

Hello this is Tom Schallert with a Community Comment

1<sup>st</sup>, let me say I like dogs. My wife and I have owned a hound, always a mutt from a shelter or a dog from another family that needed a new home. We both owned dogs as children and have had a pet for most of our lives. We have had Ben, Fido, Rover, Pal, and most recently Sparky spend many years with us.

What I don't like are the owners of dogs who do not pick up after their dog drops their business on the trails in our area. The Hammond Trail, which I and hundreds of other community folk use daily is a perfect example of dog owners who could be more considerate of their fellow trail users.

In my walks on the Hammond Trail and on other trails in the community, I find that far too frequently dog owners do not grab the free plastic dog poop bags and pick up the mess left by their hounds. Nearly every day that I walk, I see the dogs doing their business and no effort by the owner to clean up after Fido. It is not Fido or Rover's responsibility to pick it up, it is hound's owners or if you prefer, the hound's family. These folks know they are doing the wrong thing because they usually look furtively up and down the trail to see if anyone is watching or they walk and act like it is not happening.

And what makes things worse, is that frequently, I note that a dog owner will take a bag, put the poop in it but then have the audacity to leave the bag of dog poop on the trail. Who do they think is going to pick it up? County employees? Volunteer trail stewards?

As a volunteer trail steward, I am out there almost every first Saturday of the month working on the Hammond Trail. We trail stewards work as a team with county staff and we trim branches, weed whack grasses and invasive weeds. We pull up or clean up invasive pampas grass as well as holly and ivy. We clean up vandalism such as graffiti tags. We pick up trash, fix fences and posts and generally try to keep the trail as nice as possible for the hundreds of people who use the trail each week. I am not sure how our trails would look without the volunteer efforts. Way to frequently, our reward from the irresponsible and inconsiderate dog owners is to be stepping in their dog's poop or weed whacking and hitting a pile of it. You can imagine the results when that happens.

And then there are the dog walkers who don't follow the leash laws and let their dogs romp on the trail. My dog was attacked several times before she passed away and I have been snapped at and actually bitten a couple of times by free running hounds. I and others, now carry a walking stick for defense to keep me separated from the dogs whose problem was created by their senseless owners. The trails are not for free running dogs. Leashes are required and should be used.

And now to change subjects, the holidays are upon us and the shopping season is in full swing. I have talked before about the need to shop locally to ensure that local businesses survive and thrive. There are once again measures on the ballot related to taxes and I am not going to comment on those, but I will say that when we buy locally, we not only help the local business, we also generate sales tax that help pay for police, fire, roads and all of the other government services we as a community need.

If your favorite item is not available from a local merchant, talk to the merchant about ordering it for you. When you buy local, you are helping all areas of our community. So buy locally this holiday season. It makes a difference in the health, welfare and safety of our community.

And a last comment about the holiday season. It is very easy to get very busy and distracted during this busy time but please remember volunteer blood donors are needed at the Northern California Community Blood Bank. Patients in hospitals do not take the holidays off so the demand for blood continues. Please BE THE 1 to save a life this year.

This has been Tom Schallert with a community comment.