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## Santa Visits Moraga Residents

By Sophie Braccini



Rich Larsen and his five grandchildren: Mikayla Smith (age 8), Nathan (5) & Spencer (2) Bennett, and Jocelyn (1) & Sloane (5 months) Larsen  
Photo Sophie Braccini

On December 16, Rich and Carol Larsen had their children and five grandchildren, ages five months to eight years old, over for a pre-Christmas celebration in their Country

Club home. About 6:30 p.m. the doorbell rang. When the children opened the door they came face to face with Santa Claus. The jolly old elf shared drinks and sweets with the families and took notes as the kids detailed their Christmas wish-lists.

"He was the real Santa, I tugged on his beard to be sure," said one of the children, while his cousin hoped that Santa would come back on Christmas Eve with more presents.

The special visit was arranged by Rich Larson's step-daughter, Carrie Smith, an Orinda resident who had heard about the Moraga Parks and Recreation Department's pact with the North Pole. "It is a wonderful idea," said Larsen, "it was a very special moment for our family."

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## MCN Thanks Town Staff



Photo Andy Schreck

Ellen Beans, President of the Moraga Citizens Network (MCN), believes 'tis the season not only to celebrate, but to give and thank as well. On December 17, with MCN members Janet Foreman and Darleen Haffner, she organized a festive celebration for Moraga Town Staff, who, in her experience, give much to the

Town. "This was a significant community experience, said Beans, "we held it in the Fireside Room at the Hacienda, all the food was home-made by MCN members, and we had the great addition of flutist Carol Alban, from The Friends of Moraga Library, with her accompanist, who played wonderful music." As staff

members introduced themselves, Police Chief Bob Priebe said that the day marked the 31st anniversary of his coming to Moraga. "In all these years I can't remember a time when the community has given back so abundantly to us," said Priebe, "it was worth waiting for." S.Braccini

## Camino Pablo Field's Restoration Design

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council authorized staff to enter into an agreement with Callander Associates, of San Mateo, for a not-to-exceed amount of \$65,000 for the design of the Camino Pablo Elementary School Field Renovation Project. This project will cost the Town approximately \$730,000, and utilizes East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) Measure WW funds.

Jill Mercurio, Moraga's Public Works Director/Town Engineer, indicated that the selected design firm came to the interview with very good ideas, and had obviously studied the existing topography. Like other bidders, they have experience in the type of public work they will provide in Moraga.

The Town worked with the School District to select a design. Bruce Burns, the Superintendent of the Moraga

School District, expressed his satisfaction with the collaborative process at a December 10th meeting.

Successfully restoring a field that belongs to the School District with Town money demonstrates significant improvement in the relationship between Moraga's two main public agencies. Both the Town and the school district suffer from budget reductions and these financial tensions have translated in the past to lengthy disputes over who should pay, and how much, for the cost of maintaining school district facilities such as gyms and sports fields that are used for community sports and events.

The design should be completed in early 2011; the bidding for the actual work will happen this spring; and construction should proceed over the summer.

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