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## Kevin Mooney: Orinda's Loss is Moraga's Gain

By Sophie Braccini



Officer Kevin Mooney Photo Sophie Braccini

Traditionally, Moraga's new police officers are sworn in during Town Council meetings. To welcome officer Kevin Mooney to his team, Chief of Police Robert Priebe wanted to do something a little different so he arranged an event at the Hacienda de las Flores and invited Mooney's family to join members of the police department and local officials to witness the town's newest police officer take the oath to serve.

Priebe is delighted with the new hire; he has known Mooney for a long time. Until recently, Mooney served in Orinda. "We are very lucky to have been able to hire an officer with incredible talent, who has an outstanding reputation in the county and lives in town," said the chief.

"Everything came together at the right time," explained Mooney. "I had reached retirement age as deputy sheriff with the county sheriff's office and Chief Priebe told me about the opening. It is a rare opportunity; small departments are hard to get into."

For his part, Mooney is happy to join Moraga's police department. "I like the opportunity to investigate things. County patrol as a deputy sheriff is much different, because you take the initial report and you push that paper to somebody else. You may never go to court and never know what happened. Here you can investigate a case fully and that's what I like to do as an officer."

Another aspect he particularly likes is crime prevention. "I live in Moraga, I've been involved with the schools and the community for quite a while and I have a vested interest in keeping things safe here," he said.

Mooney was involved in the chase of a suspect who had been burglarizing cars in Moraga and was finally caught. "It is very satisfying to see that guy go away for a while, especially in a community where you know the people," he added.

Mooney believes that community policing and crime prevention are key to keeping the town great and, whether our teens like it or not, stopping unruly and underage parties is part of the job. "Kids who drink at parties drive drunk and crash," he said sadly. It happens in all three Lamorinda communities. "Every year somebody dies needlessly because of drunk driving. It's tragic. It's an important part of the job to make sure that when people are enjoying themselves they do it safely."

But he prefers to chase the real bad guys.

A former Marine Corp officer, Mooney spent 29 years on active and reserve duty; he was also a training officer with the sheriff. Priebe is already hinting at possible future management opportunities but, for now, Mooney will patrol the streets of Moraga; his first objective is to get to know everybody and gain their trust, just as he did in Orinda.

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