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• LAMORINDA Community •

Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writers and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.
All published letters will include the writer's name and town (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only), and should be 350 words or less. Letters may be edited for length or legal considerations.
email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: **Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570**

Editor:

MOFD, Where to Now?
What's the difference between opera and local politics? In opera, a chorus of shrill voices too long on stage would drive an audience from the theatre. But in local politics they seem to gather a following.
In opera, a seasoned voice capable of intimate nuance as well as gripping power (if you can find one) is highly prized. Why, I ask you, does the same not go for local political discussion?
The bullies are screaming "Off with Their Heads!" when it comes to the MOFD Fire Chief and the Board of Directors. Where are the mature voices calling for review of the governance structure and improvement of agency-community relationships?
How unfortunate is it that those who berate our fire/paramedic professionals have no sense of and no regard for the crisis of morale they are contributing to among those who serve our communities? How sad is it that those who come to work every day prepared to put their lives on the line for us have to endure a long running stream of insensitive vitriol containing 10% facts and 90% ear splitting, raging noise?
In a few weeks the next MOFD Fire Chief will be hired. I heartily enjoin citizens of good will to meet with the new leader and seek to find a way forward which will show respect for and be of benefit to both our communities and to our emergency responders.
Those who take the time to learn the breadth of the situation—all sides of the matter—are the rightful voices of counsel…if we can find them.

Jonathan Goodwin
Canyon

To the Editor,

Excoriating elected and appointed board members and government officials for faulty oversight of MOFD's pension policy need not turn into a vitriolic attack on an outstanding public servant for exercising his legal rights. To do so, as represented in the September 9th issue of Letters to the Editor, is no more appropriate than attacking a taxpayer for taking a completely legal but controversial tax break, as I expect many members of our affluent community do with thoughtless regularity.
Chief Nowicki has been a particularly outstanding member of a public service organization charged with protecting our properties and our lives at a moment's notice 24/7. I had the privilege of working with Pete when I served as a reserve firefighter in the pre-merger Moraga Fire Protection District. He was always an exemplary firefighter / paramedic, technical rescue leader and generally an acknowledged example to his peers in the firehouse. This was a firehouse community in the highest tradition of service to a community that demanded and got the best. Before Pete was selected for Chief of MOFD, he attended great fires and medical calls, saving lives and property as a matter of course. His elevation to Chief was inevitable given his expertise, superior intellect and incredible work ethic. What was a loss to first line fire-fighting and emergency medical needs was a major gain to the leadership of the newly consolidated district.
To put this into perspective, Chief Nowicki has many of the same attributes as many of the very successful, high achieving, business leaders of the Lamorinda community whose intellect and work ethic he at least equals. A big difference is that his was a choice of public service putting his physical safety at risk for our benefit, not the economic risks that many comparable leaders chose as careers, that have rewarded them with the opportunities and safety of a Lamorinda lifestyle.
Pete Nowicki deserves our gratitude and respect, and I believe an apology from Mr. Bill Schmicker. To the degree that this latter is not forthcoming, I offer it on behalf of my community.

Les Berkes
Moraga

To the Editor:

I'm sure many readers have heard about the new playground at the Lafayette Community Park and all that it has to offer to children of various ages. What the planners failed to account for was security.
I have been a Lamorinda resident for 10 years and my recent visit to the park was the first time I instinctually felt concern for the safety of my children and myself in this area. My visit was early in the morning and the playground was empty. Considering that the playground is not visible from the parking lot, road or any neighboring homes, this is definitely not the type of playground I would visit in any neighboring communities.
My gut feeling was validated that day and over and over again since then. The good news is that no one has been physically assaulted, but the bad news is that the lack of security in the parking lot has afforded a petty thief a great deal of opportunity. I am personally aware of 4 smash and grab incidences in the span of 11 days. Each of these incidences has involved a mother taking her children to enjoy the new playground. It seems fairly plausible that it is the same perpetrator or group.
It's unfortunate that in Lamorinda, a self-described family suburb, a mother can no longer take her children to a local playground without safety and crime concerns. As a local mother of young children, I demand that the police ensure our safety at our playgrounds. Is this so unreasonable? Considering that the cost of the playground was $55,000 less than anticipated, is it unrealistic to ask for security features such as video surveillance or other deterrents? It is unacceptable that mothers with children are being targeted in this community with so much success.

Sincerely,
Sharon Mieloch-Garcia
Lafayette

Editor:

In an insensitive attack on jobless and lower-income people, the Acalanes Union High School District wants to make a temporary property tax permanent.
Recently, the district's board voted to put a tax-increase measure on the November 3 ballot. The measure, if passed, will make a $189 property tax permanent. A two-thirds vote is needed for passage. The original tax is scheduled to expire in June 2011.
Currently, the official unemployment rate for California is 11.9 percent. The unofficial unemployment rate is 20 percent (The New York Times, July 15, 2009).
At a time when so many of our fellow citizens are unemployed, the Acalanes district should have asked for a temporary extension of the $189 tax. At a future time, the economy may be better, and the proposed permanent tax may not be needed.
In an election not too long ago, the Acalanes district received voter approval to extend a different tax for 17 years.
The Acalanes plan to make the $189 tax permanent comes at a time when Lamorinda residents have been besieged with other tax and fee increases. On April 1, the local sales tax went from 8.25 percent to 9.25 percent. Garbage-collection rates have gone up as much as 25%. The local water district recently hiked taxes 8 percent. The sewer district wants 4 percent more.
In the last 18 months, Orinda residents got a 44 percent increase in the library tax. On March 3, the property tax for the Orinda schools went up 32 percent.
By trying to make the $189 tax permanent, the Acalanes district puts each homeowner closer to foreclosure.
While good schools enhance property values, overtaxation can also lower such values.
Voters in the Acalanes district should reject the plan to make the $189 tax permanent.

Richard S. Colman
Orinda

Public Forum — JOIN IT

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda or one of its cities that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section.
Just send your letter to **letters@lamorindaweekly.com** and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum.

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Willow Spring Church
1675-1689 School Street, Moraga
www.willowspringchurch.org
(925) 376-3550
Sunday Service Times:
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Services for youth and children after worship during the 10:30am service
Weekly Activities: Wednesday Community Bible Study @ 10am
Wednesday REVERB Youth Group @ 7pm
Friday BLAST! Kids Club @ 6pm

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24 Orinda Way, Orinda (next to the Library) - 254-4212
Sunday Service and Sunday School 10 - 11 am
Informal Wednesday Meeting 7:30 - 8:30 pm
Reading Room/Bookstore M-F: 11 am- 5 pm
(across from the Orinda Theater)
www.christianscienceorinda.org

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way Orinda
925-254-3422
Fall Worship Schedule
8:15 a.m. Traditions Worship Service
9:15 a.m. Coffee Fellowship
9:40 a.m. Education for all ages
10:45 a.m. Celebrations Worship Service
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1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette
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