

Letters to the Editor

Litter on Clayton trails

Clayton is blessed with beautiful trails and parks. Thanks go to our town planners and elected officials. Measure B funding assures that we can provide basic maintenance for this valuable community asset. However, we as citizens need to do our part.

I regularly walk the trail along Donner Creek from the entry to Mt Diablo State Park to Marsh Creek road. This one mile section provides a pleasant riparian setting for trail users.

Now, the bad news:

Clayton citizens regularly drop their trash along the trail. Over the summer, I have made pickups of trash along this trail. After returning from an extended vacation in October, I was unhappy to find it took two shopping bags to make the pickup. Last week required a bag and a half. That is an accumulation of about four weeks.

I counted 54 separate items of debris. Water bottles, beer cans, food wrappers, candy wrappers, etc. Fifty four conscious or unconscious decisions to drop the trash rather than carry it home.

We can do better.

Backpackers follow the motto "CARRY IT IN CARRY IT OUT". We should give all of our trails the same support.

Don Boyd

Bee Movie Review

This is a comment on your article about the "Bee Movie" written by Ms. Budes.

According to Ms. Budes, she thought the movie was basically boring. But I think that Ms. Budes obviously has NO sense of humor. Fifteen people came to my birthday party including adults, high schoolers and middle schoolers. We are not all easily entertained, but everyone at my birthday agreed that the movie was great family

fun, cute and very humorous ... Jerry Seinfeld created a fun, clean movie and this movie did NOT mock the court system in any way . . . Some movies do mock the court system, but "The Bee Movie" simply isn't one of them! I only have one thing to say: Ms. Budes, LIGHTEN UP!

Sadie Downing, 12

Concerts in Clayton

As the time draws nearer to the reality of having a music concert series in Clayton, we as a community need to voice our opinion of the style and genres that we desire. As a professional musician for over 20 years, I feel an importance to broaden our minds and be open to the wide spectrum of musical styles not only for our own enjoyment but for our children's cultural experience.

Jill Cruicy

Send your Letters to the Editor to tamara@claytonpioneer.com. We will not print anonymous letters.

TCSP, from page A1

the list of permitted uses.

The city wants to delete assembly uses of town center land because the city already has sufficient places for community gatherings. In his report to the commission, Community Development Director Jeremy Graves specifically lists the indoor facilities provided by Endeavor Hall, Oakhurst Country Club, the Clayton gym, the multi-purpose rooms and auditoriums of the elementary and middle schools, the Farm Bureau Hall and local churches.

Outdoor gathering areas are found in the soon-to-open Grove Park and several other local parks, Black Diamond Plaza and the City Hall courtyard.

CCC member Brad Briegleb, an attorney speaking as an individual, not as church counsel, challenged the commission on the issue of public gatherings. Briegleb maintained that, by striking the places of assembly uses from the TCSP, events such as the Art and Wine Festival and

Oktoberfest would no longer be permitted.

Not so, said Graves, explaining that the TCSP applied to structures, not to events and gatherings, which are allowed by use permit.

Briegleb also questioned the city's motives in revising the TCSP. "Is (the amendment) targeted toward the church?" he asked. "I think so. The amendment came after the church expressed its intention to purchase (the parcel)."

"There is no conspiracy here," said Commissioner Ed Hartley. "It's unfortunate that this one parcel has been the sole focus of these hearings. This is not about the church...this is about a vision for the downtown."

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the amendment, but it will not become law unless and until it is approved by the City Council.

It was clear by the number of those speaking out in favor of

retail development in the Town Center (about 2 to 1) that there is growing resistance to the idea of building a church on the prime Main Street parcel.

Enthusiasm for Town Center retail development appears to have gained steam with the recent groundbreaking of Flora Square at the corner of Oak and Center Streets. Developer and Clayton resident Uzoma Nwakuche plans a two story, western themed building that will house a restaurant, a coffee and bagel shop and an art gallery among other uses.

Nwakuche has expressed an interest in purchasing the Main Street parcel from the church should they be willing to sell. In a Nov. 26 letter to Shawn Robinson, Nwakuche stated his intention to make a formal offer, paying \$1.4 million the church paid for the land plus an unstated premium. Nwakuche would develop the parcel as ground floor retail in much the same manner as Flora Square. At press time, he had not heard back from Robinson.

Nwakuche is not the first to want to buy the prime parcel from the church. Robinson and church officials met with City Manager Gary Napper on Dec. 16 of last year to announce their option to purchase the land from Dick Buscaglia. At that time, Napper made a verbal offer to buy the parcel using Redevelopment Agency funds, paying the church a 10 percent premium over the \$1.4 million the church paid.

According to Napper, that offer still stands. "But they (the church) have to show some interest," he said. "There are competing uses for those funds."

In a telephone interview with the Pioneer last week, Robinson said the church would be interested in hearing a formal offer. However, he cautioned, "this has never been about money, we just want a home."

Mayor, from page A1

fortunate to have a very competent and dedicated group of employees running our city. Without all their hard work, we would not have been able to accomplish so much this year.

Of course, the year would not be complete without controversy and challenges and we had our share of both. One of our biggest challenges is balancing the resources available with service demands of the community. The good news is that under our city manager's leadership, we remain very financially sound.

My biggest regret is that there is no extra money in our budget at the end of the year to

provide additional services to the community. We are primarily a residential based community and we do not have the commercial sales tax base that other cities enjoy.

I also liked working with the City Council and staff to implement the vision for the future of our historic downtown. City Councils, past and present, have been working on this for a long time and it is finally coming together. All the activity that has been occurring in the downtown will serve as a catalyst to stimulate and generate the interest we need to attract additional high quality development to the downtown.

Here are some of the highlights:

- We started off the year with a groundbreaking ceremony for our new park, the Grove. It was wonderful watching the dreams and ideas of so many people come to life. Who knew that the squirrels would be living in a million-dollar neighborhood? The grand opening is scheduled for Jan. 12, 2008. We had all hoped it would be open by end of the year, but it is not going to happen. I hate to see the date slide, but it is more critical that we do it right than quickly.
- In September, we celebrated the grand opening of our new Longs Drug Store. This is a beautiful new building and it serves as an anchor for the east end of town.

The rebuilding of Village Market is coming along. I think the building looks great and I am looking forward to having it open again soon, so I can grab a sandwich and picnic in the Grove Park.

In November, we had a ground breaking ceremony for the new Flora Square project at the corner of Oak and Center streets. This is a 14,000 sq. ft. commercial building with retail on the ground floor and offices on the second floor. One of the best parts of this project is the look of the magnificent Old West style building. This project is a real asset to the downtown and will serve as an anchor for the west end of town.

In June, Clayton voters overwhelmingly voted to support a

new Landscape Maintenance Tax, Measure B, with an 82.9 percent yes vote. What an awesome show of support from the community. Since then, the Trails and Landscape Committee has been busy implementing the new maintenance standards and setting service priorities.

My Magic Writing Pen is about to run out of ink, so I need to wrap this up. Thank you for all your thoughtful emails and comments. They have been beneficial.

As Will Rogers once said; "Everything is funny as long as it is happening to somebody else." Now it is time to pass that honor on to the new mayor.

Thank you for a fantastic year.

Enter the Clayton Pioneer's Annual Christmas Cookie Contest

Nothing says Christmas like mouth watering Christmas cookies. This year will be our fifth annual Christmas Cookie Contest--a chance to stir up, bake up and taste up a storm of those delectable sweets that bust the diet and send us over the moon.

So, dust off the cookbooks and dig out Aunt Mae's ginger snap recipe, cook up a few practice rounds and enter our Fifth Annual Christmas Cookie Contest.

Judging will be December 10, 6:30 p.m. in the Clayton Library Community Room. While the judges are tasting and testing, Santa will be on hand with candy canes and Clayton's own Vintage Trio will provide live music and lead everyone in singing Christmas carols. Judges will be announced in the next issue of the Pioneer.

Recipes and photos of all the winners will appear in the Dec. 21 issue. Deadline for entry is December 7.

Clayton Pioneer's 2007 CHRISTMAS COOKIE CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Please fill out a separate form for each entry.
Enter only one recipe per contestant

Name (Please print) _____

Address (Must be a Clayton resident) _____

Phone Number _____

Name of Recipe _____

Master Baker (20+)

Teen Baker (Ages 13-19)

Your age _____

Junior Baker (Ages 6-12)

Your age _____

Parent's Signature (for Junior Bakers) _____

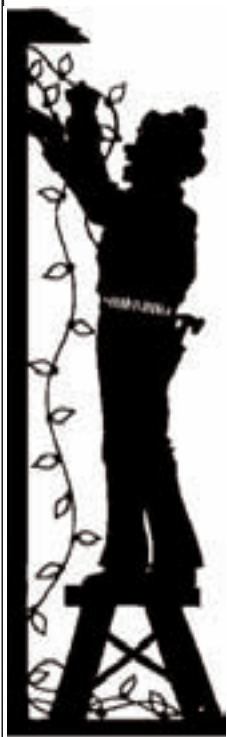
Contestant agrees to being photographed at the competition. Recipes used from published books must identify source.

Signature _____

Print out this page and complete the entry form. Mail your entry to: the Clayton Pioneer, PO Box 1246, Clayton, CA 94517; or drop off at our office at 6200 F Center Street, Clayton. If the office is closed, slip it through the mail slot.

Deadline to enter is Friday, Dec. 7.

Enter the Clayton Pioneer's 2007 Holiday Home Decorating Contest and be part of Clayton's Parade of Lights



Homes' exteriors will be judged on

Originality and creativity, attractive use of light and color, creative use of non-lighting decorations and overall effect.

First, second and third place winners will each receive a Winner's Plaque to place on their front lawn and will be featured in the December 21 issue of the Clayton Pioneer.

Judges: TBA

Judging will be on Thurs., Dec. 13

Deadline for entry is Tues., Dec. 11 by 5 p.m.

All entries will be included in the Parade of Lights

So that everyone in Clayton will have time to drive by and enjoy the decorated homes before Christmas, all entries will be listed by address in the December 21 issue of the Pioneer.

Please enter my home in the Clayton Pioneer's 2007 Home Decorating Contest

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

NEIGHBORHOOD _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

RULES: Must be a Clayton resident.

All contestants agree to have their address and photo of their home published in the Pioneer.

Print out this entry, complete and mail to Clayton Pioneer, PO Box 1246, Clayton CA 94517, or drop off at the office at 6200 F Center Street, Clayton.