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Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Bravo! to the Lafayette PD and the Lafayette City Council in their purchase of-- in place of two new patrol car replacements-- two motorcycle units. This enhanced enforcement program was completed at no added associated cost and gives us a capability we have not heretofore had. From what I am hearing, not all Lafayette residents are altogether delighted with the new motorcycle enforcement. But the two existing traffic officers - who previously had used cars and now ride cycles a good part of the year, are earning their keep. The Lafayette PD accident stats for year end 2010 totaled 106 collisions. The 2011 collisions totaled, as of Nov. 1, 58. We could expect (if 2010 is an indication) 10 more for the missing November/December numbers. Those would make for a total of 68 for this year. Some of this reduction can, no doubt, be attributed to the reduced vehicle volumes on our roads due to the economic downturn. But, certainly, not all. The motorcycle units started in mid-July and augmented their training by attending motorcycle school. Motor cycle units for Lafayette -which can be useful on Lafayette terrain in locations where patrol cars often cannot-- had been considered several times in the past. And, for various reasons, were rejected. Fortunately, Chief Mike Hubbard and our creative City Council found a way to get them for us. I know of many Lafayette residents who surely will be very grateful.

Lynn Hiden

Lafayette

Editor:

Our community, Orinda, is such a great city! But, our community has such bad roads! With only an \$11 million annual budget, Orinda will never be able to spend more than \$1 million annually on road repair/maintenance. This guarantees that each year, the City will make fewer repairs than the roads need. Our roads -- particularly our residential roads, where most of us live -- will gradually and inevitably deteriorate even further. More potholes. Even gravel? The trend is down, down, except for the big roads, where we get matching funds from outside.

Much of our sales tax and property taxes leave Orinda, never to return. Our big brothers, Contra Costa County and the State of California grab our revenues and don't let go.

Convince the legislature to change the law? Keep more of that existing revenue here? Very unlikely to convince the huge -- and nearly broke -- State of California to change. They have enough problems.

Get money for Orinda roads from the fire department? From our school districts? Other local districts? They are separate entities. Separate boards of directors. They have enough problems; they have a legal duty to take care of their own responsibilities.

Can we just re-order our city budget? Give more to roads? That would cripple police services. Cripple recreation services, classes at the Community Center, especially for our children and older adults (CPR classes).

Should we just let the roads go? Yes, we could.

Or, should we try to keep more money here, to fix our roads by ourselves? One way to do that is to vote in a new revenue stream or tax that, very strictly, may only be used in Orinda, only for Orinda roads, not for anything else.

Such a tax cannot be subject to the highway robbery that is foisted upon us now by the county and state.

Will it take political will to do this? Of course. But, it is within the control of our community.

Keep our money at work in Orinda. Bypass the dysfunction in state and federal governments. Embrace changes we citizens of Orinda can make to put our hands on the cash we need.

We can fix my road, fix your road, our roads, our community.

Sincerely,

David W. Anderson

Orinda

Editor:

MOFD's increasingly awkward attempts to explain away the tax funding inequity, with Orinda taxpayers subsidizing Moraga taxpayers by \$1 million annually, is becoming painful to watch. Their previous explanation for the inequity, that the million dollars was in compensation for service provided into Orinda by Moraga based emergency units, turned out to be false when operation records showed that Moraga units only provide about 100 ambulance operations to Orinda residents net of the service Orinda units provide to Moraga residents; and that the cost to MOFD for those 100 operations was about \$50,000.

Now MOFD is attempting to rationalize the inequity by explaining that if the taxes from an area of south Orinda were dedicated to pay for service in Moraga, that this would answer for the majority of the inequity. The area in question was served by and its emergency service taxes went to the Moraga Fire Department prior to the formation of MOFD.

However, examining service records and comparing them with tax dollars generated by this area, it becomes apparent that rather than explaining the inequity, it demonstrates that Orinda taxpayers were subsidizing Moraga's emergency services costs even before the creation of MOFD.

Why Chief Bradley, who knows where his units serve and where his revenue comes from, would propose such an argument that could so easily be dismissed by those knowledgeable of MOFD's finances and operations, is perplexing. Obviously, he is being directed by his superiors to create some rationalization, however tenuous, for MOFD's unwillingness to address the situation

This is dangerous. MOFD was formed because Orinda taxpayers were unwilling to subsidize the rest of the county with \$700,000 of their tax dollars annually. After only four years of being served by ConFire, they voted to detach and spend their tax dollars as they wanted and the bitter taste of how they were treated by the county lingers for some even after 15 years. In an attempt by MOFD's Moraga representatives to save their taxpayers money; and an unwillingness by MOFD's Orinda representatives to stick up for their taxpayers; the very existence of MOFD is being put at risk by their behavior.

A detailed evaluation of MOFD's claims, including tax and operation statistics, can be found on the FAIR website, www.FairForOrinda.org.

Steve Cohn
Orinda

Editor:

To Our Neighbors and Community,

It's been two years since the Lafayette Library and Learning Center opened its doors on November 14, 2009. Last year this vibrant facility welcomed 1,500 visitors a day, presented over 400 programs attended by more than 20,000 people, and served the community 58 hours a week/7 days a week. By any measure, this bustling gathering place has been an extraordinary success.

We have long said, and continue to say, "All We Need is YOU!" and you have responded with extraordinary generosity. We wish once again to express our gratitude to you, our donors and volunteers, for this ongoing support. Warmest thanks and wishes for 2012, from the Board of Trustees.

Mike Gilson, Victoria Bjerke, Kathy Bowles, Jim Cunha, Scott Elliott, Roger Falcone, Jeff Gale, Seth Hamalian, Rita Iorfida, Todd Jacobson, Todd La Porte, Sid Luckenbach, Caity Meaney Burrows, Karen Mulvaney, Ron Olowin, Suzy Pak, Laurie Phillips, Margaret Race, Hugh Winig, Denise Zetterbaum
Lafayette

Editor:

I recently visited a new business in Moraga and was very pleased with their service. Wonderful Spa Center is struggling to get started in Rheem and could benefit from a "New business" highlight in the Lamorinda Weekly. I had an outstanding full body massage there for an exceptionally reasonable price. My massage therapist, Coco, not only did a great job, but she also tailored the massage to my individual needs. Wonderful Spa Center is located at 450 Center Street in Moraga. Their phone number is (925)376-9988. They are open every day from 10 am to 9 pm. They also operate a Wonderful Spa Center on Sycamore Valley Road in Danville. I know that we all want to support Lamorinda businesses and Wonderful Spa Center gives the kind of value that makes it easy. I hope that they can do well here because I want to continue using them in the future, (I already bought my daughter a gift certificate). I want to be clear that I have no connection with the owners or anyone else connected with this business. I walk the Rheem Center most mornings and noticed they had opened. I hope the Weekly can give them a little introduction to Lamorinda in your pages. Thank You.

Sincerely,
Sally Swanson

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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