

The Moraga Historical Society

2026 FOURTH QUARTER - MORAGA MEMORIES-YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

Parents the Unsung Heroes of our Youth Organizations - Part IV

By Susan Sperry

Part IV of “Volunteerism in the Town of Moraga” focuses on organizations dedicated to making youth activities available to all individuals regardless of talent or disposition. Starting with kindergarten age children these organizations are called "recreational", meaning they are open to anybody who wants to join, as opposed to "traveling league" style organizations into which the more talented or motivated individuals graduate. The core principle behind "recreational" youth organizations such as LMYA, OMPA, MBA and Scouts is that the individual is competing against him or herself, not others, with the goal being personal development and self-improvement. None of this is possible without the active contributions of parents, which is why we call these almost invisible volunteers "unsung heroes". The youth activity system of Lamorinda not only feeds the most talented individuals into more competitive commercial organizations from which remarkable achievements have emerged, but it builds the character and community spirit of future generations.

These volunteer supported groups serve Moraga's youth:

Orinda Moraga Pools Association



The Orinda Moraga Pools Association (OMPA) is a non-profit corporation established in 1956 and comprised of nine recreational swimming teams all located within Contra Costa County, California. (Campolindo Cabana Club, Meadow Swim and Tennis, Moraga Country Club, Moraga Ranch Swim Club, Moraga Valley Pool, Orinda Country Club, Orinda Moraga Swim Club, Orinda Park Pool, and Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis).

The mission of the OMPA is to conduct a summer recreational swim league to benefit the member pools' children, of all abilities, aged 3-18. Through weekly

competitive dual meets, and an annual Championship Meet, the spirit of sportsmanship, integrity, and high ethical standards is promoted for all participating athletes, coaches, and parents, and ensure fairness through rules and regulations. The goal of OMPA is to use sports experience to help the swimmers develop positive character traits and values that will help them succeed the rest of their lives.

We are proud of our rich OMPA history and the Olympians who graced our ranks:

- **Barbara Stark - OCC - Swimming - 1952 Helsinki**
- **Warren Blanchard - Water Polo - 1956 Melbourne**
- **George Harrison - OPP - Swimming - 1956 Melbourne, 1960 Rome**
- **Carolyn Schüler - Swimming - 1960 Rome**
- **Karen Moe - OCC - Swimming - 1972 Munich, 1976 Montreal**

- Peter Rocca - Meadow - Swimming - 1976 Montreal, 1980 Moscow
- Peter Schnugg - OCC - Water Polo - 1980 Moscow
- Drew McDonald - MVP - Water Polo - 1980 Moscow, 1984 Los Angeles
- Jon Svendsen - Meadow - Water Polo - 1980 Moscow, 1984 Los Angeles
- Matt Biondi - MVP - Swimming - 1984 Los Angeles, 1988 Seoul, 1992 Barcelona
- Kirk Everist - OCC - Water Polo - 1992 Barcelona, 1996 Atlanta
- Rick McNair - OPP - Water Polo - 1996 Atlanta
- Artemis Daphnis - Sleepy Hollow - Swimming - 2000 Sydney (representing Greece)
- Kathy Sheehy - Campolindo - Water Polo - 2000 Sydney
- Heather Petri - MVP - Water Polo - 2000 Sydney, 2004 Athens, 2008 Beijing, 2012 London
- Kim Vandenberg - Moraga Tennis and Swim - Swimming - 2008 Beijing
- Peter Varellas - Moraga Tennis and Swim - Water Polo - 2008 Beijing, 2012 London
- Drew Holland - Orinda Country Club - Water Polo - 2020 Tokyo (held 2021) & 2024 Paris

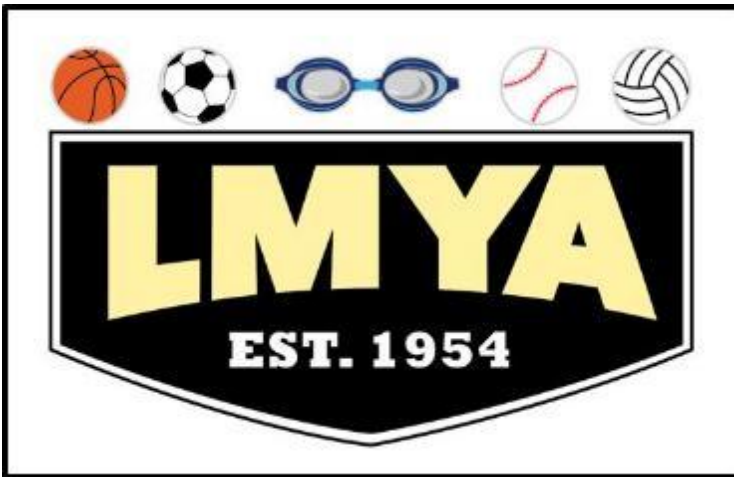
Moraga Baseball Association



Founded in 1977, the **Moraga Baseball Association (MBA)** is a not-for-profit youth baseball organization affiliated with PONY Baseball Inc., a nationwide youth baseball/softball organization that emphasizes sportsmanship, teamwork, leadership, and discipline. Moraga Baseball Association is a volunteer-run organization that is made possible by its sponsors and participation fees within the Moraga community. MBA's program is divided into four divisions based on the players' ages - Pinto, Mustang, Bronco, and Pony.

The primary mission is to provide a quality competitive baseball program for the children of our community that focuses on developing their skills and abilities to play baseball, while providing a positive, fun, supportive atmosphere that encourages all players to challenge themselves on the field, while teaching them sportsmanship, leadership and fair play. MBA is committed to providing a quality instructional program that teaches fundamental skills, tactics, and strategies for the game of baseball, promoting sportsmanship, competitiveness, and continuous improvement regardless of skill level, developing managers, coaches, and umpires that model good sportsmanship and uphold the mission of the league.

Lafayette Moraga Youth Association

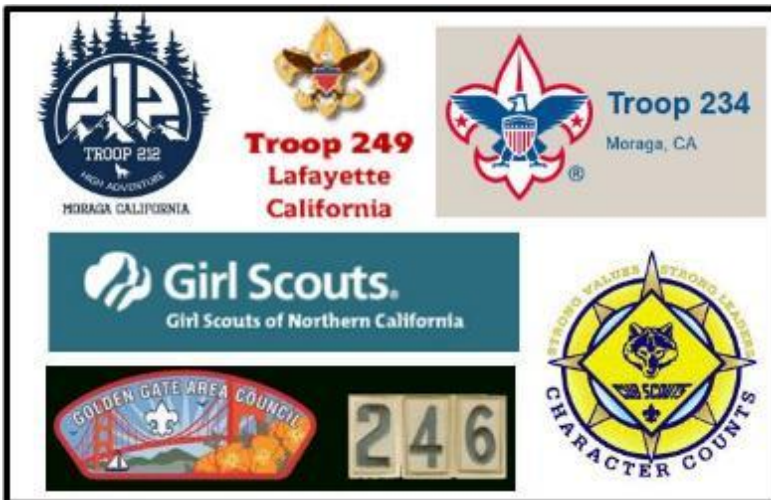


The largest athletic organization in Lafayette and Moraga, founded in 1954, LMYA's mission is to build self-esteem, sportsmanship, well-rounded players, and community by providing year-round sports opportunities to school-age youth in Lafayette and Moraga by partnering with parents, residents, local sport teams, and organizations.

Charlie Toll, then the Superintendent of the Moraga School District, was instrumental in bringing athletic programs to Moraga. He had first developed a youth program in Lafayette where he lived. Moraga students began asking him if they could also have a team. Thus began the newly formed

Lafayette Moraga Youth Association committed to having fun and engaging in positive, healthy competition, exposing children to a variety of sports developing muscles and skills. With a comprehensive approach to sports, health, and wellness rather than being a path to high school sports, LMYA offers equal game time and positive opportunities. Developing skills and teaching the fundamentals of strategy, fostering camaraderie and reliability through team play, teaching life lessons in a safe, constructive environment, educating coaches, trainers and parents to support their athletes as they grow, providing older youth work opportunities in which they serve as role models in leadership roles, and building our community through local games, inclusive events and team camaraderie remain LMYA's goals.

Scout Organizations



Scouting America, the new name for the **Boy Scouts of America** since 2025 following acceptance of women into what was long exclusively a male organization, has a mission to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. Gender participation, as well as religious affiliation, can still be defined by a troop's sponsor. The **Girl Scouts of Northern California** continues to be for women only and supports local troops through **Orinda/Moraga Service Unit 327**.

The oldest Moraga troop is Troop 212 which "Pop" Clarke revived in 1961 and whose home

became the "Scout Hut" on the Moraga Ranch property. Troop 249 sponsored by the Moraga Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded in 1960 but has withdrawn from Scouting America. Troop 234 was chartered in 1984 through the St. Monica Catholic Church Men's Club and became self-chartered in 2025 to allow more diversity. Troop 246 whose origins are a well kept secret also meets in the Scout Hut. Cub Scout Packs for grades K-5 are run through local schools and churches with "Family" as the new designation indicating openness to boys and girls. All of these "scouting" organizations are run by adult volunteers that may be parents or individuals who just care a lot.

MHS sponsors Antiques Roadshow-type event with Michaan's Auctions

By Vera Kochan

The Moraga Historical Society encouraged the public to clean out their closets, attics, and garages in order to “find out if a family heirloom has monetary value in addition to sentimental value”. The appraisal event, held Aug 30, 2026 at Hacienda de las Flores, was an MHS fundraiser with the help of renown Michaan's Auctions.

Michaan's was established in 2002, and is considered one of the leading, full-service auction houses on the West Coast. Based in Alameda, they specialize in the appraisal and sale of antiques and fine art. Items of interest to the auction house included: paintings, prints, sculpture, furniture, decorative arts, stamps, coins, Asian works of art, jewelry, timepieces, and sports memorabilia.

In addition to the six specialized appraisers, Vice President of Business Development Allyson Bradley (24 years of experience) and Assistant Vice President of Trusts and Estates Tammie Chambless (19 years of experience) were on hand to help make the event run smoothly.



Michaan's personnel appraise family treasures - Photo Vera Kochan

The public was allowed to bring up to any three items to receive a verbal evaluation of the current auction value of their property, which is based on the comparable works, recent auction results and trends in the marketplace, among other factors. The offered estimates reflect what items might reasonably sell for at a major public auction, which are different from and in many cases lower than full retail prices. Any items offered for sale at a Michaan's auction must meet various criteria and be valued all together above a minimum price of \$2,000 in order to start a contract.

According to Chambless, before a consignment contract is signed, an appraiser will have assigned a low and high estimate. “Based on the appraiser’s assessment and the estimated value, the item will be placed in either one of our Gallery Auctions or Fine Auctions. After the auction, the consignor will be notified by email of the final sale price or informed if the item did not sell.”

The highest “hammer price” (sold price) ever attained by Michaan's was of an exceedingly rare, 1750s, Asian soapstone figural carving for \$2.235 million.

Members of the public were either pleasantly surprised by the value of their items or disappointed at a low appraisal, given at what the market demanded at this point in time. One attendee, Holly (Lamorinda Weekly will not list complete names for privacy purposes), brought two watches and a painting. “I was shocked that one of my gold retro watches was worth less than I expected.” The painting she brought was not of any known artist even though her mother once told her, “Never get rid of this.” The initials were difficult to determine, but the appraiser suggested that the artist may be foreign-born and the initials could reflect that. “I think my mother got this in the 1940s or 1950s from the Baltimore area, so I’m going to contact the Maryland Institute College of Art, the Walters Art Museum, and the Baltimore Museum of Art.” She is thrilled that Michaan’s gave her the curiosity to keep digging into the mystery artist’s identity.



Mysterious painting that stumped Michaan's appraiser - Photo courtesy Holly

Another individual, Sam, had some commemorative gold coins from 2011 appraised for his sister. “I had no expectations whatsoever. The appraiser told me that the value was based on the current price of gold.” He also brought in a silver and turquoise Southwestern-style men’s watch and was told that the turquoise was valuable. Lastly, a 1938 men’s leather jacket with fringe was identified as being made from buffalo skin. “I enjoyed the experience a lot. The personnel are seasoned professionals, and it was nice to have so much information.”

Michaan’s was pleasantly surprised with the outcome for the day, having gotten five signed contracts to place items up for auction. “This was a great experience for us,” stated Chambless. “We’d love to come back to Moraga again.”

MHS President Susan Sperry received overwhelmingly positive responses from attendees leaving for home with their treasures; many of whom had asked for another such event in the near future. Inspired to seek out garage sales? Hannah Baker of *Real Simple* describes [7 Things You Should Never Buy at a Garage Sale](#).

A version of this article written by Vera Kochan appeared in the [September 9, 2026 edition of the Lamorinda Weekly](#).

Town of Moraga Then and Now Banner Project



On July 4th the Town of Moraga unveiled the fruit of a **Make Moraga Better** collaboration between the Rotary Club, Art in Public Spaces, the Moraga Historical Society and town staff. The idea of creating a set of then and now banners for the east wing of the Moraga Commons Bandshell was conceived last year by RC's John Panetta and APSC's Teresa Onoda and Holly Hartz. They got support from the town's Mackenzie Brady and recruited Susan Sperry and John Kaiser of MHS to find historical photos for the "then" part. Using the MHS online catalog of scanned photos the group selected a dozen from which 4 were chosen plus a Fandango painting for the first set of

what is hoped will become a series produced every couple years. Photographer and MHS volunteer Wilfred Galila took on the challenge of identifying the "then" locations and taking photos of "now" which in two cases proved trickier than expected. Panetta took charge of raising the funds for producing the banners. For a detailed description of this project see Vera Kochan's article [Historical interpretive banners live up the bandshell in Moraga Commons Park](#) published in the August 12, 2026 edition of the Lamorinda Weekly.



Keep an eye on our web site's [Artifact Collection](#). Wilfred and John have begun photographing our History Center's physical collection of artifacts that include prehistoric mastodon bones, Native American tools and jewelry, and obscure farm tools as well as emblems of the past. Our goal is to have this project complete in time for the **2027 Third Grade History Tour**.

MORAGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

GRANT DIN, A DESCENDANT OF FOUR ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRANTS AND A BOARD MEMBER OF THE CALIFORNIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY. HE WILL DISCUSS THE ISLAND'S ESTIMATED ONE MILLION PROCESSED ASIAN AND EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS FROM 80 COUNTRIES BETWEEN 1910 AND 1940 AND THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACTS. ADDITIONALLY, JEWISH REFUGEES ESCAPING GERMANY SPENT TIME ON THE ISLAND. LEARN ABOUT THEIR STORIES.



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2026, 1-3 PM

CASITA AT THE HACIENDA DE LAS FLORES

2100 DONALD DRIVE, MORAGA

RSVP TO RANCHSUSAN@AOL.COM

BY NOVEMBER 1, 2026

MHS MEMBERS FREE, GUESTS \$5 (CASH OR CHECK)

NO CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS

RESERVATIONS ONLY (SEATING LIMITED)



Lafayette Moraga
Regional Trail

50 Years Along the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail

Saturday, October 10 | 9-11am

**Lafayette Community Center,
Jennifer Russell Building
500 St. Mary's Rd
Lafayette, CA 94549**

Join us to celebrate the 50th
anniversary of the
Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail.

Preview new interpretive history
panels before they are installed
along 7.65 miles of trail.

Presentation begins at 10am.
Light refreshments
will be served.



LAFAYETTE
Historical Society



Moraga
Historical Society



MORAGA
Community Foundation

For more information contact
lkaufman@ebparks.org

Obituary: Nilda Rego



Nilda Rego, 99, passed away peacefully on April 19, 2026. Nilda was born February 13, 1927 in Berkeley, California, graduated from Berkeley High School and then earned a degree in journalism from the University of California, Berkely. She married John D. (Dan) Rego on November 12, 1949 and spent the next year in the

Bay Area, welcoming their first child, a daughter, before moving to Portland for her husband's job. Over the next 12 years they welcomed five more children, all boys.

Nilda was a newspaper reporter for most of her adult life. Her first newspaper job was as society editor for the Martinez News-Gazette. After moving to Portland, she raised her six children while working for a weekly newspaper, The Clackamas Review. In 1969 they moved to Moraga, California and she went to work for the Concord Transcript (later The Contra Costa Times). She had a passion for the "small stuff" of local history and started writing a weekly history column for the Concord Transcript in 1987, continuing the column for 27 years until she retired in 2015 after 46 years at the paper.

Her history columns were compiled into a series of three books titled "Days Gone By". Nilda was active in the Moraga Historical Society for many years organizing speakers for the Society's many events. After retiring, Nilda and Dan relocated back to the Portland area, moving to Willamette. Besides her writing, Nilda had a creative artistic passion. She was active in the art studio at Willamette View, producing collages, paintings, weavings and ceramics. She turned some of her works into two published children's books, melding her art into her writing. An excellent cook, loving mother, grandmother, great grandmother, world traveler, community activist and successful writer, Nilda was truly an amazing woman.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This has been a busy year for the Moraga Historical Society! We hope our four editions of the Newsletter, reporting on the volunteerism in Moraga, have been informational. Our Town has come a long way in its 50 years since incorporation.

The year was filled with stimulating speakers and events. **Leslie Crenna**, our February speaker, focused on saloon culture, local "wets", temperance crusaders, bootleggers and post-repeal businesses. In May, **Gerald Henig** fascinated us with America's Presidents: *What your History Teacher Never Told You*. MHS was pleased with the fundraising event held on August 30th with **Michaan's Auctions**. Members and non-members flocked to the Casita to determine the value of their family heirlooms! Michaan's took in five items on contract they felt could go to auction. Drawing the year to an end, **Grant Din** will discuss Angel Island's immigrants and reveal their fascinating stories on November 8th.

Please join us on Saturday, September 26th at the **Pear and Wine Festival** at the Commons, and on October 10th at the Lafayette Community Center to celebrate the **50th anniversary of the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail** featuring the installation of nine historic panels, 5 of which were composed by John Kaiser, Susan Skilton and Susan Sperry.

It is with sadness that I report the passing of **Sue McNulty Rainey**, member of Moraga's first Town council and mayor of Moraga. Her spirit and enthusiasm will be missed.

Susan Sperry, President

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Keith Katzman is a Moraga resident since 1966. Keith continues to show his passion for Moraga by always volunteering to help the people in Moraga and make our town one of the best places in America to live.

Your Strategic Partner

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Let's work together well before a sale so that you can benefit from my expertise as a strategic partner!

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