



EXPERIENCE MATTERS

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Bike riding season is fast approaching – are you prepared to cycle safely?



A cyclist heads toward Canyon Bridge.

Photo Vera Kochan

By Vera Kochan

California, in general, is blessed with the kind of year-round weather that makes bike riding pleasant during all four seasons. Lamorinda's many trails and interesting roadway configurations serve to entice bicycle owners of all ages to hit the road, though hopefully not literally.

Before even getting on a bike, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration advises everyone to ride a bike that fits you – it's harder

to control a large bike. It's also important to make certain that the bike is well maintained, especially the brakes. Never have more than one person per seat. If this suggestion comes as ridiculously obvious, then you've never watched "America's Funniest Home Videos." Make sure to carry all items in a backpack or strapped to the back of the bike – hands should be left free for signaling. It's important to plan your route when riding on a road that also carries motor vehicles. Choose routes with

less traffic and slower speeds. Any sudden lane changes could become a dangerous decision.

What you wear is just as important as how you ride a bike. Although anyone over the age of 18 in California is not required to wear a helmet, it can protect you in the event of a fall. Wearing bright clothing during the day, and something reflective at night adds to your visibility. For that matter, dressing your bike with reflective gear or lights for night riding is also a good idea. Tucking or tying shoe laces and pant legs keeps them from getting caught in a bike chain.

NHTSA warns that many bike accidents occur when the rider is not paying attention to the condition of the road itself. Hazards such as large pebbles, potholes, grates, and train tracks can cause riders to lose control of their bikes and fall. It is important to stay focused especially when sharing the road with cars and trucks. A bicy-

cle is a moving vehicle that should drive with the flow of traffic. Bike "drivers" must also obey the same street signs, signals and road markings the way motor vehicles do. Most importantly, no texting, listening to music, or doing anything else that may cause a distraction.

According to NHTSA pedestrians can also become a hazard to cyclists, because their unexpected movements might occur during a moment when they are unaware of an oncoming bike. If passing a pedestrian, announce your presence "on your left," or "passing on your left," or use a bell.

As the weather warms up, motor vehicle drivers should expect to share the road with more cyclists than during winter months. Seasoned cyclists oftentimes can ride their bikes as fast as cars and are allowed to travel with

traffic in certain circumstances. Drivers should also be aware of their surroundings in parking lots, at stop signs and when backing up because bikes, being smaller than cars, can maneuver with more agility in and out of tight and hidden areas. When stopping to make a right turn, pay special attention behind you as a cyclist may be approaching with the same idea in mind (however, even though cyclists are required to follow the same rules of the road as motor vehicles do, that doesn't always happen). Additionally, passing a cyclist on a narrow roadway can prove difficult. For maximum caution, pass when it's safe to move over into an adjacent lane.

Using common sense, courtesy and obeying the rules of the road, will help everyone to enjoy a safe biking experience.

For more information visit: www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/bicycle-safety.

The Town of Moraga was incorporated in 1974

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It was decided that the public should have the opportunity to vote on which choice they would approve. Rather than hold a costly special election, ballots were made available during two events. The first voting occasion came during a cocktail reception for then new Town Manager Gary Chase. The second occasion was made available at a town booth during Fiesta de Moraga.

After the voting results were compiled, SMC's chapel was the overwhelming front-runner with the Moraga Family Coat-of-Arms running a distant second. According to a newspaper article in the National Catholic Register (Aug. 17, 1975), "The first cries of dissension came only days after the official seal committee decided to recommend St. Mary's chapel to be used as the town's logo and shortly before the committee was to make their report to

the council." One such objection came from a member of the design committee and was followed by other residents who felt that a religious building should not be a part of the town's logo. There were a flurry of letters to various newspapers of the day proclaiming either for or against the chapel. One letter noted that the entire state of California is dotted with cities bearing religious names: San Francisco, Santa Clara and St. Helena to name a very few. Another letter asked whether the SMC chapel could be considered as a landmark building with regards to the seal.

Not wanting to be part of any friction within the town, SMC's Director of Public Relations Michael R. Vernetti penned a letter to the editor of the local Lamorinda Sun newspaper stating, "Since Saint Mary's College has been the center of so much discussion recently concerning adoption of a Moraga Town Seal, we thought you might be interested in how we feel

about the matter. We, of course, would be pleased and honored if the town council chose a design for the seal incorporating the chapel of Saint Mary's, but this is not to say the college is advocating adoption of the chapel seal." Vernetti added, "Support for this design has come entirely from people not associated with Saint Mary's. We feel that encouraging adoption of the chapel design would be improper and have not done so."

Working from the five remaining choices, the seal committee decided to take matters into their own hands. Gilliland, who was also a council member, pushed for the Rancho Laguna de los Palos Colorados (Ranch of the Lake of the Redwoods) depiction even though the lake no longer exists, but was historically located where Campolindo High School now stands. The redwoods, although non-existent with proximity to the lake, were conceptually borrowed from

the Canyon area as that was part of the 1835 land grant belonging to rancher Joaquin Moraga. To add to the visual appeal of the seal, a setting sun was inserted into the background, presumably because Moraga's western mountain range was factually referred to as "poniente del sol" (west of the setting sun).

On July 21, 1976, in a 3-2 vote, Moraga Council Members William Combs, Merle Gilliland, and Barry Gross (in favor) with Michael Cory and Susan McNulty (against) passed a resolution to adopt the Rancho Laguna de los Palos Colorados as the official town seal. However, to this day there does seem to be a mysterious discrepancy regarding the actual style of the town seal.

In 1977, Goodman's notes revealed that "the style of lettering is used today to give an antique Hispanic flavor to a publication." The town seal that citizens are accustomed to seeing on the current website, documents and buildings

do not bear a Hispanic-flavored lettering. Also, earlier versions of the town seal have a decided look reminiscent of the 1970s with bright colors within an almost psychedelic-era graphic. Town documents show this seal in use at least through 1992, and Moraga Historical Society publications from the year 2002 also bear this rendition.

Lamorinda Weekly contacted several sources within the town and was met with surprise and bafflement at the thought that there was another seal design prior to the current one which showcases earth tones and a bold font of lettering. One explanation was that there needed to be a digital vector quality seal which can be scaled as large as possible without pixelating. Anyone with more information can email vera@lamorindaweekly.com.

Special thanks to Moraga Historical Society President Susan Sperry and Moraga Town Clerk Marty McInturf.

2022 Moraga Citizen of the Year – Karen Reed



Photo Stan Holcenberg

Karen Reed – Moraga's 2022 Citizen of the Year

By Vera Kochan

Back from a two-year hiatus due to COVID mandates, the 2022 Moraga Citizen of the Year honor is awarded to Moraga resident Karen Reed.

The basic criteria were that nominees could not be a current elected member or paid staff of the town or any other local public agency; must have a Moraga mailing address; must have given their

time and talent to help make Moraga a vibrant community (one where people want to live, work and shop); and must be instrumental in bringing the community together and instill residential pride.

The Selection Committee recognized Reed for her broad scope of involvement with regards to the Moraga Park Foundation (holding office within the organization, Summer Concert Series, fundraising during the Pear Festival); Moraga Valley Kiwanis (holding office within the organization, Crab/Lobster Fest, See's Candy fundraiser, organizer of the annual Pear Harvest and tree pruning, daffodil planting, Fourth of July festivities); Park and Recreation Commission (research capacity); and Moraga Library (bookstore volunteer).

Many, if not all, of Reed's contributions to the town occur on an annual basis and the committee members felt that her positive energy and long-term volunteerism year-in and year-out embodied the characteristics of an overall exemplary Moraga citizen.

The 2022 Moraga Citizen of the Year Celebration Dinner

will be held Friday, May 6 in the Soda Center at Saint Mary's College. The festivities begin with a social hour at 6 p.m., followed by dinner starting at 7 p.m., and the recognition program beginning at 8 p.m.

Pre-paid reservations are now available and required through co-sponsor Moraga Valley Kiwanis. The cost of a ticket is \$75 per person, and reserved tables of eight may be purchased for \$600. Tickets may be purchased online at: moragavalleykiwanis.org where one can make a reservation; specify an entrée choice of either filet mignon or four-cheese ravioli; and pay for tickets with a credit card.

Reservations and tickets can also be handled by phone. Call Kiwanis member Chris McGuffin at (510) 499-0243. Provide credit card information or mail a check payable to "Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley" (mail to: Kiwanis Club, P.O. Box 503, Moraga, CA 94556) and don't forget to specify choice of entrée.

Deadline to make reservations and purchase tickets is noon on Monday, May 2.



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