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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:

Moraga is an amazing and unique town to live in. It is a place of strong community, where kids still walk to school and the pool without their parents, and neighbors gather in the streets to chat. Diablo Magazine recently listed Moraga as a Hot 'Hood saying "Moraga has always been a market in demand, but it's more so lately with the dearth of inventory fueling interest in this tucked-away town with stellar schools and a tight-knit community." Our community takes pride in their schools and it shows. The Moraga School District (MSD) is consistently ranked in the top 1% in California. It is no wonder that when new families are asked why they moved to the area they consistently say, "because of the great schools." Over the past 5 years, school funding from the State of California has decreased more than 22%. In fact, out of the 18 school districts in Contra Costa County, Moraga is 15th in per pupil funding received from the state. The Moraga School District has managed their money well -- making cuts and utilizing its "rainy day" reserve fund to help bridge the gap. We now need additional local, community funding to maintain our school programs and quality education. On November 5th, we need to pass Measure B, a \$192 per year parcel tax for the next six years. A parcel tax is

the most stable and protected source of money. We need the community to support this because without this funding MSD will be faced with severe cuts that will affect our schools and community for years to come. The money raised through Measure B would stay in Moraga, NOT go to Sacramento. It will fund core academic programs such as math, science and technology, NOT administrative costs. It would allow students to learn in manageable class sizes, keep art and music programs and have safe, well-maintained schools. Protecting the quality of our local schools and giving the Moraga children the education they deserve is a shared, community responsibility. This is something that is important not only to the families with students in the MSD, but also every property owner in Moraga. The strength of our community (and home values) is based on the strength of our schools. As the PTA Presidents of the four MSD schools (Camino Pablo Elementary, Donald Rheem Elementary, Los Perales Elementary, and Joaquin Moraga Intermediate) we ask you to please vote YES on Measure B.

Sally Whipple, Tenaya Garrett-Salvi, Sara Mooradian, and Paul Derksen
Moraga

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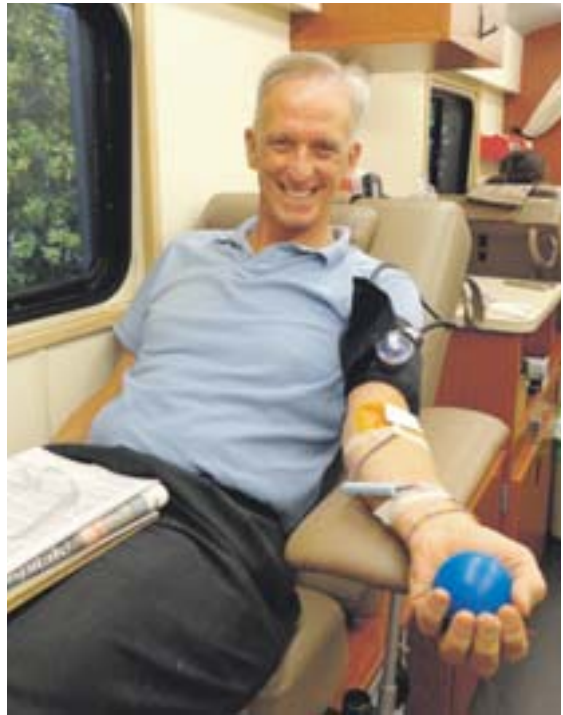
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Civic News Lafayette

City Hosts Blood Drive in Burton Valley

By Cathy Tyson



City Manager Steve Falk Photo Cathy Tyson

Phase one of Lafayette's recent blood drive proved a success, with a second date scheduled for later this week. "The vampires have landed," joked Dana Anderson, city administrative assistant, about the event that he volunteered to help organize. On Sept. 10 the tricked out, hard to miss bloodmobile was parked in front of the city

offices and humming with activity as staff collected donations from a substantial number of city workers and others. The bus will be back, this time at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road, on Friday, Sept. 27 from noon to 5 p.m.

The Red Cross got the ball rolling with the City Blood Challenge -- a contest open to cities in Contra Costa County. "We like competition," noted Anderson, who explained that one donation can save up to three lives. No word at this time which the winning municipality will be, but perhaps the tasty treats provided by Susie Cakes will provide a sugary edge for Lafayette.

While he's usually busy giving time and energy at the office, city manager Steven Falk donated the gift of life along with administrative services director Tracy Robinson who commented, with a needle inserted in her arm, that it doesn't hurt.

There's a constant need for blood, supplies are always tight, and once these donations make it through the lab process they'll be used in the next couple of days, according to one of the phlebotomists on staff.

Donors are encouraged to volunteer at the upcoming event, drop-ins are welcome, but appointments are also available -- just go to the Red Cross website at www.redcrossblood.org and in the sponsor code section, type Lafayette; the site also details eligibility requirements. It's simple, safe and the bloodmobile makes it easy. Have questions? Call 1 (800) Red Cross or 1 (800) 733-2767 for answers.



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First Step of City Review of Terraces Project

... continued from page A2



Context map. Source: Google Earth Pro, 2011. Map from city staff report

In addition, they proposed several transportation related improvements: a dedicated place to drop off students, improved sidewalks, and installing a class II bike lane that buffers cyclists with a strip of landscaping between them and motorists zipping by. The city concluded that traffic is a significant impact that is difficult to mitigate, said Steve Abrams of

Abrams Associates Traffic Engineering, "but this additional travel lane provides additional capacity and improves traffic flow." He concluded that the lane would be enough to mitigate the traffic impacts of this project.

"This project spoils the site," said the first of many public speakers. "It's the wrong development at the wrong location." Other speakers spoke of pedestrian safety, children's access to play areas and much more.

Attorney Allan Moore wrapped up the meeting with a rebuttal on a conciliatory note, "We want to work with you," and explained that not everyone can afford a single-family home in Lafayette, adding that this parcel of land has been designated for high density housing for 50 years.

City staff found that neither the current plan, nor its smaller revised version called the Mitigated Project Alternative (MPA) "complies with many of the goals, policies and programs in the General Plan," so they can't recommend the project or the MPA as proposed. The staff report points out the developer could submit a revised project that would "meaningfully address the issues in the staff analysis" and reduce significant impacts to zero or near zero. The circulation commission left city staff with some questions to be answered at their next get together slated for Oct. 21 at the Lafayette Community Center's Manzanita Room.

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