

LAMORINDA Community

Walking Moraga First

By Sophie Braccini



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

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.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Planning Task Force Presents Recommendations

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Please don't start mucking around with it," stated Judge. He felt the proposed Neighbor Consent Process took the responsibility for some residential development decisions away from the Planning Commission, which he felt might not serve the interests of the larger community. Although he felt adjusting the height allowance of downtown buildings upward might be acceptable in a large development, Judge questioned the prudence of this change.

Joyce Hawkins, another former Orinda Mayor, mirrored some of Judge's sentiments with her comments. "I think the Task Force did a great job. It's time that revisions be made," said Hawkins. But she also stated that the floor area ratio guideline had worked well for Orinda, and she worried that a change would negatively impact the diversity of housing available. Hawkins felt some of the proposed changes to the retail frontage requirements in downtown spaces were contrary to the goal of revitalization. She was also very concerned about the impact of the increase in building height to 55 feet. "I encourage you to look at the visual effect of buildings of this size. The imposing face of a 55-foot building on Orinda Way differs as compared to a similar building on the wider Mount Diablo

Boulevard," she added.

The City Council and Planning Commission will hold another meeting to discuss the

Planning Process Review Task Force recommendations on February 24th at 5 p.m. in the Garden Room of the Library.



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Orinda's Old Bricks Pave Entrance to New City Hall



Photo Andrea A. Firth

Pictured are Ruben Gerk (Public Works), Mary Alice Keeler (Assistant Engineer), Ann O'Connell-Nye (Orinda resident), and Steve Ecklund (Public Works) standing by the newly completed display of community bricks that graces the entranceway of Orinda's City Hall. The bricks, which were purchased by and display the names of many long-time and prominent Orinda residents, were salvaged during the demolition of the former City offices almost ten years ago. Through the tireless efforts of Orinda preservationist Ann O'Connell-Nye and with the help of Parks and Recreations Director Todd Skinner and the City Engineering and Public Works staff, the 143 personalized bricks (which are actually replicas of the original bricks made to meet current building specifications) provide a trail from the old building to the new City Hall and leave some local history in their path.. A. Firth



Alice A. Martin, Happy 98th—One of many who lived a long and happy life in Orinda.

The Joaquin Moraga Adobe: A Local Historic Treasure

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Although the empty residence is in some disrepair, Long found that the building's condition was better than what he had expected. The Moraga Adobe was renovated and expanded in 1941, at which time bedrooms and a veranda were added and the adobe walls were covered. The original three rooms of the adobe retain a Spanish feel with white walls and a large-tile floor, but the newer rooms, with linoleum and shag carpet, show evidence of decorating choices in the 1970's that are inconsistent with the home's heritage. Presently, the windows of the adobe have been boarded up to deter would-be party-goers.

The Moraga Adobe has been designated as a Historical Landmark by the City of Orinda and the State of California and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, which makes it an absolute must-see to local preservationists like Orinda resident Bobbie Landers. "The communities of Orinda and Moraga are both interested in the preservation of the Moraga Adobe," states Landers, who is enthusiastic about the prospect of the adobe being accessible to the larger community. Landers recently held the first meeting of the newly established Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe in the living room of her home. Both the Mayors of

Moraga, Dave Trotter (a history buff and adobe expert in his own right) and Orinda, Sue Severson, were in attendance along with several members of the Orinda Historical Society and other interested residents. "The adobe is an important historical landmark in the Bay Area dating back to the pre-gold rush days before California established statehood," explains Landers. "It would allow people to be acquainted with very early California," she adds. The next meeting of the Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe will be held on Monday, March 9th at 7:30 p.m. Those interested to attend should contact Landers at 254-8260.

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