

Letters to the Editor

Seeking answers to Moraga's fiscal emergency

I want to voice my disappointment in the Town Council Meeting on August 8, 2017. I expected to be informed on research the Council had done and proposed optional remedies facing Moraga's Financial Emergency.

When I suggested that the Town hire someone with strong financial/organizational skills from the outside with no skin in the game and team up with local volunteers with similar skills I was told the Town does not have the time or money to do so. My concern is the current staff and Town Council as hard as they work need outside guidance to bring us a sound financial plan. The findings of the Ad Hoc Committee will be either find no changes needed other than additional revenue, find tuning the staff or major reorganization needed along with additional revenue.

I am concerned the Town is talking to an outside company to help determine how much the residences are willing to pay in increased taxes and then assist in getting it on the ballot to be passed. I would rather have our tax dollars spent on hiring an outside Financial Adviser to make recommendations as to how to resolve the current crisis.

I was very upset in the way in which Mr. Freeman was treated. He made some excellent recommendations to address the Financial Emergency. A Council Member asked him to return to the podium and proceeded to cross examine him in regard to his media relationships. The way he was treated was not a high point for the Town of Moraga.

The only way I would vote for a Tax Increase is after all avenues have been studied by a Financial Consultant working with a Financial Committee.

Barry Behr
Moraga

Request for quiet arrival from some swim meet revelers

As a resident near Campolindo High School, one of the most life-affirming and joyful sounds in the world is the cheering of parents and children at the annual OMPA swim meet in August. Our family participated in this meet for 13 years and it brought us many enduring positive memories. Despite the traffic and vehicles parked everywhere, I am grateful that we in Moraga are the host of this meet and provide a venue for one of the largest recreational swim competitions in the United States.

While 99 percent of the parents save their energy and enthusiasm for the swim meet, 1 percent of you feel the need to honk your horns at 7:30 a.m. on a Saturday morning to announce your arrival. Please show a modicum of respect for the citizens of Moraga and refrain from this activity. We know that you are here by the stream of cars entering our town.

I am hopeful, that in the future, the first thing I will hear on Saturday morning is the singing of the Star Spangled Banner and the excitement of children and parents just prior to competition. Then, as my son used to say, we can all get that "big, fun feeling."

Dan Wood
Moraga

California's bail reform bills

Lamorinda, California needs our voice! Thousands of moms and dads in the US currently sit in jail, awaiting trial away from their families because they can't afford bail. But right now, California is considering two bills that would make this injustice history.

Every year, defendants lose their jobs, their homes, and even their children because they don't have the money for bail. Many take plea bargains to avoid these losses, even if they are innocent. Low income defendants and people of color suffer the most. Is it justice that those with money can easily get out of jail and go about their lives, while those without must remain and lose even more? Especially when studies have shown us that people of color are often assigned higher bail? For families that manage to gather the bond fee, the burden of paying it off can last years, and balloon into thousands of dollars more as they try to dig their way out from under the interest.

On the financial side, it costs taxpayers about \$100 per day to hold a defendant in jail pretrial, and abolishing cash bail would save us this money. Some argue against this proposal, saying it would cost taxpayers money. Even if this is true, I would rather pay a few extra dollars a year than have a single mom of two arrested for an unpaid traffic ticket sit in jail long enough to lose her job. What about you?

It is telling that AB 42's and SB 10's greatest opponents are found in California's bond industry. They argue their industry will collapse if this bill passes. Are we willing to ruin the lives of innocent people in order to continue funding the bond business? Some things are just more important than money and jobs. California is one of several states currently considering laws to ban cash bail. Let's set an example for the rest of the US. Contact your representatives and tell them to support these bills today!

State Senator Steve Glazer (925) 942-6082

Assembly Member Catharine Baker (925) 328-1515

Governor Jerry Brown (916) 445-2841

Heidi Doggett
Lafayette

Continued commentary on Moraga police blotter

I can hardly believe that the 'humorous' police blotter went on for as long as it did. I never found it humorous in any way, but I didn't bother to express my opinion to the paper so I guess I deserved to suffer through it. I can't tell you how happy our household was to see an end to it, but now that people are trying to bring it back I thought I'd better speak up.

Having gone through a similar trauma, I'm in complete agreement with Ms. Billings' views on the 'humorous' police blotter. There is nothing at all humorous about being the victim of a crime and I can tell you from personal experience that recovery is slow if it happens at all. To have someone treat your situation like it's a big joke is insulting and rude.

If the person providing the humor still works at the paper, perhaps they can find some other way of expressing their creativity ... a comic strip?

Grace Bennett
Moraga

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