



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:

Seven months ago I was standing beside my five year old daughter's hospital bed praying to any God who would listen. The doctors had no idea what was wrong but she was deteriorating very quickly. My once vibrant, alive, little girl was barely there. She could no longer walk, sit up, or even grab a sandwich off a plate. I was suddenly living my worst nightmare. After countless scans, spinal taps, and blood work the neurologists diagnosed her with ADEM (Acute Disseminated Encephalomyelitis). It is a rare inflammatory demyelinating disease of the central nervous system that in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks its own brain tissue. After weeks in the hospital, we were sent home with a cocktail of medicines and a wonderful physical therapist that helped us manage her first shaky steps.

Last weekend my daughter swam her heart out of the Lafayette Swim Conference. I had tears falling down my face as I saw her perform a perfect belly flop off the starting block. We have come such a long way in past few months. Her doctors and therapists are thrilled with her recovery. Never would I have imagined that we would be where we are today. I owe this huge accomplishment to the

coaches and fellow swimmers at Sun Valley. Only recently did I let Coach Robbie know a little bit about my daughter's condition. I had a bit of concern that if she was giving it her all in backstroke she might bump her head into the wall -- something I am just not ready for. Right before she swam I saw Robbie run to opposite side of the pool. He cheered her on and put his hand down to catch her head. He congratulated her on a great swim and took off back to the other side of the pool. My daughter did not make it to finals but she still felt as though she was a winner.

Thanks to Coach Wesley and Coach Jack for encouraging my daughter during her first few days in the water and helping her reach the other side of the pool. Thanks to Coach Carolyn for helping perfect her strokes this season and making sure she stayed on task. Coach Robbie, I can't thank you enough for all the time and care you have given my daughter. I doubt that she will ever be swimming at county but I know that if Coach Robbie or Coach Ellie are around she will always feel valued and proud. What more could a parent ask for!

Thank you Sun Valley,
Rebecca Young
Lafayette

Lynn's Top Five Taking Financial Stress out of your Wedding

By Lynn Ballou, CFP®

With the upcoming fall and holiday wedding season almost upon us, I thought it would be fun to chat about a few tips for keeping your financial sanity while planning your happy day. What you need to keep in mind at all times is that really, it's all about the balance between a delightfully memorable day and not mortgaging your future for that special day! Here are a few things to think about as you embark on this wonderful journey:

1) Set a budget -- and stick to it! As you can imagine, the whole wedding industry is a bit of a machine, focused on having you spend as much as possible on your special day. It's very hard to say no to all the fun being offered. The industry is practiced and studied in the fine art of pulling at your emotional strings. And all of that is well and good, but you have your whole life in front of you and the horror of coming back from a honeymoon to too many bills is a lousy way to start a new life. Be real, be honest and be firm about what you can afford and what would really drown you in depressing debt.

2) Finding that special dress. Check out the fashion district and wholesale options. Look for seasonal blow out sales. Go to stores that specialize in vintage gowns and those worn by other brides. A gorgeous gown doesn't need to cost as much as a new car!

3) The venue. Speaking of costing as much as a new car, here's a great place to really save money. By being thoughtful and careful on pricing you can get creative and leave space in your budget for other things. One of our clients recently married his sweetie in their back yard. He worked hard at really making the landscaping sparkle and making the day special. Plus they now have a gorgeous garden to enjoy and have added value to their home. Do you have a friend with a great back yard and home? Don't be afraid to ask their gift to you to be the use of their home. Be ready to step up to cover costs to protect their property (and work with the neighbors on parking).

4) Let's eat! So you are talking

to a girl who got married in a park with three-foot sub sandwiches (the budget) and a gorgeous multi layer cake (the splurge). Many great ideas here for you to ponder, the bottom line being that you don't need an expensive formal dinner to have an amazing event! Think cocktail party with hors d'oeuvres! Or a brunch buffet. These are easy to do in many venues and can really help keep costs down.

5) Practical gifts for the couple that has it all: In this day and age many are marrying with two full home sets of everything. Don't be afraid to tell your guests what you really need. One creative idea a friend recently used: have your guests treat you to gift certificates to your favorite restaurants, theaters, and clubs. Now there's a year of great date nights! That will keep the romance alive!

So, stay focused on the goal: Have a happy and lovely day launching yourselves into your next best life and not a basket of worrisome bills. Pick your "must haves" and your "would likes" and your "don't care that much" categories. Mix and match ideas and then check it against your budget, making necessary adjustments to stay on track. Make a game out of it! The winners? You!



Lynn Ballou is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional and co-owner of Ballou Plum Wealth Advisors, LLC, a Registered Investment Advisory (RIA) firm in Lafayette. Lynn is also a Registered Principal and Branch Manager with LPL Financial (LPL). The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendation for any individual. Financial Planning offered through Ballou Plum Wealth Advisors, A Registered Investment Advisor and a separate entity. Securities offered through LPL Financial, member FINRA/SIPC.

Editor:

City Ventures Plan for Moraga... Common Sense Outlook.

Without even looking at all the obvious debated issues such as traffic, commute time, parking, possible crowded classrooms, impact on fire station and training area, Orinda's concerns, compatibility with Moraga plans and housing, permits required, EIR etc. etc... it just seems that a 54 unit development (mostly 3 story and some two story units) would simply look out of place and out of character in the site projected and in the town of Moraga.

I just envision people driving by the development and thinking... what is that? How did that ever get built?

We recently visited a very similar 53 unit City Ventures development in Carlsbad (approximately 107,000 population and nearly 7 times the size of Moraga)... and in that city with lots of roads, and room around the development and a very large shopping center nearby ... it did not look that out of place. But imagining the same

size development jammed into the suggested 3 acre site in Moraga is real stretch at best. I understand the concept of the Moraga Center Specific Plan ... but a high density unit across the street and down the road from the shopping center? I just don't get it.

At the two meetings at Moraga Country Club with City Ventures ... I'm not sure anyone at those meetings liked this idea. If someone could gather the 16,000 Moraga citizens and explain the project ...pro and con... how many people would say "What a great idea?" A 54 unit development right there - all in favor raise your hands - How many hands would be in the air?

Unfortunately, most folks in town have no idea that this project is even in the works.

Something should and can be done on the site, but why are we even considering a 54 unit high density development?

Charlie Coane
Moraga

Editor:

As a long time regular customer to Moraga's Dynasty Nails, 1460 Moraga Road, I am appalled at the construction litter in front of the salon which has been there for months. When a section of concrete pushed up on one corner in the late spring, workmen came to the rescue and dug down to find the cause. However, since then, the hole has been refilled by about 95% and only partially covered a single 8x10 foot plywood board. Caution tape and construction debris surround the area with no evidence of further repair. People go into and out of shops all day, including a nearby UPS store and an ice cream shop. How soon until someone is injured by stepping or falling into this hole? This eyesore is a lawsuit waiting to happen.

Susan McClurg Berman
Moraga

Family Law
Litigation and Mediation

The Law Offices of Jonathan D. Larose APC

Discreet, Settlement-Oriented, Experienced

Offices in Walnut Creek and Fremont
Member Orinda Chamber of Commerce

Learn more at jdlaroselaw.com and 866-585-6314

THE DEBBIE JOHNSTON TEAM



The Right Balance of Experience & Innovation

Debbie Johnston & Lisa Geary
925.285.8556
www.DebbieJohstonTeam.com
www.facebook.com/debbiejohnstonteam
debbie.johnston@pacunion.com or lisa.geary@pacunion.com
BRE# 01206373 | 01885447

PACIFIC UNION
CHRISTIE'S
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

SELLING THE LAMORINDA LIFESTYLE SINCE 1994
A Member of Real Living



ORINDA ACADEMY

PARENTS, STUDENTS & TEACHERS WORKING TOGETHER

College Prep for Students (Grades 6-12)

LIMITED OPENINGS FOR FALL 2013

OPEN HOUSE Oct. 27th from 1-4pm

(925) 254-7553

WWW.ORINDAACADEMY.ORG

"INSPIRING SUCCESS – FULFILLING POTENTIAL"