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"I Do Not Like Going to Walnut Creek!"*Lamorindans Share Their Concerns and Interests for 2013*

By Nick Marnell



John, a 46-year Moraga resident, looks forward to our continued coverage of Lamorinda issues throughout 2013. Photo Andy Scheck

walked over. "I have something I'd like you to write about," he said. "Why isn't there a single public park in Lafayette? And school lunches. They are totally void of nutritional value."

Lauren, a Lafayette mom, loves to read about local Lamorinda businesses. "I love to shop locally," she proudly stated. "I especially like to eat at new restaurants." She concluded with a comment that should have our community erect a statue in her honor. "And I do not like going to Walnut Creek."

There are always two sides to every story, however. Annette, an Orinda Downs mom, wishes that we'd provide more information like "reviews on restaurants, plays, and on big events in San Francisco and Walnut Creek."

Linda pushed her sunglasses on top of her head and wasted no time in responding. "Speeding on Corliss! Constantly! People drive at freeway speeds on my street." She'd like to see a campaign for reduced speeds on Moraga roads. How about this, Linda? Moraga residents would likely be thrilled to have the ticketing police cars reassigned from their streets to Corliss. For, say, the next 10 years.

A cancelled appointment by her physical therapy client gave Ann a chance to discuss her concerns for the elderly. "Let the public know what services are available," she said. She'd like to see more stories on services like free transportation, depression counseling, and specifically, Caring Hands, the volunteer program of John Muir Health. Former Moraga resident Jane wants to see coverage of senior safety issues. "Especially the scams so prevalent on the seniors," she said.

Kim and her husband moved to Lafayette a year ago from Ithaca, New York. They both work, have no children, and seem a bit overwhelmed by all of the family activities in the area. "How about features on activities for folks that have no kids," she said.

As to overlooked sections of our community, how about this perspective, offered by Hope, who sat alone at a table in one cafe. She recently sold her company, the kids were gone, and she wondered what she was going to do in the next phase of her life. "Why don't you do a feature on downsizing?" she suggested.

Nilou, who works for the EPA in San Francisco, hates the perception that Lamorinda is a "Republican enclave, full of venture capitalists. That's not what we're all about here." Yet Shari of Lafayette says, "There needs to be a conservative viewpoint out there. I'm tired of the left."

Nilou, Shari and Lafayette retiree, John, all agree that they like to read stories about the interesting people in the area. "What did Joe Blow do? Where did he travel?"

Another Lafayette mom, Merilee, would "like to find out what my neighbors' kids are doing" via the newspaper. On a more conspiratorial note, Liz, from Moraga, has interest in a gossip column. "Like a Dear Nick?" she kidded. Mercy!

Adam, a Saint Mary's student, wants to see the college covered in more depth than for only its sports achievements. And it's nice to see our readership extend into the high schools. Bailey, a Campolindo student, is active in many sports, and wants everyone to know that "there are even (soon to be) diving classes at our school." Andrew Morris, Acalanes Aquatics Director, confirmed that he hopes to begin those classes this spring.

"It's all about sports here," said Jennifer, as her eyes burned through my blue baseball shirt. "How about a listing of current events for school-aged children, but non-sports related?"

Jennifer, a public service employee from Orinda and a parent of two, was the first to respond to my questions as I navigated the cafe of Lamorinda, asking residents about their concerns for 2013, and what topics they would like to see covered in Lamorinda Weekly.

The schools are no doubt one of our area's greatest assets. Meredith, mother of two young daughters, is downright worried for the future of Moraga schools. Her frustration was palpable. "Where do people think the funding for education is going to come from?" she asked. "Why didn't Moraga pass the parcel tax (last spring)?"

Paul warned of a potential problem in education that may escalate throughout 2013. The Moraga teacher is concerned about the No Child Left Behind mandate, and the resulting regulations that may tie the hands of our schools. "Do we really need the government to interject itself to determine what is right for our district?" he cautioned.

As I organized my notes, Mark, a Moraga dad who was eating a salad at a nearby table, dropped his fork and

A lack of development in our community was cause for concern. "Since the movie theater closed, there are very few activities for teenagers in Lafayette," said Amy, who works for a San Francisco software company. Richelle, a Moraga scientist, bemoaned the vacancy rate in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center.

Long-time Moraga resident, John, simply said he enjoys reading about all the current events.

And, finally, there was Jennifer - a Moraga mom, who thought, and thought, and thought. But, try as she might, she could come to only this conclusion: "I can't think of anything wrong with your paper. You cover it all!"

On that gracious note, here's hoping that by the end of 2013 all of you feel exactly the same way.

Happy New Year everyone!

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