

Letters to the Editor

Did ULI do their homework about schools?

Dear Editor,
As many now know, the Urban Land Institute's Technical Assistance Panel ("TAP") made a presentation to a joint session of the Orinda City Council and Planning Commission on April 11. One of the suggestions was that Orinda permit 240 new units of residential housing in the Village.

The TAP made this recommendation without even interviewing either the Orinda Union School District or the Acalanes Union High School District. Our schools were not considered to be "stakeholders" with respect to a proposal that would dramatically increase student enrollment in the schools. There was no discussion in the TAP presentation of the effect that the addition of 240 residential units might have on our schools.

The failure of the TAP to consider the effect on our schools of so many new residential units, and new residents, is troubling because the same TAP presentation listed, as the first asset Orinda has, our "outstanding schools." The extremely high quality of our schools was recently confirmed by published studies. The fact that the TAP overlooked our schools is even more troubling because this writer specifically asked TAP, in writing, well prior to the release of its report, to consider our schools.

Similarly, the TAP failed to explain how much worse our parking problems will be, and offered no suggestions to mitigate any of Orinda's many parking problems. One can only conclude that the TAP

either lacks the qualifications or objectivity to present the tradeoffs, drawbacks, and costs of any recommendations it may make in its final report.

Some Orindans feel it would be desirable to add housing downtown, so that empty-nesters could move there. But bear in mind that a couple moving out of a four or five bedroom home to a condo downtown will likely see their house purchased by a family with three or more children, adding to the overcrowding in our already crowded schools. And also bear in mind that there is no legal way to give priority to current Orinda residents when new housing units are offered for sale or lease downtown, should that ever come to pass.

Nick Waranoff
Orinda

Orinda should choose energy plan

Dear Editor,
As a resident of Orinda, I am perplexed as to why the Orinda City Council refuses to consider community choice energy for the Orinda community. Moraga has approved MCE as has the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and other cities in Contra Costa.

Why the delay? What's stopping the council? What are their concerns? It's a no brainer in my opinion. It would be a shame for Orinda to be left behind in adopting clean energy while every other community moves forward.

Carolyn Knoll
Orinda

Snakes alive!

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"I doubt it," says wildlife biologist Mike Cardwell. He admits that while this has been "an extraordinary winter" with "an abundant crop" of rattlesnakes it is too short a time to confirm a change. Baby rattlesnakes aren't born until August or September (the youngsters are pencil-sized), so they are pretty hard to find in spring. The rattlesnakes Cardwell has radio-tracked along the American River Parkway have been reproducing "like gangbusters" over the last four years, even amid drought conditions.

Cardwell says rattlesnakes produce only one brood per year and most females in his study have already been reproducing annually before this wet year. "They can't do better than that."

It's not just rattlesnakes that are thriving post-drought — there's been enough rain for lush vegetation, which feeds the insect population, which feeds lizards and rodents and ultimately the snakes. It is the food chain which is thriving, and "I suspect this (rattlesnake growth) is pretty stable," Cardwell says.

Lamorinda Weekly reporter Pippa Fisher recalls at least two local snake encounters she's had. Fisher and her dog ran past a rattlesnake two years ago while jogging the Briones Hills Loop Trail. "He didn't strike me, and my momentum carried me right past him," Fisher said, "but when I stopped and looked back he had reared up." She called to her collie mix dog, who was off leash and behind her.

Fortunately, he promptly obeyed and never spotted the snake. When her parents spotted a snake hiking in a similar area several years before that, her mother put an end to those hillside hikes, Fisher said. Because snakes are "so well camouflaged" Fisher says you must consider that every "stick"

along the trail could be a snake. "They're kind of neat to see," she said, "but I did recoil."

The CPCS website says rattlesnake season begins in spring and most bites occur between April and October. A rattlesnake bite can produce painful swelling, bruising, tissue destruction, bleeding problems and in rare cases can be fatal. More than 300 cases are reported to CPCS annually in California.

The CPCS's assistant medical director Cyrus Rangan says online that it is important to seek medical attention immediately if bitten. Do not apply ice or use a tourniquet or try to suck out the venom or slice the bite site. Do keep calm, do not run and keep the affected extremity elevated during transport to a medical facility.

Veterinarian Mona Miller says the same strategy applies if cats or dogs get bitten. She warns that not all general veterinarian prac-

tices stock antivenin because it is "very, very, very expensive." Most rattlesnake bites affecting dogs or cats require more than 10 hours of care, she said. Miller suggests calling your regular vet practice for guidance; they'll tell you whether to head to a vet hospital. Next call that hospital to insure they have antivenin in stock. If a human has suffered the bite, "paramedics will generally bandage, transport the patient to the emergency room, and provide pain management if needed, says Moraga-Orinda Fire District Battalion Chief Jerry Lee, but "paramedics in the State of California do not provide any type of 'anti-venom' for snakebites," he said.

Still, that shouldn't keep hikers from the area's beautiful trails.

"I've been with MOFD for over 13 years, and only recall one incident involving a snakebite," Lee said.

Snakebite prevention for humans:

- Wear boots and long pants when hiking.
- Stay on trails, away from underbrush and tall weeds.
- Do not touch or disturb a snake, even if it appears dead.
- Carefully inspect logs or rocks before sitting on them.
- Never hike alone in remote areas. Always have someone with you who can assist in an emergency.
- Teach children to respect snakes and to leave them alone.

Snakebite prevention for pets:

- Carry a cell phone with vet numbers pre-programmed.
- Know the location of the nearest vet emergency hospital
- Have a harness or towel to drag a large pet to the car if the pet cannot walk.
- Remove the pet's collar to mitigate swelling

Online information:

www.calpoison.org/about/docs/2016-03-10_CPCS_Rattlesnake_release_2016.pdf
<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=2804&inline=1>
www.yncrattlesnakes.com
www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0202/RATTLE-SNAKESSSSS.html

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Waste Diversion & Recycling Excellence

Business

Moraga Produce, Moraga – Gold Winner
Glenview Swim Club, Danville – Silver Winner
Orinda Hardware, Orinda – Bronze Winner

Restaurant

Faz Bakery & Coffee Bar, Danville – Gold Winner
panCoast pizza, Walnut Creek – Silver Winner
Millie's Kitchen, Lafayette – Bronze Winner

Office Building

Olympic Building, Walnut Creek – Gold Winner
101 Ygnacio Plaza, Walnut Creek – Silver Winner
Lamorinda Medical Office Building, Lafayette – Bronze Winner



Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority

www.recyclesmart.org