

LETTERS

CONTEMPT OF COURTS

We commend the *Pacific Sun* for recognizing the important work being done by the Center for Judicial Excellence, as featured in the article published Nov. 10, "Disorder in the Courts."

As a nonprofit community organization established to improve the Marin judiciary's public accountability and restore and maintain the integrity of Marin County courts, CJE is committed to judicial access for the entire community and encouraging fair and unbiased courtrooms.

I would like to correct one important factual error in the article. It stated that "no judge in Marin has been the subject of a disciplinary sanction by the Commission on Judicial Performance since its inception in 1960." We have documentation that at least one Marin County Superior Court judge has been sanctioned by the CJP, and confirmation of three corrective actions taken against Marin County judges. It is unknown how many others have been reprimanded since many of CJP's actions are not disclosed to the public.

Judge Terrence Boren and several former Marin County Bar Association presidents have gone on record supporting the "public's right to know" when it comes to the proper functioning of their courts. It is a shame that the current local Bar Association and every sitting judge and commissioner has thus far refused to participate in any requested meetings and forums.

As an organization, CJE is working

for positive change to improve relations between our community and the courts. We believe that the Superior Court of California, Marin County, can become a national role model for collaboration. We appreciate your fair coverage and encourage our community to get involved. It is only through involvement that real change can be made.

Jean Taylor
CJE board member

CORNERING THE MARKET

Lots of rumors are flying around about the vacated Albertsons space in Mill Valley. One is that Trader Joe's made an attempt to lease that space only to be blocked by Mill Valley Market and Whole Foods. Another is that Mollie Stone's will move in there. What is the real story? If it is true that Mollie Stone's is taking over that space, what a sorry turn of events for many of us who are on low, fixed incomes (seniors especially). Although Safeway, with its two markets, claims to have "bargain prices," it has always been far more expensive than Albertsons. And, of course, Mollie Stone's, Whole Foods and Mill Valley Market cannot even enter the equation regarding "affordable" merchandise. If the City of Mill Valley allowed a small group of businesses to override what could have been a real boon for our low-income community, this really needs to be addressed. Trader Joe's would have been a wonderful addition here and accessible for many of those without automobiles.

G R Sams
Mill Valley

DOESN'T HOLD WATER

Perhaps Dietrich Stroeh was misquoted in the recent article when it quoted him as saying, "Marin gets a lot of its water from the Sierra snowpack..." ["The Weight of Water," Nov. 24]. Perhaps he meant California as the user of Sierra water? Or, if it was Marin, I would certainly like to know how it gets here.

Name withheld by request
Corte Madera

HANGING BY A THREAD

We would like to draw the community's attention to the imminent loss of the weaving program at the College of Marin, which has been part of the curriculum since 1939. For more than 65 years the program has served both credit-earning and community-education students, but the current administration of the college has decided it cannot continue to let the program use a classroom. Their plan is to discontinue the weaving class as of December and to use the room for vending machines and other storage during IVC's campus construction. We feel this is a loss both to the community and to the curriculum of the college, given the contributions of COM's weaving teachers and students over the years.

Over the years the program has accumulated wonderful resources—nearly 30 floor looms plus all of their equipment and material. This equipment is scheduled to be disposed of on December 9. Assets like these will be impossible to replace if the administration were to change its mind at a later time. Abandoning this investment seems fiscally unwise, especially given the increased interest in fiber arts in the Bay Area over the past few years. The program draws both new students and a devoted group of continuing students. We are willing to meet with college administrators to find a way to keep weaving in the curriculum.

We wish that COM's administration would have been more willing to work toward an amenable resolution. We would be agreeable to a smaller classroom or a shared space—but we are very upset at the complete elimination of weaving in the county education plan. Surely there is some space on one of the campuses for a weaving program.

Those interested in the art curriculum at COM or in weaving can contact the college to ask that the program be maintained.

Meli Cook and Judith Sorgen
COM weaving students

go outside! There's a freight train out there!"

Freight trains ran in Marin and Sonoma from 1863 to 1998. In the 1960s and 1970s a typical day saw four 100-car freight trains on this railroad. Were people horrified? No.

Nationwide, trains haul 42 percent of our freight, versus 28 percent for trucks. A train can haul a ton of cargo 402 miles on a gallon of fuel, versus 59 miles for a truck. That's energy efficiency, translating into lower environmental impacts. If there's a menace, it's abject dependence on highways, the biggest engine of climate change.

It's that dependence that rail opponents are determined to protect. To cap it off, Ford says shifting cargo from trucks to trains will increase truck traffic. By Ford's arithmetic, four minus two equals six.

Before General Motors and its rubber, asphalt and concrete cohorts shut down electric rail transit in 83 U.S. cities, trains were the heart and soul of America, and that haunting whistle still stirs us.

Not content, the highway lobby now wants to shut down all travel that isn't on pavement. It's the GM version of free-market competition. But all the scare stories in the world won't silence the music of the rails. It's woven into the fabric of our being, captured by our best songwriters, not least by Woody Guthrie:

"There's a lonesome freight at 6:08 coming through the town,

I'll be homeward bound, I'll be homeward bound."

Lionel Gambill
Novato

Jen Sorensen

SLOWPOKE

HEY, BUSY EXECUTIVES AND GO-GETTERS! ARE YOUR SCHEDULES SO PACKED THERE'S NO ROOM FOR GOOFING OFF? YOU NEED...

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SAY IT AIN'T SO, SANTA

There comes a time in many a person's youth when we find out a little secret we didn't know about Santa Claus—that he's more, and less, than we'd been led

to believe. He's quite a bit thinner during the off-season; sometimes finds it easier to shop online for toys than handcraft them in arctic temperatures; and trades in his sleigh for a commute-friendly Civic on weekdays. He's still the lovable ol' friend who appreciates nice kids and throwing back a few cookies with a milk chaser once in a while. But we're looking for tales of when readers first learned a bit **more** about Santa.

Send us your stories of when you discovered Santa's "everyman" persona and we'll relate the best anecdotes in an upcoming issue.

Mail to Santa Stories, c/o Pacific Sun, P.O. Box 8507, San Rafael, CA 94915. Or send e-mail entries to: letters@pacificsun.com. Deadline for entries is Monday, December 11. *

