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Top Talent Tackles Triathlon Mild-mannered public servants by day... weekend warriors in Moraga this Saturday

By Cathy Tyson



From left, back row: Moraga Town Council Member Ken Chew, Lafayette City Council Member Brandt Andersson, Orinda Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu, Lafayette City Manager Steven Falk; front row: Orinda City Manager Janet Keeter, Orinda Planning Senior Administrative Assistant Dorothy Dickson-Dodds, Orinda City Clerk Michele Olsen (with coach Ava Olsen), Moraga Town Manager Jill Keimach . Not pictured: Don Tatzin and Dean Orr. Photo Doug Kohen

Surprising no one, he'll be doing the swimming leg of the race; avid cyclist Brandt Andersson will take to the bike and Ken Chew will run, again, having recently won reelection.

Cleverly named Team M.O.D.D.-D.D.O., based on their collective initials, all hail from Orinda. Comprised of City Clerk Michele Olsen, the current office egg toss co-champion (with Ursu), Senior Administrative Assistant in the Planning Department Dorothy Dickson-Dodds, and new City Council member Dean Orr - their game plan is to finish before the other Lamorinda teams.

Who knows which team will win? See for yourself - the first stage, swimming, starts at the Soda Aquatic Center pool at 7:30 a.m., meandering bike ride to follow; the final leg is a run through the Campolindo neighborhood culminating in a victory lap around the Campo track.

Participants may register online at www.moragatri.com; space is limited and is expected to sell out.

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Although they can usually be found running the cities of Lafayette, Orinda and the Town of Moraga - next Saturday, April 30th, these young and young at heart athletes will be running, biking and swimming in the Moraga Triathlon. Municipal teams representing City Managers, City Council members and Orinda M.O.D.D.-D.D.O. team players will come together for a great workout and to secure priceless bragging rights. The triathlon, now in its fifth year, lends itself to a group effort. As much as these work-out aficionados would love to conquer all three stages, for most swimming a quarter of a mile, bicycling fourteen miles and running three miles through the mean streets of Moraga is not in their job description.

"It's a no-lose proposition," said Lafayette City Manager Steven Falk, "if we lose we make our bosses (the City Council) look good, and if we win, we're superior athletes." Falk is part of the uniquely configured City Manager team - he'll be swimming, both Janet Keeter of Orinda and Jill Keimach of Moraga will be biking, and Orinda Director of Planning Emmanuel Ursu graciously volunteered to run.

And the breakfast of champions? Keeter, who has completed the triathlon solo in the past, plans on downing some yummy GU - sports energy gel; Falk favors "Man candy - Advil, possibly before and after," and Ursu wants pasta the night before and beer afterward. Keimach will be helping to set up the race in the morning, so breakfast will be "Whatever I can grab plus coffee."

The City Council team includes Moraga's Ken Chew, and Brandt Andersson and master swimmer extraordinaire Don Tatzin of Lafayette. Tatzin was the 2009 United States Master Swimmer "Go the Distance" Champion, swimming over 1,543 miles in a year.