

Excellence should be focus at school

It is regrettable that some of the student body at Live Oak High School in Morgan Hill found the display of American flag colors on Cinco de Mayo a sign of disrespect. I believe if the same four students had chosen to wear patriotic attire last March 17, few, if any, of their classmates of Irish descent would have claimed similar feelings. All students should concentrate on the pursuit of excellence in personal accomplishment and achievement above all, not only in high school, but throughout life as well. Respect will then surely follow.

Paul Grant
San Jose

Rights of students should come first

Vice Principal Miguel Rodriguez's fear of the possibility of fights breaking out as a reason to send the four kids wearing American flags home from Live Oak High School on Cinco de Mayo is ridiculous and cowardly. In 1957, when Little Rock High School was integrating for the first time, and nine black students were admitted, there was more than just the possibility of fights. The National Guard had to come out to protect the students. If Live Oak has to hire more security to protect these

Situation a wasted teachable moment

Principals and vice principals have many teachable moments. How sad that the Morgan Hill school does not have experience in conflict resolution that could have helped in this recent situation. Students with flag shirts and students involved in the Cinco de Mayo celebration could have been brought together for an education in history and tolerance. Guided discussions could have taught about the history, bias and cultural history of both countries to build understanding. Instead, it is a tempest in a teapot and prejudices are growing. Vice principals everywhere, take note and get some appropriate training. It's your job.

Konne Ainsworth
San Jose

Patterson Ranch plan needs to halt

Coyote Hills is a treasure that must be preserved. The mixed-use Patterson Ranch development as currently planned will remove a buffer zone for Coyote Hills Regional Park. In the current Fremont General Plan, this site is designated an urban reserve with a maximum of 266 housing units allowed. If this proposal is approved, there will be more traffic congestion and pollution in an area that is negatively

would strip away Shahzad's rights and try him in a military tribunal as an "enemy combatant." A better approach would be to suggest to him that any information he might have about other terrorist activities is very perishable — if they want any kind of accommodation from the government, they need to talk now and not later. A full confession a week after Shahzad has been arrested is of little value in rounding up his associates.

David Lewis
Mountain View

Council members wrong on Arizona

I can't believe it. Four San Jose City Council members were to punish Arizona for being right (Page 3B, May 8). What part of illegal don't they understand? When I break a law, I pay a penalty. But the council members are saying, "Look the other way" on illegal immigrants. Instead we give them jobs and benefits, and once again I pay a penalty, this time with my hard-earned money. Instead of punishing Arizona, why don't they pass a resolution to resolve the immigration issue? There is a need for immigrants, but let's set up a program that allows for legal immigration and punishes illegal immigrants. Let's not punish honest, hardworking Arizonans for standing up for their rights and their protection.

Steven Shideler
San Jose

operate on seniors' safety net

tion and enrichment. The current city budget proposes closing two of these centers this year with more possible closures in 2002. Given the draconian cuts that were initially proposed, this is some reprieve. However, more cuts could be in San Jose's future. One in five seniors is "food insecure," meaning they can't acquire enough nutritious food—an estimated 43,000 in our county. Without proper nutrition older adults are at greater risk for a variety of chronic diseases and acute conditions. Malnutrition, being underweight or overweight can lead to weak muscles, reduced stamina and inability to engage in physical activity. This in turn results in reduced ability to perform daily activities, increases risks for

falls, and threatens independence. The potential closure of neighborhood centers and the elimination of senior physical activity programming only exacerbate this risk.

The loss of congregate meal sites also puts older adults at risk of social isolation. Research indicates a significant association between social isolation and negative health outcomes. Individuals who lack social connections or report frequent feelings of loneliness are more likely to suffer higher rates of illness, death, infection and cognitive decline.

What's more, if San Jose removes some of its support for senior nutrition programs, it puts programs in other cities at risk if county dollars are shifted to fill a void in San Jose. Other cities may reduce their financial commitment to meals programs as well.

Given San Jose's dire fiscal situation, what can we do? We recognize everyone is making cuts. We propose a well-planned, equitable approach. By looking at the issue of senior nutrition countywide, policymakers can assess where the greatest need exists and how the cities and counties can best partner to maximize the dollars available. They can also look at creative solutions such as public-private partnerships and consider innovative models like senior cafes.

Constant and Kniss have stepped up to the plate, gathering together leaders from San Jose, the county and surrounding cities to begin work on this solution. This will not be a fast, easy process, but in the end it will be a better outcome than a haphazard fraying of the safety net.

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