

June 17 letters to the editor

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County must step to plate on home care

I encourage the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to step to the plate and do the right thing. It's imperative to save money that goes to unneeded emergency room visits and costly acute care of our county's older adults.

Community-based services are a necessary part of the equation in helping older adults meet the challenges of aging and living successfully in the community.

These services not only complement medical care and help seniors juggle life on a budget, they often provide lifeline interventions that increase safety and prevent institutionalization.

Service Opportunity for Seniors provides a service that makes a difference by serving more than 185,000 meals, along with daily wellness checks, per year to homebound seniors.

With the senior population increasing in numbers, it is a challenge to raise the extra funds needed to continue the program without having a waiting list in place.

We will all be older adults one day. Your help is needed. These services rely on federal funding and donations, and are struggling to serve more seniors than ever. Call or email your county supervisor and tell him or her that the county needs to step up and provide some funding. Their contact information is available at www.acgov.org/board/

Connie McCabe

Executive director SOS Meals on Wheels San Leandro

Should be a change in fee structures

Fremont's local sewer company, Union Sanitary District, is raising our sewer rates again. Sound familiar?

Between Alameda County Water District, Republic Trash Services and Union Sanitary District, Fremont residents pay more than \$100 per month in account maintenance fees alone. That's like being charged a mandatory monthly fee for the privilege of walking in the door at a grocery store, if you buy any food or not.

In my hometown in Nevada, there's one monthly account maintenance fee for water, trash and sewer -- a total of \$35. The services are not farmed out to three separate monopolies, each with their own bureaucracies, overpaid employees, expensive benefits and pension plans -- funded by perpetually increasing the minimum monthly account fees of customers.

The current structure only benefits the people working at these three monopolies and gouges ratepayers. Given the opportunity, I'd sure vote to change it.

Carol Alverson

Fremont

Article made crucial point about brothers

I am very moved by the recent guest commentary, "'Little fathers' can have a big impact on little lives," in which the author described the positive influence of big brothers in the lives of their younger siblings when a positive fatherly role model is absent in the picture.

Too often, when the role of older brothers is mentioned in the media, the emphasis is on the negative impact on the younger ones. We need to convey and to hear more positive messages on this topic.

There is an old Chinese saying: "Elder sisters are like mothers." This article says "Elder brothers are like fathers."

I, too, wish that all of the little fathers had a happy Father's Day.

Olive Lee-Deacon

Oakland

Mend tenure system but shouldn't end it

The inability to dismiss incompetent teachers is reported by some to be detrimental to sound educational goals. If there is evidence that it is true, certainly the system must be fixed. The students deserve no less.

But, like President Ronald Reagan's welfare queens of the 1980s, I am not completely convinced.

What percentage are incompetent, 2 percent or 20 percent? What I do know is that there is no end of wealthy individuals who would like to turn education into a private enterprise with stockholders and dividends.

But doing so requires dismantling the powerful tenure system.

President Bill Clinton used to say "mend it, but don't end it." Overall, our schools do a very good job.

Just look at affluent schools like Miramonte, Acalanes, and San Ramon high school, for example.

It is the poor and segregated schools that don't do well, as proven by statistics repeatedly. But fighting unequal distribution of income and resources isn't easy so the reformers turn to less important targets.

Anne Spanier