

Letters to the Editor

Clarifying Position on Playground

I want to clarify my position on the Special Needs Playground in Moraga. If you read the article in the Lamorinda Weekly July 13, you were given the impression I was not in favor of the playground at Rancho Laguna. On the contrary, I had no strong feeling on the location. My main concern was that the playground equipment was not going to be installed with the existing structures but be on the opposite side of the park.

My motivation for getting involved was that I feel strongly that all children should have the opportunity to play together. Acceptance of someone different than oneself is an important lesson.

I congratulate the Town Council for unanimously recommending the placement of the new equipment be located at the Commons.

Barry Behr
Moraga

Womenpriests Encourage Inclusivity

Dear Editor,

This is in response to last issue's Letter to the Editor about Womenpriests. It is my hope that providing some information may soothe the writer's feelings of being offended.

There are many different Catholic churches, each living their particular beliefs and traditions in an effort to "follow Jesus." Examples include: Roman Catholic, Eastern, Orthodox, and Anglican Communion. In the U.S., additional Catholic churches include: Old Roman, Celtic, Independent and Gnostic.

Roman Catholic Womenpriests (RCWP) beliefs include that Jesus lives within each of us, and each is called to use their gifts. The RCWP states their mission: "To spiritually prepare and support women and men from all states of life, who are theologically qualified, who are committed to an inclusive model of Church, and who are called by the Spirit and their communities to minister within the Roman Catholic Church" (RCC).

Within the RCC, several theologies are expressed such as Redemptive, Liberation, and Creation. The traditional RCC focuses on redemptive theology, whereas Roman Catholic womenpriests focus on both, redemptive and creation, the latter encouraging inclusivity.

The first women priests were ordained on the Danube River in Europe by two Roman Catholic bishops who acted in full apostolic succession. As a result, ordained women are valid in celebrating the Eucharist, although not approved by the Roman Curia. There are more than 100 womenpriests serving throughout our country, with several RCWP communities ministering in the Bay Area.

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. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

My hope is that, together, we can celebrate what we have in common, i.e., made in the image of God, and appreciate that we are different and unique.

The writer, and any others, are invited to join the Namasté Catholic Community for liturgy, which is held at 4 p.m. each second and fourth Saturday at the Orinda Community Church.

Papa John Kiefer
Lafayette

Support Lamorinda's Spirit Van Program

Dear Editor,

As you may know, the Lamorinda Spirit Van Program provides rides for older Lamorinda residents, ages 60 and up, so they can attend to medical and personal appointments, shopping, errands, social events, enrichment activities and the C.C. Café nutrition program. There are now four Spirit Vans, supported by 13 (and soon to be 15) drivers. The program currently provides 60 hours of service each week to residents in need in Moraga, and the Lamorinda community as a whole. This service is especially appreciated by folks in their 80s and 90s who no can longer drive and are thus somewhat house-bound.

For each of the past several years, the Town of Moraga has contributed \$9,000 to help fund the Spirit Van Program. The Town Council was unable to do so this year in adopting our 2016-2017 budget, due largely to the very significant increased emergency costs the town is incurring to address the sinkhole situation on Rheem Boulevard. While the council intends to revisit this request for funding at the mid-year budget revise next January, in the meantime the need for community support for the Spirit Van is real and immediate.

A very generous anonymous Moraga donor has agreed to match all contributions from the Moraga community, up to \$4,500, as part of a campaign to raise at least \$9,000 from private donations to help defray a small portion of the Spirit Van Program's additional annual costs. This is a worthy effort, for which I ask your support.

Moraga is a great community in which to live, raise a family and age gracefully at home -- and Moragans have always answered the call when the cause is right. So please support this important community service. If you would like to help the Spirit Van Program, please make your tax-deductible check out to the "City of Lafayette," and write: "Lamorinda Spirit/Moraga" on the memo line. Checks should be mailed to: Lamorinda Spirit, Lafayette Senior Services, 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette, CA 94549.

Dave Trotter
Vice Mayor, Town of Moraga



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Larry Olson

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The Eleventh Coast Guard District stretches from California, Arizona, Nevada, and Utah to the coastal and offshore waters of Mexico and Central America and down to South America. Lt. Cmdr. Olson has assisted in the search for drug boats from Mexico, monitored Crescent City for high water after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami near Tohoku, Japan, and watched ships in the ports of Stockton and Oakland to ensure they remain in the proper channels.

"I like the marine life (portion best)," he says, because it is "so spectacular." Olson has been flying since he joined the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at U.C. Berkeley. He spent two years stationed at Spokane's Fairchild Air Force Base and joined the Berkeley police department when he returned to the East Bay, working seven years and rising to the rank of sergeant.

Olson spent 17 years as Chief of Police and Fire for the East Bay Regional Parks district, during which he also established an independent police department for the Town of Moraga and become its first Chief of Police.

In 1986 he moved to Southern California and became Carson's Chief of Police. He held that position for three years, and spent the following 10 years as Carson's city manager.

When asked about Moraga's Robert Priebe making a similar move to fill the vacancy left by

Jill Keimach's departure, Olson admits "I gotta kick out of that." He said switching from having one boss as police chief to having five (city council) bosses with divergent viewpoints as city manager was tough.

"I had to learn how to count to three," said the man with a UC Berkeley criminal science degree, a master's degree in public administration from Cal State Long Beach and a law degree from Golden Gate University.

Olson also volunteered for the Alaska Iditarod for 10 years beginning in 2003. "That's why I got my ham radio license," he says. His last paid position was as executive director of Advanced Life Support for the city of San Mateo.

"Then I retired," Olson said simply, although cut back would perhaps be more accurate. Olson put aside his decades-old involvement with Rotary, and Contra Costa Kops for Kids because "it was too much."

He continues to fly for the Coast Guard Auxiliary and to volunteer with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Support 241 team. He and his wife enjoy spending time with their four Moraga grandchildren; Olson has even coached a few of their little league baseball and soccer teams.

Asked if his grandchildren know about his lifetime of service, he says simply, "We don't discuss it a lot." Perhaps it is time they did.

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