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Letters to the Editor

Editor:

A recent article in The Wall Street Journal about the sad state of Orinda's roads received much coverage in our local press. In the story, an Orinda businessman is quoted as saying that the city spent a lot of money on the new (opened in 2001) library. This is simply not true.

Many people, Orindans as well as others, do not realize that the Friends of the Orinda Library raised over \$5 million in donations for library construction. The Friends also owned the old library and received almost \$2 million for that building. The city's contribution, about \$3 million, was from developer fees negotiated with the company which is currently building a new housing development called Wilder. Those developer fees are restricted by state law for public facilities, and could not have been used for road repairs.

The Friends of the Orinda Library, a nonprofit organization, is the owner of Orinda's wonderful library. The Friends board members are proud that we were able to raise the money and provide such a warm, welcoming and well-loved facility for everyone who comes to enjoy it. Ours is the only library in the county owned by a Friends group. We just want to set the record straight.

Linda Landau (Treasurer, Friends of the Orinda Library)

Orinda

Editor:

A year or two ago, I wrote to share my opinion that the police activity columns were too casual, or even jocular, about serious events. This morning, I read in the Moraga column about a mother who called 911 after her teenager threatened her, and about a drunk driver on one of Moraga's main roads. Both of the stories were presented with dry humor that I thought was inappropriate. What must have been going on that a parent felt the need to call 911 after being threatened? Does humor really have a place in a story about someone who was presumably driving unsafely and while impaired (this in a town that not so long ago had a drunk driver kill a pedestrian)? I get that some situations fit a tongue-in-cheek approach, sort of a "people do the darndest things" tone. Years ago, in a competing publication, I enjoyed reading how someone had called the police when the ATM would not return his card (the reporter noted that police advised the man to call his bank's customer service line), and how a homeowner had complained that a neighbor had filled up a swimming pool ... using the homeowner's hose and water (the neighbor admitted the hose was strung across the fence, but denied knowing how that had happened). Those are "life in a small town" amusing anecdotes. Domestic arguments that result in a 911 call and drunk drivers are not. Please pick and choose which events get the dry humor more carefully, and remove this unnecessary weakness in your quality publication.

Tony Rodriguez

Moraga

Editor:

High-speed rail--another low-brain bandage for a self-inflicted wound, i.e., too many people. Show me an audited financial report of a passenger rail system anywhere in the world in which passengers' fares are not subsidized by non-passengers . . . and I'll show you an incompetent auditor.

"USA Today" quotes Zhao Jian, a railway economics expert at Jiaotong University in Beijing: "In no country worldwide has high-speed rail ever been profitable." Of course, the central-control socialist government of China believes in taking whatever it wants from whomever it wants to do whatever it wants without restraint from a constitution. Whereas in this country . . . Oh, never mind.

Edward C. Hartman

Moraga

Dear Editor:

I am responding to your many articles and Letters to the Editor regarding the budgetary problems in Lamorinda and California.

Let's be objectif: The median household income in California is less than \$77,000 and in the U.S., less than \$55,000. Yet the cost of educating a child a year alone averages well over \$9000 and can exceed \$14,000 if the child receives the so-called bilingual education. Our state government also has to spend money on the construction/maintenance of roads/bridges, fire/police/emergency/prison/court prison services, pollution/traffic control, health care, unemployment/welfare benefits, etc. When will Americans realize that although some U.S. and foreign-born individuals are great assets, adding 3 million people every years to the U.S., and hundreds of thousands to California, essentially means more jobseekers, students, patients, welfare recipients, drivers, users of energy, and additional pressure on our fiscal and natural resources? Teen births reportedly cost California \$1.7 billion a year. In 2002 alone, according to the Census data, legal immigrant-headed households in California received welfare, cash and non-cash, costing taxpayers \$6 billion. Why don't we urge Sacramento and Washington, D.C. to take serious measures to stabilize our population? A number of experts already warn that the U.S. fiscal crisis can be worse than

Greece's. Raising tax burden on the struggling middle class or continuing to borrow massively from China and other countries will not solve our budgetary, unemployment or education problems.

Sincerely,
Yeh Ling-Ling
Orinda

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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