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## Letters to the editor

Two good outfits

Once again recently, Ron Schumacker of Moraga Motors solved a small problem and didn't charge me. What a great local shop. No wonder it's where I go for work I do pay for. Beats driving out to the dealer in Concord.

I haven't had a rat problem since Honest Rodent Proofing did work at my house. They were more thorough than outfits I've used before. I'm glad I called them.

Dale Walwark  
Moraga

In response to Nov. 25 Letter

I'm very unhappy that you chose to publish the letter entitled (quite inappropriately) "Our Community" in the Nov. 25 issue.

First of all, the writer didn't include his actual name, or at least you chose to publish it as "Jared L." All other letters to the editor I recall in your paper have included first and last names.

Second, I believe your guidelines say letters must be factual, but the letter makes disingenuous claims about slavery ("America didn't create slavery, it abolished it."). America had slavery for 246 years (1619 to 1865), enshrined it in the Constitution, and continued to hold many African-Americans in near slavery after Reconstruction under draconian Jim Crow laws for another century. That's what the Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s was all about. And discrimination didn't stop in 1965.

Jared L's comments about implicit bias are equally wrong headed, as are his comments about black poverty. There are dozens of recent books that draw tight connections between centuries of slavery, Jim Crow, and subsequent economic, legal and other constraints that kept many blacks in the US in poverty, leading to the conditions that Jared L. opines about (crime, dropouts, etc.). Redlining, bias against blacks in the housing, job and financial markets and other factors created the situation Jared L. blithely blames on the victims. And psychologists at Harvard and elsewhere have written extensively on the role implicit bias plays in our society, and elsewhere.

I believe Lamorinda Weekly can do better. I hope you will promote a more inclusive and informed conversation on these matters in the near future, rather than giving space to the most narrow minded among us to serve up racism in sheep's clothing. I suggest reaching out to many in the community (Lamorinda and beyond) for advice and comment.

Thanks for listening.

Chris Rauber,  
Lafayette resident and regular reader

Concern over Letter to Editor

On November 25th, the editorial team of the Lamorinda Weekly chose to publish a letter from Jared L. that perpetuated racist stereotypes and claimed racist falsehoods as truth. When an editor and publisher provide a platform for dangerously inaccurate rhetoric, it brings into question their journalistic integrity. It also causes significant harm to the Families of Color who live in this community. By allowing Jared's falsehoods to be printed in your paper, you sent his unsubstantiated "statistics" and ill-informed racist personal opinions into the homes of countless people who were then subjected to the harm that racism causes. Letters to the editor may not represent the beliefs of the editor, but when they are used to spout racist tropes, the choice to publish those falsehoods does reflect on the journalistic ethics of a news organization. Lamorinda is currently engaging in tremendous anti-racism work at the school district level, within the city council, and among numerous grassroots groups that have all been born from the desperate need to make this community more equitable, safe and inclusive. A look at the masthead on your website shows that your editor, writers, and publishers all present as white. You would be doing a tremendous service to your readers if your team was instead a reflection of the diverse community that receives your paper on their doorstep. As a journalist, I know that local journalism is often the heartbeat of a small town. It can be used to build community, foster understanding, and share information. You may be a small paper, but you still have a responsibility to uphold the standards of journalistic integrity that a larger paper would. Publishing racist misinformation, and granting Jared's request to remain anonymous, is not what reputable news organizations do. I'm curious to know what editorial decisions went into allowing Jared to not publish his last name, when it's your own paper's policy to require it. I would welcome the opportunity to engage with you in further dialogue, and to point you in the direction of local leaders who are doing this work. The work of anti-racism is life-long, and it is important for white folks to be responsible for making these changes. The privilege that you are afforded by having the Lamorinda Weekly as your platform, should be used for good.

Kim Simon  
Lafayette

Opting for change

Jared L's letter from November 25th called for being identified by one's life path, not by color or gender, and we could not agree more.

We aspire for a town where people are treated on their merits, children are graded equitably regardless of race, all people are treated as belonging in our city, and residents don't tighten their grip on their handbag when they see a person of color.

Yes, this happens here. Our leaders are listening, learning, dissatisfied with the status quo, and opting for change.

Bias no longer is codified in law as slavery, yet exists in policy, culture and measurable outcomes. Black Americans receive a different score for kidney function because the assumption that all Black Americans are more muscular. Despite education and income, Black and Brown persons are hospitalized at higher rates with Covid. Despite education and income, Black women suffer more labor complications and their babies die at higher rates. People pursuing the American dream, making the right choices, finishing advanced school and working hard; all exhibiting the right behaviors but worse outcomes. We have a long way to go. Please join our LAFSD district DEI committee, run for city council, mentor our students; get involved as we make our country better. Thank you for calling for unity as we move forward.

All Americans deserve their constitutional rights: to exercise speech, not be unreasonably searched, to assemble on a bridge over Highway 24 and Lafayette Plaza. We strive for all people to enjoy these rights equally, where White and Black Americans can protest, resist, jog, or sleep in bed, and not get shot. Please reach out and join us. For together we can remain pushing towards the ever more perfect union. "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction," quoting another President. "It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for (our children) to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where (we) were free."

Kishore Nath, MD  
Lafayette

Working together to solve problems

Last week, you published a letter to the community from "Jared L." As a member of this community, here is my response to his call to an "open dialogue to a better way." Quotes from his letter are italicized.

We have a Black mayor. Black exceptionalism is in of itself steeped in bias that you claim that does not exist. Our community has recently experienced blatant acts of racism painted prominently in our public spaces.

American didn't create slavery, it abolished it. Slavery was brought into the US for economic gains that benefit white people and still do. Legalized slavery was abolished but followed immediately by mass incarceration, and redlining which perpetuated segregation and discrimination. Listen to stories shared at our public meetings.

Implicit bias is not scientific fact. There may be controversies about which test best measures bias, but it exists. Follow the science.

Eighty percent of young Black men are fatherless. Fathers are important. Why are they missing? Let's start with the high rate of police brutality of our Black brothers. Ahmaud Arbery, Treyvon Martin, Miles Hall. Systemic oppression in our societal structures are creating families without fathers.

What about making good choices? Making good choices does not protect you from being Black in America. Among women with a college education or higher, the pregnancy related maternal mortality rate is 5.2 times that of their white counterparts, and 1.6 times GREATER than white women with less than a high school diploma. Making good choices is not sufficient in closing the gap.

I am not my color, I am not my sex. As for me, I am my color and I am my sex. Do not erase my identity by assuming we all have the same lived experiences and same access to resources in this country.

I am an American, we all are. Let's stop dividing ourselves and solve our problems together with hope and understanding. Amen.

Christine Chang Pecci, MD  
Taiwanese - American, Bay Area born, Acalanes class of `86

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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