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Letters to the Editor

Go Gaels women's basketball!

As one of four retired guys who follow women's and men's St. Mary's Basketball please note that Thursday, Jan. 18 the St. Mary's Women will play the Gonzaga women in Moraga at 6:30 p.m. We will be at midcourt cheering for the women and we ask that all of the Lamorinda community make plans to attend this game to show support for these student athletes, every one of whom will graduate with an earned degree. When St. Mary's travels to Gonzaga they will be met by 6,000 Bulldog fans. Our women usually play before 400 or so fans. So there are more than 3,000 empty seats available for the Lamorinda community to fill and cheer on the women as our McKeon gym holds 3,500.

Some of these role models are babysitters and nannies for your children. This game is an opportunity for the community to show its support for the women. The game starts at 6:30 p.m., so if a fan and family left the house at 5:45 p.m. and watched a bit of pregame, then the game, one would be home by 8:15 p.m. - two and a half well spent hours.

Please join us on Jan. 18 and cheer on the Women of St. Mary's basketball. Go women's Gaels.

William R. Anderson
Moraga

Thank you for the article on private roads

I think the unfairness of having about a quarter of Orinda residents pay for all public road maintenance without getting any support for their private road maintenance was under-emphasized. I had only lived in big cities prior to purchasing my Orinda home 23 years ago. When the agent told me it was a private road my reaction was "My how quaint," not having any understanding of the implications. My fellow private road residents have been maintaining our culverts and our private road with our own funds for about 50 years. During all this time we have been paying the same taxes and assessments as our neighbors on public roads. We regularly clear debris from our road drains. When our street drainage gets blocked we individually call Roto-Rooter and pay the bill. When the road needed repaving, we asked all the property owners to share in the cost but only a few were willing to participate. We really wish to maintain friendly relations with our neighbors so recourse to the law is not an option. Furthermore the law is not clear on the cost sharing responsibilities.

Road maintenance public funds both avoids neighbor alienation and acts as a disaster insurance policy. Should a road collapse and an expensive repair be required the cost is shared by all Orinda residents rather than falling upon the few residents of one particular private road.

The city council represents the interests of the entire community of Orinda, yet to date it has failed to deal with this fundamental unfairness which diminishes our collective sense of community. The requirements for a road to become public exceed the specifications of many, possibly most, currently publicly maintained residential streets. In addition to bringing our street up to unreasonable specifications staff have also suggested a special 20 year assessment for our road would be required. This seems both excessive (\$1000/year/parcel) and unfair, as we have been paying for both our own private road maintenance and paying taxes and assessments all along.

It is of course reasonable for the city council to hesitate taking on the additional liability, but the cost is completely unknown. The private roads have not been surveyed to determine their current condition. An estimate of \$22 million was mentioned in the last city council meeting but this is a speculative guess and in my opinion possibly an order of magnitude to high. (Caltrans only spends about \$100,000 per mile lane for road maintenance.) It seems to me reasonable to have the city council request a survey of all private roads and their culverts to be able to assess the repair and maintenance cost realistically. Some of these costs may be shared with the state and federal government by increased miles in the public infrastructure.

The Orinda private road residents enjoin their public road neighbors to stand in solidarity with them to rectify this inequity. This issue has been ignored for too long.

Charles Porges
Orinda

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[back](#)

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