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## Letters to the Editor

Orinda

Dear Editor:

A recent letter by Clyde Vaughn attacks Steve Glazer regarding discussions by the Orinda City Council on the issue of moving the power lines that cross the village side of our downtown. This matter of the effect of the high wire lines on Orinda's downtown has been under discussion by a citizen's Task Force for the past 12 months. No recommendation whatsoever has come before the Council. Members of the Task Force wanted to understand the cost and timeline if a formal study by PG&E were to take place. City staff posed these questions to PG&E and provided the responses to the Council.

The Council heard the staff report and took no action. Any resident can review the Council minutes at <http://old.ci.orinda.ca.us/agendas/pdfs/c080318m.pdf>. The minutes of the meeting show that every Councilmember, including Mr. Glazer, spoke in opposition to moving the towers into a residential area. In fact, the minutes of the meeting say: "Councilmember Glazer received clarification that, if the Council took no action on the matter, staff would not be authorized to proceed with a study and no action would be taken." This was the exact outcome, in total contrast to the fabricated account of the meeting put forward by Mr. Vaughn. While Mr. Vaughn has the right to his opinion, misstating the facts of a public record is a disservice to all and to the democratic process. Sadly, this is a long-time pattern with Mr. Vaughn, who regularly ignores facts and puts forward erroneous opinions.

When Mr. Glazer ran four years ago for the Council, he faced the same type of smear attacks, but was elected by an overwhelming majority. I am pleased to support his bid for re-election to the Council. As our former Mayor and as a Councilmember, he has worked diligently and successfully to promote transparency in city government and consensus-based solutions to problems.

Sue Severson  
Mayor Pro Tem  
Orinda City Council

Dear Editors,

Victoria Robinson Smith, long time Orinda resident and lawyer, is running for reelection to the Orinda City Council. I am glad to be able to recommend her for reelection. She has been a caring and intelligent councilmember, and is now a thoroughly experienced one too. Her interest and understanding of the businesses of downtown Orinda benefits this sector, and is important to us all. I am the owner of the 32 year old Orinda Book Store, and have been impressed with Victoria Smith's appreciation of local businesses and her availability to them. I think her presence on the City Council is vital to the "heart of Orinda," and I urge you to vote to keep her in office.

Sincerely,  
Janet Boreta

Dear Editor,

We are writing to urge other Orinda voters to join us in supporting the re-election of Mayor Victoria Smith to the City Council. She has been a tireless advocate of public safety, including disaster preparedness, Safe Routes to School, and over-all traffic safety, and has worked diligently to find a responsible means of repairing our roads. She has also been involved in the Chamber of Commerce 'Shop Orinda' program and efforts to revitalize our business areas. Her recent work on the Pulte and former library developments will help our city meet state requirements for affordable housing, prevent our loss of Measure C funding, and, hopefully, make it possible for people who work in Orinda to live in Orinda.

Victoria Smith has served the citizens of Orinda well on both the Planning Commission and the City Council. She deserves our support. We need her energy and creativity on our City Council. Let's re-elect Victoria Smith to the Orinda City Council!

Ellen and Joffa Dale  
Orinda

Dear Editor,

I would like to encourage all my friends and neighbors in Orinda to re-elect Victoria Smith to the City Council. We need Victoria Smith's continued leadership. We need a city council person who understands critical infrastructure needs and is willing to work for solutions. Victoria Smith understands that infrastructure has a profound effect on our local economy and the people who live in Orinda. Among Victoria's many accomplishments are the repaving of Moraga Way and the passing of Measure E, the parcel tax that provides the extra hours so that our library stays open 60 hours a week. She created the Traffic Safety Advisory Commission to help neighborhoods manage traffic and has served for many years as a Parents Club volunteer with our schools.

Please join me in voting for Orinda's future. Vote for Victoria Smith.

Pam Pulley  
Orinda

Dear Editor:

As an interested resident of the City of Orinda I routinely attend city meetings whether of the City Council or one of the City's committees, taskforces or commissions. There is usually a mechanism for giving input through the public forum component at city meetings. I certainly support having input in that fashion. I realize there are some restrictions about how meetings can be run in compliance with the Brown Act. I am supportive of the idea that city government involve its residents and obtain their input on matters of importance for governance.

I am not the first resident to suggest the idea of a "citizen ombudsman " to be utilized by the City of Orinda in representing its constituents. It would be helpful if there was a designated liaison that residents could go to with the authority to look into matters beyond what other staff have time for. I conceptualize this position as a quarter to half time position. The City could partner with the local universities in sponsoring an internship which would make this a low cost endeavor. The School of Public Policy at U.C. Berkeley, the School of Business at St. Mary's College and an appropriate department at J.F.K. University would be natural potential partners. These schools of higher education have as part of their mission maintaining ties to local communities. Internship programs are promoted at these colleges as a means of giving students real life experience.

Communication between City Hall and the residents of Orinda is a crucial element to effective representative government. The proposed citizen ombudsman program has the potential for helping Orindans with their concerns and complaints. We have local talent that is available to help us in developing such a program. This would be a supplement to the existing open20forum and would not undermine those important efforts.

Very truly yours,  
Dr. Bob Larsen  
Orinda

To the Editor:

Orinda has many qualities of which we can be proud: our schools, our climate, the beauty of our surroundings.

We can also look to our leaders. One of them, Victoria Smith, has served our community with particular distinction: as a Planning Commissioner, Member of the City Council and Mayor. She has been a key figure in dealing effectively with the major issues facing our city.

Victoria is now up for re-election as a member of the City Council. Those who believe in good government should support her with great enthusiasm.

In these trouble times we need representatives who understand the issues and who will exercise fiscal responsibility in dealing with them. We urge our citizens to vote for Victoria Smith for re-election to the Orinda City Council.

Bea and Dick Heggie  
Orinda

Dear Editor,

Victoria Smith is a keeper. She is a careful financial steward with a reasoned, analytic approach to problems. As a true advocate of Orinda's best interests, she has been a long-time Parents' Club volunteer, organized the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee and has worked tirelessly to improve our public roads.

Victoria's deep concern for our community's needs and her broad experience through work with the schools, the Chamber, advisory groups and the City Council combine to make her an outstanding leader in Orinda.

Vote to keep Victoria Smith on the City Council.

Jean Lyford  
Orinda

Editor:

We support Mayor Victoria Smith for her basic traits: integrity, intelligence, common sense, commitment to and understanding of Orinda, and a strong sense of fair play—qualities that are critical to continued excellent leadership in our community.

Chris and Anne Marie Kniel  
Orinda

Dear Editor:

I had the good fortune to spend two years on the Orinda City Council with Victoria Smith and have closely followed her performance since then. Victoria gets top marks for her performance, especially this year when she has been Mayor. In fact, I don't think very many have done as good a job as she has done serving the people of Orinda.

Victoria is both hard working and intelligent. She always does her homework and asks good questions. She approaches issues with lots of common sense and savvy. She uses her good judgment to make excellent decisions and always articulates her reasons in a clear and concise manner. Most importantly, Victoria's only agenda is doing what is right for Orinda and its citizens.

I know Victoria will continue to be an excellent Council member and urge Orindans to vote for her on November 4th.

Bill Judge  
Former Mayor of Orinda

Dear Editor,

I first met Victoria Smith in 2003 while serving as a Planning Commissioner for the City of Orinda. I remember watching her transform from a newcomer to one the

most effective Commissioners within just a few meetings. She was always well prepared, reasonable and well spoken.

After serving as a Planning Commissioner, Victoria was elected to the City Council and has served as Mayor. If you go to a City Council meeting you will see what I mean about being effective. She does her homework on every item on the agenda and it shows. She makes informed decisions, speaks clearly and is to the point. As a council member, Victoria had the foresight to spearhead the creation of the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, of which I am a member. With her guidance we completed Traffic Calming guidelines for the City last year. With her strong support, we are now working on improving pedestrian and bike access in Orinda, with a focus on better walking paths to schools and the downtown area. Please vote to keep Victoria Smith on the Orinda City Council.

Tom MacKinnon  
Orinda

Editor:

Please join me in voting for Victoria Smith for Orinda City Council. When I was on the original Infrastructure Committee, I learned that Victoria patiently listens to all points of view before forming her own opinion and reaching a decision. She decided to support both bond issues to fix our failing roads and drains. As Mayor, she has worked with the Council and City staff to restructure the budget to provide more money to repair our arterial and collector roads. The recent successful Moraga Way repaving project is proof that we are headed in the right direction in the use of our limited funds. Victoria is also active in improving traffic safety and implementing an emergency disaster preparedness plan.

The next four years will be critical for Orinda because the State, suffering under its budget woes, will continue to look toward retaining more local funds in Sacramento. Victoria Smith will be a vital member of the Orinda City Council during these difficult times by working to maximize these funds and make good, careful use of our City revenues. Vote for Victoria Smith; you'll be glad you did.

Bob Mills  
Orinda

Dear Editor,

Please join me in voting for Victoria Smith for re-election to the Orinda City Council. I have known Victoria for over ten years, both personally and professionally as a fellow attorney. In whatever roles and responsibilities Victoria takes on, her approach is hard-working, level-headed, practical, and efficient. She has brought all of these talents and more to her seat on the City Council. One recent example of Victoria's excellent work that benefited all of us is the repaving of Moraga Way. Even though I live on the other side of town, I was dreading that project. With the brilliant planning of Victoria and the others who masterminded the timing and other crucial aspects of the project, I barely had time to become irritated with the dust and traffic delays when the repaving was finished. In addition to Victoria's highest priority of repairing Orinda streets, she has also dedicated her considerable energy toward the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee which was created at her request, and bringing a canine officer into the police force to assist in locating missing children and fragile seniors. These are only a few examples of the meaningful work Victoria has undertaken while on the City Council.

Let's enjoy at least four more years of this type of contribution to our community by re-electing Victoria Smith.

Dana Dumas Sankary  
Orinda

Dear Editor,

I have been given the opportunity to endorse Measure E, a \$93 million bond measure. I have some serious concerns. Proponents are encouraging a Yes vote

based upon the premise that the bond measure "does not raise tax rates." Tax rates may not go up, but this is a new tax. Seniors exempt from the existing bond will not be exempt from Measure E.

This is the type of spending that has gotten individuals, corporations and our nation into serious trouble. As a fiscally prudent Democrat, I am sure my Depression era Republican parents would want me to speak out. Many voting for this bond won't be alive when it is paid off. Twenty-five million dollars for adult education is a significant portion of the bond. For these reasons I have serious concern about the wisdom of this measure.

The Orinda City Council unanimously voted support for Measure E. There was no discussion about its cost nor adverse effects that its passage will have upon an infrastructure bond measure for our city. The Orinda Unified School District is considering a parcel tax. How many property tax assessments can we afford at a time when Orindans are retired, unemployed, underemployed or cutting back expenditures? Not everybody in Orinda makes over \$100,000. The City Council has again abdicated its responsibility for safeguarding the community's financial well-being. At risk of becoming a pariah in a town where I have always supported the schools, I am disappointed with the Council's fiscal irresponsibility and questionable judgment.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert C. Larsen, M.D., M.P.H.  
Orinda

Moraga  
Dear Editor,

As a fourteen year Moraga resident, I want to encourage other Moragans to cast their vote for Karen Mendonca for city council. Karen brings twenty-five years experience as a senior administrator in the Cal State University system, and is already actively engaged in our community through service on the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Moraga Beautification and Tree Planting Committee. Her decision to run is based on a strong desire to support a civil and constructive process in our community deliberations with a dedication to ensuring we have a sound budget and budgeting process. She is also committed to working on our town efforts to revitalize our local business offerings. Our town needs someone who has her skills in working with others to address and find solutions for complex problems. Sincerely,

Marti Roach  
Moraga

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter because of the critical times facing Moraga. We need to elect Janice Kolbe to the city council. Bring back to our local government a person that represents the best interests of all Moraga's citizens.

Her professional background, along with the experience of being President of the Homeowners Association at Moraga Country Club will prove to be a real asset for Moraga.

Our town has a financial crisis and we need leadership that will safe guard the towns future. We currently have an understaffed police department and many vacancies in our shopping centers. These are just some of the problems the next city council will face.

Some members of the current city council have divided our town and prefer to pursue their personal agendas as opposed to putting the interests of Moraga's citizens first.

I have been a resident of Moraga for 29 years and have never experienced this before. Lets return to the times when we could be proud and confident in our city government.

Please support me in electing Janice Kolbe to our city council.

Mark Solomon  
Moraga

Editor:

I am writing to express how offended I am by the Bruzzone family's campaign tactics for Measure J. To imply that the measure is only supported by "extremists" from Berkeley is not only false, but denigrates all of us who want to see Moraga remain the beautiful town that it is.

In addition, to state that "developers" will sue if measure K passes is quite cynical—since the Bruzzone family is the developer they speak of. I have heard that the Bruzzones complain about how maligned they are by many Moraga residents. Is it any wonder? Their campaign is basically saying: If you pass Measure J and let us build hundreds of homes on the hills, we'll give you a Rec Center. If you pass measure K we will sue and you know you can't afford it.

Where I come from, that's called blackmail.

Perhaps if the Bruzzones put their development efforts into the Specific Plan areas where Moragans want development, they would find themselves better-liked while making money at the same time. I hope all Moragans will reject their heavy-handed tactics by voting No on Measure J.

Mike Bernhardt  
Moraga

Dear Editor:

After reading measures J and K in detail it appears that BOTH measures are essentially asking Moragans to sign a BLANK CHECK. In measure J the Bruzzone family is asking for money to be spent before any of the details of traffic amelioration and permitted building construction are approved. . The traffic improvements required, particularly for their proposed new development area are not specified or costed in detail.

For measure K, while properties at risk from proposed environmental changes are listed, there is not even a map available to show the details to be affected because these details have to be developed by the proposers AFTER their measure would be approved.

For these reason we urge Moragans to vote against each of these measures so that each of the proposing groups can better define their proposals for our futures.

William Tyson  
Moraga

Editor:

Give K the OK to preserve open space.

I support Measure K because we can't let Moraga lose hundreds of acres of open space to housing developments in the coming years. The beauty of our small town—the stunning hills and ridges with cattle grazing peacefully—are an irreplaceable asset. They bring peace and well-being to us every day and define what it means to live here.

Critics say there's no threat to open space and we should trust in the Town's regular planning process. They ignore the fact that even after 15 years of massive public opposition and over fifty public hearings, the Palos Colorados developer still ended up with an approved 123-lot subdivision. Public opposition is helpless to stop overdevelopment when the Town's laws allow it.

And now, despite five years of public opposition, our Planning Commission is about to approve the Rancho Laguna subdivision along Rheem Ridge. Additional subdivisions are planned for Rheem near the "painted rocks," Bollinger Canyon, and Indian Valley.

In 1986, Moraga voters seized the opportunity to protect Mulholland and Campolindo Ridges from proposed subdivisions by passing Moraga's first open space initiative. Now's the time to do it again for Rheem Ridge, Bollinger Canyon and Indian Valley by passing Measure K.

Teresa Onoda  
Moraga

To the Editor:

On Moraga Way near the Orinda fire station, we look up and are shocked at the visible scarring on the hill from the new Gateway Valley development. Moragans must vote YES on MEASURE K to protect hillsides in our own town. Moraga passed MOSO in 1986 and prevented building on ridgelines threatened then. Measure K will protect the rest. It still allows new houses on open space lands, but limits their number and location. Measure K has Nothing to do with high density downtown development. That disinformation was even included in the voter pamphlet by developer interests. Don't be intimidated by the litigation scares. Voters prevailed when opponents used the same tactics against MOSO 1986. Now we need to do it again. And beware of numerous other claims distorting Measure K's provisions—outright lies are being sent out in mailers and emails by the development interests sponsoring Measure J. Measure J is on the ballot to confuse voters so they'll vote no on both. Measure J is self-serving and, incredibly, imposes a freeze on the Town on developer fees, regulations, etc. for 25 YEARS! The Town Council and voters could not make Any changes. The promised \$7 million dollars for a new Town Recreation Center could be as many as 25 years away and only IF the Town approves their development projects. That "gift" rec. center also HAS to be built on their land with the Town to pay rent for that land at an as-yet undetermined rate. MOSO 1986 helped save the safety, beauty and ambiance of our town twenty-two years ago. Moraga can continue that by passing 'K' now. If Measure K fails, Moraga's limited staff and resources will have to deal with a costly fight over each individual development currently planned. Pass Measure K to avoid that by creating a strong framework to protect Moraga's open space.

Steve and Karen Chin  
Moraga

Dear Editor:

I don't know any Moraga citizens who want to substantially alter the Town's character and add thousands of new residences. Moraga is already a very, very slow growth Town. Although it sounds quite pastoral and appealing to "Save Our Small Town," Measure K goes too far. Turning Moraga into essentially a no growth town will place a financial strangle hold on the Town.

Fact #1: Without Measure K, it has taken nearly 20 years for the Palos Colorados neighborhood to receive approval to build 123 homes.

Fact #2: Without Measure K, the Town estimates the potential addition of 360 new homes. If Measure K passes, the Town estimates 46 homes could be built. Adding 360 homes in our town of 5,798 existing households is a 6% increase--and we don't know how many years it will actually take to build these homes. That's hardly an attack by "large scale developments" as the Friends of Moraga Open Space suggest.

Fact #3: Without Measure K, the Town's analysis estimates 360 new households will spend over \$5 million per year specifically in Moraga. Combined property tax, sales tax and other revenue would add \$470,000 of ANNUAL NET revenue (after the cost of incremental services used by the new residences) to the Town. If Measure K passes, the net revenue to the Town would be only \$60,167, a reduction of more than \$410,000 per year.

Our Town's current Open Space Policy, Planning Process and Design Guidelines already take years to navigate. It's hard to imagine how 6% growth over a multi-year period could "destroy Moraga's signature vistas and small-town character" as the Friends suggest.

The Town analysis states unequivocally, "[Measure K] would weaken retail and other business demand and thus weaken economic vitality of the Town." A vote for Measure K today means that fewer Moraga residents will be left holding the bag when the Town runs out of money down the road.

Eric Flett  
Moraga

Dear Editor,

High Noon in Moraga.

Moraga is caught in a struggle over its future, but some folks are asking us to give up without a fight. The "no-no's" want Moraga voters to reject both Measure K and Measure J for fear of lawsuits.

Measure K, sponsored by local residents, would preserve Moraga's ridgelines and create permanent open space where today there are "study areas" at risk of development.

Measure J, sponsored by the Bruzzones' development company, would lock in development rights and freeze development fees for 25 years so they can build 273 homes in those same study areas. They offer Moraga a payoff: \$4 million to build a recreation center – on their land so they can collect rent. And the Town doesn't get the money unless the Bruzzones get to build their 273 homes.

Since when do we back off from doing what is right because someone might sue us? Developers use lawsuits to gain leverage over cities that are trying to control suburban growth. Bruzzone already sued the Town once.

Should we just roll over at the merest threat? Surrender to the developers?

Dan Smith  
Moraga

Lafayette Council Candidates  
To the Editor:

All Lafayette citizens who care about this wonderful city should consider re-electing Mike Anderson, Carl Anduri, and Carol Federighi to the Lafayette City Council. As a 47-year resident and an avid volunteer it has been my privilege to work closely with these three outstanding citizens on numerous occasions: the Advisory Committee for the Downtown Strategic Plan; the Lafayette Senior Services Commission; the Lafayette Liaison Committee; the Affordable Senior Housing project; and the Lafayette Community Needs Assessment Task Force. Each brings unique experience, special talents, and insightful perspectives to the City Council and the ability to represent the varied interests in our community.

We've seen many changes in Lafayette over the years and under the stewardship of these three incumbents Lafayette will continue to grow and succeed while still retaining its unique semi-rural small town ambiance. Growth is inevitable, but what is important is the consideration, experience, and guidance that these three leaders can and do bring to the City Council. They have also demonstrated great fiscal responsibility by adhering to a balanced budget.

To help assure Lafayette stays on the right track we should re-elect Mike Anderson, Carl Anduri and Carol Federighi.

Ruth D. McCahan  
Lafayette

To the Editor:

THROW THE RASCAL(S) OUT !

Throw the rascals out! I agree. But which ones? Do we throw out Carol Federighi who has a demonstrated record of fiscal prudence and municipal leadership?

Maybe Carl Anduri who has a long record as a Planning Commissioner and City Councilmember protecting Lafayette's ridgelines and small town feel ? Or Mike Anderson, who has led the campaign to fix our roads and encourage a healthy downtown?

Or is it Gabriel Froymovich, a neophyte who rails against a proposal already rejected by the City Council, whose comments about downtown growth show a complete lack of understanding of basic land use principles and disregard of vested property rights and whose superficially attractive call for city belt-tightening is the rhetorical equivalent of jousting at windmills for the city that has the lowest per capita municipal expenditure of any in Contra Costa County.

I applaud Gabriel's interest in the community. But first, try to learn how government works and get your basic facts straight. Then maybe I'll support you. In the meantime, don't replace incumbency with ignorance.



Ivor Samson  
Former Mayor  
Lafayette

MOFD Fireboard, State and National Issues

Dear Editor:

As parents of a lesbian daughter who was finally able to be legally married to her partner of fourteen years, we feel compelled to speak out against Proposition 8. Proposition 8 would ban gays and lesbians from getting married - denying them the dignity and respect that marriage conveys to everyone else. We feel that all couples who choose to make a lifelong commitment to each other deserve to be allowed to do so under law. And we believe that our society and families can only benefit and be made more stable when such commitments are recognized and supported. We urge a NO vote on Proposition 8. It's the fair thing to do.

Jeff and Barbara Beck  
Orinda

Editor:

As we approach the coming election, I'd like to comment on an important race that may easily get insufficient attention among the many issues on the ballot. I refer to the race for Division 2 of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board.

I want to voice support for Fred Weil. Fred and I worked together as young lawyers in San Francisco 40 years ago. We both ended up moving to Moraga, worked together on Moraga incorporation, and then as Board members of the Moraga School District. Fred later served on the board of the Acalanes School District. After consolidation of the Orinda and Moraga fire districts, Fred was first appointed, and then elected, to the Fire District Board. He is now president of the Board seeking re-election.

Fred is not a politician (which I view as a good thing). He is sincerely interested in giving back to our community. He has excellent judgment, common sense, and the ability to analyze complex problems to find the correct solution. He is responsive to citizens, takes time to investigate before reaching conclusions, and never hesitates to make decisions. I am confident Fred will represent Moraga well and urge a vote for him.

Bob Merritt  
Moraga

Dear Editor,

Congress and the White House have come to an agreement on the largest governmental bailout in the history of our country----\$700,000,000,000. For most of us this difficult number to get our minds around. if you had \$700,000,000,000, you could give away \$1000 a second for the next 21 years before you ran dry. ----- Now that's real money.

Last week, the CEO of Lehman Bros. admitted in a congressional hearing that he was doling out 23.2 million dollars to his cronies 5 days before the company collapsed. While investors were losing their life's savings, executives of the company were raking in millions in "golden parachutes".

That's real chutzpah!

To assure us that this money will be spent wisely, the White House has changed its position from demanding a blank check with no accountability to agreeing to "strict Congressional oversight". The abysmal lack of Congressional oversight during these last 8 years has left me uneasy about this agreement with the White House.

For openers, we should be sure the plan has been vetted by qualified economists, not the same politicians that have gotten us into this mess.

We must be certain that the Committee entrusted with this enormous responsibility of oversight is being fully staffed and fully funded. ---no excuses for not carrying out their mandate.

Rather than a Congressional Committee I would prefer a committee of financial experts from the private sector headed by a respected financial genius like Warren

Buffet. Such a committee would be less likely to be corrupted by greed, and cronyism.

The agreement with the White House must be devoid of signing statements that exempt the White House from living up to the agreement.

It must guard against "stone walling" and have consequences for refusing to testify under oath. In recent months Karl Rove and Todd Palin have made a mockery out of our judicial system, thumbing their nose at subpoenas and getting away with it.

Finally the committee must have the political will to re-regulate and indict. No longer can we afford to turn a blind eye to flagrant violations of the law.

Forrest Cioppa

Moraga CA

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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