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Letters to the Editor

Why not publish editorials?

Dear Editor,

Having recently gone through a contentious dispute between Lafayette's city council and the property owners on three streets about to be repaved, it occurs to me that your newspaper could have provided an extremely valuable service to our community by editorializing the unfairness of Lafayette's Municipal code, Section 8-123.

Although that opportunity has probably been lost, it is not too late to initiate an editorial page in the Lamorinda Weekly as almost every newspaper worth reading in the United States proudly publishes. Pippa Fisher did a yeoman's job of covering our dispute in two articles she wrote and I thank her for that but editorializing it and many other contentious issues as they arise would be an exceptionally good service to local journalism and to our community.

I hope you will give serious consideration to my suggestion. In fact, I will go one step further to facilitate it. I volunteer to write your first editorial with the Lamorinda Weekly with the headline, "The Unmitigated Gall of Lafayette's Section 8-123."

My service won't cost a dime and you'll find it enlightening.

John Salley

Lafayette

[Editor's Note: Traditionally the Lamorinda Weekly has elected not to publish editorials nor endorse candidates for office, but we do offer a Public Forum as well as this section for residents to state their opinions on matters of importance to the community.

Most papers that do publish editorials have their own division, with an editorial manager, who writes the editorials, to avoid conflict of interest between the editor of the paper, who often helps write articles, and an unbiased third-party.

Also, both Pippa Fisher and Nick Marnell covered the sidewalks issue.]

Sanctuary Cities effort is misguided

Dear Editor,

Your March 8 article highlighting the efforts by three young women to have "Lamorinda" designated for sanctuary status is an example of appeal to the heart, and not to the head. Early on, the article mentions that the three women are children of immigrants; while the article does not state this, we can presume that the immigration status of their parents flows from them having gone through the normal legal channels. Thus, the women are not essentially self-advocating, and instead are appealing to the better human instincts in all of us.

However, the article lays out a case that effectively ignores the laws of the United States. And this is the great failing of the women's effort. Either we are a nation of laws, or we are not. Advocating that laws be ignored is a slippery slope. Perhaps it would be better to advocate for changes in our immigration laws, as opposed to the "nice" concept of a sanctuary city (or area).

I am not an advocate for forceful removal of otherwise law-abiding undocumented individuals. But is your paper an advocate for avoiding our laws?

Bill Fraser

Lafayette

Leigh Creekside Park Welcomes Everyone

Dear Editor,

The recent decision to conduct a focused EIR for Leigh Creekside Park is being framed by playground developers as children vs. nature. Children and nature go together like a hand-in-glove. To pit children against nature is not fair to children or nature, especially future generations.

At the 2/27/17 Lafayette City Council meeting, four children and a young adult advised the council to protect the park from development. In fact, one young man requested we preserve the park into perpetuity for future generations and then declared, "I am the future!" Moreover, noise ordinances for single family residential neighborhoods are tighter than in multi-family or downtown neighborhoods.

As a frequent park user, I can attest to the wonderful sounds of children laughing, playing and running in the park, especially in the spring, summer, and fall. Leigh Creekside Park was founded to preserve nature for future generations. It is the only park of its kind in Lafayette and it welcomes everyone of all ages and abilities. Framing the issue as children vs. nature is illogical, because no one should be forced to choose one over the other. It deepens divides within our community and demonstrates our inability to appreciate the value of greenspace.

Leigh Creekside Park is too small to install an elaborate playground and expect the park to remain a natural oasis. To claim we have a semi-rural character and to strip our neighborhood of this little gem of a natural space along the creek is to say one thing and do another. In the words of Joanie Mitchell, "You don't know what you've got 'till it's gone!"

Deborah Callister
Lafayette

Hoping Moraga can act civilly

Dear Editor,

In response to Doug Home's letter to the editor last edition I wanted to give an alternative perspective on how I see the recent engagement in several town issues. Doug suggested that current voices at Moraga Town Council meetings were "politically extreme groups." What I witnessed were dozens of local parents, longtime residents and young adults, all who live in our community, speaking passionately about issues that concern them and the people they love.

One parent spoke about her experience firing a loaded gun at a teenager and barely missing hitting her friend; another resident, who has lived here for decades, spoke about his journey from China and the positive impact many immigrants have had on this country; and a third resident spoke about her fears of her young children coming into contact with guns at playdates in Moraga.

While there is much divisiveness in our country right now, my hope is that locally, we can do things differently: Avoiding attacks on individuals and groups and discussing issues and concerns with rigor, compassion and civility.

If people are concerned, as I am, about the town's liability and fiscal impact as it relates to new ordinances that are being proposed, I would love to see people join us for the monthly Community Conversations that are being held at Saint Mary's College. These meetings are explicitly for the purpose of helping people hear each other and think creatively about the many interests and concerns of our residents. We have been fortunate that many town council members and town staff have been present for these meetings. The next meetings take place on Sat., March 25 and Sat. April 29, both from 9:30-11:30 a.m. The expectation is that participants come ready to listen, speak authentically and think creatively. I hope to see you there.

Edy Schwartz
Moraga

Safe gun storage ordinance encouraged

Dear Editor,

As noted in last week's edition, a group of over 230 concerned residents is asking Moraga to consider two commonsense gun violence prevention ordinances. As representatives of that group, we write to explain our concerns and objectives.

Our primary focus is the safety of children in Moraga. Just among our group's Executive Committee, our children have been shown unsecured guns at playdates, and we've known teens who committed suicide with their parents' guns. Some of us lived in Moraga when a JM student was accidentally killed while playing with a gun at a friend's house. Many of our children were in elementary school when a deranged individual used his mother's guns to kill a classroom of 7-year-olds, and six of their educators, in Newtown, Connecticut.

We've asked the town council to adopt an ordinance that would require people to keep their guns safely stored when they're not carrying them. Safe storage, already practiced by responsible gun owners, helps prevent accidental shootings by children, teen suicides, and gun thefts during burglaries. An existing California law that makes it a crime after an adult leaves a loaded gun where a child can access it does not do enough to protect kids from getting guns in the first place, which is why eight communities in California - including San Francisco and Oakland - have passed "safe storage" laws. Only one of these laws was challenged. It was upheld by a federal appellate court as consistent with the Second Amendment.

We've also proposed an ordinance that would require gun dealers who wish to operate in Moraga to sell out of commercial zones, rather than from private homes, so that law enforcement can have greater oversight. Lafayette, Pleasant Hill, the unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County, and 58 other localities in California have these modest requirements.

We elected our town council members to put the safety of its residents above all else. We believe Moraga can and should follow the lead of the dozens of other California communities that have taken steps to make them as safe as they can be. To join our effort, email safemoraga@gmail.com.

Executive Committee, SAFE MORAGA: Moragans for Gun Safety

Anne Naffziger
Dr. Elizabeth Berkes
Eric and Ana Moon
Ada Sheng
David and Allison Anderman
Doris Chen
Kiran Malancharuvil
Moon Chung
Stephanie Dickerson
Richard Herd and Meghan Sweeney
Rebecca Leimbach

Enjoys Moraga Police report

Dear Editor,

Please tell whoever writes the police report for Moraga that he/she is great and I think he/she is so funny and entertaining!

Vicki Featherstun
Moraga

[Editor's Note: Our Moraga police report is compiled by our talented feature writer, Cathy Dausman.]

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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