

## LET THE PUBLIC SPEAK

### Prohibition won't work

EDITOR: In 1917, a constitutional amendment outlawing alcohol was proposed by the Senate, and in 1919 Congress passed the Volstead Act, which enforced the ban. We now know that no amount of alcohol consumption is safe, but we also know that we couldn't stop people from producing, buying or consuming alcohol. Thus, we reversed course, and millions of Americans die annually from alcohol abuse and its concomitant devastation from its effects on broken families and deadly accidents.

Assembly Bill 935, by Assemblyman Damon Connolly, D-San Rafael, would prohibit the sale of tobacco products to anyone born on or after Jan. 1, 2007. That means today's 15- and 16-year-olds and anyone younger. This otherwise laudable goal will experience the same result as its alcohol ban predecessor.

It is a waste of time and money and will be impossible to enforce. The moral arc of tobacco cessation is continuing. Let's all be examples of this by practicing abstinence of both poisons: tobacco and alcohol. Tell Connolly to work on something else.

### CHRISTOPHER SORK

Santa Rosa

### Bus questions

EDITOR: The backs of buses say something like "powered by clean natural gas." Now Sonoma County will spend more than \$10 million on electric buses. Kylie Lawrence's article was informative but invites more questions ("Ten electric buses will join fleet," Feb. 12).

That \$1,028,740 (minus \$120,000 from the state) per bus is just the beginning of the costs. How many years to amortize? Interest? How much does it cost to install a charging station and what level? A Tesla home charger costs \$1,000 to \$7,000. How much does it cost to charge a bus battery? How long does it take? Where are the transit bus charging stations to be located? Where does the power come from?

Has an analysis been performed for the per-rider cost of acquiring electric buses? The buses I've seen driving around town rarely have more than three or four riders. College students and veterans already ride for free.

the message I'd received. Tests showed I was a compatible donor, even though I was well past age 65.

Since the transplant surgeries, Carlos has been free of kidney failure and his life's been transformed. I've gotten along fine with my one remaining kidney. I encourage you, young or old, to consider making this lifesaving gift — to someone you know or to a stranger whose life depends on a donated kidney.

And check out the marvel of the Never Ending Altruistic Donor chain. If there's someone you'd like to give a kidney to but you two are not compatible, you donate to a third person, then a willing but incompatible donor to that person donates a kidney to someone else, and on and on and on.

### DEE SCHILLING

Sebastopol

### Evacuation concerns

EDITOR: The Feb. 12 article about the sale of the Elnoka Lane development site quoted developer Hugh Futrell saying, "CEQA provides a treasure trove for affluent ZIP code objectionists to infinitely delay or kill projects," pointing to the lawsuit filed against the Sonoma Development Center plan as an example ("Developer sells site for housing project"). This statement highlights an unfortunate outlook and causes much conflict between developers and residents.

Residents are concerned about safe evacuation from wildfires, and the California Environmental Quality Act now requires this analysis to be done before new development. Developers must take this seriously and not propose developments that put new and existing residents at further evacuation risk.

That was the issue with the proposed Sonoma Development Center build out and must be properly addressed for any development proposed for the Elnoka site. Both sites will add cars to Highway 12, which is already known to be inadequate for evacuation of existing residents as evidenced during the Nuns and Glass Fires when traffic came to a standstill on Highway 12.

No new housing development can avoid adding traffic to an already unsafe evacuation route in a fire-prone area. Developers, the city and the county need to accept that development cannot safely occur in these areas.

Does the county expect electric buses to attract more riders?

**DEBORAH EPPSTEIN**

Santa Rosa

Ryan Schleeter said buses can be used to “actually prevent power outages,” that bus batteries can be used to power hospitals if the power grid goes down. That is astonishing and begs credibility. Next are solar cell-covered or hydrogen fuel cell hybrid buses.

**SANDY METZGER**

Santa Rosa

### **Donating organs**

EDITOR: An excellent Press Democrat editorial extolled organ donation when a person dies unexpectedly (“Give a gift of life in the new year,” Dec. 30). Please consider an equally challenging and rewarding opportunity: donating a kidney while one is alive.

I became an organ donor following a dream in 2007. The spirit told me I should give a kidney to the husband of a former co-worker. I was reluctant. He was an alcoholic and troubled. But I felt compelled by

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