

Editorial

No need to fight

ONE OF the pat (and utterly misleading) phrases constantly uttered by the big city news media about the goings on in Washington these days is that there's something called a "trade war" under way.

What's really happening, of course, is that the Trump administration is trying to renegotiate a series of heavily one-sided arrangements with countries around the world that made their products very inexpensive in our country, while making ours much more expensive in theirs. What the president is trying to do is tip the scales to make them a bit less unfavorable for us — an idea heavily resisted by leaders in other nations (especially China) who would rather keep the gravy train running full speed in their direction.

Meanwhile, despite all his rhetoric about tearing up old import/export deals, Trump also says he's 100 percent in favor of free trade as long as it's fair trade, and despite his sorry record of playing fast and loose with the truth in many areas, there's no reason to disbelieve him where trade is concerned.

Trump is, after all, a businessman, and nobody can succeed the way he has without also having developed a profound appreciation for the importance of international trade when it comes to creating wealth. It's just a given.

In fact, it was the guru of capitalist economic theory, Milton Friedman, who best illustrated the principles of specialization and international exchange in the early 1980s on his PBS television series, "Free to Choose."

In one classic episode, Friedman famously observed that "nobody knows how to make a pencil."

His point was that, while it might be one of the simplest things on your desk, the common pencil is actually quite complicated, with its components of rubber, wood, graphite, glue, steel and yellow paint.

The seemingly humble pencil is actually so complicated, you definitely could not make one, and neither (by themselves) could anyone else.

No single person possesses even a small fraction of the knowledge that goes into growing, harvesting and cutting the trees, trucking the wood to the mills and creating those nifty hollowed-out pieces which can be glued together to become perfectly straight wooden tubes. Meanwhile, a similarly complicated effort goes into cultivating rubber trees, tapping them for the raw substances that eventually, thanks to numerous other people, are refined, colored and molded into erasers. And then there are the thin graphite columns which must be just the right softness to easily mark paper, and just the right size to fit the aforementioned wooden tubes. And those little metal bands that attach the erasers to the wooden bit don't exactly grow on trees. Etc., etc. Truly, pencil making is a vast, and definitely world-wide, effort. And that's a good thing.

Friedman used the pencil to illustrate the principle that free markets foster cooperation among far-flung people who are able to pool their efforts to create even very complicated products at low prices. But the pencil also provides a perfect illustration of how interdependent the world is, and how the wealth, good health and leisure enjoyed by people who live in developed countries are a direct result of the fact that these countries have complex and interwoven economies.

It's also a principle that is even more true today than it was when Friedman explained it. The smartphone you surely have close at hand, for example, could not only not be made by a single person, it would require a team of dozens of highly specialized experts just to explain how those miracle devices come to be, and the global network required to create them.

Trump may be trying to fine-tune the trade arrangements that regulate American exports and imports, but he's not trying to blow them up. We should all be very glad that we live in a highly interdependent world — and the "we" most definitely includes Donald Trump.

BEST of BATES



"My garage is so small I had to buy a Porsche."

Letters to the Editor

Would like answers

Dear Editor,

I read with great interest Denny LeVett's letter to the editor last week in favor of the proposed ordinance prohibiting transient rentals in the city's commercial district. A number of questions come to mind:

Are there really enough hotel rooms and other short-term lodging to meet the needs of visitors as suggested by Mr. LeVett; or is this just a way for existing hotel owners (including existing members of the city council) to protect their turf?

Should the members of the city council who own or benefit from a limited number of hotel rooms be allowed to vote on the ordinance? Don't they have a conflict of interest?

Should there be disclosure [and discussion] of those members of the city council who applied on an expedited basis for their rental unit to be approved for transient rentals in the commercial district?

Why is the ordinance being pursued on an "urgency" basis? Aside from the members of the city council who recently applied for approval to convert their rental units, is there a tidal wave of commercial district property owners who wish to convert their long-term rentals to transient occupancy?

Wouldn't the city be better served using

city-owned property to increase the housing stock?

The proposed ordinance includes a finding that "the conversion of long-term rental units into transient rentals eliminates some of the most affordable housing in the city and conflicts with the city's general plan as well as a state mandate to preserve and increase housing supply." If the finding is valid, then why is the ordinance written so broadly as to prohibit new construction of transient units in the commercial district? There is much more to this story.

I hope you will join me in attending the city council meeting scheduled for April 2, at 4:30 p.m. I, for one, would like some answers to these questions.

Ralph Guenther,
Carmel

Use Navy housing

Dear Editor,

It's very clear that utilizing short-term rentals to fill the gap for affordable housing is debunked. You can't stop progress, and many solutions were brought to light when we sat with coastal commissioner Carole Groom and Supervisor Mary Adams in Big Sur this week. Monterey County is struggling to find a legal path to stopping short-term rentals by implementing a restrictive ordinance that would eliminate transient rentals as a way to create workforce housing in Big Sur.

But the best way to create affordable housing in Big Sur would be to utilize the Navy

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Cabin slipping into Palo Colorado creek, but coastal commission says no to emergency permit

By CHRIS COUNTS

A COUPLE whose family has had a home in Palo Colorado for nearly 100 years wants to install a foundation to keep it from falling into Palo Colorado Creek. But they've been unable to convince officials to let the work proceed on an emergency basis — and now they must go through a lengthier, and more expensive, planning process.

The Monterey County Planning Commission will review the proposal April 3, and the Monterey County Historic Resources Review Board will do the same April 4.

Located at 36963 Palo Colorado Road, and owned by David and Linda Marshall, the home is part of the Palo Colorado Association — a subdivision of vacation homes built near the mouth of Palo Colorado Canyon in the early 1920s. The redwood-shaded cabin straddles a small creek.

Rejected after consultation

The Marshalls applied for an emergency permit because the log foundation of the cabin is failing. But the request was rejected by the county after consultation with the coastal commission.

“Staff coordinated on the emergency permit and it was determined that the proposed foundation repairs are not the minimum required to stabilize the structure and address the im-



PHOTO/COURTESY ROB CARVER

The wood foundation of a home in Palo Colorado is collapsing into the creek that runs below it, but an emergency permit to repair it has been denied.

mediate emergency situation,” a county planner’s report said.

Representing the Marshalls, architect Rob Carver told The Pine Cone that county officials were “on board with the emer-

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LETTERS

From page 20A

Research Facility at Point Sur, currently owned by State Parks. This facility, with a massive amount of housing already built, has been sitting vacant for 40-plus years. It is the obvious choice for alleviating the affordable housing crisis that plagues Big Sur.

Short-term rentals are a good source of income for the county, and any ordinance that would eliminate them would discriminate against those less fortunate wanting coastal access. We homeowners operating transients rentals are a vital

part of our community and help make coastal access vacation experiences affordable. Moreover, any homeowner in a desirable area should be able to operate a short-term rental legally. Any ordinance limiting them should maintain safety and respect for neighbors, but in no way be restrictive of the rentals themselves.

One more thing: We need the 10.5 percent transient occupancy tax generated by short-term rentals to be a line item in the county budget so we can track the money. The public needs this information to understand how the county is benefiting from the revenue. Let’s put our best foot forward for the future of our livelihood on the Monterey Bay we call home.

Thyme Lewis, Carmel Valley

Sidewalk needed

Dear Editor,

I was somewhat surprised to read in last Friday’s Pine Cone about an item included in the proposed budget for “San Carlos Street traffic calming.” I’m not entirely sure what, in fact, “traffic calming” means.

Continuing to read the details, I was astonished that it has been decided to “move forward with Barbara Livingston’s proposal to slow drivers on San Carlos by installing a “tree median island” between 10th and 13th — Ms. Livingston’s neighborhood. Taxpayers will “pony up” \$17,000 to match her donation of the same amount.”

Methinks city hall is setting a precedent here. I have lived on Junipero for 35 years. My residential block extends from 12th to 13th Avenues and, between those two stop signs, Junipero is the equivalent of a speedway. And, unlike the residents of San Carlos, we do not have the luxury and safety of a sidewalk. Two dogs have been killed — one of them mine.

Ben was walking with me on leash, hit by a speeding car, thrown into the air and killed instantly. The speeding motorist kept on driving. I don’t want my life to be cut short like my beloved dog because the city of Carmel favors residents who “pony up” 50 percent of the cost of their own personal “tree median island whilst ignoring speed and safety issues.

San Carlos is designated as the main thoroughfare in Carmel. Just wondering, does this “calming element” mean that it will now have a new designation? As a taxpayer, I am incensed at the thought of my dollars contributing towards this gratuitous island. Three children live next door to me and three more opposite. Sadly, it is not safe for them to ride their bicycles and scooters in our neighborhood since they don’t have the benefit of a sidewalk.

Jean Hewer,
Carmel



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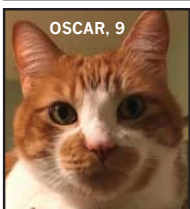
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