

Featured letter by Micheal Frances Smith, Ojai

Many Ojai Valley families could benefit from mental health group forming

Ojai is known to be a caring community. Yet many of Ojai's families are struggling to get help for family members with mental health issues.

People enjoying Libbey Park have occasionally been frightened off by the presence of people who suffer from severe mental illness. Many of these apparently homeless people have families right here in Ojai who are concerned for their loved ones and need support and direction.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): "... 25 percent of all adults in the United States

experience a mental health disorder every year." It can happen to any family — even yours.

Families are often isolated and left to fend for themselves — yes, even here in Ojai. What is needed is greater understanding and education about mental illness. Ojai families deserve support and understanding when helping a family member with mental illness.

NAMI family support groups are people with loved ones suffering from a mental illness coming together for support and sharing valuable information on how to be and how to care for their ill family member.

A small group has assembled to form an official NAMI Family Support Group here in Ojai. We need to have 15 foundational families signed up. Are you interested in joining us? Do you know anyone who could benefit from this?

The NAMI Family Support Group will be led by two facilitators who have been trained by NAMI California in a two-day training. Facilitators are trained in the skills necessary to create and maintain a group that provides a safe space to express feelings, frustrations and victories in the long job of helping a family member connect to services.

The support groups will be held on Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. locally, twice a month.

Please contact me at michel.frances@gmail.com for further information and to sign up for our e-mail list if you are interested in attending a NAMI Family Support Group in Ojai.

For more information on NAMI, please go to NAMI.ORG.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your opinions to letters@ojaivalleynews.com

Post office tower looks deplorable

SARA H. BEEBY, OJAI

This letter to the editor is a follow-up from the Friday, April 17, letter by Shelley Scott.

The Ojai post office building is in deplorable shape. It is our historic, architecturally prominent centerpiece of our community and it is dirty, cobwebbed and stained. Why is it not at least kept clean like the important edifice that it is?

To whom is the sign referring?

RUTH LASELL, OJAI

My husband and I have been debating the meaning of the electronic sign one sees heading west from the East End on Route 33: "Don't Talk and Drive."

He, the usual driver, says we both have to be quiet. I, often the passenger, am sure it means I can talk at will and risk no disagreement, nary a peep, from him.

We've not resolved this. What do you think?

Spot spraying is still too much

JOANIE BLAXTER, OJAI

Glyphosate that is "only spot sprayed" still gets into the dust next to the Ojai Valley Trail. That dust is breathed in not only by anyone using the trail, but also by those who live or work next to it, including babies and toddlers. It also accumulates on the feet of dogs, who lick it off

and ingest it. It is absolutely inhaled by the county workers who spray it, with their employer's permission, without wearing any protective equipment.

Supervisor Bennett said he had his staff people monitoring the most recent glyphosate application to the trail to make sure it was "done correctly." A bicyclist told me a woman from Bennett's office hailed him to warn him to tell the workers ahead to stop spraying. Since the workers couldn't hear him, he ended up riding through the mist with his shirt pulled over his nose. In this instance, the staff monitoring had no positive effect; the bicyclist experienced direct exposure anyway.

Thierry Vrain is a retired biologist and genetic engineer who raises public awareness about the link between engineered food and poor health. Vrain presents published studies linking glyphosate exposure to: damage to the human microbiome and immune system; damage to the liver and kidneys; rise in inflammatory diseases; gluten intolerance and celiac disease; reduced testosterone levels and male infertility; tumors; birth defects; and autism.

Google by "youtube Engineered food and your health: the nutritional status of GMOs" to hear his talk.

Glyphosate is not the cheapest alternative when all costs are factored in beyond that of the price tag on the can. See the National

Geographic article: "Chemical Exposure Linked to \$1.75 Billions in Health Care Costs."

Please contact Supervisor Steve Bennett, asking for nontoxic-only spraying on Ojai Valley Trail: steve.bennett@ventura.org or 654-2703.

Ojai's unity won the day for us

PAT McPHERSON, OJAI

The recent court decision is over the top. The Ojai Valley News published an excellent article last Wednesday that sums it up very well. Thank you.

Ojai should be proud. What made it so over-the-top was not the seven Ojai EL, OJV, steering committee members who set the direction, but the entire community coming together for the common good. Would the court have seen it the same way if the vote had been just 67 percent rather than 87 percent? Likely not.

So that tells us that without the citizens speaking out, hundreds of small contributions, an excellent business case written by Richard Hajas, great presentations by Ryan Blatz, the Ojai Valley Inn donating the use of their property, hundreds of signs around town for over two years, help from the Ojai Valley Democratic Club to get out the vote, the people walking the streets to get the petition signed to give to Casitas, the Casitas board voting yes to take it on, the crazy old truck of Dwayne Bower going around town just before and

on election day, and etc., it might not have happened.

It seems there was some special energy involved and it was destined, because it was Ojai united and the right thing to do, and the court seems to have seen this, too.

Congratulations, Ojai!

We are lucky to have our hospital

SHEILA T. CLUFF, OJAI

Ojai residents are so very fortunate to have such a wonderful hospital in our community!

On the evening of Sunday, April 12, my husband brought me to the Emergency Room of Ojai Valley Community Hospital which culminated in a four-day hospital stay.

Each and every staff

member I encountered during my stay was professional, competent and compassionate — from the ER doctor, Gordon Clawson, who examined me and admitted me to the hospital, to Catherine, the admitting nurse from Montreal, to my nurses Natalie, Elizabeth, Jackie and Norm, who took excellent care of me and were so kind and caring — everyone was terrific. Nurse Barb even pulled up The Oaks at Ojai website and watched a video of me figure skating! The two techs who drew my blood were terrific, and the discharge nurse and I had a lovely discussion while she was getting me ready to go home.

Many thanks also to Dr. Jim Halverson who stopped by to check on me and to Haady

Lashkari who popped in to say hello. And many thanks to Dr. Constantine for insisting that I stay in the hospital despite the fact that I wanted to leave!

My husband and I are so grateful for have OVCH right in our own backyard.

Due to the excellent care I received there, I am feeling much better and well on the road to recovery!

Recent headline was in poor taste

JODI BRANDT, OJAI

I am absolutely shocked and appalled at the title of your recent article "Pet... Ophiles."

Although the article was about pets and animals I see zero humor in the title and find it very poor taste.



thumbs up, thumbs down

- Thumbs-up to everyone who donated the use of tennis courts to make the 115th Ojai Tennis Tournament possible this week, especially the owners of private courts.
- A reader sends a thumbs-up to Kim Smith, Susan Elizalde, Cullen Robertson, Gwen Pace, Chris Churchill and Colleen McDougal for volunteering at Arts Month at Topa Topa School.
- A reader sends a thumbs-down to the property owners who come to their houses in Ojai for weekends and leave their trash barrels out for days at a time.
- A reader sends a thumbs-up to Dr. Irina Rodriguez and her staff for their kindness, skills and help during her dental crown procedure. Thank you to all, love my tooth.

Submit online at thumbs@ojaivalleynews.com

We reserve the right to publish submitted thumbs up or down as letters to the editor. Submissions that are "advertisorial" disguised as legitimate opinions, or those unfairly targeting individuals or businesses by name will not be published.

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Letters to the editor

- Keep it local. Letters about issues impacting the Ojai Valley receive priority.
- Don't get personal. Stick to the issues.
- Keep it short (350 words is ideal).
- Include your phone number for verification (not publication).
- E-mail to letters@ojaivalleynews.com, fax to 646-4281 or mail to P.O. Box 277, Ojai, CA 93024.

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To inform you about the issues and events in our community with diligence and dedication.

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