

Moraga Women's Society **40 years dedicated to community service... and fun!**

By Sophie Braccini



Moraga women celebrate 40 years of community service Photo Sophie Braccini

The energy level of the Moraga Women's Society has not diminished over their forty years of existence. The association assembled on May 18th to celebrate 40 years of community service and plan for the 40 years to come. "Our town wants to officially recognize service groups like yours," said Mayor Lynda Deschambault, as she presented a Town Proclamation to the assembly, "I am pleased to honor this group, the first women's service society founded in Moraga."

"We opened our first bank account in 1968 with \$54," remembers past treasurer Jean Farnsworth, "membership was \$3 and members had to be active or they'd be kicked out." The club first operated in a town that was unincorporated, that had no library or parks and recreation department. The first actions and fundraisers aimed at providing after-school care, creating a charter library and developing summer programs for children.

Listening to Sue Holmes retrace the history of the group was like a trip back in time when Moraga argued against a bus service to go to BART. "We had many ways for raising funds," remembered Holmes, "one of our most popular was the Honorary Mayors race.

Candidates created events to raise money for the group and the one who raised the most was proclaimed 'Honorary Mayor.'" Holmes took the assembly back to a time when there was a party every night in Moraga. "Then we incorporated and all that fun ended," added Holmes.

Now the main fundraiser for the group is the Christmas Home Tour that raised more than \$16,000 in 2007, and the inflatable bouncers for children at the annual Pear Festival. All that money is redistributed to local institutions. Over the years, the Society has donated more than \$300,000. The biggest recipient is Moraga Parks and Recreation, which has received more than \$80,000, closely followed by the Moraga School District with almost \$80,000., then the Moraga Library, the Acalanes High School District and the Senior Helpline, among others.

"In the 70's when you turned thirty-six you were kicked out of the Moraga Juniors and joined the Women Society," remembers outgoing president Colleen Lund. That's not the case anymore and the group has had difficulty attracting younger members. This will be one of the challenges of new President Roberta Klaproth.