

In Memory

John Briggs De Garmo



April 4, 1924 - January 17, 2012

John (Jack) De Garmo passed away peacefully in his sleep at Tender Touch Residential Care in Walnut Creek on January 17th, at 87 years old. He joins his wife of 57 years, Ann De Garmo, who died April 11, 2011. John was the son of Margaret (Briggs) and Kenneth De Garmo and is survived by his sister Jeane Brown of Granville Ohio, and three children (and spouses) Lori Prince (Robert Hum), Bill De Garmo (Maureen) and Bob De Garmo (Lisa), all Bay Area residents. Additionally he is survived by four grandchildren Melody Prince, Brian, Michael, and Matthew De Garmo.

John was born in Evanston, Illinois and also resided in Rockford, Illinois and Edina, Minnesota prior to moving to California in 1967. He was a long time resident of Orinda before moving to Walnut Creek in 2006. John attended Hamilton College in New York and graduated from Northwestern University in Illinois in 1946 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He worked for Mobil Oil Corporation for a number of years before retiring from full time work. John was active in the Episcopal church as a Lay Reader and Eucharistic Visitor and committed to outreach activities, often visiting residents of nursing homes. For over 20 years he served in leadership roles in Camps Farthest Out (CFO), a group of nondenominational Christian retreats across the US. John loved music and at one time sang barbershop harmony with a local chapter of SPEBSQSA.

A memorial service will be held at **St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 66 Saint Stephen Drive in Orinda on Saturday February 18th at 3:00 PM.** For those wishing to make a contribution in his honor, consider a gift to St Stephen's Episcopal Church memorial fund. For friends and family, an online guestbook and picture gallery is available on this site: princehum.org

Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis.
email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

I am pleased to see that the City of Orinda is going to poll its residents to measure the level of support for taking action to fix our roads. I have been a resident of Orinda for 32 years. We moved here because Orinda was one of the premier communities in the Bay Area. While that hasn't changed, it is disheartening to see the continuing deterioration of our roads. As a civil engineer and a transportation planner I know what level of effort it takes over time to maintain roads. Besides the annoyance of maneuvering around the potholes, cracks and bumps, the poor road conditions pose a threat to bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages. Year after year the amount of money available has fallen way short of what is needed. Now our wonderful community is known as having some of the poorest pavement conditions in the Bay Area. It is not a matter of saving money by reducing city expenditures to put more into road maintenance. In order to put our roads in good repair

we will need something in the range of \$60 million. The total annual budget for the City is only \$10 - \$11 million. The day is gone when we can rely on outside help at the state or federal level to address these problems. Pointing fingers and debating about who should have done what is not going to get our roads fixed. It is time for us to step forward as a united community and do the right thing to solve this problem.

Sincerely,
 Bill Hurrell
 Orinda

Editor:

Having worked with the city and my neighbors over the past two years to successfully repave a large portion of Crestview Drive, I have come to some realizations about Orinda's infrastructure problems.

There is not nearly enough money in the city budget to address the problem. Nobody likes the idea of increased taxes, but frankly, I would rather that we raise the money and spend it right here where we can all keep an eye it. We cannot expect anyone to effectively and efficiently solve this city's most pressing issue without resources, but those resources must be spent wisely.

I suspect it will be very difficult to get 2/3 of voters to approve such a tax, especially when half of Orindans live on reasonably sound roads. People give a myriad of reasons why they would not approve additional taxes, often reaching back into our short history to point out various expenditures that were not necessary, or to raise concerns about the negative aspects of higher taxes, or simply not trusting our government leaders to do the right thing.

How can we move past discussing the problems and towards a working solution? Consider the comments you hear when discussing this topic with friends and neighbors. Consider your own personal skill set and what you can do to help the community. To give you an example, while the city was looking into the idea of benefit assessment districts, I polled my neighbors about their feelings on the subject. Some respondents

felt additional taxes would have a negative impact on property values, so together with two neighbors in the real estate industry, Lisa Geary and Jeannie Anderson, we polled Realtors. We found that generally local Realtors felt a moderate tax increase would not negatively affect home values or sales, but continued deferment of road maintenance would. I also recently spoke against MOFD's proposed commercial purchase because I understood that any perceived misuse of funds by a local public entity would fuel a negative response to any future spending, and Orinda's roads are more important to me than MOFD's administrative staff having comfortable digs.

We are all familiar with the arguments for a bond measure having to do with safety, fewer car repairs, increased property values, community pride, and peace of mind, but I suggest that the more involved you are, the more you will want to see Orinda succeed in its efforts to repair its infrastructure. Be a part of the solution.

Diana Stephens
 Orinda

Editor:

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) states that they have \$18 million in pension liabilities. In reality, footnote 8 of their audited financial statements shows that they have liabilities with an accounting value of \$143 million and offsetting assets of \$125 million. The market value of these assets is less; about \$117 million. But what is the \$143 million of liabilities? It is the present value, using a 7.75% discount rate, of a 60 year stream of future liabilities. What is their undiscounted value? No one seems to know or will tell but one person has estimated that they add up to over \$600 million. If you discount them at a lower rate, let's say 6%, the present value would be \$185 million and our "net liability" would then be closer to \$70 million just for pensions. A \$70 million pension obligation is a far cry from the \$18 million MOFD projection.

Vince Maiorana
 Orinda

Join our Public Forum

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.

BIG BAND

BALL ROOM DANCE/SHOW

Rheem Theatre, 350 Park Street Moraga

Come swing with your friends and neighbors
 or just watch the show!



With special guest
 singer Mary Ann Meltzer

Friday, February 3rd

The doors will swing open at 6:30pm.

Brush up your moves with dance instructor Gail Enright beginning at 7:00pm. Then at 8:00pm, get ready to be entertained by the 31 piece band that includes musicians from 10 years old to 92.

Tickets \$10 at the door
 or at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

Call 284-7404 for reservations

Public Forum

JOIN IT

Seatbelt Laws and School Age Children

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) states that car crashes are the leading cause of death for children aged 3-14. On January 1, 2012, California passed a new law regarding car seat safety. The law is simple. Children under the age of 8 years old OR under 4 feet 9 inches (57 inches) need to be secured in a car seat or booster seat. Also, children under 8 years old need to be seated in the back seat. This new law has many parents questioning the "or" in the law and trying to understand what it means.

Officer Will Davis of the Moraga Police Department stated that the minimum was raised to protect our children. He commented, "The new law is the minimum. Children can stay in their seats longer, but this is the minimum." A child can move out of a booster when they reach either of the two criteria- age or height. So what should be the minimum? How does California law compare to what is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the NHTSA, which analyzes the impact and safety tests?

The AAP on their Healthy Children website (a website for Parents) has a clear, thorough explanation of when children should move from one restraint device to another and eventually out of the booster. Its guidelines for a booster state, "As a general guideline, a child has outgrown his forward-facing seat when any one of the following is true:

- He reaches the top weight or height allowed for his seat with a harness.
- His shoulders are above the top harness slots.
- His ears have reached the top of the seat.

They recommend that children remain in a booster "until 4 feet 9 inches which is generally between 8 and 12 years of age."

Why the discrepancy? California law says 8 years old and the AAP stretches it to potentially 12 years old? Looking at the standard growth charts that a majority of pediatricians use, an 8 year old who was 57 inches would be in the 100%. It is not until 11 years of age when boys and girls are at the 50% mark when 57 inches. So clearly, California law is setting a minimum as a 57 inch 8 year old would be off the charts.

The AAP also recommends that children remain in the back seat until they are 13 years old for optimal protection. The

NHTSA also recommends keeping a child in a restraint as long as possible and waiting until age 13 to allow a child to travel in the front seat. To reiterate, California law states a child can move to the front much sooner- at 8 years of age.

Failure to comply with California law will result in a \$475 fine. Failure to comply with the AAP and NHTSA recommendations could result in far worse. You are informed and the decision is yours.

Internet Resources:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS>

Healthy Children: <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx>

California Highway Patrol: <http://www.chp.ca.gov/community/safeseat.html>

Becky Maher
 Moraga

(Becky Maher is a Moraga mom and former Pediatric Nurse Practitioner)