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To: Tiburon/Belvedere Ark Newspaper  
Subject: Letter to the editor Angel Island Tiburon Ferry Meeting  
January 17, 2014

The power of the intelligencia! With a town as intellectually diverse as ours, it is a potent thing when we come together as we did last Thursday night at Mill Valley Rec Center's main hall. We filled the hall; our voices joined in unison. Keep our historic ferry!

At risk was a passive split designed by the State Parks with few in small groups. Leaders from every reach of our community stood together. An impressive public speaking forum emerged with voices calling out with facts, perspectives, and a united call to protect our beloved Ferry.

From the Mayor Alice Fredericks, Council Jim Frazer, Fire Chief Rich Pierce, to shop keepers, managers of properties, to neighbors and friends. We all supported the Angel Island Tiburon Ferry.

We do not want the State Parks to bid into extinction our Angel Island Tiburon Ferry to Blue and Gold Ferry. They should be protecting this historic ferry. For those of you who missed it, Bill Lukens traced the ownership of the corporate ferry to a Chicago law office. Our Ferry is not an impersonal, run of the mill tourist attraction. It is personal. It is local. When there was a fire on Angel Island, Capt. Maggie answered Rich Pierce's call with quick action.

What a forum that simple meeting turned out to be. Mo's presentation with the fliers with "our ferry" on them was charming. Friends showed up to say how their son was deck trained at 16 by Capt. Maggie. Others spoke to the magical trip to the Island. It starts the minute you step on the boat and get up to the top deck. There were also questions from our thoughtful locals. Many were confounded as the reasoning behind the bid. Why was it a concession anyway? Greyhound buses going to parks are not a considered state concessions.

For a waterfront town such as we are, the beach impacts were perhaps the most ominous facts raised. The startup of the Vallejo Ferry caused severe beach erosion on the Paradise/Romberg side of the Peninsula. 10 feet of land in some areas! Those with beachfront homes all along the waterfront have no desire to become inadvertent houseboats!

Our Raccoon Straits is a recreation area within the Town of Tiburon, with kayaks and small rowboats. The SFYC sailing classes in the little Optimists (Opti's) with our children in tow, by the club boats as they go out to do maneuvers all enjoy our special waters on the coastline of our town. The last thing we need is the large wake of the big ferries swamping them. A voice at the meeting highlighted that we have the largest youth sailing program on the West coast. It is a treasure, a special gift we can offer our families and our community. It must be protected. Not only is Capt. Maggie involved in our community and sensitive to its delicate balance. Capt. Maggie's boat is even built for our needs; it has a shallow draft with a very small wake. Seeing the number of people who rose to voice support for our ferry was a reminder of how powerful our community can be when we join together.

Kudos to our community!

Cathy Benediktsson