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Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Having just caught up finishing the recent editions of your paper, I felt compelled to commend you on your accomplishments in allowing Lamorinda residents learn more intimately about the local community. Admittedly, there are those in my household who do not feel the need to keep back issues of the old papers. But, I very much enjoy the information and pictures that are presented. The publishers and cofounders, Wendy and Andy, have earned my admiration in achieving, with you and your colleagues an attractive and informative means of distributing print information to a demographic inclined to read beyond 140 characters.

I like the writing and reporting, greatly appreciating the efforts devoted necessary to meet the burden of publishing a high quality product as you have done. Now, admittedly, I might have a question/suggestions or two about the layout of information, but it is minor compared to the actual content. While I am not averse to reading on the web, my life as a former practicing lawyer dictates that I have a print version of news that is important to me personally and the community in which I live. The Lamorinda Weekly does that for me.

Again, I thought a note of appreciation would be in order as I finally completed reading what happened last week and now can happily recycle. I'll do my best going forward to try to keep up.

Sincerely,
Randolph L. Tom
Moraga

To the Editor:

If you're in trouble, Orinda is a good place to be. I experienced a severe hypoglycemic episode driving in upper Orinda hills, stopped, couldn't tell where I was but called police. The dispatcher sent a car and an ambulance and they found me . . . somehow.

The ambulance was manned by Laynee Cooley and Michael Lacy of the fire department. One couldn't hope for more prompt, skilled, courteous, supportive and, yes, friendly rescuers. They did a blood glucose test and made other assessments. I and my car were delivered back home, on El Toyonal, and all became well.

Thank you again, Orinda Fire Department.

Roger McMillan
Orinda

Editor:

My name is Gregory Robinson, I am 17 years old, and I am a fervent supporter of the Lafayette Bike Park. I am one of the many who attend and speak at the meetings, and I do everything I can to support the project. Because at the moment the project is largely a political issue, I have been following the opposition and for the past 6 months or so I have been noticing that the site nolafayettebikepark.com has been posting items that are either inconsistent with facts and/or are misrepresentations of facts. For example, the "Best of BMX lobby" section on the site shows only the most vulgar and rude comments that the biking community has said, and it has gone and selected these statements from sites where there are forums about the project. I myself have written a number of very polite and logical letters to them, and they were completely ignored. The opposition is trying to paint us as though we are deliberately attempting to destroy their natural park, when the reality is that we just want to ride our bikes and we want a place that is dedicated to the sport we love; I myself race mountain bikes fairly seriously and want a place to train on a regular basis. They call us vandals, when in reality we are simply athletes attempting to do what we like to do.

Sincerely,
Gregory Robinson
Lafayette

Dear Editor:

The response to my article series on gluten has been tremendous, from the majority of people who've written about how it's begun to improve their lives, to a person who challenged the information in a previous letter to the editor. Contrary to his assertion that I plan to open a gluten-free bakery, I have no current or future ownerships in bakeries, Trader Joe's, Open Sesame or Whole Foods, all businesses I mentioned in the articles as community resources. (I'd probably frequent a local gluten-free bakery if one were to open, however). I am a Doctor of Chiropractic, a portal-of-entry doctor and physician under Medicare and Workers Compensation. Additionally, I have a Master's degree in Nutrition and a Bachelor's degree in Biology.

It's critical to know that major medical research journals are increasingly publishing studies linking gluten with many conditions, in susceptible individuals. A study of 29,000 with celiac disease (CD), 13,000 with solely small intestine inflammation, and 3,700 with "latent" CD (positive antibodies but normal intestinal findings), concluded that risk of death is modestly increased in all 3 groups (Journal of the American Medical Association 2009; 302(11): 1171-78. In

"Surprises from Celiac Disease", Alessio Fasano, M.D. states "Roughly 1 percent of the global population has celiac disease, although most do not know it. About half of adults with the condition do not suffer from diarrhea at diagnosis. Other signs that may occur in adults are anemia, arthritis, bone loss, depression, fatigue, joint pain, seizures, and numbness in the hands and feet." (Scientific American, Aug. 2009; pp. 54-61). Another study states "It is of a critical nature to identify children with gluten intolerance and celiac disease as early as possible to reduce the development of other auto-immune diseases." (J. Ped. Gastro. and Nutrition 35: 704-5). One has only to refer to Pubmed.com for hundreds of research studies on the topics referred to in my articles.

When scientists search rigorously for the causes of disease, even longstanding dietary staples we thought were healthy can be found detrimental to health. Apparently certain grass proteins such as those found in wheat, rye and barley can play a significant role in a variety of commonly encountered health difficulties. Were it up to my taste buds, gluten-filled foods would be among the healthiest items in a daily diet. Unfortunately they don't seem to fall into that category for many. Like most, my childhood was filled with those foods and the adjustments haven't always been easy. It's a matter of making an informed personal choice, aiming to reduce pain and suffering; it's about making appropriate changes based on sound medical research.

I hope the articles are thought-provoking because everyone deserves to be made aware of the latest discoveries in disease prevention. To reiterate, I do not plan to own or operate a gluten-free bakery, and do not own stock in any gluten-free businesses. Thank you for this opportunity to clarify any misconceptions which may have occurred. Additional medical references are available upon request.

Sincerely,

Theresa Tsingis, DC,MS

(Editor's note: The Lamorinda Weekly has verified Dr. Tsingis's credentials. Our columnists are professionals working in the field about which they are writing; their opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Lamorinda Weekly, but we do not accept professional columns from those who are not qualified to write them.)

Measure A: Emergency Education Parcel Tax

Editor:

I read with dismay Mr. Lively's distorted view of the Acalanes Union High School District's financial problems. He claims that the rules for K-2 class size reduction supposedly foisted upon the state by teachers unions, have caused AUHSD to hire many more teachers than he believes are required.

Obviously, this is ludicrous since high schools don't serve those students. In fact, AUHSD claims an average class size of 25.8, which is in line with what Mr. Lively himself seems to deem acceptable.

The "long-ago" classes of 30-40 students in which Mr. Lively claims to have received his excellent education were not nearly so information-intensive as modern classrooms; students must now be taught far more during their high school years than he (or I) did. If the planned layoff of 50 teachers comes to pass, many classes will have 40 or more students. Teachers simply cannot teach well in such large classes (how does one even fit that many desks in a classroom?) and our children's education will suffer.

Many other classes will be gone completely. An entire period of school will be eliminated. AP classes? Most will be gone, making our kids far less competitive with others when applying to good universities. Did Mr. Lively have wood or metal shop when he was in school? Our children won't.

To support his view, Mr. Lively quotes studies and statistics from the Libertarian CATO institute which (politics aside) may be useful from a high-level viewpoint but are hardly applicable to AUHSD. His complaints about excessive school funding in California also have no bearing at AUHSD, where per-student contributions from the State are 6% lower than average.

Spending by the district is up to 29% less per student than other districts of comparable academic achievement.

Despite Mr. Lively's claims of financial mismanagement, AUHSD and the other Lamorinda school districts have been doing more with less for a very long time.

Due to Proposition 13, property tax revenues that used to be generated locally for schools were replaced with state funding which, as we all know, has been drastically reduced now that the state's finances are in disarray.

The only reliable source of funding available to school districts are parcel taxes, which the state can't steal-- I mean borrow-- as it has other local revenues.

The primary reason Lamorinda property values hold up as they do is because our schools are so desirable. Ten years from now, how much less will your house be worth than it would have been, if the proposed \$112/year parcel tax doesn't pass and our schools become mediocre? Instead of fighting an extra, tax-deductible \$10/month, think about the big picture and support the future of our schools.

Mike Bernhardt

Moraga

Dear Editor:

I have been a resident of Orinda for 20 years. I am a product of public schools, including universities. My 2 kids both attended public schools in Orinda. I consider myself a proponent of public education.

I have recently begun to reconsider my financial

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com