With Safe, Fun Ideas

By Sophie Braccini

Once a month the three Lamorinda Youth Involvement Committees, appointed by their respective City/Town Councils, meet to plan tri-city activities and service projects. On November 17, it was Moraga's turn to host the meeting. Accompanied by their own staff liaisons, the teens led a very efficient meeting. Following the Brown Act to the letter, they tackled a long agenda in an hour, made decisions and even had time for a group picture.

"We started to meet together last year," said Linda Dezzani, Orinda Recreation Manager and staff liaison for the Youth Committee in Orinda, "it is a great opportunity for the teens to interact. We couldn't do the teen dance last year, but the overall experience was tremendous. It provides opportunities for more teen activities and they learn to better support each other." Each jurisdiction appoints a group of teen volunteers that plans activities and participates in service endeavors, either supporting existing town functions or designing their own service projects.

Since it was Moraga's turn to hold the meeting, it was led by Moraga Youth Involvement Committee Chair Steven Wetterholm. The first task was to decide what name the grouping of the three committees should have. After a short deliberation they unanimously voted for Lamorinda Teens Association, LTA. They also agreed to create a pool of volunteers among themselves to support individual projects when needed.

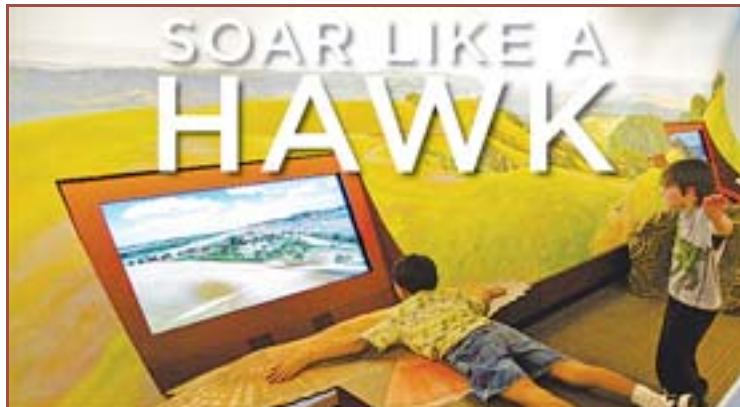
The most ebullient and pro-

ductive part of the evening was when the teens started brainstorming ideas for future common recreation opportunities. It opened with previously debated ideas such as a battle of the bands, a teen dance or movie night; but then all sorts of creative suggestions began to come from all sides of the room. The proposal of a petting zoo morphed into an animal extravaganza with an adoption component, donations for ARF and the participation of the Lindsay Wildlife Museum. The battle of the band scheme was enriched by the addition of a visual and performing art component, a showcase for all the creative students of the three high schools.

Lafayette members proposed to expand across Lamorinda the café and art auction they organize, while Orinda suggested to open up the taste of Orinda that brings restaurants and businesses together. Ideas for younger Lamorinda kids, such as a Teddy Bear tea and a mother-son dance/dinner, were explored as well. They agreed that February would be a good month for their next big joint event. They also voted to appoint two or three members from each town's Committee to be LTA coordinators and follow up on the projects.

The teens then discussed tri-city community service projects, as a way to strengthen their bond. "Getting you together outside of the formalities of these meetings would be good," commented Kimberley Nelson, Recreation and Facilities Coordinator in Moraga. The next planning steps will be taken in December.

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