

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievance.”

First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Opinion

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YOUR VOICE

Indian Wells

Council is correct in holding off on center

I have lived in Indian Wells for 33 years. Before I was elected to the Indian Wells City Council in 1998, the city was experiencing a rash of burglaries.

I write the following not to demean any committee before and after. The then-City Council decided to create a public safety ad hoc committee. The council and police learned the hard way that, despite of the good intentions of the committee, human nature and personalities would split everyone up on how to approach the problem. It may be that this is again occurring with well-meaning citizens who are pitting one against the other and the process itself.

As a councilman then, a community center was brought up by residents and the issue still remains. I believe the current council would be sending the wrong message if it were to approve the center — especially at this time with the existing economic problems and Gov. Jerry Brown's proposal to eliminate the redevelopment agency. This not to say the center has no merit. However, I believe that at this stage of the proceedings, the approval of a community center is a risk. I believe that Mayor Patrick Mullany and the majority of the council are approaching this correctly and realizing that spending money is not the reason for living in Indian Wells.

Conrad Negron Sr. Indian Wells

Snowbirds left out of community center poll

Regarding the Indian Wells community center. Why would the city put out a survey in August when most of our citizens are out of town?

We don't need a community center. It would be an expense we don't need or want. Rent it!

Sherry Scudder Indian Wells

Stop sending our tax money out of the city

The Indian Wells City Council all agreed the dollars are available for a civic center. The current position the council members are now espousing is their concern for the economic conditions and the state's future actions as they apply to the redevelopment agency and the city's funds in general.

I would suggest if we are going to postpone this project, which is primarily for the taxpaying resident, because of financial concerns, I propose we put a moratorium on dispensing of taxpayer dollars to charities and council-favored causes outside of our city, such as the Palm Springs International Film Festival, the Palm Springs Art Museum, the McCallum Theatre, United Way, Eisenhower Medical Center. Indian Wells has given tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to such entities, this and past councils are renowned in this valley for their largess with its taxpayers' dollars.

If our finances are so dire we do not have the money for a community center for our taxpaying residents, would it not be prudent to suspend our giving of taxpayer dollars to causes such as mentioned above? Let us stop giving away taxpayer dollars and let's build a reserve for what our council obviously perceives as an uncertain financial future.

Andy Eldhuck Indian Wells

send your letter

Submit letters at our website, www.mydesert.com/letters

■ Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number for verification

■ Letters should be fewer than 200 words

■ Letters may be edited for length, clarity and taste.

See a complete list of rules online.

STAR TRIBUNE
S&A



OUR VOICE

Press pedal to metal for motorsports park

The Coachella Valley has so much going for it and there is yet another proposal that can do even more to enhance the region.

The Thermal MotorSports Park, proposed for 400 acres of privately held land on Kohl Ranch next to the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport, would be another great addition to attract visitors from all over the valley.

The final Riverside County Planning Commission hearing on this issue is slated for 9:30 a.m. April 20 at La Quinta City Hall.

The plan calls for a track that would be suitable for something such as Formula 1 racing.

But the project also would be a private racing club, with founding memberships selling for \$300,000 apiece. For that fee, a founding member gets a parcel to build a custom garage with great views of races from the top. Selling them all would provide \$30 million up front.

There are many possibilities with a project like this that can benefit the Coachella Valley beyond the actual project and its activities.

Consider the hundreds to possibly thousands of jobs that would be needed to build the project. Jobs are always needed, but particularly during a recession with 14 percent unemployment in the valley.

Jacqueline Cochran airport itself continues to establish itself as an alternative to Palm Springs International Airport for those flying in with and storing private planes.

That area, as the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership has pointed out, could provide a cluster of automobile companies related and unrelated to the track that could feed off one another and provide more jobs.

Economist John E. Husing provided a 50-page economic analysis in 2009 that concludes the Thermal project could



COURTESY OF GUY DREIER

Rendering of the members clubhouse at the proposed Thermal MotorSports Park.

Possibilities

Potential races and projected revenue estimates for the proposed Thermal international raceway:

- American Le Mans Series: \$10.6 million
- Indy Racing League: \$5.4 million
- Rolex Grand Am: \$5.4 million
- A1 Grand Prix Racing Championship: \$7.7 million
- AMA Super Bike: \$1.2 million
- MotoGP International: \$6.2 million
- Ferrari Challenge: \$450,000
- Thermal MotorSports Championship: \$4.5 million
- Sports Car Club of America: \$375,000

SOURCE: Thermal MotorSports Park 2009 executive summary from economist John E. Husing

generate \$500 million in economic activity and more than 5,000 jobs.

Even without drawing the nine racing series, the private racing club would have a major economic impact, he said. But he expects most of the elite racing community would be attracted to the area and the impact would be huge.

“With the Coachella Valley already known as an international, national and Southern California playground often for the rich and famous, the Thermal MotorSports Park would be the perfect place for these races to be held,” Husing says in his report.

Developers of the track, which would accommodate tens of thousands of spectators, envision up to nine annual races, such as the American Le Mans Series, the Ferrari Challenge Racing Series and the AMA Superbike Championship Series.

We urge the county to continue forging ahead on this project that would definitely benefit the valley.

VALLEY VOICE



tammy i. coia

A memoir helps you see who you are

Many people think memoir writing is all about the dreaded word “me.” It sounds self-indulging to spend so much time thinking about oneself. But people who do come and write about themselves are some of the most unselfish people I know.

Imagine this: examining your life, sorting through some of those dark closets that you would like to remain closed and opening them up to the light of self-examination. Then imagine writing about it and sharing it with a small group of friends that are on the same journey that you are on.

The process of memoir writing is indeed a process. You take a flicker of a memory, examine the past and see how that bit of truth has helped you become the person you are today. The wonderful piece of the puzzle with memoir writing is that it is truly allowing the past to guide you to see who and how you are today. The more we review our lives, the more our sense of personal identity deepens. We realize then that we have achieved more than we thought we had, and this helps to bolster our feeling of self-worth.

Refocusing the lens clarifies our lives

In refocusing our lens on our lives, we more readily come to terms with ourselves. The jagged mountaintops of the past shrink to mere molehills. We look back more sympathetically, and ask, “Where did I go wrong?” Feelings begin to evaporate. The gift of memoir is not only for your family, but the gift of the journey is one that you give yourself.

People often come to my memoir class thinking they need to write about the most meaningful, most dramatic or most life-changing moments in their live's stories — such as the joy a person feels with the birth of their first child, the difficulties of going through treatment for a serious illness or the delight of a special anniversary.

Memories take on new meaning with age

But there are hundreds of moments in every life worth capturing in a memoir or autobiography. They are the ordinary activities of life, made fascinating by the passage of time and the way the world changes around us. How you got to school or what you paid for coffee and a doughnut as a young person might not have seemed worth noting at the time, but today, your grandkids have a different story to tell. The contrast between how you grew up and their lives today is really quite amazing. And imagine the differences possible in another generation.

These are the sorts of details that bring a memoir to life and make it relevant to younger generations of readers. So you shouldn't feel like every chapter in your life's story needs to be monumental. It just needs to be full of little stories and reminiscences that speak about you and the times you lived in.

I encourage everyone to start with recording their own journey.

Tammy L. Coia of Palm Desert hosts women's workshops and teaches throughout the Coachella Valley. Email her at ticeducator@yahoo.com

MYDESERT POLL

Today's question

Are you worried that you will be affected by the computer theft at Eisenhower Medical Center?

To vote, go to mydesert.com/opinion

Wednesday's poll results

94 votes cast as of 5 p.m.

Who will win the Kraft Nabisco Championship?



34%
Michelle Wie



11.7%
Yani Tseng



34%
Karrie Webb



20.2%
Suzann Pettersen

SHAREYOUR VIEWS

The Desert Sun welcomes guest columns addressing local political and social issues.

General guidelines include:

- Columns should be 500 to 550 words.
- We print the author's photo and contact info (typically an e-mail address) with the column.
- Anonymous columns are never published.
- Stick to a single topic and avoid personal attacks.
- We reserve the right to edit and republish (including electronically) all columns.

Direct column submissions and questions to: James Folmer, community conversations editor, at james.folmer@thedesertsun.com