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Walking Moraga First

By Sophie Braccini



Hikers on the Cindy Waxman Trail (front to back): Yvonne Lefort, Kim Burrowes and Astrid Munroe
Photo Sophie Braccini

On a recent Thursday, the walk should have been on a trail, not on a street. But Kim Burrowes, the Moraga Parks and Recreation assistant who runs the Walk Moraga First program, felt the trails might be muddy so she decided on Mulholland Ridge for the Thursday stroll.

Walk Moraga First is a program offered by Moraga Parks and Rec to encourage residents to discover the town on foot. Tuesdays are set to roam the different neighborhoods and Thursdays are geared to trail exploration. "We have a mix of abilities in our group," explains Burrowes, "some feel more comfortable on pavement, others like it rough." And exploring the Moraga back-country can be an adventure on which some would rather not go alone.

At its inception, the activity attracted seven women ranging in age from their mid-thirties to 77. "A man called me," said Burrowes, "but when he heard he was the only male, he declined to join." The purpose of the group is to get to the area in which you live and explore places where people have never been. "I get exercise at the gym," says Yvonne Lefort, a counselor and mother of an elementary school student. "Joining the group is a way to get plenty of fresh air and explore trails and areas of Moraga I wasn't familiar with," she explains.

"I have been a resident of Moraga for 25 years," says Astrid Munroe, who is retired, "and I wanted to be out in nature with other people." And there are many ways to roam around Moraga, some very well known and traveled, such as the

Moraga-Lafayette trail and others that are more secluded, like the trail that goes behind the St Mary's campus and ends up in Bollinger Canyon, or the old Moraga Trail off Rancho Laguna Park.

"For the neighborhood walks I use a computer program to calculate the exact distance and I explore myself on foot or with my car," explains Burrowes. With its many steep hills, Moraga can present some challenging terrain to the amateur hiker.

There are always new places to discover in town, but Burrowes is also planning to take her group a bit further, up Pinehurst, to hike the Redwoods trail. "I have to time everything," she says, "the activity is planned to last 1 1/2 hour, no more."

The group is informal and not everyone comes every time. "This session will continue till the end of May and we are still accepting members," says an enthusiastic Burrowes, "this is a pleasant way to make new acquaintances, here in this group you have seven women who didn't even know each other existed a month ago." To join Walk Moraga First, call 888-7026.

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