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Letters to the Editor

Clean up your trash at the Commons

Dear Editor,

Even though Moraga's small public works staff did its usual amazing job of getting the Commons back in order after the Fourth of July extravaganza, a tremendous amount of trash on the bandshell hill needed to be removed on the morning of the July 5. It made our wonderful park look terrible, so I spent the morning picking up most of it and the lone public works employee later gathered the plastic for recycling. Do offices still have signs that read "Your mother doesn't work here, clean up after yourself?" Do the national and state parks still instruct visitors to "Leave nothing behind but footprints?" I recommend that we post signs like that at the Commons, as well as adding more trash receptacles, with the signs attached to them.

Community leaders insist that Moragans aren't responsible for the mess, that it is people from out of town. One wit's suggestion that we build a wall and make another city pay for it probably isn't feasible because the idea appears to have failed at another level of government. No, we still welcome visitors to the Commons, and all we ask is that they not leave it looking like it did on the morning of July 5. It is Moraga's living room.

Dale Walwark
Moraga

Less students on the bus means more cars on the road

Dear Editor,

Reportedly a "School Bus Stop Safety Study" has been done for Orinda School Bus Routes which proposes "significant school bus route changes" to many Orinda bus routes for the coming year, including Route 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 18, and essentially proposes the elimination of school bus access to all of the El Toyonal hill (Route # 18), and Brookwood, and Charles Hill Road, as well as rerouting and /or reducing bus routes on several other routes including Bus 13, 11, 12, and 15.

In Lamorinda, the school districts do not run the school bus program. Instead the school buses are run by a JPA or Joint Powers Agreement between all four school districts and three city councils, established in 1994. The stated purpose is to "relieve traffic congestion." That makes sense, since the more students on the bus means less cars on the road during the morning carpool/ commute time.

Now, fast forward to Oct 7, 2016, and the school bus company "First Student" sends a letter to "Lamorinda Parents, Guardians and students," which explains that there is a "severe nationwide driver shortage." The following month, the seven member Board of the JPA voted to hire a consultant to do a "School Bus Stop Safety Study." The Draft report did not become public until early May, 2017, at the end of the school year and a busy time for parents. The consultant does not have an engineer on their staff, is from out of state, and yet are evaluating whether the school buses are complying with CA Vehicle Code. It certainly raises many questions and concerns.

The Board of the JPA (the LSBTA) is likely to make a decision at their next meeting on July 13. Details: <http://www.lamorindaschoolbus.org/public-meetings--links.html>.

If the LSBTA Board follows the recommendation of the consultant, they will be reducing students' access to school buses in several neighborhoods, and adding to cars on the road. How would that be following their purpose of "relieving traffic congestion"?

Sarah Butler
Orinda

Save our School Bus Route!

Dear Editor,

To date, over 250 parents and community members have signed a petition to the Lamorinda School Bus Transportation Agency regarding a proposal for significant changes to Orinda school bus routes. A portion of the petition is available below or at this link: <https://www.change.org/p/save-school-bus-service-in-orinda>. The Lamorinda School Bus Transportation Agency includes the following board members: Lafayette City Council Member Don Tatzin, Lafayette School District's David Gerson, Orinda City Council Member Amy Worth, OUSD's Julie Rossiter, Moraga Town Council Member Jeanette Fritsky, Moraga School District's Heather O'Donnell and AUHSD's Nancy Kendzierski.

We petition the Lamorinda School Bus Transportation Agency to reject the recommendations in the flawed "safety" study, and instead continue to provide vital school bus service on current routes so that our children have safe, reliable, and accessible transportation to and from school.

The school bus is the safest vehicle on the road and the safest way to get our children to school. The school bus also benefits every member of our community by decreasing traffic congestion on Camino Pablo and Moraga Way and at our schools, maintaining property values in affected neighborhoods, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, and providing our children with a beloved and beneficial opportunity for

independence and social interaction.

Despite the absence of any significant problems with the existing school bus service, the consultant study recommended the elimination of certain current Orinda school bus routes. Eliminating school bus service will add scores of vehicles to our roads during the morning and afternoon commute-and worse, force children to walk along narrow, poorly lit roads with no sidewalks or crosswalks.

The proposed alternative will either force children to walk treacherous stretches of road that lack pedestrian safeguards or require parents to drive children to the bus stop - decreasing safety and/or increasing congestion and pollution. LSBTA must maintain school bus service to all current riders in a way that does not eliminate the safety and other benefits the bus provides to the entire community. Please save our school bus!

Michelle Swaney
Orinda

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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