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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

If you want to understand how California got to be what we didn't want it to be, I recommend the book, "Paradise Lost" by Peter Schrag. Regarding our abuse of the initiative process, he describes it as, "first, a quick-fix autopilot remedy for perceived legislative failure -- a self-enacting political solution that exempts citizens and voters from the need to engage themselves in individual elections; second, a tangle of unintended consequences; and, third, further exacerbation of the tension between reform and frustration, and between the voters and the courts."

Schrag points out that many of the major measures enacted by initiative in California have been challenged in court, so the courts have become increasingly engaged because of no checks and balances; no legislative hearings; no studies or expert witnesses; no requirement that majorities in two houses, plus a governor, be in agreement; no possibility, in most cases, that errors and inequities can be amended through legislative action.

The next time someone sticks a petition under your nose and tells you that you don't need to understand the proposal because "this is just to get it onto the ballot," don't sign it. Please.

Dale Walwark
Moraga

Dear Editor,

Malignant melanoma can be a fatal cancer when it metastasizes to the brain and causes seizures. Senator McCain, the Republican candidate for the President of the United States has a history of malignant melanoma, yet he has repeatedly refused to fully release his health records. To say the least, this is very disconcerting to a citizen trying to make an informed vote.

Senator McCain's last biopsy was reported to the public as "negative." This is of little comfort to me, coming from the candidate whose party has been famous for falsifying scientific documents to suit their purposes.

It is imperative that the public be fully informed of the health status of a candidate for the highest office in the land, especially when his running mate is believed by many to be unqualified for that job. Insist that John McCain make a full disclosure of his medical records so that we can cast an informed vote for the President of the United States this November.

Are we really a nation of laws? The recent financial calamity has brought to mind the many areas in which the laws and regulations of our country are not enforced.. Things are getting out of hand. Pelosi refuses to impeach Bush for his many criminal acts documented in a plethora of recent books. Immigration laws have not been enforced for decades, resulting in the ever worsening of the immigration crisis. Karl Rove thumbs his nose at a Congressional subpoena while enjoying a high paying job on Fox news. Todd Palin refuses to answer a subpoena in Alaska. Are there no consequences to refusing to comply with the law? Is "big money" really the law? Are we returning to the good old "robber-baron" days where the rich ruled and there was no middle class.? This election is crucial to the future of our country. Please take the time to study the issues and vote intelligently.

Forrest J. Cioppa MD
Moraga

Dear Editor,

I feel I'm at a tennis match, listening to one expert, then another. Who to believe, who to trust? "We must move quickly." Isn't that how we got into the mess in Iraq?

Two candidates before me, no crystal ball. No expertise to know who's right. What I do know:

McCain

1. Graduated near bottom of his class
2. Admits no understanding of economics
3. Advisor Phil Graham, author of bill responsible for current problems
4. Agreed with Bush, fundamentals sound (then changed story daily)
5. Wants to postpone first presidential debate, denying us

info to make decision

6. Denies access to Palin (3 interviews) preventing informed choice

Obama

1. Graduated Harvard Law, President of Law Review

(academic excellence)

2. Constitutional lawyer, knows/ respects Founding Fathers' intentions

3. Advisor Warren Buffet, financial genius, does well for investors/ himself, gives generously to charity

4. Carefully weighs options while consulting his experts

5. Recognizes public's need to keep debate schedule

6. Biden (over 84 speeches/interviews to date) gives us insight

And, houses (Mc 8, Ob 1), cars (Mc 13, Ob 1), temperament (Mc hot, Ob careful), Sunni/Shia / Pakistan's borders (Mc confused, Ob clear). For me, just one choice: Obama I trust, he "gets it" and gets my vote in November.

Sandra MacKenzie

Moraga

Measure E

To the Editor:

Voters beware! The Acalanes Union High School District wants more money from district residents.

The Acalanes District has put Measure E on the November ballot. The measure, if passed, will allow the district to issue \$93 million worth of bonds. The bonds will be used to establish a technology fund, replace worn out roofs, and upgrade electrical systems.

Measure E will not raise tax rates but will extend existing taxes.

Measure E is a direct assault on the bank accounts of the district's senior citizens. These citizens, most of whom live on fixed incomes, have been paying outrageous prices for gasoline, food, and medical care.

Moreover, the stock market, a major source of income for seniors, has been performing miserably.

A few years ago, when the Acalanes District asked for a property (parcel) tax increase, the district offered an exemption for senior citizens. The current Measure E offers no such exemption.

Property taxes are especially egregious because they tax an asset (a home) before it is sold. Stocks and bonds are not taxed until sold. Other assets -- like a person's furniture, clothing, and appliances -- have no property taxes.

In general, property taxes should be eliminated. If replacement funds are needed, a tiny income tax might be acceptable.

Specifically, Measure E should be voted down. It's time to give senior citizens some relief from the greedy hand of government.

Richard S. Colman

Orinda

To the Editor:

As a 15-year resident of Orinda, I've come to appreciate much about the Lamorinda community. Our strong public schools top that list.

Moving to California from the east coast, I was surprised and dismayed by the sorry condition of public education in California. The Lamorinda schools are among a handful of schools in Northern California that can compete with some of the best schools across the country; I believe that is due to the long-standing history of community support. In fact, I researched the history of community support of education before purchasing my home.

Now, even as my youngest child nears the end of her high school years, I am proud to carry the torch for continued investment in our local schools.

I endorse Measure E, the facilities bond measure that will fund repairs and upgrades for our high schools; and I do this with the knowledge and understanding that our community's greatest asset -- and best investment -- is our schools. It's an investment that we can't afford to neglect.

Please join me this November in voting Yes on Measure E.

Pat Rudebusch

Orinda

To the Editor:

As chair of the Acalanes Union High School District's Measure B Citizens Oversight Committee I had a

front row seat in watching the prudent manner in which our schools manage facilities funds. All of the school improvements funded under the 2002 Measure B funds have been completed. Moreover, the district completed these projects in a cost-efficient and timely manner. In our final report, the Citizen's Oversight Committee commended the district on its aggressively pursuing all sources of revenue, its leadership in obtaining state matching funds, and for refinancing previous bond issues at lower interest rates thereby saving taxpayer dollars. Now that the Acalanes District is poised to continue its facilities repair and maintenance program, I can wholeheartedly endorse their continued efforts. Measure E is a facilities bond measure on the November ballot that will do just that. Measure E is a sound investment in our local high schools. Please join me in voting Yes on Measure E. For more information, readers can go to www.AboutMeasureE.org.

Art Kapoor
Lafayette

To the Editor:

On the November 4 ballot, one issue will be easy for us to decide: a yes vote for Measure E. Why vote for a school bond measure when the economy is suffering? There are several reasons: Measure E will not raise our current tax rates. It will help maintain our property values by keeping our high schools' facilities in good repair and improving the technology available for students. And by issuing bonds now, while interest rates are low and contractors are looking for work, it will give our schools the biggest bang for their buck. Our high schools were built between 1940 and 1961. Previous bond measures have provided repairs that kept the roofs in one piece and provided facilities for growing enrollments, but the job is not complete. It is especially important that we keep up with the technology that students need to function in the 21st century. Measure E will do this. The state will not pay for it; we need to do it ourselves. Our property values are high in great part because excellent schools drive demand for housing. Measure E won't create Taj Mahal schools—it just lets us keep the schools in decent condition and able to teach our students what they need to know. Get the facts on Measure E at www.AboutMeasureE.org – and then join me in supporting our students: Vote yes on Measure E.

Linda Landau
Orinda

Lafayette: Council Candidates

Dear Editor,

Vote for Carl Anduri, Lafayette City Council.

I am a 23 year resident of Lafayette and a product of its high ranking schools, and have chosen to raise my own children here largely because of the quality of life that Lafayette has to offer. I have observed the many challenges that the City of Lafayette has faced over the years and am pleased with the work to improve our downtown, to build the new library, and to preserve the integrity of our local neighborhoods. I urge you to support Carl Anduri for Lafayette City Council. As a current council member and past Mayor, he has the experience and knowledge that it takes to continue running our great city. He is an incredibly careful listener and weighs every point of view when making his decisions. In fact, all three incumbents running this fall (Carl Anduri, Mike Anderson and Carol Federighi) have worked extremely well together to bring about thoughtful, responsible change in Lafayette and address ongoing challenges. I urge you to vote for all three.

Carl also supports the preservation and protection of Lafayette's hillsides, ridges and open space for the enjoyment of all residents. He has done a great job in maintaining the semi-rural nature of our city.

Brad Kisner
Lafayette

Dear Editor,

I have known Carl Anduri since he became a member of the Lafayette City Council in early 2002, and have always been impressed with his fair and unbiased opinions, questions, and voting on matters before the City Council. About two years ago I became very much involved with senior citizens in Lafayette when I organized the Lafayette Senior Liaison Committee and became its chairman. In that capacity, I have been involved in committees, task forces, and discussions with Carl Anduri and have found him always to be very supportive of Lafayette senior citizens, their challenges, and solutions.

I support Carl Anduri 100% for his reelection to the Lafayette City Council and urge you to vote for him as well.

Sincerely,
Marechal Duncan
Lafayette

Dear Editor,

I urge Lafayette voters to reelect Carl Anduri to the Lafayette City Council. Carl continues to demonstrate talents that have made him an effective community advocate and problem solver for 16 years. Not only is Carl intelligent, well-organized and hard-working, he is also ethical, thoughtful and fiscally responsible.

I have witnessed all of Carl's impressive and balanced leadership qualities while serving with him on Lafayette's Environmental Task Force. I have been particularly impressed with Carl's careful and responsible approach to all problems. When discussing the Environmental goals Lafayette might adopt, Carl has made sure that voices from all community constituents have been heard. He has supported an extensive search of data about communities with similar demographic and geographic features to get a sense of environmental strategies that work, and that are not too costly. In meetings, I am always impressed with Carl's excellent organization, background knowledge, communication and leadership skills, as well as his clear commitment to and forward looking vision for Lafayette. Carl and the rest of our current Lafayette City Council have been an impressive team, and I look forward to benefitting from their experienced judgment and leadership for years to come.

Sincerely,
Janet Thomas
Lafayette

Dear Editor,

I would like to encourage voters in Lafayette to re-elect Carl Anduri for City Council. As a Board Member of the Lafayette Homeowners Council and Burtonvalley.com, I have worked with Carl on several high-profile and controversial issues, and found him to be extremely thoughtful and sensitive to community concerns.

Lafayette's General Plan articulates the community's desire to maintain the city's small town, "semi-rural" feel by limiting building heights downtown, prohibiting development on protected ridgelines, and maximizing open space. In spite of continued pressure to bend if not break the spirit of the General Plan, I have found Carl to be its staunchest defender.

The city is now in the process of developing a downtown strategic plan, and will be under even more pressure to intensify development. While many of us want to see a family-friendly, livable, and economically vital downtown, we don't want to lose the semi-rural character we all enjoy. Carl is one person I would want on the council to balance competing interests and arrive at a solution that is in the best interests of Lafayette's citizens.

Clifford Tong
Lafayette

Dear Editor:

I urge all Lafayette voters to re-elect Carol Federighi, Carl Anduri and Mike Anderson to the Lafayette City Council on November 4.

I have seen how hardworking and thoughtful they are on behalf of our City. Each brings many years of community service before they joined the City Council. Each has a unique perspective to represent the varied interests in our neighborhoods.

In Carol's professional life as an attorney she has dedicated herself to helping juveniles who have become dependents of the court, and giving legal assistance to seniors.

Carl specializes in business law with an emphasis on finance. He is uniquely situated to help Lafayette manage its limited finances, protect our hillsides and land use ordinances.

Mike works for the East Bay Regional Park District; he is an invaluable resource for Lafayette's Parks and open space interests. Mike and the other council members have all served on the Planning Commission, adding years of experience and service to our City.

They all have supported the new library and the Senior Housing Task Force. Through their stewardship Lafayette is one of a few cities that is not in financial trouble, because they have been prudent in maintaining a balanced budget.

Anne Grodin
Former Mayor
Lafayette

Dear Editor,

In this very important election there are four people running for three positions on the Lafayette City Council. I am writing to urge all voting citizens of Lafayette to vote for the three incumbents, Carl Anduri, and Carol Federighi and our Mayor Mike Anderson, They are compassionate and thoughtful people with exceptional experience and backgrounds, who care very deeply about the concerns of people of all ages in our city. They work to provide services that help make our lives comfortable and fulfilling. They are the essence of what City Council members should be.

In my 44 years of living in Lafayette, this city has always been far ahead of its time. 18 years ago, when I became a member of the Lafayette Senior Services Commission very few cities the size of Lafayette had advisory commissions which focused on the concerns of Seniors. Because we have people like Carl, Carol and Mike on our City Council, we are still ahead. We have the best schools in the State for our children, a new Library which will be a model for other cities across this nation, and plans for a downtown where we can "Shop Lafayette", so that the sales tax goes to Lafayette instead of surrounding communities, and Seniors (20% of our population) will be assured they can "age in place " in Lafayette . I have attended many City Council meetings and have spoken on behalf of a number of issues. What truly impresses me about Carl, Carol and Mike is that they LISTEN , THINK and CARE deeply about what is being said. I know that I have had their full attention. We are fortunate that they volunteer their time and energy to serve us all. So please vote for them, and keep Lafayette on the right track.

Sandra A,Smith
Lafayette

Moraga: Measures J and K

Editor:

Without some growth, Moraga will die. Picture vacant stores, as currently in the Rheem shopping center. If Measures J or K pass, it is very likely that the Town will be sued and will have to spend money it doesn't have to defend itself. To provide that defense means taking from police, parks, roads and other services as the Town has no budget for this type of expense. Note last Friday's article on the front page of the Contra Costa Times citing that Police Chief Ruppenthal has to do patrol duty himself because of inadequate funding for staff, while burglary, assault and theft are rising. The existing General Plan adequately protects Moraga open space and does not need fixing. We urge you to vote no on both Measures J and K.

Sincerely,
Howard & Deborah Hall
Moraga

Dear Editor,

Moragans received a glossy mailer from the Measure J camp this week, featuring a letter from Joan Bruzzone. I understand that Joan is a very pleasant person so it is sad to see her campaign write such a misleading letter for her signature. The brochure is a flagrant attempt to sway the undecided vote through scare tactics and outrageous statements.

To address a few of the most egregious:

1. Measure K is not the work of "Berkeley fringe groups" – I'm one of dozens of Moraga volunteers for Measure K and 9 out of 10 of us are town residents (the rest are residents of unincorporated Moraga plus one from Orinda).
2. Measure K does not "ban single family homes." Measure K explicitly allows single family homes, along with secondary units. (See Measure K, Section 9(a))
3. Measure K does not apply to downtown or promote low-income units downtown. The development of the downtown remains entirely under the control of the Bruzzone family and the Town.
4. Only Measure K protects Moraga's threatened ridgelines. The Bruzzones have submitted a 126-lot development plan that would build 35+ houses along Bollinger Ridge, which rises to 1000 feet and is visible to much of Moraga. Measure K would keep development off that ridgeline.

We are all busy people with limited time to spend investigating Measure J's allegations. And this is what its proponents are trying to exploit. In this single mailer, there are so many distortions that it's impossible to respond here to every misleading statement that is made. But that's the political technique used when one's own program is bankrupt.

This election is one of the most important in Moraga since its founding in 1974. Moraga's remaining open space is threatened with several hundred houses under current laws. Measure K would reduce those to approximately 50 houses and ensure that they are not permitted to destroy ridgelines, scenic views, and natural resources. Measure K would also prevent an additional 3000 car trips each day on our roads. Please vote yes on Measure K to prevent overdevelopment that will harm Moraga's quality of life.

Jan Blumer
Moraga

Dear Editor,

Despite opponents' false claims, Measure K is not about downtown development. Measure K, the community-sponsored open space protection measure for Moraga, does not contain a single provision that applies to downtown Moraga. The Town's official "9212 Report" on Measure K makes clear that it applies to the specific open space parcels listed in the initiative, not one of which is downtown.

Nevertheless, the Bruzzone campaign—having evidently determined from phone polling that the current Specific Plan proposal for high-density development on Bruzzone-owned land downtown is highly unpopular—is attempting to link that development to Measure K. They do so by asserting—with no factual basis—that Measure K's "true agenda" is to support "lower income" apartments downtown. Don't believe this deceptive propaganda. Measure K has one agenda and one agenda only: to protect Moraga's open space and scenic ridgelines from overdevelopment and prevent the excessive traffic that large-scale subdivisions in these areas would cause. Measure K is about preserving our small town, not about helping the Bruzzones develop the land they own next to the shopping center.

Susan McNeill
Moraga

Orinda: Council Candidates and Kudos

To the Editor:

I recently attended a presentation by the engineer Tom Chan, a member of the Orinda Public Safety Advisory Commission. The Orinda Chamber of Commerce sponsored this update on disaster preparedness. It was very informative for merchants & small businesses.

As a physician with a Masters in Public Health from U.C. Berkeley, I support disaster preparedness in Orinda. A list of volunteer physicians, nurses & crisis counselors should be established. A major earthquake on the Hayward Fault will likely disable Highway 24 for 1-4 weeks according to Mr. Chan. There will be injuries. There may not be access to hospitals & emergency facilities for some time after a Big Quake. We must be prepared to take care of ourselves. A clinician roster, a cache of medical supplies & designated triage sites should be established expeditiously.

Orindans and other Contra Costa County residents need a flu vaccination program. 100 million people died in the Pandemic of 1918 when the world's population was far less than today. The Centers for Disease Control have forecast millions will die or become disabled should Avian flu hit the North American continent & we are unprepared. Better to be safe than sorry. A program for vaccinating our older residents, those with respiratory conditions & public safety officers should be established now. The flu season is approaching.

Our community through active planning should pledge that mismanagement of a disaster like Katrina will never happen in Orinda, Lamorinda or Contra Costa County.

Thank you for your consideration,
Dr. Bob L arsen
Orinda

To the Editor:

Orinda City Councilmember Steve Glazer is running for reelection to the Orinda City Council on the November ballot. It's worth noting that Mr. Glazer's business is that of advisor to developers. It was proposed in a recent City Council meeting that the PG&E towers be moved from downtown Orinda and relocated in the El Toyonal hills. The enraged residents of the El Toyonal Hills showed up and pointed

out that it has been proven that the high-voltage electricity in the PG&E power lines causes cancer and that both their health and their property values would be severely downgraded by the relocation of the towers.

Even after hearing the severe hazard to residents Mr. Glazer voted to continue the study of relocating the PG&E towers.

It is obvious that Mr. Glazer values business interests far more than residents' welfare and safety. What else would you expect from a developer's consultant?

If you wish your City Council members to protect your interests you should vote for another City Council candidate and not Mr. Glazer.

Clyde Vaughn
Orinda

Dear Editor,

We wholeheartedly support Victoria Smith for a second term on the Orinda City Council! Victoria has been a tireless servant to "what's best for Orinda" from her contributions to the Parent's Club at Miramonte and Scouting to her service on the Planning Commission and the last four years for her leadership on the Council and as Mayor.

As a Council member and Mayor, she has provided sound leadership on city priorities and day-to-day issues and judicious financial stewardship over our limited city budget. Some recent accomplishments working with the Council include: Repairing Moraga Way from Camino Encinas to the Moraga border, creating the Traffic Safety Advisory committee to resolve traffic "hot spots" in neighborhoods, working with the Lafayette and Moraga Councils to develop a Lamorinda emergency preparedness plan, and working with the Chamber of Commerce to promote Orinda retailing and restaurants that provide additional tax dollars to the city.

While working directly with Victoria on the roads and infrastructure campaign (Measure E), the Public Safety Commission and local neighborhood issues, we find her to be a keen listener focused on constructive solutions, collaborative in working with people and possessing impeccable personal integrity. Public service (especially for volunteers) is noble in every sense of the word when the individual delivers on the priorities of the community and it's constituents. Victoria has consistently focused and delivered on our community priorities over the past four years and we will be very fortunate to have her leadership on the City Council for a second term. She is "what's best for Orinda."

Victoria has our enthusiastic vote for City Council and we urge other Orinda residents to vote for her as well.

Russ and Mary Belden
Orinda

Editor:

The recently completed Moraga Way reconstruction project has accomplished more than just providing a smoother ride for motorists. As a resident who lives near Moraga Way, this project has substantially improved the quality of life for me and my neighbors. The rubberized asphalt pavement has noticeably reduced the traffic noise from the road to the point where I can now enjoy being outdoors in my yard. And recycling of old tires benefits the environment, as well. I would like to extend my thanks to the City of Orinda and the City Council for doing this much needed project and doing it right.

Equally improved is ambient noise level in the Crossroads/Theater Square area since Highway 24 has been repaved with rubberized asphalt. You can now sit outside at Starbucks, Casper's or the Greek Café and enjoy the street without the deafening roar of the freeway making conversation impossible, as was the case before.

So - kudos to the City of Orinda and Caltrans for improving the quality of life in our community.

Sincerely,
Fred Smith
Orinda

Dear Editor,

We support Victoria Smith for re-election to the Orinda City Council because her informed, thoughtful, and civil governing style. Her talents and experience are particularly needed to help solve a number of pressing issues, including street infrastructure and fire safety. We urge Orindans to vote to retain Victoria on November 4.

Wayne and Jo Alice Canterbury

Orinda

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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