

Kathy: In the Council's Packet, the Pages 291 and 292 that I turned in (the Myths about chickens) did not copy well – the councilmen will not be able to read it. Below is a Letter To The Editor (L.A. Times) published this week that has most of the same information – but it is readable. PLEASE distribute this to the Council. Thank you very very much! Sorry to have to bother you with this, but it is reliable true information. Nancy

Letters to the Editor

MYTHS ABOUT BACKYARD CHICKENS

NANCY WEAGLEY, Capistrano Beach

A Dana Point City Council meeting agenda will soon include the proposed ordinance change to allow the keeping of up to six chickens at single family residences. In researching the topic, I found the following information on the Internet—with permission to copy and use the facts. The information was adapted from the book, *City Chicks*, by Pat Foreman.

Hopefully, the following abbreviated "7 Myths about Backyard Chickens," article will clarify all the misconceptions concerning these "pets with benefits."

1. Urban chickens carry diseases. **FACT:** The Centers for Disease Control states there is no risk of avian flu transmissions to humans. Also, salmonella is a food handling sanitary problem, not an avian problem.

2. Chickens are noisy. **FACT:** Laying hens—at their loudest—have about the same decibel level (65 decibels) as human conversation.

3. Waste and odor. **FACT:** A 40-pound dog generates more doggie-do daily (about 0.75 of a pound) than 10 chickens (0.66 of a pound of daily poo).

4. Chickens attract predators, pests and rodents. **FACT:** Predators and rodents are already living in urban areas. They are attracted by wild bird feeders, pet food, bird baths, trash waiting for pick-up and

many other things. Don't forget chickens are carnivores, eating fleas, mosquitos, grasshoppers, slugs, ticks (think Lyme disease), mice, baby rats, etc.

5. Property values will decrease. **FACT:** Seven out of 10 cities on *Forbes Magazine's* "Most Desirable Cities" list for 2010 allow backyard chickens. There is not one documented case that a home property value decreased due to a family flock of chickens next door. In truth, some realtors and home sellers offer free coops with every sale. This emphasizes the values of green neighborhoods, and residents who value local, healthy food supply and respect the environment.

6. Coops are ugly. **FACT:** Micro-flock coop designs can be totally charming, upscale and even whimsical.

7. What will neighbors think? **FACT:** You can't control what neighbors think. But experience shows that once people understand the advantages and charms of chickens, most prejudice and fear evaporates.

Requiring neighbors' consent is a civil liberties violation and an offensive to the American way. You don't need neighbors' consent to breed pit bulls, have guns, rev motorcycles or have a house-load of kids. So why should keeping a family flock of chickens need to be approved by neighbors?

Civic Chicks are Valuable Assets

Often overlooked is the value of chickens as bio-recyclers. They can divert tons of "waste" from the trash collections. Chickens will eat just about any kitchen waste including "gone-by" leftovers that have seasoned in the refrigerator. Combine their manure with grass clippings and

leaves to create compost and topsoil. Chickens are charming, amicable and entertaining beings that bring so many advantages to local agriculture and home gardens. They are truly pets with benefits. May the flock be with you! I hope you found this informative. You can find the complete article at www.chickensandyou.com/7_Myths.html.

To submit a letter to the editor for possible inclusion in the paper, e-mail us at letters@danapointtimes.com or send it to 34932 Calle del Sol, Suite B, Capistrano Beach, CA 92624. Dana Point Times reserves the right to edit reader-submitted letters for length and is not responsible for the claims made or the information written by the writers.

Over the years, also - I turned in at least 5 more signature pages that were signed by Dana Point residents at the Feed Barn - They are not in the packet and I have no copies. N.W.