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A group of Moraga residents at their weekly cul-de-sac cocktails gathering.

Photo Katherine Choi

Some pandemic perks have staying power

By Diane Claytor

Every Friday at 5 p.m., neighbors – now friends – grab their outdoor chair, beverage and glass, snack, mask and sweater, and head up the hill to the end of their Moraga street. Chairs are placed in a socially distanced circle and, as more people arrive, the circle expands. It's cul-de-sac cocktails, a neighborhood get-together that has been taking place for the last year.

There are families with kids, empty nesters and singles; they range in age from almost 2 to 80-plus. Several households are regulars, showing up just about every Friday; others join in occasionally. All agree that it's a great way to spend several hours on a Friday evening. Birthdays are celebrated with cupcakes and singing, accomplishments are touted and toasted. Binge-worthy shows and takeout restaurant meals are suggested, jokes are told, children are bragged about, wine recommendations are shared and investment strategies discussed. Many of these party-goers previously only knew each other in passing – perhaps giving a smile or a quick wave; now friendships have been formed and support given during these challenging times.

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Advertising

Saranap address change causes confusion among some residents

Photo provided

A package with a preprinted Lafayette address label delivered to a Saranap location had the city crossed out and the city of Walnut Creek written in pen by hand.

By John T. Miller

In a surprise move by the U.S. Post Office, many residents of the unincorporated area of Saranap have had their Walnut Creek address changed to Lafayette. The zip code for them, at least so far, remains the same at 94595.

Apparently, a petition signed by approximately 200 residents requested the post office make the change. They were originally denied, but then the USPS went ahead and granted their wishes, initiating the conversion.

Contra Costa County District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen said, "As far as the County is concerned, we have not made a final decision and would need additional public input. It appears the post office leapfrogged beyond that." She added that in the near future the Supervisor's office will meet with the Chief of Staff, Congressman Mark DeSaulnier's office, the planning department and the assessor's office in order to figure out what the process should be.

"Some people may not want it," said Andersen, "although it wouldn't change anything legally; it's just what goes on an envelope."

David Dacus, president of the Saranap Community Association, says that the board doesn't have a view on it, also citing the fact that there would be no legal change, just a postal address.

Dacus said that from what he's heard – anecdotally – he's a bit skeptical. "Will this affect property values?" he asks. "The supposition is that a Lafayette address could be more valuable than a Walnut Creek one."

But longtime broker Linda Friedman with Village Associates, who has also been a practicing attorney says, "Our office is proceeding cautiously with how we designate the affected homes." Friedman, who has been selling Lamorinda real estate for the past 40 years adds that they could use more guidance. "We are respecting the assessor's listings for public records, which are still in effect with Walnut Creek addresses. We've always had the Lafayette schools to tout with the Saranap area and don't feel this will affect pricing in any way."

One of the main reasons for the address change could be the difficulty Saranap residents with Walnut Creek addresses have in registering their children for Lafayette schools. They are often rejected because of the address and then must go through an appeals process, at least once each year. Depending on the address, a next-door neighbor might have to jump through hoops to enroll their child, while the other neighbor is accepted automatically into to Lafayette schools.

While residents await direction from the County Board of Supervisors, there already appears to be some possible problems. An Amazon package with a preprinted label for Lafayette arrived with a 94595 zip code. The city on the package was marked out with a Sharpie pem and, in large letters, it was changed to Walnut Creek. In another case, when reordering checks from the bank, an elderly resident of Saranap found her check's address had already been changed from Walnut Creek to Lafayette.

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