

OPINION

Letters to the Editor

Updating the record

Editor:

We appreciate your reporting on the Wood Middle School parent who filed a complaint with the California Department of Education (CDE) about the transfer of his child, who is a special education student, to the new Jr. Jets program (Sept. 12, 2013).

As an update, we would like the community to know that the CDE has since concluded its investigation and found that Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) officials followed the law when they transferred the child to the new school. According to the CDE, the evaluation and placement of the child, as well as the services being offered to him, had not changed. The CDE also found that the district notified the parent appropriately of the upcoming move.

We appreciate this parent's strong advocacy for his child and truly hope that he thrives at his new school this year.

— Susan Davis, AUSD

Sinking money into a sinking island

Editor:

The environmental impact report (EIR) is out on the old Navy Base, but climate change may put Alameda Point underwater. The EIR authors take the position that this will happen by 2100; the real number is closer to 2050, less than 40 years from now. Regardless of whether or not the actual year is 2100 or 2050, long before the base is actually under water, the base and the rest of Alameda will be financially underwater, i.e. redlined by the banks.

Banks make loans on perceived risk, not science. As the process of ocean rise accelerates, the perceived risk in a sea-level community like Alameda will suddenly reach a tipping point. All the banks will fall like dominoes and refuse to lend — unhappily, at about the same time the banks redline Alameda and other communities. The city will be cash-starved to reduce flooding due to ocean rise. Think, for example, as to how much it would cost to keep the Posey and Webster tubes from flooding on a daily basis, think of the pumps needed, the retrofits, etc.

So the public policy issue becomes, what should Alameda be doing to show the banking com-

munity that it not only has an effective plan of action but the means to deal with ocean rise? Sinking, and sinking is the right word, tens of millions of dollars in publicly insured bonds to retro fit the old Navy base is not a viable option.

— David Baker

Thank you, Alameda Theatre

Editor:

Here in the Bay Area, we are used to all kinds of sports in all kinds of venues, but during the past three weeks, we have been able to be part of something quite different — the 34th Americas Cup Race viewed in the Alameda Theatre & Cineplex. Watching this incredible sport in a close up and personal way was an unbelievable experience.

A huge thank you should go to Kyle Connor and his staff for giving us all the exciting and thrilling races in this contest. The winner-take-all finale seen in the historical theater was the frosting on the cake. Thank you so very much, Kyle. It was a great sail.

— Nancy Gormley

Look out below

Editor:

Ten seconds: That's about the time it would take an overloaded cargo plane with a seagull suck in a starboard engine to take out the proposed Harbor Bay Club.

That's because the proposed club would be located three-fifths of mile north of the Oakland Airport's main runway. Don't take my word for it. Look at a map. Go stand on North Loop Road and witness these babies claw for altitude at full throttle. 6:30 p.m. is a good time. Wear earplugs.

On page 45 of the city's September Harbor Bay Club environmental impact report, the city notes a "potentially significant impact" and safety hazard for people residing or working in the new club area. That's right. Ron Cowan wants to put at least part of the new 4,000-member Harbor Bay Club inside an airport safety zone.

Cowan's point man, Tim Hoppen, spins it this way: "It's an ideal location. And I believe when an environmental study is completed, it will find no significant impacts to the nearby community."

No impacts yet, anyway. According to the report the proposed Harbor Bay Club project is located within the safety compatibility zones established within the airport land-use guidelines.

Why would the city allow a 4,000-member health club inside an airport safety zone especially since the turf is zoned for commercial manufacturing? I guess Alameda residents have become manufactured products.

As one wag once put it: "Aviation is not inherently dangerous. But it is terribly unforgiving of any carelessness, incapacity or neglect."

— Jan Sutter

A fond farewell

Editor:

I just retired from Otis School and want to use the forum of the *Alameda Sun* to say I felt both overwhelmed and humbled by the outpouring of best wishes, cards, flowers, music, gifts and love on my last day of teaching. I am still reading and responding to cards, letters and class sets of writing from former students.

Best to you all, and many thanks.

— Judith Lynch

What a sham

Editor:

In response to "Cops May Get New Scanner," Oct. 3, it appears that Alameda, already the beneficiary of a tank, now needs to jump on the data-collection bandwagon that is shaming this country globally.

As we lose funding for the poor, for children, for the elderly, for the needy, we still throw wads of money at the police to "stop terrorism."

What a disgraceful sham our politics have degraded into. \$22,000 for four cameras to "stop terrorism." I hadn't noticed a lot of terrorists hanging around Alameda in cars.

I wonder when the propaganda will be recognized for what it is.

— Jaan Carter

Not what Paine intended

Editor:

This whole federal government shutdown business is ludicrous. In 2010 the current House of Representatives majority party happily gerrymandered voting districts and manipulated primaries to gain their majority via the Tea Party.

They then assented to the Health Care Act, and now they want to use it as a bludgeon to get their own way. Since things aren't quite going as planned, they are starting to pin all the blame on the radical fringe with whom they had connived to gain power (e.g. Tom DeLay, now conveniently "exonerated").

Somehow it doesn't quite sound like what Thomas Paine was thinking of in *Common Sense*. Perhaps it is time to consider going to the parliamentary system because this same party has also totally corrupted the Bill of Rights, the no-longer-Supreme Court and much of the Senate.

As Aesop put it in the Wolf and the Fox: 'Tis with Sharpers as 'tis with Pikes, they prey upon their own kind; and 'tis a pleasant Scene enough, when Thieves fall out among themselves, to see the cutting of one Diamond with another."

— Ewart "Red" Wetherill

Let's get back to work

Editor:

The inability of our elected leaders in Washington to keep the federal government open is appalling. As a federal employee in Alameda, I am proud to go to work each day to do my part for the country I love.

Now that the government is shut down, federal workers like me must stay home and wait. We are no longer able to provide the services that we know our fellow Americans rely on. Because of the shutdown, families may have to cancel trips to national parks, first-time homebuyers may see delays in the processing of federally-backed loans, and we will question the safety of the food we eat.

Federal workers are also being penalized in the pocketbook. Even employees who aren't furloughed will not be paid as long as the government is shut down.

The *Alameda Sun* is independently owned and operated. The newspaper is supported by its advertisers and subscribers. The Sun focuses on just the news that affects the residents of the city of Alameda, from the West End to the East End, from Bay Farm to Alameda Point.



Joe Heller

Chinese Culture Does Deserve Celebration

Stewart Chen

The Alameda Sister City Association (ASCA) was a spin-off from the Social Services Human Relations Board (SSHRB). It was established as a way of implementing the program that President Dwight D. Eisenhower initiated in 1956. Its aim is to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation.

Currently, Alameda's sister cities are Lidingo, Sweden; Arita, Japan; and Wuxi, China. Wuxi is the latest addition to our list of sister cities and we look forward to establishing more sister-city relationships with other countries in the future to further promote cultural exchange.

I believe that the sister-city program is a great way for our citizens to gain first-hand knowledge and experience of other cultures. A few months ago, a group of middle-school students from Wuxi visited Alameda through our sister-city

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program. It's about getting to know people from different countries at a personal level, without politics. It's about recognizing and celebrating diversity that would, hopefully, pave the way towards greater understanding and cooperation.

The China National Day ceremony had been held twice in front of Alameda City Hall in the past without any incident. Both occasions were attended by hundreds of Alamedans in a festive and harmonious manner. The flag-raising portion of the event is purely ceremonial and does not involve the use of the flag poles at our City Hall. The flags of the United States, the state of California, and the city of Alameda are not lowered nor replaced during the event.

What had been done in the past, and what was planned for this year's event, was to bring in two similar poles, which are about

10 feet tall, and use these to raise the flags of the United States and China during the ceremony. Then both flags are taken down after the event. Under no circumstances will I suggest or even entertain the notion of having the flag of our country, state or city be replaced by the flag of China or of any other foreign country in any of our city property.

I joined the event on Oct. 1 to celebrate Chinese culture and the people of China in the same manner that I attended the Philippine Independence Day celebration that was held in June; and, in a week, I will also be attending the 102nd anniversary of the independence of the Republic of China, better known as Taiwan. I think that we need to look beyond politics to recognize and honor the heritage of the different people that make up our country.

Stewart Chen is an Alameda City Councilman.

Success Deserves Thanks

Barbara Rasmussen

I would like to extend my thanks to many Alamedans for a job well done. Last spring, members of the local congregation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints were searching for a community service project. We focused on painting the historic Alameda Belt Line railroad office buildings on Sherman Street.

The buildings are a part of the Jean Sweeney Open Space Park. After much discussion about the feasibility of such a task, we presented our proposal to Amy Wooldridge, head of the Alameda Recreation and Park Department (ARPD).

We wanted to reduce the rate of external deterioration to the railroad office buildings, eliminate an eyesore and generate interest and excitement in the Belt Line Park development.

Our representatives in Congress need to stop playing games with our nation's services and those who provide them. They must immediately resolve the budget crisis so federal employees across the nation and right here at home can get back to work for our country.

— Barbara Kennedy-Dalce

Bring on the change

Editor:

I am 100 percent in favor of the "new" Harbor Bay Club. The existing club is very convenient for me. I live in Brittany Landing and the club just across the street. I understand that "fitness" has changed over the last 30 years and a new approach is necessary.

People with their busy schedules want to get in/get out and get on with their days. The new club fits this mind-set.

Through the years, I have watched many cars speed down Packet Landing Road during peak hours to get to the club on time. I have counted cars in the club's parking lot, but found it was much easier to count the empty spaces. I

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The more we got into the project, the bigger it became, and the original estimate of three Saturdays stretched into the entire summer. The original objectives have been exceeded and the service project is now considered finished. The original goals have been met.

Volunteers, who included members of the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and other Alamedans, contributed more than 500 volunteer hours to the project.

Central Self-Storage made a significant financial contribution. George Thayer Painting and Eric Steinberg Painting made major contributions with donated paint or discounts on the purchase of paint. Home Depot in Oakland and Encinal Hardware contributed tools and supplies. Wind River Systems,

have also circled the perimeter of the club, checking for any action on the many empty tennis courts. I have poked my head into the club's bar and have wondered, Why in the world is this bar still open?

I have talked to professionals in the Harbor Bay Business Park who are thrilled knowing a new fitness club would be near their work environment. They can work-out morning, noon and night and it fills a void in this area. My husband and I have ridden our bikes to the new club site and are thrilled with the location.

The 80 homes planned for site where the club now sits are ideal! For those home buyers for whom yards and large lots are not a priority, it's perfect!

What about all the cars and traffic from the new homes? Here in Brittany Landing we have 82 households. I can tell you that at least 16 (and maybe more) either have no car or just one car. With the new housing in place of the club, the traffic will be non-existent compared to what it is right now.

— Cami Schumacher

The more we got into the project, the bigger it became.

Inc. provided parking. Individuals sent contributions earmarked for this project to ARPD.

The Public Works Department greatly contributed to the success of this project.

The skills and continuing enthusiasm of the team leaders deserved special mention. These leaders, Walt DeCelle, Richard Hunter and Joe Snell, contributed know-how and support that made this project happen. I'd also like to thank Wooldridge for her ongoing support.

It is also important to remember Jean Sweeney, whose tireless efforts assured that this wonderful piece of property will be enjoyed by all the citizens of Alameda.

Thanks again to all who have helped move this project forward.

Barbara Rasmussen is a project leader for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Our Letters Policy

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Alameda Sun*, its advertisers or staff.

Letters to the Editor are welcome from the community. Letters must include a name and phone number for verification purposes. Unsigned letters will not be printed.

Letters are subject to editing for length, clarification and legal considerations. Please try to limit letters to 250 words.

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SUN STAFF

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Publishers

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Kasia Metkowski

Photography Intern

Lhadze Bosijevac

Online Partner

The Alamedan

www.thealamedan.org

Contributors

Ron Salsig, Ed Jay, JoanAnn Radu-Sinaiko, Chuck Diguia, Gil Michaels, Irene Dieter, Jeffrey R Smith

The Alameda Sun is a member of:



3215J Encinal Avenue, Alameda, CA 94501

Editorial ■ 510-263-1470

Advertising ■ 510-263-1471

Finance/Production ■ 510-263-1472

Fax ■ 510-263-1473

www.alamedasun.com