

# LAMORINDA

## WEEKLY

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A miles-long line of first responder vehicles wind down Moraga Way toward Orinda. Photo Vera Kochan

# First responders bid farewell to MPD officer

By Vera Kochan

In a solemn funeral procession, the communities of Lamorinda observed a visually emotional display of solidarity amongst the “brothers in blue” honoring one of their own – Cpl. Kevin Mooney.

Mooney passed away on Aug. 21, after a courageous battle with COVID-19 and related complications. He was 58 years old; a husband, father and grandfather.

He served his country for 29 years as a member of the United States Marine Corp, rising to the rank of Major before retiring from the military in 2010.

He continued his service in the protection of communities for 21 years as a Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Deputy, followed by more than six years as an officer with the city of Orinda, before joining the Moraga Police Department in 2013, where he was a detective.

Besides being a rangemaster, a field training officer, and president of the Moraga Police Officers Association, Mooney was the local organizer for the annual Toys for Tots drive – a cause that was very close to his heart.

Funeral services were held on Sept. 8 at St. Monica’s Catholic Church in Moraga (where he was a resident). The funeral procession began at ap-

proximately 12:30 p.m. with several police motorcycles leading the route along Moraga Way toward Orinda and onto Highway 24, escorting Mooney to his final resting place at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Lafayette.

Dozens of police vehicles followed behind, with red and blue lights flashing, representing law enforcement from Moraga, Orinda, Lafayette, Walnut Creek, Danville, Concord, Martinez, San Ramon, Kensington, Napa, Hercules, East Bay Regional Park Police, Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Department, California Highway Patrol, Bay Area Rapid Transit Police and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

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# Parents call for school safety as community mourns crossing guard death



Parents and students deposit flowers and toys at school memorial site. Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

By Sharon K. Sobotta

Ashley Dias showed up at Stanley Middle School long before the students on the morning of Sept. 8. Dias wasn’t new to the job of being a crossing guard, but he was just two days into his assignment at that particular post in front of Stanley Middle School.

“When I saw him early in the morning, I told him he could go home and relax for an extra hour (because of the late start on Wednesdays),” his family friend and fellow crossing guard Frank Boykin said as he helped a cluster of parents cross the intersection of First and School streets on the day after the accident. “That was the last time I saw him.”

Boykin says he referred Dias to the company they work(ed) for as crossing guards. “He was a good kid, from a nice family and he lived right up the road,” Boykin said, pointing toward Avalon Street. “I knew he’d be a good guy for the job.”

At around 3 p.m. that Wednesday, Dias put himself between a large SUV and at least one Stanley Middle schooler when the vehicle showed no sign of slowing down.

Like many who help children in the district, Boykin drives through the tunnel each morning to work at his intersection between the walking entrances at Lafayette Elementary School. Boykin says that although drivers have been doing better since the accident that took Dias’s life, many were failing before that. “A lot of people get frustrated because they say there’s too many kids, but the reality is that a lot of kids go to the middle and elementary schools,” Boykin said. “We just need people to slow down.”

Boykin says what keeps him doing the work is the same thing that worries him. “The kids,” he said. “I have three kids of my own. I come from a large family. I do this job because of the kids. They show me love, respect and I enjoy being around them.”

A growing memorial stands outside Stanley where Dias worked his last shift as a crossing guard.

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