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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:

My youngest child recently graduated from Miramonte High School. I have had two children go through the Acalanes Union High School District, and I can say that each child received an exceptional education. Although my children are now in college and at work, I will still vote Yes on A because I know that the District is struggling to preserve core academic programs, music and arts, computers, technology, and science labs. I want to make sure that each student receives the education my children did. I'm voting Yes on A and I hope you will join me.

Janet Riley
Orinda

Editor:

I am a long time resident of Lafayette and our children all attended school in town. I am also acutely aware of how important good schools are to our town. That being said, I am troubled by the structure of Measures A and B, and for the first time I may vote against school taxes based on what I believe to be structures that are not good for the long term health of Lafayette. First, both measures are permanent, taking any real oversight or review away from taxpayers. The monies will be collected forever, regardless of need. Second, and even more troubling is that measure B includes a COLA adjustment. This is badly undisciplined policy as it bakes automatic increases into the taxes collected each and every year. What I find disingenuous is the advertising and description of the measures. If you look around Lafayette there are hundreds of signs up claiming that tax rates will not increase, when as a point of fact in measure B the COLA will absolutely lead to annual automatic and permanent increases in taxes. I would happily vote for 'clean' tax measures that have a sunset date and no COLA, but voters should think carefully about the long term implications before voting on measures A and B. Note that the Contra Costa Times has come out against both measures. I do not always agree with their take on things, but in this case I have to agree with them.

Richard Cohen
Lafayette

Editor:

The "nattering nabobs of negativitism" are wrong about Orinda Measure J, a \$20 million bond that will fix Orinda's worst roads. They want you to turn down a plan that polled with 70 per cent support. They have no plan to fix our awful roads. They prefer our inexorable march to gravel. No one is going to pay to fix our roads except us. With a combination of existing funding including the Measure L sales tax; the Measure J bond; and a future additional ballot measure to be determined based on the community's preference and future cost, Orinda will finally enjoy all roads at an acceptable level. Measure J requires the funds to be spent on Orinda roads and drains. It will be Orinda's money, coming directly to us and completely controlled by us, the very epitome of local control. How much will all of this cost? If someone can perfectly predict the weather; utility work on our roads; interest rates; mudslides and drain failures; and the growth of property and sales taxes in Orinda, then ask that person to give you a precise figure. Our City is in sound financial shape, except for the roads. Orinda is the rare entity that does not have a defined benefit retirement program for its employees. It has a defined contribution program. The City does not provide a retirement medical plan. This prudent approach has spared Orinda the rapidly rising pension costs that have caused service cuts in most other cities and agencies. But even with no pension overhang, the seven cents that Orinda receives from each property tax dollar is not enough to fix a problem that exceeds \$50 million. Vote "Yes" on Measure J. The time for us to repair our roads is now!

Carol Penskar
Orinda

Editor:

There is No Road Fairy. Orinda's roads need fixing. I don't think a single resident of Orinda would disagree with that statement. The question is: Who will fix them? Orinda has tapped every available resource and still come up short on funding. These are our roads, they need repairs and no one else is going to do it. We have put this off far too long. The longer we put off repairing the roads, the bigger the job and the bigger the price tag. We all need to step up and vote for Measure J to provide much needed funds for repairs. It is our town. They are our roads. They are our responsibility. They need to be fixed now. There is no road fairy, but together we can do this. Vote YES ON MEASURE J.

Best regards,
Nancy Booth
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.

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