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## To many, Oktoberfest means only one thing – beer



Photo Vera Kochan

Polkageist West entertains Canyon Club Brewery's Oktoberfest revelers

By Vera Kochan

As you hoisted that stein of beer, you may not have known the origin of Oktoberfest, and you may not even have cared, but the annual festival in Munich, Germany is held over a two-week period and ends on the first Sunday in October. It originated on Oct. 12, 1810, to celebrate the marriage of the

crown prince of Bavaria, who later became King Louis I, to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. Moraga's Canyon Club Brewery has its very own biergarten which provided a perfect backdrop for this third annual event. The celebrations were held Oct. 14-16 and included a special menu of German potato cakes, Bavarian pretzels, bratwurst, sauer-

kraut, applesauce, fries with German curry ketchup, and German rice pudding. Folks washed that down with either imported German beer or CCB's special Oktoberfest Beer. On Saturday, Polkageist West provided traditional German music with a twist.

CCB had every intention of conducting a "stein-holding contest," but apparently the crowd was full of "hühner," which means "chickens" in German. Let this information serve as a notice for next year!

General Manager Kirsten Popcke was busily enjoying the atmosphere while taking care of guests. "Oktoberfest is my favorite time of the year. It's lively and fun with the music. I love it!" At one point, an elderly couple found some space in the crowd large enough to dance in – proving that where there's a will, there's a way.

Moraga resident and former recreation assistant for the town's Parks and Rec Department, Kim Burrowes, came by to see the band. Now working in Emeryville, she stated, "I've hired them before, and I know they are good." Prost!!

## Moraga joins other local cities in banning the sale of flavored tobacco and electronic smoking devices



Photo courtesy Moraga Police Dept

Vape pens disguised as permanent markers

By Vera Kochan

Choosing to be proactive, Moraga's town council voted to ban the sale of flavored tobacco and electronic smoking devices (also known as vape pens) just ahead of Prop 31 on the Nov. 8 ballot. A "yes" vote on Prop 31 means in-person stores and vending machines could not sell most flavored tobacco products and flavor enhancers.

Moraga Police Chief Jon King, Officer Fabiola Hernandez and Assistant Town Attorney Denise Bazzano gathered information to compile a staff report that was presented during the Oct. 12 town council meeting. It was noted that Contra Costa County and the cities of Antioch, Lafayette, Orinda, Pinole, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, San Pablo, and Walnut Creek have adopted similar bans.

According to results from a 2019-20 Tobacco Survey presented by King, 32.5% of Contra Costa high school students had used a tobacco product; 92% of students who were current tobacco users reported using a flavored tobacco product; highest use of flavored tobacco products was among current vape users (95.8%) and smokeless tobacco (73.3%); 40.6% of current cigarette smokers report using menthol cigarettes in the previous 30 days; and 77% believed that tobacco companies targeted youth through flavored product advertisements.

A New York Times article

by Christina Jewett states this year's National Youth Tobacco Survey "showed that 85% of adolescent e-cigarette users favored vapes in fruit, dessert and candy flavors. Some mentioned PuffBar; Vuse and Juul as their favorite brand among those on the survey's list. But many said their favored e-cigarette brand was not one of the 13 listed. That finding highlights how nimble the industry has been in stamping an array of brand names on vapes with flavors like strawberry ice cream and fresh vanilla that are largely made in China and shipped from warehouses to corner stores and into e-commerce."

On a more local level, Campolindo High School's 2019 Healthy Kids survey results found that 36% of the students admitted to using vaping products. An unexpected and nearly tragic by-product of vaping was the cause of the 2019 Merrill Fire in the Sanders Ranch neighborhood where a discarded vape pen was found at the fire's origin.

King described flavored tobacco and vape products as being a "gateway" for some users to potentially seek a progression to more dangerous tobacco products and even drugs.

The sale of tobacco products to anyone under 21 years of age is prohibited thanks to an existing law, Stop Tobacco Access to Kids Enforcement (STAKE) Act. There are currently five tobacco retailers in Moraga: ARCO-Carwash; 7-Eleven; Moraga Chevron; Mor-

aga Star Station; and Moraga Wine & Spirits. None of these rely solely on the sale of tobacco-related products to stay in business, nevertheless the town council was willing to postpone the ban until Jan. 1, 2023, in order for those retailers to legally sell or dispose of their inventories.

Staff's proposed ordinance would repeal and replace an existing one (Chapter 7.24), which would "prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco and vaping products in the Town of Moraga." Modeled after Orinda's May 2022 ordinance, aspects of it include: "updated definitions of specific products; prohibition on the non-sale distribution of tobacco products; an updated requirement that all tobacco sales be tobacco retailer assisted; and a change to the Violation/Penalty section allowing the town to utilize civil, criminal or administrative sanctions rather than mandating a misdemeanor violation, which could potentially result in a jury trial in Superior Court for a minor violation."

The Ordinance will return at a future town council meeting for a second review and approval.

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