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Published December 8th, 2010

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

I am writing in response to the reader who unfairly attacked Burger King in Moraga. I have never found the place "filthy" and find the staff extremely pleasant and hard working. If this reader has a problem with Dollar Tree they should direct it accordingly. In addition, you would have to be crazy to open a high end retail establishment in "our beloved Moraga". They can say all they want that they would shop at such but we all know this wouldn't be the case. And the argument that property values will suffer due to a Dollar Tree is just plain silly.

Tara Murphy
Moraga

Leaf Blowers

Editor:

I was at the city council meeting and spoke against the proposed ban on leaf blowers.

QUIET ORINDA IS DISHONEST! The argument about particulate matter and pollution is phony and contrived. They seem to think all particulate matter in the air comes from leaf blowers. The arguments about particulate matter and pollution from leaf blowers are meaningless in the absence of any attempt to measure the quantity of such pollution caused by leaf blowers compared to the total amount of such pollution that exists. Until they come up with valid quantitative measurements, their word is worthless.

When asked what they would go after next, they claimed there would not be any followup attempts to ban other things that make noise. Due to their dishonesty about particulate matter; I do not believe them. Leaf blowers are quiet and tranquil when compared to the noise chain saws and wood chippers make. Yet those tools are as necessary as leaf blowers.

Maybe Quiet Orinda will not go away...but neither will we!

Henry R. Pinney
Orinda

Dear Editor:

From decade to decade I like to peruse articles on local concerns and letters to the editor to assess my own views of the world in relation to my community's and I am always richly rewarded. I was particularly rewarded in last week's (Nov 24) Lamorinda Weekly.

On page one, I was shocked and disgusted to find that through-out my many years, I have been subjected to, " . . . particulates - the microscopic particles of fecal matter, herbicides, and pesticides - made airborne by leaf blowers . . . " [Italics added]. My gosh, in all my years of intermittent listening to lawn mowers, chain saws, leaf blowers and the like, I had no idea that my very life was in danger, that, " . . . it's the particulates that will kill us."

How could I have known? (Maybe gardeners we see, dead on our sidewalks and filling our hospitals, dropping like flies from these highly offensive and dangerous particulates,- but that can't be).

Orinda organizer Jeff Segall certainly has a most reasonable response to this dreadful problem; twice each week this poor man is, " .. forced to retreat indoors ... " [To protect his 3 year old twins and wife against] " ... this onslaught of mow and blow landscaping crews ... " While I do not know how to protect myself from dangerous poo poo dust (yucky!) and unnamed killer toxins; I really must be honest here and admit that I have never personally noticed these airborne perils or their after affects, nor has anyone I know, but I guess we are just insensitive and unaware; the walking dead, so to speak.

I might also admit that the sound of leaf blowers and other machinery, on rare occasions, has annoyed me for 10 minutes or so - but not enough for me to tell my fine neighbors to stop cleaning their lawns and walks and not even enough to force me into my hermetically sealed home to protect my little children, long now grown up and healthy, from this impending airborne death.

Maybe Segall, Kendall and their ilk will take on those nasty base woofers in passing cars, the kind that rattle us to our bones. I want them to ban whatever annoys me and use any ridiculous hyperbole they can get into print, by golly!

Sincerely
David K. Lindemuth

Dear Editor:

I am writing to thank the Orinda City Council for their unanimous vote to KEEP leaf blowers in Orinda. Years ago, summer vacationers were reluctant to come to Orinda because of our "foliage problem." It was not until the advent of the leaf blower, after which our meadows and orchards and streets were blown clean, that Orinda's population surged. It is very likely that, today, Orinda would suffer a sizable population decline if these implements were banned.

Historical documents show an even earlier and more important role for the leaf blower, particularly in the settlement

of the American West. Meticulous records kept by the explorers Lewis & Clark show how often their mission faltered until Congress provided funding for the purchase of two, early model leaf blowers, allowing the explorers to clear a pathway through the mountainous, foliage-laden territory that we now call California and Oregon.

Going further back in our history, it is a little-known fact that our first settlers brought with them on the Mayflower an early prototype of the leaf blower. It is rumored that Myles Standish refused to set foot on Plymouth Rock until the blower was gassed up and the debris swept from that outcropping. Thomas Jefferson later claimed he could not possibly have maintained his estate at Monticello, with all its deciduous trees, had he not been the beneficiary of Ben Franklin's redesigned leaf blower.

There has been much talk from the would-be blower banners about the deleterious health effects of blowers on children ("asthma in children has increased almost 200% in the last 25 years, etc."). This kind of emotionalism has no place in a debate about serious matters: put simply, what is to be done about the ubiquitous presence of fallen leaves, sticks, and dog droppings on our lawns and driveways? Am I to allow this debris to accumulate simply because my neighbors' toddlers might contract asthma or another respiratory disease from the regular dispersal of particulate matter while they are at play? Councilwoman Severson struck the right note at November's meeting: if some Orindans are worried about the noise and pollution caused by leaf blowers, why can't they simply invest in triple-pane windows and remain indoors?

Many of those opposed to leaf blowers fail to understand the variety of useful tasks that this versatile machine can perform. Recently, when my wife's hair blower shorted out and we were faced with the prospect of arriving late for an important social engagement, I employed my leaf blower successfully in drying and curling Barb's perm. When my little terrier Toby had a piece of sirloin caught in his throat, I was able to dislodge the impediment by applying several blasts of forced air from my blower directly to his larynx, saving the animal's life.

It is unfortunate that some in this community put their own family's health and peace of mind before their neighbor's right to use whatever power tool he chooses. I applaud the Orinda City Council for having the good sense to silence those who beg for quiet and to place the right to a well-manicured lawn and an unblemished driveway above any public health concerns. I hope council members have placed a small replica of a blower in their Orinda time capsule, emblazoned with the inscription across its throttle, "Blow Free or Die: Orinda Then, Orinda Now, Orinda Forever." God bless them all.

Yours sincerely,
J. Segall
Orinda

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