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## Brussels Sprouts Are For Kids!

By Susie Iventosch

For most of us, there's at least one vegetable we'd rather shove in our pocket than down our throat! My 'pocket' vegetable is definitely beets, but for my older brother it was broccoli. The way I heard it, when he was eight years old, he actually stuffed his serving of broccoli in his bathrobe pocket, rather than suffer the pain of actually eating it. My mom says it took her a few days, but she found it in the dirty clothes basket. The smell was a dead giveaway!

Another one of my least favorite vegetables has always been Brussels sprouts. So, when my friend Carol McDonald of Orinda said she was going to make them for dinner during our Mendocino getaway, I was leery. I told her, "I'll never eat Brussels sprouts ... ever!"

"Oh, yes you will!" she said. "The way I make them, even my kids love them!"

And, she was right. I couldn't believe it, not only were they delicious, but I groveled for seconds!

Carol says her mom, Betty, used to make these and wouldn't let the kids have any.

"They were her favorite vegetable," Carol said. "She'd say, 'they're just for me' and finally we begged her to let us try them."

Now, Carol uses the same tactics on her family. Her husband refused to eat Brussels sprouts until he tried this recipe.

"And, it's so simple you can do it at the last minute," Carol added. "The longer you cook them, the better they are, because the leaves become crunchy like potato chips."

"My kids love the crunchy, crispy leaves that fall off the core as they bake."

Once I jumped on the Brussels-sprout bandwagon, I asked my friend Fran Miller of Moraga how she makes her Brussels sprouts.

"My best childhood friend Di Cardoza used to sauté Brussels sprouts in butter when we were kids and I just loved them like that," Fran recalled. "And my kids really like

them this way, too. In fact, they won't eat them any other way."

Fran is a Brussels sprout lover and she came up with a delightful salad of Brussels sprouts and heart of palm in a simple vinaigrette dressing. Sometimes she adds pancetta and occasionally she adds cherry tomatoes, but she says the main thing is to sauté them in butter until they are crunchy and well-browned. Fran serves them warm on the salad.

Brussels sprouts are harvested in California from June through December, and, if you're desperate for these little cabbages during the winter and spring months, then head south to Baja, California, where the harvest lasts from January through June.

### Frannie's Brussels sprout-heart of palm salad with vinaigrette

- 1 head butter lettuce
- 12-18 Brussels Sprouts, cut into quarters, lengthwise
- 1-2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon Lawry's garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- One 14.5-ounce can or jar of hearts of palm spears, sliced into ½-inch slices
- ¼ cup crumbled blue cheese
- ¼ cup shaved Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup bacon crumbles
- 4-5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar



### Carol's roasted Brussels Sprouts

- 2-3 dozen Brussels sprouts
- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- \*optional: pancetta, crumbled bacon, grated Parmesan, balsamic vinegar

Wash Brussels sprouts and cut in half length-wise. Place in large Ziploc baggie and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Drizzle olive oil over Brussels sprouts and seal baggie. Knead baggie to coat each with oil and seasoning. Remove Brussels sprouts from baggie and place on a baking sheet that's been prepared with cooking spray. Bake in 400-degree oven for 20 minutes. Allow any loose leaves to roast, too, as they become very crispy and resemble potato chips by the time they're cooked. The kids love these best!

Heat butter in medium frying pan. Add quartered Brussels sprouts and season with Lawry's garlic salt and pepper. Sprinkle bacon or pancetta bits over all. Cook over medium-high heat for approximately 5 minutes. Stir Brussels sprouts to turn and continue to cook over medium heat for an additional 10 minutes or so, until sprouts are beginning to brown. Meanwhile, tear butter lettuce into bite-sized bits and place in salad bowl. Add blue cheese, Parmesan cheese and hearts of palm slices. When Brussels sprouts are cooked, place in salad bowl and toss with olive oil and vinegar. Serve at once.

This recipe is available on our web site. Go to: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com)

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### Rising Food Cost and Money Conscious Customers:

## A Challenging Situation For the Local Food Industry

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Shelby's has tried not passed on the increase to customers. "We will have to share somehow in the near future," says Rangel, "maybe 20% of the increase, but not more because we know that our customers are watching their expenses, too."

As the margins are eroding, the restaurant has had to reduce the hours of its employees, trying not to make any lay-offs. Beyond the price increases, Rangel is concerned with the recent dramatic reduction of the amount of business generated. "Recently the number of our lunch customers has fallen by 70% and this week (starting October 5th) has been almost dead." He tries to keep a positive attitude and hope for a quick turn around.

Roos Pal from Terzetto Cuisine in Moraga is applying multiple strategies to cope with the changes. "We have to cut somewhere if we do not want to pass the whole price increase to our customers," says the restaurant owner, and her customers have noticed her now full time presence in the restaurant.

The difficult times have sent Pal on the route to further rationalization. "I'm taking classes in Los Angeles once a month to improve my business practices," says Pal. The tricks of the trade she has learned have allowed her to keep choosing the higher quality ingredients while optimizing her management and keeping the prices in check. She has created new menu items like an early bird dinner for a fixed \$9.95, to continue to attract customers.

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# Public Forum JOIN IT

### J is for Junk

Proponents of Moraga Measure J continue to spread the half-truths heard from the paid signature-gatherers who got it on the ballot last Spring, with odd new twists. Ignore the signs-- "J" does not help and is not endorsed by the Acalanes High School District. Neither "J" nor "K" have anything to do with low income housing requirements, which are imposed by state law. And if you are worried about proposed development at the Moraga Center, you should vote against "J," not for it.

In fact, "J" is a Trojan horse: its "gifts" are not what they seem, and may be entirely illusory. Inside "J" lurk enemies that will harm the Town.

Measure J will clog our roads. With only two narrow commuter routes out of Moraga—both of which are sporadically at a standstill during peak hours now—our infrastructure cannot sustain massive development without harm to our property values and lifestyles. The Town has recently approved 200 new houses, which will mean 2000 more daily car trips on Moraga roads, using standard planning assumptions. Around sixty more homes are in process. Through zoning, "J" creates a theoretical potential for 276 additional houses in Bollinger Canyon, and 120 in Indian Valley. ("Summary" on Town website, pp. 2-3) The Town is legally required to approve all that meet regulatory standards: probably around 300, but potentially more. "J" thus imposes 3000-3960 additional daily car trips on Moraga roads, above the 2000-2600 new development already guarantees.

In thinking about traffic, we need to consider proposed development at Moraga Center, some of which is inevitable. As currently zoned, Moraga Center development will add 3720-4600 daily car trips to our roads, based on housing alone. (Draft Moraga Specific Plan, Figure 2-7) One proposal would add a total of 720 dwelling units, for 7200 additional daily car trips. (Id. P. 35) This does not even count all the traffic that will be generated by 140,000 square feet of proposed additional retail/office space, a 75 unit hotel, 150 senior care units, a Town recreation center, and a 10 room bed and breakfast, assuming all are approved. (Id.) Add development in Orinda and Lafayette to that—something we cannot control -- and we could easily have traffic gridlock.

Passing "J" would make all this development more likely,

because the additional houses it authorizes provide a rationale for additional retail and office space. It also provides capital to the Bruzzones, who own most of the Moraga Center land and are reportedly behind the high density option.

"J" also represents a significant transfer of political power to developer(s). It prohibits changes in local building standards on "J" property for at least twenty-five years, even by initiative. (Exhibit C to the Initiative—henceforth "C"—at 1.2-3 and 2.3-4.) Lawmaking powers instead shift to the landowner(s), who can simply make a deal with the Town Council if they want changes in the development agreement, even though "J" elevates it to an ordinance. (Initiative—henceforth "I"—at Section 5; C 5.2)

And "J" freezes local developer fees—which help compensate for development costs—at December, 2007 levels for "J" property, for at least twenty-five years—a serious financial blow to our cash-strapped town. (I Sect. 8A; C 2.2, 2.6.)

When all the bad things have crawled out of the Tro"J"an horse, what is left? Supposedly, \$7 million in "gifts" to the Town—but these "gifts" are not what they seem.

Don't vote for "J" If you like the idea of a Town recreation center and athletic fields—unless you would sign a lease for a building that may never exist, without knowing what the rent will be. "J" offers only to rent 2.5 identified acres for a yet-to-be negotiated fee, sometime in the next twenty-five years. (C3.2(a).) The landowner will then spend \$2 million to build athletic fields on its own property, and \$4 million to partially fund a Town recreation center on it. (C3.2(b) and 3.3.) By definition, this so-called "gift" will eventually be recouped in rent. The \$1 million "gift" for roads is unnecessary, because Moraga Code 8.84.030 already requires developers to pay for improvements made necessary by development. And there are so many contingencies tied to these "gifts" that Moraga may never see the money at all.

Perhaps you feel the Bruzzones will make these "gifts" because they are trusted locals—even though the lawyers who drafted "J" have largely protected them from having to do so. But what if the Bruzzones sell some of this land—made enormously more valuable by "J"—in order to fund the development they are contemplating? "J" guarantees their successors the same rights and (non) obligations the Bruzzones enjoy. (C 5.8.) Mor-

agans will then have multiple developers dominating the debates in our Town Council and planning sessions, instead of just one. These new Trojan horses may have no local ties, and lawyers even more aggressive than the ones who wrote "J." Welcome to the Trojan War.

Ironically, "J" deprives town officials of leverage they could use to get a Town recreation center and athletic fields built where Moraga wants them, in a timely fashion, and at no expense to the Town. Here is why: zoning changes and accommodations are needed to allow developer(s) to build beyond current zoning at Moraga Center. Towns routinely extract concessions—such as a new Town recreation center—as the price for such changes. Voting against "J" does not guarantee a Town recreation center, of course—but then, neither does "J."

In contrast, Measure K is straightforward. It eliminates these large developments, and affects only defined ridge areas (no longer including the Country Club or St. Mary's). My guess is that "K" is the best way to minimize expensive litigation over open space. If "K" passes, the potential lawsuits will be consolidated into one that should be relatively cheap and easy to win, because "K" is so similar to the initiative in Hercules that was recently upheld without a trial. (Do you really think the Bruzzones would have funded "J" if they thought they had a viable lawsuit against "K"?) If "K" is defeated, at least four more open space developments will go through the Town process—and every time the Town grants or denies development permits, a lawsuit is possible and perhaps inevitable.

For further detail, citation to the specific section in "J" that create these problems and an abridged version of "J" that focuses on the offending language, go to [moso2008.org](http://moso2008.org), or DefeatJandK.com, and look for the "Trojan horse" references. If you read "J" yourself, be sure to start with the last exhibit, where most of the enemy soldiers are hiding.

The ballot is confusing, so remember this: "K" is for Kloser Kwestion. But "J" is for TroJan horse. "J" is for junk.

(Mary Ann Bernard is a Moraga resident and retired lawyer, who for 25 years advised and litigated civil cases for federal, state and local government entities. She is not working with the Town of Moraga on this or any other matter, nor is she affiliated with the MOSO initiative.)