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July 7 Readers' letters

From Mercury News readers

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Couple deserve jail time for actions

Howard Mintz's well-written story (Page A1, July 5) about the BB gun conviction stirred up some great conversation at my house. My take on the story was Barbara Saldinger should "go to jail! Go directly to jail!" Todd Saldinger should join her, as him using a BB gun to spook deer near their precious horses is a crime, as clearly stated in California law. His then handing his wife the weapon to intimidate his neighbors makes him guilty of conspiracy in my book. Using the word "shoo" to describe her actions is abusing an interesting word that in no way connotes the tenor of her actions. You "shoo" people by using the word, not pointing a weapon at them.

John Vonderlin

Santa Clara

No need to bring gun into property dispute

I hope the Saldingers' case is not considered by the California Supreme Court. Whether she has the right to carry a weapon on her property is beside the point here. Her actions with the gun are the point. Gun-rights advocates lose credibility when they defend the actions of someone like Barbara Saldinger, who rather than peacefully resolving her property line dispute with her neighbor threatens to

shoot her neighbor. Saldinger also defends her actions by saying they were —...in the name of avoiding someone getting hurt." This is disingenuous at best, when you

consider that the way Saldinger wanted to keep "someone" from getting hurt was by shooting "someone."

Jennifer Schaub

Sunnyvale

Patent office needs more funding

Chris O'Brien's recent column (Page E1, July 4) simply highlights the fact that 90 percent of the problem with the U.S. patent system lies in the underperformance of the Patent & Trademark Office.

One of the main causes: Congress has diverted \$1 billion in fees, instead of allowing the USPTO to invest in high-quality people and technology. Examiner turnover approaches 30 percent. Eighty percent of examiners have less than three years' experience; less than 10 percent have more than 10 years' experience.

Patents are more complex today, and the backlog of pending patents has grown dramatically, which has contributed to an increased number of controversial patents and increased litigation activity.

We need to give the current administration and the current USPTO director, David Kappos, the tools/resources to solve the problem. Let's end fee diversion and let the USPTO set its own fee structure.

Hank Nothhaft

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Chairman and CEO Tessera Inc. San Jose

Mayor being unfair to West Evergreen

As co-chairman of the West Evergreen Neighborhood Action Coalition, I am furious with Mayor Chuck Reed's comments about the possible sale of the San Jose Water System (Page B1, July 6). "If you are in the 10 percent of San Jose residents who are getting a good deal, you are going to view it as an increase. But I am mayor of all the people." I guess we're not part of the people the mayor represents. It is the No. 1 item on our priority list. While San Jose has built community centers all over the city, we came out on the short end of the deal. You asked us for your support in taking on the unions, but it seems like you're trying to stab us in the back. Why don't you work on getting the binding arbitration issue on the ballot instead of trying to take more out of our pockets?

Carlos M. DaSilva

San Jose

Questioning the U.S. record in wars

How dare Michael Steele, chairman of the Republican National Committee, declare that the Afghanistan war is unwinnable. How dare he say that Obama will ultimately fail and that will be good for Republicans.

Steele must soon resign, as all Republicans know that America must always win every war we begin.

The fact that Afghanistan's economy is based on opium production, and that the government is corrupt and that the people have no history of

democracy is irrelevant.

Paul Boehm

San Jose

Lack of U.S. flags on July Fourth upsetting

Driving around San Jose on the Fourth of July, I could not help but notice the lack of U.S. flags displayed. A rough guess would be less than 20 percent of residences had anything red, white and blue displayed. The display of our flag takes a very small effort to show your support of those who have truly sacrificed, suffered and risked their lives, in peacetime and in war, to enable the life we all enjoy here. As a veteran, and son of a combat veteran, this is a disgraceful statement of the state of our country.

Brian Dunlap

Santa Clara

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