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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:

In regard to Mr. John Silbermans' letter to the editor (June 19), I share his feelings. There is nothing wrong with town homes. My objection to "Plan Bay Area" as applied to Orinda is the apparent requirement for government financed low income housing. If people choose to move into or build town homes priced by the free market, I have no problem. If housing in Orinda is provided by the government I strongly object! People who are provided government housing almost always turn it into slums. They have not invested in their homes and rarely care. Look at Oakland and San Francisco + other cities.

Free market value, based on supply and demand is the only thing that should set prices on homes. When the government interferes by setting prices, the people always loose. I hope never to see any "subsidized housing" in Orinda, Moraga or Lafayette.

Sincerely,
Henry R. Pinney
Orinda

Editor:

As a long time hiker, camper and outdoors person I was shocked to read Cathy Dausman's headline stating that Lyme Disease is not likely in California. Lyme Disease is present and making people ill and even killing them in California. The reported numbers may be small but that is in part because of denial of the disease and wrong diagnosis. In my street alone two young people have been infected with Lyme disease, then not diagnosed correctly as even

some doctors say there is no Lyme Disease in California.

A diagnosis eventually made at the Mayo Clinic may not count in Contra Costa County records. These unfortunate young people were not treated in a timely fashion, and later, when the disease was correctly diagnosed had already suffered irreversible damage from the disease. I knew another person who died of the disease after years of deteriorating health and extreme pain.

The California Lyme Disease Association www.lymedisease.org is a good source of information. Many of their members are former park rangers suffering from Lyme Disease. The association reports on many labs missing nearly half the positive cases, and provides information on additional testing. A number of doctors in California also have the erroneous belief that Lyme disease exists only on the east coast, so be persistent if you continue to feel ill after a tick bite, and are told that you cannot have Lyme Disease.

The Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District provides useful information about ticks and Lyme Disease. Most of our local parks also post notices warning about ticks and Lyme Disease. When you hike, or even garden, in much of our county, wear long pants tucked into your socks, then when you shower check your body carefully for ticks. I speak from personal experience about the ticks, but fortunately have never contracted the disease.

Whereas the chances of contracting Lyme disease may be small, the disease itself is extremely serious if not quickly diagnosed and treated. Prevention is usually the best course.

Alison Hill
Lafayette

Lamorinda Gets Closer to Official Wine Region Designation

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Not only is it a historical wine-growing region with a unique climate, but the geology in Lamorinda is unlike that of its neighbors. Unfortunately, meeting certain criteria of Lamorinda's unique geology meant that some properties had to be left out of the American Viticultural Area.

In order to apply to get an appellation with some chance of success, many criteria had to be scientifically demonstrated. LWGA hired two geologists, Dr. Michael Oskin and Dr. Kenneth L. Verosub (a specialist of the relationship between soils and wine), from the University of California, Davis to study the local geology and soil, as well as Patrick L. Shabram, a geographer who drafted the petition to the US Department of Treasury Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB).

What was discovered is that Lamorinda grapes grow on uplifted sedimentary rock that is a younger, less resistant sedimentary rock than neighboring rock. It was also found out that soils are higher in clay content (which will not surprise anybody), and that combined with the gentle sloping of the terrain permits good drainage.

Lamorinda also has a unique climate, protected from coastal cooling influences, an area of transition from cooler, marine-influenced climates to warmer inland climates, with multiple microclimate pockets due to the topography. The last unique characteristic is the suburban setting. The AVA covers 29,369 acres and includes approximately 121 acres of planted

vines and planned plantings across approximately 42 vineyards. Those are a large number of small vineyards, mixed in low density housing areas, where all the work is done by hand.

"We had no idea about the geology of the area, they (Oskin and Verosub) identified that fact fairly quickly on geological maps, and confirmed with field work and testing, and the area coincides with the boundary of Lamorinda," said AVA Committee leader Dave Rey, who served as the liaison to the UC Davis experts and professionals who worked on the application. "The grapes grown here are different. The combination of the terrain, the warm days and cooler nights makes it perfect for growing grapes. We need that designation to represent what's unique about our growing circumstance."

LWGA also researched the history of wine making in Lamorinda and discovered that growing grapes in Lamorinda goes way back. The 1860 census showed that local growers John Grinnell, Daniel Hunsaker, Isaac Hunsaker, and William B. Rodgers collectively produced 623 gallons of wine in the Lafayette/Alamo area (Alamo is not part of the proposed AVA). Then in 1907, Serafino Rossi started growing wine grapes commercially at a site currently occupied by Reliez Valley Vineyards in Lafayette. In Moraga the Trelut brothers who settled there in 1880 planted vines, and in Orinda by 1897, Theodore Wagner was commercially growing grapes.

"We were amazed to find out how

unique we are," commented LWGA President Susan Captain, "and very excited because this appellation will bring value to Lamorinda. It puts a stamp on how distinct we are."

As the process went on, some property owners -- some part of LWGA -- found out they could not be part of the AVA without compromising the scientific criteria. Some parts of Orinda close to the Caldecott Tunnel and some areas of Lafayette close to Walnut Creek had to be excluded; Canyon altogether could not be added. On the other hand, one Indian Valley property in Moraga, which had not been included at first, was added after the consultant researched the property.

The Lamorinda application has been formally accepted by the TTB, which means the TTB agrees that a new AVA is likely warranted. "We are now entering a process that could take two years," warned Captain. First the TTB creates what is called a "proposed rule making" in support of the AVA, which could take a year. Then a comment period will be opened to the public, and the TTB will prepare a "final rule" that will be published in the Federal Register as a treasury decision.

Although some new information could still cause the TTB to change its mind, LWGA says that is extremely rare. "We are confident that our application will be accepted; it is just a matter of time," said Rey. "In the meantime, we at LWGA will focus on the quality of our wines, a work of love that combines science and art."

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