New park hours stir controversy

OLIVIA GONSALVES / MONITOR

A couple carries an exhausted dog down the Mission Peak trail. Increased use of the park has caused problems for park police who respond to 911 calls. Last year, five dogs died of exhaustion on the trail.

CAMPUS COMMENT

What is the scariest thing in the world right now?

NICHOLAS GRAHAM

Undecided

“Living in a society that just doesn’t care. When no one cares things tend to get worse”

GINA BRUNELLI

Undecided

“Chimpanzees, I’m terrified of them because they rip people’s faces off”

ZAKARIA WAN MUHAMMAD

Engineering

“The war in Syria. Kids are dying, and they kill innocent people”

IVANN GELICO

Communication

“The great unknown. In the future, we don’t know what will happen to us”

NEWSPAPER

The administration at Ohlone is planning to close the 28-year Ohlone Super Flea Market; a letter has gone out to vendors announcing this. The reason? There is so much construction going on that there are no parking lots available to house the heavy equipment and they must use all of the parking lots. In years past, through all the construction jobs, once a month the machinery was moved and the flea market went on. This does not seem to be an option for them. I suggested we move the market to the Newark campus and was told there is construction going on there as well.

The flea market started 28 years ago for many reasons; it let the public know about the school behind those trees on Mission Boulevard — a great school. It was successful doing that. It provided hundreds of student jobs, especially for foreign students who cannot work off campus. It also gave senior citizens a place to make extra money to supplement their income. The flea market has operated through two economic busts, when people came to make some money to avoid losing their homes, businesses and futures. I personally talked to many parents raising money at the flea market. Case in point: A vendor selling extraordinary jewelry was taking care of a customer, and they soon began dating and then married. Lots of stories like that. These are personal bonds of friendship due to the Ohlone College Super Flea Market over the past 28 years.

Let the college and Board of Trustees know that the Ohlone College Super Flea Market should continue.

Elaine Nagel

ALIZAIB LODHI

Online editor

Mission Peak Regional Park has cut its hours due to noise, litter and other problems.

The entrance used to be open from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. Now the hours are 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The tighter curfew has caused more controversy than it’s resolved. The hordes of people are still coming — up to 3,000 people on some days. And some hikers are angry at the new hours.

I think setting a curfew is not the best way to tackle the problems that Mission Peak is having. A curfew is not going to solve littering or graffiti. Noise will still be there, and parking will remain a mess during the day.

What park district officials need to do is have a couple of security guards at night patrolling the neighborhood, looking for the hooligans who are urinating in people’s yards, blocking people’s driveways, or doing something else they are not supposed to be doing.

Park police already have issued 475 curfew tickets at the park entrance from mid-July to mid-August, according to a story by Bay Area News Group. The penalty is at least $300 per ticket.

Then there’s the problem of hikers who experience difficulties and call 911 about 20 times a month, dragging park police and firefighters away from other duties.

Last year, five dogs died of sunstroke and exhaustion at Mission Peak. The Stanford Avenue entrance with 42 parking spaces was only lightly used until a few years ago, when suddenly it got busy and then swamped because of people taking selfies at the summit.

Park district officials are looking at options to build a much larger parking lot farther up the hill, or to limit visitors at the Stanford Avenue entrance through some form of permit and fee system.

But even if the parking fee is $4 and hikers don’t want to pay that, we might be looking at the same problem again if people park on other neighborhood streets or use the other park entrance here at Ohlone, where a $2 fee is charged.

Still, there are other options for park-goers if things get too crazy. As Mark Ragatz, the park district’s interim chief of operations, told Bay Area News Group: “We have 65 regional parks, and they are good outdoor places to go, too.”