



## Fire Districts

### Public Meetings

**Moraga-Orinda Fire District** Board of Directors  
 Wednesday, Oct. 18, 7 p.m.  
 Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)

**ConFire** Board of Directors  
 Tuesday, Oct. 17, 1:30 p.m.  
 Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez  
 For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

Please...

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community. Send a letter to the editor: [letters@lamorinda.com](mailto:letters@lamorinda.com)

- ◆ HARDWOODS
- ◆ CARPETS
- ◆ RUGS
- ◆ LINOLEUM
- ◆ TILE
- ◆ LAMINATE

FAMILY -OWNED  
 30 YEARS !

3344 Mt Diablo Blvd in Lafayette  
 925-284-4440  
[lamorinda.com](http://lamorinda.com)

LAMORINDA FLOORS  
*Karastan GALLERY*

**TREE SCULPTURE**

COMPLETE TREE CARE  
 Proudly serving the East Bay since 1965!  
 Fully Insured ❖ Certified Arborists ❖ License #655977  
 (925) 254-7233 ❖ [www.treesculpture.com](http://www.treesculpture.com)

# Festive sendoff for MOFD Chief Healy

By Nick Marnell



Paige Meyer, left, with MOFD Fire Chief Stephen Healy

Photo Nick Marnell

Family, friends and coworkers of Fire Chief Stephen Healy celebrated his 31-year fire service career and his 12 years with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District during a farewell party at the Hacienda de Las Flores in Moraga Sept. 20. County Supervisor Candace

Andersen recognized Healy with a resolution from the Board of Supervisors, and officials from Moraga and Orinda read proclamations from their municipalities. Current and former members of the district board and friends from other fire agencies honored the outgoing

chief, with the firefighters presenting him an axe, a tool put into service while Healy was fire chief and symbolizing the history and experience of all of the fire service members.

The banter between Healy and Paige Meyer, fire chief of the San

Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, stole the show. “Thanks for dressing up,” Healy zinged at Meyer, the only chief officer not in Class A dress blues. It was payback from a meeting years ago when Meyer looked in the audience for Healy and asked him to please stand. Except that Healy was standing.

Healy read a short, emotional speech, thanking his family, the firefighters, the district staff and board members. “This is the best place I have ever worked,” Healy said. “Nowhere else has even come close.”

The dozens in attendance applauded MOFD Director Steve Anderson’s concluding words. “The true test of someone’s character is if they do the right thing when no one is looking,” Anderson said.

“The chief did the right thing when no one was looking.”

Healy is succeeded by Interim Fire Chief Jerry Lee, who was sworn in earlier that evening at a district board meeting.

# ConFire donor meets his bone marrow recipient

By Nick Marnell



From left: ConFire Batt. Chief Rob Lutzow, Richmond Fire Capt. Elizabeth de Dios, ConFire Safety Chief Pete Marshall, Daniel Andrade, Tom Darst, Sheila Darst, Be The Match Rep Jennifer Sawle

Photo courtesy ConFire

Firefighters rarely have the chance to enjoy the positive outcomes of their work let alone meet a person whose life they saved under such a dramatic, unique circumstance.

After a 2015 training session, Lafayette Station 15 firefighter Daniel Andrade and his comrades stopped at a booth sponsored by Be

The Match, a bone marrow transplant registry, and entered their names. A representative swabbed the inside of Andrade’s mouth, tested his tissue and once approved he became a nationally registered bone marrow donor.

As befitting the fire service, the call came quickly and with no notice. Incredibly, in two months, Andrade’s

DNA had met its match; typically, matches take two years or more. “We had just moved to South Carolina,” said Tom Darst, a retired Wisconsin PPG Industries factory worker. “I got sick about an hour and a half after we arrived. The doctors told me I had three months to live.” Darst, 57, who had leukemia, received Andrade’s stem cells and two years later, on

Sept. 15, Darst stood inside Fire Station 1 for a reunion - of sorts - with Andrade and his family.

“What started out as a night to educate firefighters turned out to save somebody’s life,” said Lon Goetsch, ConFire assistant chief.

Those who knew Andrade had no doubt that he would respond as he did. “He’s always been a team player,” said Andrade’s father, Alonso. “This doesn’t surprise us.”

“With Daniels’s stem cells, you’re smiling more, laughing more and pulling practical jokes,” said Battalion Chief Rob Lutzow, confirming what Darst was beginning to figure out the more time he and his donor spent together.

Andrade and Darst said they hoped that by telling their story, others would sign up with Be The Match and donate their bone marrow. To join the bone marrow registry, go to [join.bethematch.org/swaboutcancer](http://join.bethematch.org/swaboutcancer).

“When somebody needs your help, you answer the call,” said Andrade, a response second nature to those in the fire service.

# Public expects next MOFD chief to thoroughly grasp the numbers

By Nick Marnell

Above all else, the fire chief of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District must have a handle on finances, district residents told the board at a Sept. 27 community workshop designed to gather input on what qualities and experience the public wants in its new chief.

Financial problems have dominated district headlines for eight years, beginning with the fall-out from an incorrect pension the board approved for a retiring fire chief that the district pension manager later reduced by \$1 million. The district misapplied \$2 million earmarked to pay down its pension

obligation bond and its auditor incorrectly recorded a \$23 million prepaid item in its 2015 and 2016 financial reports. Since 2016 the board includes a majority of directors with private industry financial experience.

Dozens filled the Moraga Library conference room for the MOFD workshop, even with attendance likely suppressed by a high-profile Moraga Town Council meeting. Interim Fire Chief Jerry Lee and his board received plenty of advice from passionate district residents.

“We need somebody with the background to be able to manage the underfunded employee pension plan,” said Orinda resident Kathy Finch, referring to the more than \$60 million in net pension and retiree health care liabilities carried

by the district. Other Orinda residents talked about the tax allocation discrepancy between the two major district municipalities. “The new chief must take care of Orinda,” said Janet Maiorana.

Former MOFD director and Moraga resident Dick Olsen said it was essential that any required financial sacrifices be equitably shared while maintaining services and fairly compensating employees. Olsen also recommended that the new chief live within 10 miles of the heart of the district in order to respond timely to emergencies.

“It is important that the chief you hire have the prospect of remaining for at least five years,” said former director John Wyro, noting that without longevity it will be difficult for the chief to maintain credibility within the community.

Superlative political skills to deal with the board and the district factions were a fire chief must, added Canyon resident Jonathan Goodwin.

With a reminder that the job is more than just financially driven, Vince Wells, president of Local 1230 of the firefighters union, advised the board to be sure to hire a chief with a thorough knowledge of fire operations. “We put our lives on the line for that person,” Wells said.

Lee said he is considering applying for the permanent job but is weighing personal and family considerations. “I have not made my final decision,” Lee said.

The district has retained Roseville-based Bob Murray and Associates to conduct the search for the new fire chief.

# Police arrest two in elder abuse case

By Cathy Dausman

On Sept. 28 Moraga and Orinda police, assisted by the U.S. Marshal’s Service Fugitive Task Force, announced a second arrest made in a Lamorinda elder abuse case affecting residents of Aegis Living in Moraga and Orinda Senior Village. Police charged Shawn Morris, 30, and Antoinique Bryant, 29, both of Richmond with elder abuse, burglary, fraud and identity theft. The pair has been identified as being involved in similar elder abuse cases in Concord, Berkeley and Marin County.

The investigation began in late August when Moraga Police received reports that checks, credit cards and debit cards had been stolen from Aegis residents’ private living spaces. Witnesses reported a female suspect dressed in a nursing uniform inside the Aegis facility during the thefts; the suspect was not employed there.

Checks were cashed and credit and debit cards were used at various locations throughout Contra Costa County, as well as in Southern California and Nevada. Officers working with Orinda Police discovered a similar theft had oc-

curred against one elderly Orinda Senior Village resident.

Morris was arrested after police found property and evidence during a search of his residence. Bryant was arrested Sept. 26 and booked into Contra Costa County Jail in Martinez on a \$655,000 warrant.

The Contra Costa County District Attorney’s office filed a total of 27 felony and misdemeanor charges against both Bryant and Morris. Anyone with information about these cases is asked to contact Moraga Police Detective Kevin Mooney at (925) 888-7056.