



# Moraga

## Civic News

### Public Meetings

#### Town Council

Wednesday, April 27, 7:00 pm  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,  
1010 Camino Pablo

#### Planning Commission

Monday, May 2, 7:30 pm  
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

#### Design Review

Monday, May 5, 7:00 pm  
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

#### Liaison

Friday, May 13, 8:00 am  
Fire Station, 1280 Moraga Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

#### Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us

#### Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

#### Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



## Police Report

**Theft at Gym, 4/17/11** Cops responded to a petty theft at 24 Hour Fitness. Sometime between 6:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. two purses were stolen out of a locked locker in the women's locker room. Missing credit cards were used for a shopping spree in Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill and Vallejo. Total loss approximately \$1,220. The incident is being investigated by Moraga's finest, including a review of surveillance footage.

**Stolen car found, 4/16/11** A car reported stolen in Berkeley earlier in the day was found on St. Mary's Road near the Moraga Library. Police did a routine check on a green 1996 infinity 130. Surprise, the DMV reported the car stolen. A screwdriver and crowbar were found on the front seat. Happy ending – the car was released to the daughter of the registered owner. Perhaps the thief checked out a book and took the bus home?

**Driving with drugs, 4/15/11** Cops pulled over the 19-year-old driver of a white BMW on Chalda Way near Rheem Boulevard for a broken brake light. An officer could smell alcohol from the car, a search resulted in the seizure of six small balloons containing a black tar-like substance, several hypodermic needles and an open bottle of alcohol and jewelry. The jewelry is being investigated as stolen. The subject was taken to the Moraga Police Department and later to the main detention facility in Martinez and his car was towed away.

**Pot pipe at Campo, 4/14/11** Two students were detained by high school staff for possession of drug paraphernalia. Staff handled the incident administratively, giving both students a five day suspension for a glass water pipe containing suspected marijuana residue. One of the students had the option of counseling to reduce her suspension. Does zero tolerance ring a bell?

**Laptop lifted from car, 4/09/11** A laptop was taken from a locked car parked on Ascot Drive sometime during a three day period. When the owner returned to his car on 4/09 he realized that the car's rear driver's side window had been smashed and the computer was gone. Total loss estimated at \$1,200.

**Loud party, 4/10/11** Cops came to an Ascot Drive apartment to check out a loud noise complaint. Upon arrival cops could hear the shindig from fifty feet away. After removing (?) the unwanted attendees a citation was issued for a "Loud or Unruly Party." No further complaints. Perhaps they were celebrating the exciting conclusion to the Masters Golf Tournament?

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## Economic Action Team in the Starting Blocks

By Sophie Braccini



Hollie Lucas-Alcalay in her herb garden with two-year-old daughter Bella  
Photo Sophie Braccini

The first meeting of Moraga's new Economic Action Team is scheduled to take place on May 4th from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores. This brainchild of the Economic Development Team (EDT) is composed of 12 Moraga residents who have indicated an interest in, and have ties to, local economic development. The action-oriented body is tasked with supporting the EDT on two main points – to cre-

ate a Town-wide Commercial Ordinance that streamlines community supported retail, office and other commercial business; and to assist in the revitalization of the Rheem Valley Shopping Center and adjacent commercial areas.

"We wanted to appoint a mix of Moraga volunteers, people familiar with the issues, and others who are new, to help us walk through all the things we want to consider for the commercial ordinance, to contact the owners, businesses and potential investors who can help the Town with the revitalization," said EDT member Renee Zeimer. The Action Team will include two Council members (Ken Chew and Howard Harpham); the three EDT members (Zeimer, Mary Coe, and Rich Larsen); one member of the Revenue Enhancement Committee that worked extensively on these questions last year (Fred Schroeder); members of the Chamber of Commerce, business and property owners (Edy Schwartz, Larry Tessler, Allen Sayles and Dave Shnayer); and two residents-at-large.

One appointee is a new face on the Moraga political scene, Hollie Lucas-Alcalay, the mother of two

young children and a local small business owner with marketing experience. Lucas-Alcalay became involved with the civic affairs during the Dollar Tree debate.

"We've lived here for five years," says Lucas-Alcalay, "I lived in San Francisco, Los Angeles, London, and Washington, D.C. My professional background is in marketing and lobbying, and I also managed fundraising for organic food and wine companies." With two little children, the young woman decided to create a business of her own that she could manage when time permitted and decided to turn her own garden into a little farm. "It's a business I started while my daughter was taking a nap," she says laughingly.

While looking for a local business opportunity, Lucas-Alcalay met with commercial realtors and researched the town's demographic and business rules. So when the Dollar Tree applied to set up shop in Moraga, she had an idea of how things worked. "I just thought that that store was a bad idea, not just for Moraga but for everybody," she says, "they just sell leftover junk. What was great is that I met other women at the meetings

who shared the same views and we immediately hit it off."

Lucas-Alcalay and her partners did not win the battle in spite of their pugnacity. "After it was over, I asked Jill Keimach (Moraga Town Manager), to give me something else to do so I could continue to work on getting Moraga the kind of retail that the residents really want." She then met with Zeimer and agreed to serve on the Economic Action Team.

"We really are at a turn of a corner and things are beginning to happen," said Zeimer, "I'm hopeful we have an opportunity to influence how the community responds to business and as a result, what kind of businesses we can attract." Council Member Harpham, who volunteered to sit on the team, agrees. "You have to grow your way out of the financial situation we are in," said Harpham, "We have limited population, limited ownership; we'll have to change the rules, and if anyone can do it, it is certainly this motivated group."

The second resident-at-large appointee has not been identified at press time; the EDT is looking for a Moragan with ties to the Campolindo High School community.

## Moraga Country Club Station Post Office in Danger of Closing

By Cynthia Brian



Moraga postal workers and former Moraga Postmasters attended the April 19th meeting. From left to right, Shelley Hayse (Rheem office), Evelina Ramirez (former Moraga Postmaster, currently in San Leandro), Gurpreet Sohal (former Moraga Postmaster, currently in Fremont), Mark Fahmy (Country Club Station)  
Photo Cynthia Brian

"Moraga Country Club Station was the original post office in our community. It is part of our town history. How can you consider closing it?" exclaimed a long time resident of Moraga at an April 19th community meeting organized by the United States Postal Service. The Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium was the location of an initial gathering to inform Lamorinda residents that the 1545 School Street location was one of

over two thousand post offices in the country slated for closure.

Postal workers, Moraga's Postmaster (as well as two former Moraga Postmasters), and local citizens were in attendance. A petition to halt the closure and save the post office signed by nearly 500 residents was presented to the District Administrator by a representative from the American Postal Workers Union. Augustine Ruiz, Public Affairs and Communications Director for the

Postal Service, presided over the discussion about the potential consolidation of retail services offered in Moraga.

The lease for the property expires in October of 2011. The speaker admitted that the Country Club Station has always been profitable for the Postal Service, however with deficits throughout the country, it is trimming services. "We know that the Country Club office is profitable, but it would save us \$187,000 a year to close it, with minimal impact on our services since the other office (at the Rheem Center) is located less than three miles away," Ruiz later stated.

According to the current governing law, amended solely by Congressional authority, post offices may only be closed at lease expirations, for maintenance issues, and for reasons unrelated to profits. As a cost cutting measure, the USPS would like to close as many as 16,000 offices nationwide.

Moraga resident Dick Olsen observed, "My first concern is that the post office did not bother to tell the residents of all of Moraga or South

Orinda about their plans to close the Country Club Station."

"My second concern," continued Olsen, "is the potentially significant environmental issues. Will the USPS do an Environmental Impact Report because of the negative environmental impact to the community regarding this discretionary act? People will now be forced to travel to Rheem, Orinda, Canyon, or Saint Mary's College to be serviced. Parking in three of these locales is impossible." Olsen added, "If the Country Club Station closes, there will be a major detrimental impact for seniors, especially those at Moraga Royale and Aegis. The new Moraga Center Specific Plan calls for three hundred additional senior units installed adjacent to the Moraga Center and Safeway, which is basically across the street from this facility."

Traveling a few miles could be a burden, especially if one does not have transportation. The effect on seniors, businesses, and local residents who have depended on the services at this location for years was troubling for the vocal group at the meeting. ...continued on page A8

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Cinco de Mayo at the Hacienda – Fun for the entire family May 5, 4:00-7:00 pm

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