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Letters to the Editor

Editor:

This letter is in response to the recent hate crime committed in Moraga, where a bi-racial couple had a white cross with the letters KKK written on it left in their driveway by a racist coward.

I am so deeply saddened and dismayed that such a disgusting, hate-filled racist crime has occurred in my community; a community I bought my first home in many years ago because of its pristine beauty, sense of community, excellent schools and relatively safe neighborhoods. I feel sickened and not so safe anymore.

Worse yet, I am dismayed by the fact that the community of Moraga did not make a HUGE deal of this hate crime. The Lamorinda Weekly published a non-descript blip of an article under the police blotter section titled "Moraga's Shame." Those words should have made the front page headlines! It should have read, "Shame on US, Moraga"

The community of Moraga should not only be outraged that this hate crime was committed in our community; but the fact that we, as caring citizens and neighbors have not shown a stronger and more unified outcry to denounce this disgusting act of hate and racism is sad. Through our silence and lack of action, Moraga is condoning the underlying racism that affects our community and world.

Wake up Moraga! OUR children, who we are raising in a so-called safe community, will most likely be living their adult lives outside of Moraga, in a diverse world of many religions, races, and cultures. Moraga is not a safe, beautiful community - for any of us - if we do not ALL stand up and publicly denounce such prejudice and hate in our neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and places of worship.

I, for one, would like to extend my most sincere apologies to the couple and their families for having faced such ugliness in our community. I hope we all become more enlightened and stand together against racism and hate crimes everywhere.

Karen Saffarian
Moraga

Editor:

Welcome one and all to Lafayette's NEW "public" dog-run.

I'd like to publicly thank EBMUD and the city of Lafayette for the beautiful and much appreciated sidewalk running from opposite the new Community Center to the entrance of the Lafayette Reservoir. This new sidewalk has made it a much safer journey to the reservoir and it is truly a beautiful piece of construction. There is, sadly, one segment of our community who seem to think that this new sidewalk is actually a dog-run. A place for them to bring their beloved pet to deposit his (or her) daily load of defecation.

I've watched these owners stop to let their pet poop either directly on the sidewalk or more commonly, in the dirt area right next to the walkway. When I ask them why they're leaving the poop, I get the most interesting responses. Some people say they will pick it up on their way back, others tell me it's good for the soil, which is so not true. Dog poop spreads disease and seeps down into our local water table. Most people get angry with me and say something I can't put in print. I don't understand why THEY get angry with ME, when they are the ones clearly breaking the law.

There is so much poop by our new sidewalk that it really stinks!

The other day, we had our first fall shower which (normally) makes the air smell so fresh and clean. I decided a walk to the reservoir would be just the thing. With all the newly wet poop steaming along the sidewalk, the smell was overpowering. I actually had to go over to the other side of the street just to get away from the stench. Unfortunately, I could smell it way over there too.

I would like to know why so many dog owners think it's OK for them to let their dogs poop alongside our trails, sidewalks and in other peoples yards!

Why don't all you dog owners go down and pick up ALL the accumulated poop? And when you see another dog owner leaving poop on the ground, say something to them!!!!

Peoples pets are just like our children. We don't leave their poop lying around for others to smell or step over.

And don't even let me get started about the dogs in restaurants licking their private parts while I'm eating my meal.

Karen Engbrecht
Lafayette

Editor:

I just read a letter to the community from the Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection Board members (F.I.R.E. Oct. 2009) in which they state they dare not consider reducing the salary of the Fire Chief or firefighters because it would

undercut their ability to recruit and retain excellent firefighters. This is self-serving nonsense. Firefighting is a much sought after job in the Bay Area with an abundance of applicants for every opening. How many jobs are there in this area that provide a good wage, good health benefits, an excellent pension, and only require a high school diploma? Not too long ago, when the Oakland Fire Department had openings for trainees they had something like 5,000 applicants for a handful of positions. I guarantee that a not particularly demanding fire department like Moraga-Orinda (after all, how many blazing highrises do we have in Lamorinda) would have no difficulty finding competent applicants even if salaries and pensions were slightly reduced. I have great respect for firefighters. They have a physically demanding and at times dangerous job and deserve a decent salary and pension--but it isn't brain surgery. When the chief of a small fire department like Moraga-Orinda makes way more in his pension than most of the superintendents of school districts in Contra Costa County, it seems to me there is something terribly out of whack with our process for compensating public employees.

John O'Hare
Moraga

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