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Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis.

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

Editor:

I like to see citizens recognized for making Moraga better, so here are my first three Walmark Prizes: Dave Trotter, who was recently re-elected to the Moraga Town Council, took down his campaign signs on election day. That's right, even before the polls closed. I'm sure many Moragans would agree with me that the sooner the signs go away after each election, the better. Thanks Dave. Bill Snider, the competitive proprietor of Moraga Hardware, was unable to provide what one customer wanted recently. As the man was leaving the store, Bill called out to him to try OSH. I couldn't believe my ears, and when Bill saw the look on my face he explained that he wanted to keep the money in Moraga. Sales taxes on Moraga purchases are paying for the work on our streets, he emphasized. Nice going.

Tim Freeman, a past president of the Kiwanis Club, came up with the idea a few years ago to raise money by selling See's candy at Christmas time. He then made it happen so effectively that this activity has become the Club's largest source of money for its charitable donations, from the three Lamorinda education foundations to the Food Bank. All of the profit from sales at the store next to Starbucks in Rheem goes to these contributions. Tim is still actively involved in this project. Good man.

Dale Walmark
Moraga

deputy pull over 35+ bicyclist, because they had no regard to the traffic laws (Stop Sign) on St. Mary's Rd. As I witness drivers moving slowly past the sheriff's vehicle, each driver gave a thumb's up to the officer. I just realized, I was not the only one frustrated with the bicyclist not following basic traffic laws. Thanks again for the Lafayette Sheriff's Department leadership in this ongoing issue.

Daniel I Bernie
Lafayette

Editor:

I believe your paper should do a front page article in the next edition on the issues that Mr. Cohn brought up about the Moraga-Orinda fire district's major unfunded pension and health care liabilities. If I interpreted Mr. Cohn's math correctly the unfunded liability is \$80,000,000 which will continue to grow. As a Moraga resident I am concerned that this will continue to grow and that the Orinda/Moraga taxpayer will be stuck with the bill. I am sure a majority of Orinda/Moraga residents are unaware of how serious this problem is. I just want this issue to be transparent so that we as a community can decide what should be done. Thank you.

Best,
Tom Frainier
Moraga

(Editor's note: Please visit our archives to read our past coverage of the above issue – www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0714/Reality-Is-Setting-In-MOFD-acknowledges-painful-times-ahead.html; www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0720/Soaring-Pension-Debt-Confirmed.html; <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0717/Task-Force-Speaks-Out.html>).

Civic News Lafayette

Meet the Newest School Board Member

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She's been an active community volunteer, serving on a number of boards, including the Springhill Elementary Parent Faculty Club, Lafayette for Education, and Educate our State; she also worked on the parcel tax campaigns of 2011 and 2014.

Clearly an adept multitasker, Pak, the mother of two girls, has been serving the community while working in asset management for more than two decades. She works for ClearBridge Investments in San Francisco as a client service manager.

Despite the busy schedule, Pak and Gundacker are passionate about the power of public education and have made it a family priority to give back to the community.

She's well aware of the relatively recent changes to school funding with the Local Control Funding Formula and cites the importance of the recently passed parcel tax as a "great testament of the value the community places on supporting public schools."

State mandated Common Core requirements, which establish clear, consistent standards for students focusing on critical thinking and analytical skills, is now in its first year of implementation and is the "new normal," says Pak. In her opinion the local roll out has been relatively smooth, due to a substantial amount of professional development for teachers along with a concerted outreach effort to parents.

Pak wants to encourage parents

and members of the community to attend the monthly school board meetings, to become even more aware and involved. Meetings are generally held at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the Stanley Middle School library, 3455 School Street. Pak will be officially sworn in at the Dec. 10 meeting. The public is welcome to attend the meeting, not only to welcome the newest board member but to also hear about items on the agenda ranging from a technology update to a draft of the 2015-16 calendar and the first interim budget report. For more information and a schedule of board meetings, go to www.lafsd.k12.ca.us.

Civic News Moraga

Planning Commission Approves Controversial Development Project

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Ella Samonsky, associate planner, discussed the 35-foot landscaped buffer, 20 feet from the town's right of way; the increased setback of the third story from the street; and the 90 planned parking spaces. She stated that the project complies with the Moraga Center Specific Plan, which governs this lot.

Most of the residents who spoke during the public comment period were opposed to the project. "I can accurately attest to the fact that at no time has any developer tried to inflict on Moraga anything as ugly, massive, and high density. The very reason we incorporated Moraga 40 years ago was to make sure that no development such as the one proposed by City Ventures would ever be approved," said Dick Olsen. Others criticized a density not compatible with the scenic corridor, including resident Scott Bowhay who described it as a good

design in the wrong place. Many residents of Moraga Country Club expressed concerns over parking and traffic along Country Club Drive. Two residents said they support the project – they view it as a well-conceived project that adds density and vibrancy to the town center.

Commissioners Stacia Levenfeld, Steve Woehleke and chair Christine Kuckuk noted that the extent of the commission's power was to decide whether or not the plan was compliant with the Moraga Center Specific Plan. "I can't find any reason to say no," said Woehleke. They noted that the project was true to the spirit of a plan that seeks to bring higher density downtown, and encourage bicycling to shops.

Commissioner Tom Marnane expressed his approval for the concept, and so did new commissioner Alexandra Babcock – in terms quite fresh for

the commission. "Funny to see how all of you residents who came here 15 to 30 years ago to build a family, now are opposed to the kind of development that would allow your own children to build a family here," she said. Babcock also inquired if the developer would pay traffic impact fees that could be applied to a Lamorinda-to-BART shuttle.

Only commissioner Frank Comprelli opposed the adoption of the plan. His opposition stemmed from a proposed 10,000 square foot park that he found grossly inadequate and misplaced.

Commissioner Teresa Onoda, who was just elected to the Town Council, recused herself from the meeting so that her participation would not be challenged when the council makes a final decision regarding the Moraga Center Homes project.