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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:

As one of the founders of SHSTC, I thoroughly enjoyed Laurie Snyder's well researched update on the facility. The most important job I had in the project was to contact industrialist Richard Rheem's assistant to see if he had five or ten acres we could acquire at a reasonable price. To our delight, he offered us 54.7 acres at a price of around \$20,000! Needless to say, we snapped it up, and the rest is history.

George "Dode" Hall
Orinda

Editor:

As I was driving to Church this past Sunday, I was horrified to see a sign among candidates running for office, "Defeat Mendonca" In my opinion, it stated anger and hostility. That was a "Bully Sign" that left no name of ownership. I spent my career as an educator, teaching children love and respect for each other. If one has a difference of opinion, it can be handled diplomatically. These signs were drastic and unacceptable. Is this the negative message we want to convey to our youth, our future adult citizens? How sad.

Millicent Mc Cormack
Moraga

Editor:

A plea for civility:

As I drive around bay area communities this time of year, the roadways are lined with signs of candidates running for office. Nothing unusual here. Until you drive into Moraga and see signs that single out and attack a candidate. These mean-spirited signs, and there have been various iterations over the past 6 months, have set Moraga apart from other communities—and not in a good way.

Over the years, Moraga has developed a bad reputation And for good reason. As a resident of Moraga for over 28 years, I have watched good, hard-working public officials who are trying to balance the needs of the community viciously attacked by small, vocal groups when they do not get their way. Though the issues have changed, the vitriolic responses are all too similar.

Unfortunately, the result is often stagnation or litigation. What's worse is these vicious, retaliatory behaviors have stymied Moraga's potential to raise financial and social capital.

The latest controversy is over the use of Rancho Laguna Park by off-leash dog owners. Without getting into the details of the debate, one could only hope that the behavior of the dogs is better than that of the owners. By and large Moraga residents are looking to our public officials to establish rules and conditions that consider fair and balanced access to the park and the health and safety of all that use it.

Ironically the candidate targeted, Karen Mendonca, understands the importance of civility in dialogue. Her academic career included research on the lead-

ership skills that build successful organizations through the practice of civil discourse. In March of 2011, she was invited to give a keynote address at Saint Mary's College where she delivered an address entitled, "Civility is a Choice--Even in Politics."

Mendonca is hardworking and accessible. In 2010, she instituted monthly "Ask the Mayor and Town Manager" open public meetings. Karen works collaboratively with the community and Town staff in order to make informed decisions that respect the Town's history, uphold the General Plan and positively shape our future.

We can do and must do better at working together with civility to achieve the best results for all the people who live in Moraga.

Renee Zeimer
Moraga

Editor:

I have been watching with interest and dismay, the new kerb installation on Moraga Way on the Orinda side of Miramonte High School.

Seems to me, that the whole thing has not been thought through - cyclists have no idea what is going on, and ride in the road anyway (are they supposed to ride between the kerbs and the hedge?), trash trucks can't get to the trash cans, busses now block the road entirely as they can't pull out of the traffic stream, - these kerbs have eliminated parking in front of all the residences (including Miramonte), - these kerbs will force head-on collisions as there is no way now to pull off the road in a potential accident situation, - cars will hit the kerbs by mistake and cause major damage to their cars and accidents as well.....

Do you want me to go on?

Lamorinda apparently has more money than sense when it comes to road spending - these agencies do not have a revenue problem, they clearly have a spending problem!

Colin Taylor
Moraga

Editor:

Moraga made national headlines when teenager Ryan Andresen was denied an opportunity to become an Eagle Scout in a local troop, allegedly on the basis of his sexual orientation (he is gay). He has appeared on the Ellen Degeners' TV show and 400,000 people signed an online petition in support.

I find it disappointing that the Lamorinda Weekly devoted no coverage to this story (although you covered the troop when it promoted several boys to Eagle Scout in July). Ryan's plight generated significant attention on Moraga. Apparently, when that attention is negative, the Lamorinda Weekly turns the other way. Turning away is no different than endorsing discrimination by silence; a free and unafraid press should know better than that.

Scott Bloom
Lafayette

Civic News orinda

Orinda Planning Commission Moves Adobe Project Forward

... continued from page A6

Although the City earlier designated the three remaining original walls [front and side] of the Moraga Adobe as a historic landmark, additions after 1841 are not a part of that designation.

City Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu observed recently that the Adobe has been a private residence with no public access since 1841. J&J Ranch is "moving in the direction of more public access," he said, through the creation of the "Adobe Community Clubhouse," which will incorporate the remaining Adobe elements as part of a facility accessible by the 13 J&J subdivision families.

The Joaquin Moraga Adobe Pre-Design Report prepared by Carey & Co. Inc. Architecture on September 23, 2010 for J&J project managers (available on the City's website) offers the possibility of greater public usage than current estimates project. Although ownership of and responsibility for the Adobe would rest with the future home owners who would also be its primary users, the report

leaves open the possibility that public and private groups could visit by prior arrangement.

Friends of the Moraga Adobe disagree. "The developers are proposing that the Adobe become a clubhouse for the exclusive use of the 13 homeowners of the subdivision," reads the Friends' website (www.moragaadobe.org). Others remain opposed to the Project because of concerns regarding potential damage to the environment.

Planning Commissioners in their CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) analysis determined that the "Project would have a less than significant impact on the environment and that the Project's individually limited or cumulatively considered impacts (when connected to the effects of past projects and to foreseeable future projects, such as the Lavenida Lane subdivision) are less than significant." Future home designs on the 13 proposed lots will be subject to the City's design review process, during which each home's visual impact on the scenic vistas will

be evaluated. Eighty new trees will be planted along the new roadway and around the bio-retention basins.

Additionally, there will be no street lighting or bicycle or equestrian trails in the development. The habitats of a variety of threatened species must be protected.

Three pedestrian paths are planned to allow public access to the Moraga Adobe site.

Regarding potential landslide worries, the CEQA report states, "a large area of the site will be graded to repair existing slides and to create the roadway. The finished grade will resemble the natural topography of the hill side." Ursu clarified the action statement further, noting that remedial grading will be undertaken only during the dry season -- and will be completed within one dry season. He said a smaller, similar operation north of Stein Way is successfully wrapping up.

To learn more about the Project, visit the websites for the City of Orinda and Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe.