

LET THE PUBLIC SPEAK

Camps and trails

EDITOR: Motorists on Highway 12 would find it completely unacceptable to encounter unleashed dogs and people dressing, cooking, sleeping or using the shoulder of the road as a toilet. Yet this is exactly the gantlet that hikers and bicyclists experience on the Joe Rodota Trail from Sebastopol to Santa Rosa.

Why should we accept this? Just as we don't allow families to picnic on the pitcher's mound during a baseball game, we shouldn't need to let people camp on a hiking and biking trail. It is OK that public spaces have rules for shared use.

It is bad public policy to spend hundreds of thousands of tax dollars to erect fences and clear encampments just to have them return the next week. It seems we need to designate some public land to allow camping for unhoused residents in our county. There are many parking lots, fairgrounds and areas of various parks where this could be accomplished. It really can't be on this trail, which is one of the few vehicle-free places in the county for hikers and cyclists.

This is a situation where the tyranny of the few has ruined the use of this trail for so many. Shame on us, Sonoma County. We should do better.

GINA BROWN

Sebastopol

Tyre Nichols beating

EDITOR: What leaps out to me on reading the description of the beating of Tyre Nichols is, what will the dear ones of those officers think? What do they teach their children? Do they take them to Sunday school? Do they teach them to be truthful and kind to animals? Will they have any moral authority in their family in the future? Do they tell them police are hired to protect and serve? As the grandmother of mixed-race children, the fact that it was Black men who did this to one of their own is doubly tragic. Did these officers teach their children to beware of white cops?

JESSIE GORDON

Sonoma

A question of scale

EDITOR: Sonoma County has relentlessly missed the mark on future opportunities at the former Sonoma Developmental Center property. The Glen Ellen Historical Society is again suggesting that historical preservation can interface with repurposed buildings, which in turn would help mitigate the carbon footprint, reduce waste and unnecessary material consumption and protect an irreplaceable California legacy.

The county consultants should not have built demolition costs into the unit housing price as it makes affordable housing a fleeting and unattainable goal. Adaptive reuse of some existing structures could help lower costs of any new construction and could make housing affordable to the "missing middle."

In addition, the potential for 1,000 houses and 400,000 square feet of commercial space would destroy the rural character of the Sonoma Valley and assumes fire evacuation impacts are nonexistent.

This is not anti-housing. It is about the scale of any development.

This current county environmental impact report is substandard and dangerous at best. Hundreds of valley citizens are more than concerned as documented in Board of Supervisors meetings for three years.

TERESA MURPHY

Glen Ellen

Students and stress

EDITOR: I believe the majority of teenagers are under severe stress from school, and I also believe that this claim isn't one to shrug off. I wholeheartedly believe that high-quality education is important for everyone, and I do not believe in reducing the quality of education but would like to have more promotions in schools for ways to cope with stress in teenagers' lives.

I'm not talking about the once-a-year heavily promoted "mental health week." That's not enough. As a junior in high school, I want more resources for stress. I want people to recognize the significant stresses on high school students and bring them to the forefront of administration and school board meetings on how to support students' mental health, so students can succeed without the big burnout that comes with it.

I want students to successfully achieve their academic goals without putting their mental health on the back burner. Is it too much to ask for better resources and more awareness for struggling students?

RAFFAELLA BRAVO

Santa Rosa

America is sinking

EDITOR: America is slowly being allowed by its government and citizens to destroy itself. We have gun violence every day, and nothing is done. The government does nothing, and voters allow it. We are told the Second Amendment allows gun possession, so that's it. Well, the Second Amendment was passed in 1791, and I don't think it meant the types of guns being used now. It's rather ridiculous to compare those times to now and use that as an excuse.

Congress has an easy ride because it seems all they do is argue and belittle each other and lie. We have elected liars, and nothing is done. Take a look online at benefits they get. Being in Congress isn't a bad deal. It's sad that the government and citizens of this country have allowed it to sink to the level it has, and it will continue until citizens wake up and do something about it.

LINDA ELLIOTT

Cloverdale

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