

Moraga Brings Back the Good Ol' Times for the 4th of July

By Sophie Braccini



2007 4th of July race Picture courtesy of Campo Track

This 4th of July, the Moraga Parks and Recreation Department will go all out to offer Moragans and visitors community-building fun for families. Parks and Rec Director Jay Lifson has added old fashioned amusement to attract crowds to the Commons Park. Starting at 11:00am, youth from 7 to 77 years of age are invited to compete in wheelbarrow and 3 legged races, a spoon and egg relay, water balloon toss, and a watermelon-eating contest. There will also be the traditional parades and activities, followed by the well-attended fireworks at 9:00pm.

The day will start with the runs planned by the Campolindo Track Team. The runners will meet at the Montessori School in the Moraga Center (on Moraga Road, close to the new Union Bank). The children start their run at 8:00AM, followed by the five-mile and 2-mile runners. Registration is \$20 before June 20th and includes a T-shirt, (\$5 for Kiddie Run). The form is online on the campotrack.com web site or at the Hacienda. Registration is possible on the day of the race, starting at 7:00am, for \$25.

Back by popular demand, the Moraga Youth Involvement Committee will offer a pancake breakfast at 8:00am.

New this year: Immediately following the con-

clusion of competition, both two mile and five mile race competitors are invited to the Moraga Commons for complimentary pancakes.

At 9:00 AM, canine pride will be displayed in its usual and quite unbelievably orderly manner. Equally orderly, the children will follow at 10:30AM with a bike parade led by the Moraga Police Department (MPD). The Kiwanis are organizing the very popular inflatable park. The ephemeral wonderland has been moved close to the basketball court to promote mingling with the rest of the festivities.

In front of the band shell, visit the booths of several local organizations such as the Historical Society, the Moraga Movers, the Hacienda Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce, the Lions, Loard's Ice cream, Community Emergency Response Team, Moraga-Orinda Fire Department (MOFD), and the MPD. Food booths will provide sustenance to visitors from 11AM to 9PM.

New excitement this year: the Parks and Recreation Department invites all skater-boarder to show off their talent at the Skate Park around 12:30PM. Potential performers should call Parks and Rec at 888-7045 to register.

Evening festivities will open at 6:45PM with Mayor Lynda Deschambault's welcome at the Bandshell. She will be followed by Larry Lynch and the Mob's concert. As usual, the best seats at the Commons and on the Country Club grounds will be staked-out well before the start of the fireworks at 9:00pm.

The MOFD has also issued its traditional annual warning: Fireworks may be canceled up to 15 minutes before the show, if conditions mandate. This hasn't happened yet, so let's hope that the unprecedented dryness of the vegetation this year will not lead to a big disappointment for the thousands of viewers expected to attend the display.

Orinda Celebrates 25 Years of the July

By Andrea A. Firth

25th Anniversary July 4th Parade and Celebration



Sophia Spitulnik, who recently graduated from 5th grade at Wagner Ranch Elementary School, designed the logo for Orinda's 25th Anniversary Parade Celebration

“Twenty-five years ago a lot got started and established in Orinda, including the July 4th parade,” says Kate Wiley, Co-President of the Orinda Association. “We thought it was the right time for the community to share in those traditions and accomplishments, so we decided to throw a week-long party,” she adds with a laugh. The ever resourceful and exceedingly organized Wiley worked with core group of about twenty volunteers to create a 25th Anniversary Celebration that Orindans and their neighbors in Lafayette and Moraga won't soon forget.

Celebration banners, which feature red and blue stars reminiscent of a fireworks display, already adorn poles on both the Theater Square and Community Center sides of the City. “I was looking for a banner design, and Nancy Daniels [a local artist and Co-President of the Orinda Arts Council] mentioned that she had created something a few years back that was never used,” explains event coordinator Susan Meyer. “So we resurrected Nancy's design, recruited sponsors, and the banners are up and make the City look really

festive,” she adds.

Orinda's first July 4th parade, held in 1984, was the brainchild of Bobbie Landers, a longtime resident and Orinda activist. Landers and friends were looking for a way to bring Orindans from both sides of Highway 24 together for some sun, some fun, and to introduce the concept of incorporation of the City. A few phone calls later and with a help of her many friends (like John Fazel), Orinda's Annual July 4th Parade and Fun Run were born.

“We have been working on the 25th Anniversary July 4th Celebration since last September,” notes Wiley. “Almost every civic group in Orinda is involved.” Finalists from the recent Orinda Idol Competition will sing the National Anthem at the start of the parade. This year's Grand Marshall, Harriet Ainsworth, will lead the procession seated on a platform (created by Wiley's son Travis) that depicts Orinda's majestic hills and historic buildings. And, Orinda's All Volunteer Band—a parade favorite—will be marching and playing and celebrating their 25th anniversary as well.

Moraga 4th of July Program:

Morning Runs:

- 8:00 Kiddie Run
- 8:30 5 Mile Run
- 8:40 2 Mile Run
- 10:00 Awards at the Bandshell

At the Commons

- 8:00 – 10:30am Pancake Breakfast
- 9:00 Dog Parade
- 9:30-1:30 Community Organization booths
- 10:30 Children's Bike Parade
- Fire Department vehicle display
- Police Dept. vehicle display
- 10:00 – 6:00pm Inflatables
- 11:00 – 9:00pm Food booths
- 11:00 – 12:30pm Old fashion 4th of July Games
- 12:30pm Skate Park Show

Evening Festivities

- 6:45pm Mayor's Welcome
- 7:00pm Larry Lynch and the Mob
- 9:00pm Fireworks by Pyro Spectaculars
- 9:30pm Larry Lynch and the Mob close the celebration

Traffic Detour in Moraga on July 4

To protect the public from fallout from exploding rockets during the display, the Moraga Police and Public Works Departments will provide detours around road closures near the display area. Signs will be posted directing traffic around the area and along residential streets. Remember that the 25 mph speed limit will be enforced along the detour.

Road closures will be in effect from 8:45 PM until approximately 15 minutes after the display ends. The closed roads include:

Moraga Way between Hardie Drive and Camino Ricardo

All entrances to the Moraga Country Club (including Country Club Drive from School Street).

Please prepare for severe traffic impact immediately following the fireworks show to last approximately 1 hour.

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ORINDA July 4th—Make a Day of It!

- 7:30 am Pancake Breakfast (til 10 am)
- 8:00 am Roadrunners' and Haley's Fun Runs*
- 9:30 am Friends of the Library Book Sale (til 1 pm)
- 10:00 am Orinda's 25th Annual July 4th Parade
- 12:30 pm Exotic Bird Show
- All day! Starting at 8:00 am and running until 3:00, there will be live music and arts and crafts booths in the Library Plaza and Community Center Park— plus food, beverages, games, a petting zoo, a classic car show, and more.

*Register in advance for Haley's Fun Run at www.angelhaley.org. On the 4th, sign up for the Roadrunners' and Haley's Fun Runs in front of the Orinda Community Center.