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# Mercer Island REPORTER

## Off leash area at LBP

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Yes, things have to be done to accommodate a more useable off-leash area at Luther Burbank park.

The present area is either a mud pit when it is wet or a dust bowl when it is dry. That is why a lot of dog owners go-off leash in non-designated areas. However, the times when "unleashed dogs are running rampant in the park" or "dogs ravishing children, scaring them or biting them" as two persons were quoted in the March 29 issue of the Reporter are virtually non-existent. My wife and I are at the park four or more times a week and we have yet to see either instance. Almost every dog owner we see is quick to collar their dog at the slightest sign of a problem being caused with another animal or a person. On the other hand I have often seen people without dogs come up to a dog or let their children come up to a dog and pet it.

Jim Rauch

I-5 impact on MI traffic

Congratulations to the Mercer Island Reporter for asking its readers to focus on the traffic problems in Greater Seattle. Unfortunately, your March 15 editorial did not make reference to the problems (both current and potential) with Interstate-5. Let's say that the Seattle City Council moves ahead with its present proposal to take the Seattle viaduct down. Where will the current traffic go? Some of it will go to surface streets such as Alaska Way; but the vast majority will try for I-5. And that is the problem: I-5 was meant to move traffic north and south -- it was not designed to do that as it funnels down to two lanes at the Seneca exit.

Let's say we move 80 percent of the viaduct traffic to I-5 and then imagine the congestion. Some of the I-5 traffic can bypass the Seneca funnel by taking the collector-distributor route, but that is also the way that Mercer Island and other eastside vehicles get onto I-5. Any planning for traffic improvement in the greater Seattle area must take under consideration the two-lane design mistake at Seneca.

Foster Cronyn

Honors/AP classes need admission standards

As Brittney Wong and Oren Wright from the MIHS Times pointed

out in their letter to the editor, anyone who wants to take an honors class at MIHS, can. There is no screening or application process. If you received a C in English, you can still sign up for honors English. How ridiculous is that? Why did this come about? The competition to get into the honors classes was so intense, it created dilemmas for teachers and administrators. So, the district administration copped-out and opened the classes to any student.

What has been the outcome of this decision? Academic standards of honors classes have been lowered. Teachers are obligated to teach to a norm and not leave students behind. As a result, the high level of scholarship that once took place in these classes has suffered. Exceptional students are discouraged. Just ask the teachers!

Dr. Simms has rightly placed an emphasis on not "leaving behind" the students in the bottom third. But, it has been to the detriment of the students in the top third. These students are not challenged like they were when entrance was selective. How can this lowering of academic standards not impact acceptance rates at highly selective universities?

We are sending students the wrong message under the current system. It rewards mediocre performance and penalizes exceptional students and teachers. There must be standards for entrance into honors classes.

Dj Brooks

#### Drunken driver kills Eastside teen

Last Wednesday evening, nearly 1,000 people gathered to grieve the death and celebrate the life of Robert Jonathan Vasen. Robert was a wonderful, cheerful, incredibly insightful, loving, wise beyond his years, giving, warm, fun loving, humorous, and selfless 20-year-old young man from Medina. He was killed -- his life was taken away, by another who had been drinking and sped through a stop light. Robert was young person who had nothing but unlimited potential had his life continued. He was a friend to our family, especially to our son, Tony. Many, including myself, have sought ways to make sense of this tragedy, but it is not possible. Robert was not ill. He was not old. And, he was not in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was just living life.

His brother David admonished all of us, old and young, to recognize this for what it truly was -- a horrific and preventable tragedy. Then he begged us to not sit quietly in our grief. He beseeched us not to let time pass and wounds heal. He implored us to do something. He demanded that we not let drinking and driving happen. He pleaded with us to stand up for life. He implored us to be accountable and responsible.

We talk to our 16-year-old daughter about alcohol and drugs. We are very clear that they are not ok. We talk about drinking and driving. We are very clear that she needs to call for help if she is ever in such a situation. We always check on evening events. We

always talk with parents who are chaperoning, even though some are offended. We know that alcohol is present or available to almost every event. And we know the potential horrific consequences for our daughter.

I would ask every parent and member of this community to stand up and fight for the lives of our children. Don't keep quiet and worry about what your friends or neighbors will think. Don't say to yourself later that you wished that you had spoken up. Don't bend or be deterred by your child who might find your questions and concerns embarrassing. My goodness, be adults and stand up!

All of us love our children. We love ours -- Luke, Tony and Nell. We will not stand idly by and let this happen to them or any of our children on this island.

Mike Rona

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