

Letters to the Editor



Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writers and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

All published letters will include the writer's name and town (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only), and should be 350 words or less. Letters may be edited for length or legal considerations.

email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Dear Editor:

The recently completed repaving of Moraga Way by the City of Orinda is an excellent example of public works done right. All too often public projects—particularly road works—are slap-dash affairs that drag on and on, disrupt the lives of the citizenry, and end with substandard results. But this project was very professionally executed, finished a month ahead of time and with minimal inconvenience to residents. In the 30 years I've lived here, Moraga Way has never looked so good or driven so smoothly.

Bill Brown
Orinda

Dear Editor,

One of my favorite fairy tales as a child was the Emperor's New Clothes, its meaning lost on my youth. Later on, I found the implied lesson more and more pertinent: Just because someone says it is so convincingly, doesn't mean it is. Point in fact, when management of 24 Hour Fitness says that its members are now privy to a Super Club, it ain't necessarily so. In itself, the change in designation to Super Sport is to lead the membership to believe that in fact they are getting something which they are not. Take a look at the descriptions of 24 Hr. Fitness own website for club types. What clearly sets the new Super Sport Club apart from the Current Active rubric—as stated on website—are: Bas-

ketball court, pool, pro shop, spa, tanning, whirlpool, juice bar, lounge, steam room.

The re-designation to Super Sport is a misnomer as it falls short on the following: basketball court, pool, pro shop, spa, tanning, whirlpool, juice bar, lounge, and steam room. The Super Club has no new clothes other than a new, clean and enlarged space. In fact, current membership ought to get kudos simply for putting up with a facility long cramped, poorly ventilated and run by an indifferent staff.

How does 24 Hr Fitness blatantly and imperiously increase monthly costs—particularly without prior notice of any kind and think this will fly?

How does 24 Hr Fitness off-handedly redirect its current clients to Walnut Creek without the clients' involvement in the decision process? No one to my knowledge had been given a heads-up about this change of venue.

I for one, am not inclined to drive the extra miles (or I'd be at Renaissance Clubsport), to spend the extra gas but mostly, I resent being yanked about. Incidentally, checking the reviews online for Walnut Creek 24 Hour Fitness is an additional deterrent for even entertaining the idea of going there.

What we the clients are getting is the "old" stuff in a new setting. There are some unflattering words for this kind of business dealing. The idea that an increase of \$10 (pardon, I meant, \$9.95) per month (or merely \$39.99 per month depending on status) won't be noticed much but be a drop in the bucket for the locals is insulting to be sure.

Shop **locally** whenever you can.
Only your support of our **local** businesses will keep them open!

But, we can all see beyond the words and know what's what when we see it.

L. Foley
Moraga

Dear Editor,

I certainly did not mean to offend anyone in writing the letter of 6/25 regarding American Flags. I have nothing but respect and admiration for people who have fought for our country, and for those still fighting. I was simply trying to get the point across to people who do not love our country and show no love or admiration for it. My feeling is that many people complain about America; therefore, they could care less about holidays, Veterans, etc. These are, also, the people who probably do not vote, yet insist on complaining about how "messed-up" everything is....My point to the public is that if you are going to live in America then act like an American and show that you love "her". I have had several relatives fight in wars. I love this country, I just don't like how she is being treated. If you don't like it here then move. That's my feeling. In my opinion, this is the best country to live in. That is why everyone migrates here. And that is all I was trying to convey in my letter. Thank you; and GOD BLESS AMERICA!!

Sincerely,
Janet C. Bellotti-Kelley
Moraga

Public Forum

JOIN IT

This week's Public Forum letter comes from Mr. Frank Compelli, a resident of Moraga who has been an informed and active citizen-participant in Town affairs.

All opinions expressed in this forum are those of the writer and not of the Lamorinda Weekly. Letters may be edited for legal considerations, but edited letters will be returned to the writer for consent prior to publication. Submissions should be sent to letter@lamorindaweekly.com. Our internal editorial board will review all letters for form and content, and reserves the right to refuse a submission. Writers should have significant knowledge of the area in which they are writing, and letters should be on a subject that we have introduced in our pages. We have not set a maximum word count, but it is unlikely that a 2000-word letter would be printed (for reference, the letter on the right contains 817 words).

A SEA CHANGE FOR MORAGA

With Phil Vince's departure a few weeks ago, the Town Council has rightly initiated the process to find a replacement. Assuming an Executive Search firm will be engaged, it will require a position description and I would like to offer some thoughts on that description.

For the first 26 years of its existence, under the policies set by 13 successive Town Councils and through the management skills of Town Managers Gary Chase and Ross Hubbard, Moraga was a charming small town, renowned for its semi-rural environment, the natural beauty of its surroundings, and effective Town government. It was "boring" for teens, but a desirable place to live for adults and young children.

Only recently have residents begun to fully appreciate what made the Town government exceptional. During that period, the Town was managed as a minimum service community—required services were provided efficiently and cost-effectively within the Town's budget. Fiscal responsibility was first and foremost, not an inconvenience afterthought. Population continued to grow through prudent development projects. Moraga was a successful small town with no aspirations to be something it wasn't or couldn't be, and many current residents moved here for that very reason.

In the year 2000, a sea change began to take place in Moraga. Over the course of the following years, the principal focus of Town government shifted from living within our means to formulating and enacting a

vision for Moraga – a vision that has focused on increasing Town services (and therefore staff) and improving the "quality of life in Moraga" through revitalizing and expanding the Town's commercial sector.

Now there are many and diverse opinions about the current state of the latter aspect of that vision and not enough time and space in this letter to address them. But suffice it to say, that unless the revitalization is an approved Redevelopment Project, the participation of the Town government in that matter should be limited to encouragement and support, in whatever forms may be allowed by the Municipal Code and Town ordinances. The success or failure of the revitalization should fall squarely on the shoulders of the owners of the commercial property.

It is important to recognize that the principal function of the Town Manager is to implement the policies of the Town Council. If everyone is not on the same page, the result is ineffective and wasteful governance. Therefore, before the Town Council completes the Town Manager's position description, the Council should seize the opportunity to make another sea change in the course of Moraga's destiny. The Council should consider establishing a policy or policies that clearly state that Moraga is a small town, enjoys the benefits of a small town, and not only desires to remain a small town, but desires to be the best small town west of the Hudson River.

That doesn't mean the Town can't grow or revitalize; but it does mean running the government within its means and proceeding prudently with further development, consistent with maintaining the small town character of Moraga. It is worth it to gain the tax revenues from an additional 1000 homes (to support a larger Town staff) if, in doing so, we lose

the essence of what makes Moraga so special? What have we gained?

With this Town policy firmly in hand, what should that position description say? The Town Manager's job is to run the Town government efficiently and cost-effectively within the limits of the Town's resources. The Council should look for a manager with the skills and qualifications to run a small town and, just as important, someone who wants to manage a small town and will take pride in doing so. The Town has a strong technical staff, which suggests that the principal talents of the new Town Manager should be in team management, with particular emphasis on setting priorities and budgets and on maintaining the team's focus on them.

It has been said many times that Moraga will be in dire financial straits in a few years because the concept of balancing expenses against revenues seems to have been sacrificed on the altar of vision, and a structural budget deficit now looms in the Town's future. That prediction needn't come true. Now is the time for the sitting Council to affirm who and what we are, and who and what we want to be, now and in the future, for ourselves and for our children. Now is the time to recognize and accept the need to focus on the twin priorities of a small town government – safety and infrastructure – and commit to developing responsible budgets to achieve those priorities within expected revenue.

This Council has the singular opportunity to set a meaningful, fiscally-sound goal for Moraga's future, and then find the appropriate Town Manager to make it happen. The residents of Moraga are depending on the Council's swift and true action.

Frank Compelli

Lamorinda's Religious Services



Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Orinda, 254-3422



Summer Worship Schedule

8:15 a.m. Traditions Worship Service
9:15 a.m. Coffee Fellowship
9:45 a.m. Celebrations Worship Service
Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

Our Savior's Lutheran (ELCA)

1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette
283-3722 www.oslc.net

SUMMER SCHEDULE

One service in "blended" style
9:30-10:30 am each Sunday



St. Anselm's Episcopal Church

A Loving Community

Sunday Services: 8 and 10 AM
Active Youth Program, Childcare

682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, 284-7420, www.stanselms.ws

St. Giles Episcopal Church of Moraga

Worshipping at St. Mary's College Chapel. All are welcome at our services.
9 a.m. Sunday Service: Holy Communion - with St. Giles' Choir.
Child care is available all year.
1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. 925-376-5770

Temple Isaiah welcomes you to worship with us on Shabbat.



For specific questions, call the Temple office at 925-283-8575 or visit our website: temple-isaiah.org.
1st and 4th Friday evening - 6:30 PM
2nd and 3rd Friday evening - 8:00 PM
Saturday mornings at 10:30 AM

If you would like your services listed, please email to info@lamorindaweekly.com or call 925-377-0977.
A one inch listing will cost \$20.

Troop 237 Orinda Eagle Scouts Honored

Submitted by Sandy Roadcap



Clockwise from top left: Kyle Young, Alex Weber, Peter Sciamanna, Jared Hein

Four Miramonte High School students received Eagle Scout honors at a ceremony June 1, and a fifth student on May 19. Both ceremonies were held at Orinda Community Church, sponsor of Troop 237. The ceremonies included Mayor Victoria Smith's proclamation of an Orinda Day for each Eagle: Alex Weber, Jared Hein, Kyle Young, Peter Sciamanna and Stephen Church.

The Eagle honor is the highest in Boy Scouting (earned by 4% of all nationally-registered Scouts) and entails an ambitious community service project capping years of outdoor fun & skills, service and leadership de-

velopment. The boys thank their fellow Scouts, family & friends, community members, and the dedicated adult volunteers of Troop 237, including the four Scoutmasters they've had: Bill Cooper, Wick Smith, Gabe Esquivel and Eric Jorgensen



Stephen Church Photos provided

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www.lamorindaweekly.com



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