

OPINION

In Case You Missed it

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**Reimagining Eastern Malibu's commercial sector**  
*Malibuites, City Council and mayor celebrate opening of the Malibu General Store*



**Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors excludes City of Malibu fire victims from fee waivers**  
*A vote Nov. 25 could give Malibu fire victims equity*



**A perfect pairing: Malibu Vineyard bounces back**  
*Malibu's Colcanyon Estate Wines donates net proceeds from wine sales to the Boys & Girls Club of Malibu*



**Malibu Council OKs controversial \$50 Million PCH Safety Project; Denies Malibu Township Council Appeal**  
*Key separation agreements go before SMMUSD and Malibu City Council in early December*



**Malibu sixth-grader takes center stage in Westside Ballet's largest-ever 'Nutcracker'**  
*Young dancer Alix Weissbecker Kushner brings holiday magic to the Broad Stage amid a season of resilience and community spirit*



**Marlow captures MVP as Malibu High volleyball shines in Citrus Coast League**  
*Senior outside hitter leads Sharks to league success and postseason recognition under Coach Saenz's guidance*

Letters to the Editor

*\*Letters to the Editor may not reflect the view, opinion and/or ethics of The Malibu Times. They are however, letters from the people of Malibu. We support your right to express your opinion. Submit your letter to [editorial@malibutimes.com](mailto:editorial@malibutimes.com) or visit [malibutimes.com](https://malibutimes.com).*

Malibu fire families deserve the same urgency as 4000 Malibu Canyon

Dear Editor,

As a fire victim who lost my home in January, and as someone who has spent the past year advocating for displaced Malibu families, I hope for compassion and accuracy in our public dialogue — not personal attacks from an out-of-town developer expeditor.

Last week, that same expeditor, Don Schmitz, published a letter mischaracterizing my public comment to City Council — and even misstating the date of the meeting, which was Nov. 10, not Nov. 25. His letter was inaccurate and deflects from the real issue — Malibu's stalled fire-rebuild process.

In my comment, I did reference the proposed 200,000-square-foot resort at 4000 Malibu Canyon Road — not to oppose it, but to illustrate a simple truth: the city mobilized extensive emergency grading on that site — tens of thousands of tons of earth in under 24 hours — while hundreds of fire families have spent nearly a year navigating an excruciating rebuild process after the most devastating fire our city has ever experienced.

That is not a distortion.

It is a factual observation made by a resident directly affected by these delays — the kind of straightforward community advocacy Malibu has always relied on.

According to Mr. Schmitz's own letter, the 28-acre clearing occurred under two Emergency CDPs (25-006 and 25-007) issued almost immediately. Anyone familiar with Malibu Planning knows that Coastal Development Permits typically take three to five years, not 24 hours. The city may have acted under emergency authority, but the result undeniably advanced the project Mr. Schmitz represents.

And given the speed with which Public Works Director Rob Duboux was able to mobilize 28 acres of emergency grading in a single day, perhaps he should be asked to oversee Malibu's fire-rebuild process — because if displaced families had received even a fraction of that urgency, many would already be home.

And the scale was enormous:

- Even at a 6-inch scrape, the clearing represents 30,000 tons of earth.
- At 1 foot: over 60,000 tons — more than 120 million pounds.

As I stated in my comment:

Meanwhile, fire families have waited 11 months to rebuild homes that stood safely for decades. To the city's credit, 17 rebuild permits were issued in the last five weeks, more than quadrupling the previous total — real progress. But the core bottleneck remains: over 100 households still stuck in Building & Safety, delayed by duplicative reviews and required studies.

Mr. Schmitz also omitted the most relevant fact: he is the expeditor for this development. He is not a neutral community voice.

His attempt to discredit a resident advocating for displaced families is not civic advocacy — it is client advocacy.

And this is not an isolated concern. On Tuesday, Dec. 16, at the Planning Commission hearing, the same developer is attempt-

ing to advance more than 12,000 square feet of new construction at 25200 PCH between Corral and Puerco Canyon — without obtaining the required variance to Malibu's factor-of-safety standards that every other landslide assessment district must meet for new construction. This double standard — where rules apply to residents but not to developers — cannot be allowed to continue in Malibu.

And let me be clear: I am proud to be a Malibu activist. I stand for residents, fire-victim rebuilds, and Malibu's Vision & Mission, which protects our environment and rural character — values that do not align with oversized visitor-serving resorts overwhelming limited community resources.

So the question stands even more clearly now: If the city can fast-track 28 acres of massive grading with two CDPs in a single day, why can't we apply even half that urgency to getting Malibu residents back into their homes?

This is far from an anti-development position — it is a call for fairness, urgency, and a permitting system that serves Malibu residents with the same energy and efficiency given elsewhere.

**Jo Drummond,**  
Malibu resident and fire-rebuild advocate

Why I'm not running as a Democrat for U.S. Congress in California's 32nd District

Dear Editor,

For too long, politics in California — and across our nation — has been driven by division instead of direction. The loudest voices on both sides have drowned out the sensible middle, where most of us actually live. I'm running for U.S. Congress as a Moderate Republican because I believe it's time to bring balance back — not by fighting old battles, but by focusing on practical solutions that make life better for working families, small businesses, and our communities.

Many people have asked me, "Why are you running as a Republican in California?" It's a fair question — and one that deserves an honest answer.

I grew up believing that public service is about stewardship — about leaving our communities stronger, freer, and more prosperous than we found them. The Republican Party I identify with is one rooted in personal responsibility, fiscal common sense, and a deep respect for individual liberty. It's the party of Ronald Reagan — one that believed in optimism, opportunity, and the idea that government should empower people, not control them.

That's the spirit I want to restore.

Now, let me be clear: I'm not running against Democrats. I'm running for Californians — for safer neighborhoods, better schools, and an economy that rewards hard work and innovation. California is a state full of talent and promise, but too often, the decisions coming out of Sacramento and Washington make life harder, not easier. Our cost of living is through the roof. Small businesses are overregulated. Families are being priced out of the communities they helped build.

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*The opinions they express are solely their own and do not reflect the views or positions of The Malibu Times.*



From the publisher  
**HAYLEY MATTSON**

*"Love your Enemies, for they tell you your Faults."*  
— Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanack, 1756

Over the past few weeks, we've received an influx of letters to the editor and columns from real members of our community. I review and approve each submission, ensuring that the writers from Malibu have the opportunity to be heard — whether they are sharing praise, concerns, or grievances. While my editor does not make changes after approval, I want to be transparent: I do not read each submission in full detail; however, at the end of the day, I am responsible for every piece of content that appears on these pages.

I've noticed rising tension in some of the letters, especially around the MTC's PCH Safety Plan appeal. So, following this week's Jo Drummond response to Don Schmitz's column, I hope we can focus on finding some unity as a community. While spirited debate is natural in any community, I am committed to curbing personal attacks. Infighting detracts from meaningful dialogue, and I will be stricter in moderating letters that cross that line. We can disagree, but we must do so with respect.

That said, I also recognize that some of you have expressed concern about what we cover — and what we might be overlooking. I want to encourage all of our readers to reach out and share your perspectives. There's only so much space in each issue, and there's only so much we can report on, but I am always willing to consider topics or stories that matter to you. Your input helps us represent Malibu more fully and fairly.

Speaking of current topics, as I was finishing up this week's paper, I tuned into the Malibu Community Meeting discussing the PCH safety plan and the proposed "quick-build" roundabouts. First, I want to commend Nadia Fahoum, Associate Engineer with the Public Works Department, and project manager, for her calm and patient leadership during a challenging discussion. The passion from the community was palpable, particularly regarding opposition to the roundabouts. While we'll have a full report in next week's issue, it's clear this debate is far from over, and we'll continue to follow it closely.

This Friday is the Malibu Business Round Table, where we will discuss important topics

These aren't partisan problems — they're California problems. And they require balanced leadership to solve them.

As a moderate Republican, I can bring a fresh perspective to Washington. I can work with both parties to hold government accountable, ensure tax dollars are spent wisely, and help make California competitive again. While many in Washington talk about unity, I intend to practice it — by listening more than I speak, and by finding common ground where others see

only political opportunity.

Some will say, "Wouldn't it be easier to run as a Democrat?" Maybe. But easier isn't the same as right. California needs a stronger two-party system, not one where every idea comes from a single perspective. When one party dominates unchecked, we lose balance — and with it, the incentive to innovate and reform. That's why I'm proud to run as a Republican: because I believe in restoring that balance, not to fight the other side, but to make both sides better.

The holiday season is upon us, and Malibu is alive with events to bring us together. On Thursday, Dec. 4, don't miss Locals Night at Malibu Country Mart, a festive evening celebrating our community. On Friday, Dec. 5, we'll kick off "Vandy Days," honoring the incredible Dick Van Dyke's 100th birthday. Festivities begin at 6:30 p.m. at Malibu City Hall with a screening of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, featuring the original Chitty car and free desserts in the Community Room. The celebration continues on Sunday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m. with the world premiere of the documentary Dick Van Dyke 100th Celebration, including new interviews, memorable moments, and a costume contest with a pre-show reception.

On Saturday, Dec. 6, Cross Creek Ranch will host a festive Christmas Celebration from 2 to 7 p.m. at 23465 Civic Center Way. And we are thrilled to recognize Heidi Bernard for her continued support of the Navy League of the United States Malibu Council. In partnership with First Bank, they will host the annual Toys for Tots Open House on Dec. 10 at First Bank Malibu, collecting donations to brighten the holidays for local children in need.

These events, and the people behind them, remind me why I am proud to be part of this community. Malibu is full of incredible individuals striving to make our city better — sometimes in ways we might not agree with, but always with passion and heart. It's easy to focus on disagreements or setbacks, but as we approach the anniversaries of this year's most difficult moments, it's important to pause and reflect on how our community came together. In times of crisis, Malibu showed resilience, generosity, and compassion.

As we move into the holidays, I encourage all of us to remember the good in our neighbors and the power of unity. Let's celebrate our accomplishments, support one another, and continue to work toward a Malibu that reflects the best of who we are. I know I will.

At the end of the day, I'm not asking for your vote because of the letter next to my name. I'm asking for your vote because I'll fight for you — for affordability, accountability, and opportunity for all Californians. Let's move beyond the extremes and focus on what unites us: the shared belief that our best days are still ahead.

Let's get back to common sense.

**Larry Thompson,**  
Candidate for U.S. Congress CA-32

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*"I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live by the light that I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right, and stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong."* — Abraham Lincoln

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