

Letters to the editor

Questions to ask about gas leaf blowers

I, too, dislike the sound and smell of gas powered leaf blowers and I commend the young activists for their concern about air and noise pollution. Having said that, I believe that more research is necessary before final action is taken. Following are some questions that need to be answered: Who are the primary users of gas powered leaf blowers in our community? Is it possible that they are the landscapers who maintain the yards of local residents? How much is a landscaper paid for each yard they “mow and blow”? How many yards must a landscaper service per day in order to earn enough money to live on?

I maintain my own yard with a rake and broom and it takes at least four times longer than if I used a blower. Will residents provide their landscapers access to electricity to power electric leaf blowers?

Noise and air pollution are important but so is the ability to earn a living. The human dimension should be taken into account when considering a prohibition on gas powered leaf blowers. These are difficult times for everyone. Not jeopardizing the ability of someone to earn a livelihood should be a primary consideration. Byrne Sherwood Lafayette

The science behind gas leaf blower pollution

I commend and applaud the three Renton siblings who have taken up the banner of community health and sanity. Thank you for publishing their story!

Recently I sent a letter, and a scientific article supporting my thesis, to the Moraga Town Council regarding the measurement of the polluting capability of just one gasoline powered leaf blower. The science revealed that one leaf blower running for an hour had the same amount of emissions as an automobile driven 1,000 miles.

There is no doubt that we must no longer allow noisy gasoline powered polluting leaf blowers to operate in our communities. Is anyone happy that their neighbor's dust and dirt is being blown into their

yard, and vice versa? There are electric alternatives such as “EGO” products which do a great job.

Cheers to the Renton family!!!
Marcy and Dick Terry
Moraga

More on leaf blowers

Thank you for the front page article on leafblasters. As 40-year residents we have seen our once peaceful community transformed into a war zone by hideously noisy, polluting machines versus perfectly innocent leaves. We offer our enthusiastic support to young activists. Thank you. John and Mona Nygard Lafayette

Shared frustration on leaf blowers

Kudos to the young activists! And to the Lamorinda Weekly for publishing the piece on the hazards of gas leaf blowers.

Last summer, I wrote to each member of the city council and the mayor about this issue and included documentation. I mailed my letters to each one through the U.S. Postal Service. No one responded. I re-sent my letter by e-mail to all the same public servants twice after September. Still no response—not even an acknowledgment of receipt. I am as frustrated as Finn and the other bright kids.

Seeing your coverage gave me some hope if only because more residents may take a position. Where I live, blowers are in use every day, including Saturdays and Sundays. Data has been collected for years about the health hazards of these gas blowers and their overuse. It's time to put a stop to them. Pam-Anela Messenger Lafayette

On climate change

Kudos to Jamie, Scout, and Finn Renton for doing research and persuading their local government to adopt climate-protecting policies! Climate change is the greatest threat to human life everywhere, including here in Lamorinda. A recent study at the University of Cambridge shows that climate change is one of the main factors giving rise to the pandemic we find ourselves in today

(www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/02/210205085718.htm). Environmental changes caused by climate change allow the coronavirus to spread more easily from animals to humans.

You can contribute to the effort to combat climate change by learning more about the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (<https://energyinnovation-act.org/>) and Citizens' Climate Lobby (<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>). Citizens' Climate Lobby is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to building political support to pass legislation that addresses climate change. The EICDA is the main piece of legislation that CCL is advocating for. This act will place a fee on carbon extraction, and the revenues collected will be paid out as dividends directly to American households. In other words, the large corporations responsible for the majority of emissions will be incentivized to switch to green energy sources, while average Americans like ourselves will reap the benefit of additional income. This will more than offset any price increases - and of course, everyone will benefit from a cleaner, healthier planet for future generations to come!

To make this a reality, we need your support. You can join the Contra Costa chapter of CCL at <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/join-citizens-climate-lobby/>. Let's come together and secure a livable planet for Lamorinda and the rest of the world! Ashley Zhang Moraga

Moraga road work

I guess I should feel grateful that work is being done on our streets, but what is it that's being done? Road construction signs, yellow safety vests, road construction equipment, steel plates, and re-routing give no information to Moraga's citizens as why or what is being done.

Moraga Road is a glaring example of my concern. Why is there a need to dig up the street? It may appear face-

tious to ask, what's going on? Inquiring minds should know. Ed Vasgerdsian Moraga

Vaccinations are a worldwide concern

In the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is easy to feel isolated and alone. Many of us have had to abandon our normal understanding of life to stop this deadly virus and make our community safer. With the announcement of multiple vaccines and a coordinated effort on behalf of our county's health department, the end of the pandemic seems much closer.

While vaccines are rolling out in our cities daily and making our community safer by the minute, many places are not so lucky. Nearly one quarter of the world's population will not have access to COVID-19 vaccines from any company until 2022. Middle and low income countries are unable to compete with the buying power of higher income countries and are left unprotected from this deadly virus. This pandemic will not end until every country can slow the spread and the vaccine is the key to stopping the virus.

We have a tremendous amount of power as United States citizens to impact global vaccine relief through legislation. It is so vital that communities like ours advocate for positive change and pressure our political leaders to set a global standard for helping other countries in these extraordinary times. Calling and emailing our representatives in support of global vaccine distribution can make a huge impact on millions of lives. I urge the members of this community to realize the position we are in to help those who are not as fortunate as we are. A thirty second phone call can make all the difference in the world; please be a global citizen and advocate for a pandemic free world today! Theresa Nevins Lafayette

Save Lafayette ad clarification

Save Lafayette, an organization that opposes the Terraces of Lafayette housing project at the corner of Deer Hill and Pleasant Hill Roads in Lafayette, recently published an advertisement seeking donations for its legal battle with the City of Lafayette.

Save Lafayette's ad contained many inaccuracies, and this letter cannot address each one. One particular example, however, requires immediate correction. The City of Lafayette has just embarked on an update of its General Plan, which includes a Housing Element, and the City's future planning efforts must be based on facts. Save Lafayette's ad claimed that Lafayette does not need more housing because the city has “exceeded” its state-mandated affordable housing quota. This is untrue.

In its most recent filing with the State Department of Housing and Community Development and the Office of Planning and Research, the City of Lafayette reported that only 46 very low, low, or moderate-income affordable units have been built in town. And, although we have exceeded our market rate housing quota, an additional 255 affordable units would need to be built in Lafayette by 2022 to meet the current quota. The Terraces project provides 63 affordable units that, when occupied, will count towards Lafayette's quota.

We all want what's right for Lafayette, and we should all have the facts. I would urge residents who wish to understand the facts behind the City Council's approval of the Terraces of Lafayette project to visit the City's webpage at www.lovelafayette.org/terraces. Niroop K. Srivatsa City Manager, Lafayette

Correction: In the Feb. 3 issue of Lamorinda Weekly, in a Letter to the Editor, Yuki Fujimoto was incorrectly listed as the founder of the LafSD DEI Committee. She is a member of the committee, not the founder.

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 must be factually accurate and 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

Lafayette school district approves racial equity policy

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Acalanes Union High School District adopted a racial equity program last summer. Sturm says that while there wasn't coordination with AUHSD, his district leveraged the high school district's policy and approached it as a starting point, adapting it to fit the LafSD. “An extra-

ordinary working group did the heaviest lifting in collaboration with the district, producing the LafSD policy and plans,” he said referring to the team of volunteer parents.

The policy identifies six areas – school climate and culture, curriculum and instruction/student engagement, staff capacity, community and relationships, sys-

tems, policies and administration, and accountability.

Sturm says that passing the racial equity policy was an important step for the district and he's proud of the board's unanimous and enthusiastic adoption. “Now we must hold ourselves and our district fully accountable to prioritize and timely execute on the worthy commitments that we made.”

Expressing great confidence in the partnership of the DEIB task force, school DEIB committees and the broader support from the community, Sturm says he anticipates making strides to do and be better.

“It's a moral and educational imperative that our school community warmly embraces, celebrates and understands different identities,

backgrounds and experiences, and that we enable all students to feel safe, valued and comfortable being their full selves,” says Sturm, adding, “Our ongoing work will mean leaning into difficult conversations; however, I trust our ability to do so with courage and respect.”

What will housing in Lafayette look like in 2030?

Tune in to Housing Element 1011

Come meet your General Plan Advisory Committee representative and learn about the Housing Element update process in a remote info session. City staff will provide an overview of what a Housing Element is and does, background on why it needs to be updated, and how it affects your community.

You play a critical part in creating the vision for the future of housing in Lafayette, so it's time to get involved!

Feel free to write in your questions ahead of time to generalplan@lovelafayette.org.

Visit www.PlanLafayette.org to register and learn more about the Housing Element

<p>Burton Valley Thursday, February 18, 2021 6PM</p>	<p>Downtown Thursday, February 25, 2021 6PM</p>	<p>Community Organizations Wednesday, March 3, 2021 6PM</p>
<p>Youth Thursday, March 4, 2021 6PM</p>	<p>Acalanes Valley & Happy Valley Thursday, March 11, 2021 6PM</p>	<p>Reliez Valley Thursday, March 18, 2021 6PM</p>

Not sure which meeting is for you? Visit www.PlanLafayette.org to see the General Plan Advisory Commission District Map and register for online sessions or email generalplan@lovelafayette.org.