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Letters to the editor

Electric power shutdowns

There has been broad reaction to the recent PG&E electric power shutdowns in Lafayette ... three in a row, June 10, 11 and 12 for a total of 18 hours! Feelings by residents and our elected officials including my own range from surprise, intimidation, inconvenience, helplessness, and disappointment, to anger and hostility. Given the circumstances and potential dangers caused by the shutdowns, all of those feelings among us are understandable. I personally heard all of those feelings expressed.

For perspective, consider the following:

1. There was no advance notice given to the citizens of Lafayette, not even to Engine Company 17 on St. Mary's Road. I was there and spoke to the firemen themselves.
2. The Fire Chief who oversees E-17 and others, recently had attended a meeting at PG&E that concerned the criteria by which PG&E makes decisions to initiate power shutdowns. Amazingly, I was told by the fire personnel that their Chief was not given what those specific criteria were when he asked for them! Why not?
3. Two or the three outages lasted well into darkness, one past midnight. Some residents had flashlights, candles (fire hazard), or a kerosene lamp to navigate their residence but some did not. How many falls happened and how many seniors were injured?
4. Some traffic signals in Lafayette were inoperative during the outages and no public safety personnel were at them to head off accidents.
5. Telephone land line service was unavailable for 911 calls nor any other. Were there any emergencies during those blackouts?
6. What about seniors and others whose oxygen or other medical needs were interrupted or killed?
7. Loss of electric power equals to loss of refrigeration and food spoilage.

All things considered; two questions are worth asking. First, are electric power outages appropriately weighed against to the risks associated by having them? And, since above ground electric delivery is very dangerous to life, property and the environment, why doesn't PG&E bury them everywhere they operate? Buried electric wiring works in many countries and in many communities in all 50 states. Why not ours? Maybe after we complete that bullet train.

John A. Sallay
Retired Lafayette resident

BART parking reductions in the name of art

In the 46 years I have lived in Lafayette there have been times I have failed to understand some of the decisions made by the City Council. The latest one to remove 19 spaces at the BART station takes the cake. In a city which is parking challenged the last thing needed is the removal of parking spaces, even more importantly as they provide spaces for people who are taking public transportation. To encourage residents to ride bicycles or walk to the BART station is all well and good but what about residents who are unable to ride or walk there due to physical challenges or the distant they live from the station?

Over the years, as the downtown area of Lafayette has seen so much growth, no consideration has been given to providing any form of regular, reliable public transportation to help the residents in outlying neighborhoods of the City to enable them to get to the BART station or to give them access to downtown without adding to the nightmare of traffic and parking which has become part of the Lafayette scene. Surely there can be some kind of planning and a vision of how a city can grow, keep it's semi-rural character and make sure it can continue to remain the special place Lafayette has always been.

Ann Burns
Lafayette

What more can I do?

Living in a time of great peril, as reported by the recent United Nation's Report on Climate Change, we continue, day after day, enjoying our marvelous quality of life in Lamorinda. However, the threatening dilemma surrounds us - either significantly alter our lifestyle now, or accept a radically altered quality of life in the years ahead. In daily conversation, we shrug our shoulders saying, 'what more can I do? I'm already recycling, driving a hybrid car and doing sustainable practices.'

Well, how about checking in with your children and grandchildren. Are they okay with living in a radically altered world with higher summer temperatures, more fires and storms? Or, would they prefer to make the challenging changes now?

Yes, government and the multi national corporations must shift, if we are to meet our climate goals. But, Individual families, and communities acting together, can make additional changes now to ensure reasonable quality of life for our future generations. Yes, we can!

Here's one option: Reduce or eliminate the consumption of red meat. How?

Raise and process meat rabbits in your backyard.

It makes a lot of sense: the healthiest of meats, economical, and sustainable. Replacing red meat with

rabbit also reduces global warming, because cattle produce three types of gas that are toxic to our environment.

So, improve your family's health, and cast off your dependency on the red meat industry. I stopped buying red meat 50 years ago, when I started raising rabbits. And, when you're enjoying a dinner out, find rabbit on the menu at Postino's, Rove and others.

But, you can't raise and process rabbits in your backyard in Lafayette. Wrong!

Current Municipal Code for Lafayette (Title 6, Part 2, 6.591) and Moraga (Title 8, Chapter 8.92) permit raising and processing Small Farm Animals, including rabbits.

Visit website: Living Sustainably with Papa John to learn more about the surprising health benefits of including rabbit as part of your diet, while reducing pollution.

Rabbit: a gift to your family / an opportunity to help heal the planet!

P.S - if you are willing, watch a 16-year-old present 'The disarming case to act right now on climate change' (11 min). <https://youtu.be/H2QxFM9y0tY>

Papa John Kiefer
Lafayette

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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