

OPINION

Letters to the Editor

Would a chill pill help?

Why can't we chill?
Let's take a pill,
whether right or left,
we are not bereft!
Our country's strong,
let's get along!

This disjointed fuss,
is caused by us.
Agree or not,
our lives seem fraught,
with hate and ill,
So, take that pill!

For calm and harmony ...
let's agree to disagree,
so, in the end,
We can still stay friends!

— C. Perry

Upset over letter from Assemblymember

Editor:

I was upset at the letter from Assm. Rob Bonta ("Birther Movement Comes to Alameda," July 5) and the statements he made about Vice Mayor Malia Vella. How could he say her leadership was inspirational after what she did to the City Manager?

Why didn't he provide proof of his citizenship? When is he going to provide proof of his citizenship?

— Emily Shea

Don't insult our intelligence

The Alameda Sun received a copy of this letter.

Assm. Rob Bonta:

I have not signed the recall petition for Vice Mayor Malia Vella. While it might be true that some people have racist motives in the campaign to recall Vella, it's not true of all or even a majority of concerned Alamedans, including those, like me, who voted for her and you. I am simply beyond disappointed with your behavior in the recent scandal involving former City Manager Jill Keimach and hiring of Edmond Rodriguez as Fire Chief.

Your statements have attempted to lump the many in with the few in what I believe is an attempt to conceal wrongdoing and malfeasance by you, Vice Mayor Vella and Councilmember Jim Oddie. Instead of addressing how you all cost the city more than \$1,000,000, you are accusing those of us who disagree with you and refuse to denounce the recall campaign of being racist. Was I a racist when I voted for you and her in the past?

Many Alamedans are simply upset with how our City Council

has handled this and other issues. I feel that the firefighter's union has too much power over city governance.

People have said and done insensitive and despicable things about Vella. I do not condone that behavior but I also don't believe race and gender lie at the core of this recall effort. Stating otherwise does disservice to your office as an elected official as well as further insults our intelligence.

— Dan Neuschafer

Please prove me wrong

Editor:

I was saddened to hear recently that a group of Alameda residents has decided to pursue a "birther" type conspiracy against Assm. Rob Bonta ("Prove U.S. Citizenship," June 28). The statements being made and supported by this group are nothing less than racist and xenophobic and have no business in Alameda politics.

I ran for City Council in 2008. Campaigns are demanding. You debate and question and contend with opponents you see multiple times a week. You end up spending more time around your political rival(s) than your own family, but because of that I always felt that the contention truly ended with politics.

I served alongside one of the men spearheading this "committee" and I enjoyed many conversations with him. However, often when chatting I would find that some of his views and statements were either borderline racist or, in one case, overtly racist. Specifically that joke referenced by Bonta in his letter ("Birther movement comes to Alameda," July 5).

I'm now a standup comedian and in my mind no jokes are off limits. I wouldn't be writing about this if said person had simply cracked a joke. I certainly wouldn't label anyone racist, but as the saying goes "where there's smoke there's fire."

I'd like to be proven wrong. I'd like to encourage the folks behind this to go back to opposing their rivals with all the ferocity they can muster but in the arena of policy. Abandon the reprehensible course of action that's been chosen. There's no room for it in Alameda.

— Justin Harrison

Do research before completing survey

Editor:

Your recent News in Brief article ("City Posts Survey on Minimum Wage Increase," July 5)

provided Alameda residents with information on a survey to assess residents' and businesses' interest in increasing the minimum wage in Alameda.

As it has been 20 years since I took a college economics class, I thought it best to do a little research before taking the survey. During my first search, I came across "Myths about the Minimum Wage" on the minimumwage.org site. This site offered helpful information, including a link to a 2007 study by the University of New Hampshire.

The study found "that seven out of 10 economists agree that the Earned Income Tax Credit (EIC) is the best antipoverty program available to us, while only one out of 10 said the same thing about minimum wage hikes."

This nugget of information led me to look up EIC. According to the irs.gov site, EIC is a benefit for working people with low to moderate income. To qualify, one must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if they do not owe any tax or are not required to file. EIC reduces the amount of tax owed and may give one a refund.

As I continued down the rabbit hole of research, I found a paper titled "The minimum wage versus the (EIC) for reducing poverty." The author of this paper provides pros and cons; one of which states that "(EICs) more efficiently provide benefits to workers in poor families and increase employment in them."

The research I performed was insightful and confirmed to me that this topic is important, highly debated and very politically charged. I strongly encourage all residents and business owners to research this topic before taking the survey.

— Kelly Marx

Transcripts would help clear the air

Editor:

As a signer of the petitions to remove Vice Mayor Malia Vella and Councilmember Jim Oddie from office, I take umbrage that my signature was interpreted as anything other than a vote for good governance and a vote against corruption. Assm. Rob Bonta's entire editorial comment ("Birther Movement comes to Alameda," July 5) was a subterfuge to confuse the residents of Alameda and take the spotlight off the reason Vella and Oddie had petitions for removal from office drawn against them in the first place.

Let me remind readers that the City Manager has the responsibility to hire department heads that the City Manager determines will do the best job for the city based on experience and education. The City Manager is given this authority by the City Charter, which also states that City Councilmembers cannot unduly influence the City Manager during this process.

We as residents of Alameda have the right to let our politicians know that we do not tolerate malfeasance and remind them that they do not work for one special group or department, but for all the people of Alameda. This is the reason why I signed my name to the petitions.

The ease with which the City Council reached into the taxpayers' pockets to pay off the City Manager, her and Councilmembers' lawyers to make this issue go away worries and concerns me.

As residents we need to know the truth and the truth seems to have been both buried and ignored. Since we paid for it, could we get the transcript of the audio-taped conversation of concern between Vella, Oddie and former City Manager Jill Keimach so that we can determine the facts and move forward with good governance for all Alamedans?

— James Snider

Island life deteriorating in quite a few areas

Editor:

As a long time Alamedan I concur with Margie Siegal ("Climate Change, Emergencies and Pollyanna in Alameda," July 5) though she puts it quite elegantly — a quality I admire.

Yes, our island life has been greatly deteriorated. Goodbye to



Joe Heller

wonderful Alameda!

It is now overcrowded with excessive buildings, apartments, traffic, cars, people, crime, rudeness, endless speeding cars, unsafe streets, overuse of bridges and tubes. It's too much for our city's sanity, safety, hospital, police department, fire department, grocery stores, gas stations, outsourced jail, etc.

Some 60 or 70 years ago we had operable DMVs, an unemployment office, and PG&E and telephone company offices. Gas stations, five theaters, two drive-in theaters, diners, coffee shops, a roller rink, bowling alleys — places for teens to go, be safe and enjoy.

We're now closing the front of the Naval Air Station to build 200 more housing units that will generate 400 more cars. Narrow, one-lane streets — downsized! Idiotic. We are told to conserve water yet build more apartments with sinks, toilets, showers, washers and dishwashers. Idiotic.

And as for crime? Call Alameda Police Department and good luck when you need help. They should be visible on our streets, not waiting for a call. Zero-tolerance for illegal fireworks? Ha!

— Jo Williams

Stop being so ignorant about climate change

Editor:

Recently, a writer voiced concern regarding rising oceans and that Alameda only planned for a three-foot barrier when the State called for a six-foot rise in ocean level ("Climate Change, Emergencies and Pollyanna in Alameda," June 5). Where does such ignorance come from? Does the writer think that the ocean rise will be only around Alameda? Assuming that for some reason there is a rise in ocean level, wouldn't the tidal increase occur equally throughout the world?

I haven't heard yet whether Boston, Iceland, Chile or New Zealand are planning for this impending ocean rise. Will there be a concurrent rise in the Atlantic, Indian, Arctic oceans or the Siberian, Arabian and Norwegian seas? Maybe I have been misled but I'm told that if I add water to one end of the swimming pool the level will rise equally throughout the entire pool.

Wouldn't this apply equally to any water rise throughout the oceans and seas of the world?

Yes, I know! "Scientists" predict that due to "climate" change the ice caps will melt and the world will experience catastrophic rise in the ocean level and Arizona will become waterfront property.

Like all information; garbage in-garbage out. Like politicians, scientists, also, lie! Let's end this madness right now!

— Bruce Elerick

Another resident writes regarding Bonta's letter

Editor:

This letter is in response to the letter from Assm. Rob Bonta ("Birther Movement comes to Alameda," July 5).

In his letter he is characterizing a group of concerned Alameda residents as Donald Trump supporters and right-wing wingnuts. The recall of Vice Mayor Malia Vella has absolutely nothing to do with Trump, the Republicans or anything having to do with the federal government.

It's really a moot point now because the papers weren't filed

correctly. However, his reaction and accusations are unacceptable. It is simply residents of Alameda voicing their concerns about the whole City Manager deal where two sitting Councilmembers (Vella and Jim Oddie) chose to go against the charter and tried to influence the City Manager regarding the hiring of a new Fire Chief. Ultimately the City Manager was let go with the residents of Alameda paying the bill for her firing.

In his letter he characterizes anyone signing the recall petition as being a Trump supporter therefore very few people would have the nerve to sign the petition for fear of being harassed.

This is what he wrote: "So let's be clear. If you sign any recall petition, you're supporting this hate, bigotry and intolerance. If you think Alameda should aspire to becoming a racist backwater, sign it."

Talk about a smear campaign, this is the worst kind of bigotry and bias. I have big news for Bonta, people who sign the petition are concerned residents of Alameda who see something wrong with sitting Councilmembers going against the City Charter by trying to influence the City Manager.

This is a democracy where everyone has a right to voice their pleasure or displeasure of our politicians. How dare you paint good, honest people of Alameda as racists or bigots because they want to sign a recall petition.

I will certainly exercise my right of dissent when it comes time to vote for State Assembly.

— Sue Spiersch

New facility won't threaten Crab Cove

Editor:

It was a classic beauty of an Alameda evening at last Friday's Concert at the Cove. All the beautiful parents, grandparents, dancing kids and those relatively new to Alameda. Some signed a petition to "Save Crab Cove" that was vaguely worded. The petition used an emotional appeal with misconstrued facts that may have lead you to conclude Crab Cove — the lovely picnic grounds, Visitor Center, exploratory beach and gorgeous open space where we rock out during the summer — will be lost to the Respite Center operated by the Alameda Point Collaborative planned for the property across the street.

Nothing could be further from the truth. None of it is at risk. The narrative provided by the petition gatherers is false and misleading. Our beautiful cove is here for posterity. I urge you to do the research, starting with the Alameda Sun's accurate report on the nature of the McKay Avenue property. ("McKay Property's Aim is to Benefit Homeless," June 14) The project has nothing to do with Recreation and Parks or the demise of our gorgeous and beloved Crab Cove.

If you'd be interested in removing your name from the petition, you can call City Clerk, Lara Weisiger at 747-4800 or email lweisiger@alamedaca.gov.

— Gabrielle "Gaby" Dolphin
Co-Chair, Alameda
Democratic Club

Teacher weighs in on high school unification

Editor:

As a teacher in the Alameda Unified School District, I am excit-

ed to see what the committee determines ("Committee Formed to Explore Merging High Schools," July 12). I am not convinced the district will save money by merging the high schools, and am also not convinced that student outcomes will change all that much.

I feel that an appropriate amount of money should be budgeted for teacher salaries and essential school services. If there is no other solution, then parcel taxes should go toward the special "extra" programs that the district is offering. If the community doesn't ratify the parcel taxes, then the special programs close.

I strongly feel that telling the community that teacher salaries can only be increased by closing schools and canceling special programs is misleading at best.

— Name Withheld

New GABA President pens welcome letter

The Alameda Sun received a copy of this letter.

Hi Alameda, I'm Ed "Eddie" Owens, I'm the new 2018-19 President of the Greater Alameda Business Association (GABA). I'm also the President of SpeedPro East Bay, (speedproeastbay.com) and a 20-year resident of our fair city.

Many thanks to Dania Alvarez, GABA's president for longer than the past 12 months, whom I am succeeding. She's been a fantastic voice in the business community and instrumental in serving as a representative to the "four families" of GABA, the Downtown Alameda Business Association, West Alameda Business Association and the Alameda Chamber of Commerce. Together we're a louder voice for business, while keeping our individual mandates and goals separate. Dania will continue to keep us connected to the rest of the "families."

GABA is dedicated to the growth and prosperity of independent business in Alameda. We are a volunteer-driven organization with one part-time administrative employee. Our board consists of small business owners, all based here in Alameda and all volunteers, that work to keep GABA running month to month, year to year.

We're an organization of its members; independent, mostly small businesses, some doing most, if not all, of their business here in Alameda. We advocate for those businesses to the City of Alameda and to business organizations in and around Alameda.

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Our Letters Policy

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

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