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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Wednesday, October 15, 2008

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For Paul Reising, a longtime Moraga resident, growing grapes and making wine has always been about spending time with good friends. "It's fermented grape juice that you are meant to have with a meal," says Reising, with his ever-pragmatic approach to all things related to grapes and wine.

As he sits in his sun-filled family room where the walls are covered in brightly-colored, framed posters from his visits to vineyards throughout California, the northwest, and Europe, Paul recounts the letter he and wife Jackie sent to ten Moraga couples back in 1977.



Photos Andy Scheck

Paul Reising filling the crusher

Bruce Dunn picking at John and Megan Leuteneker's vineyard

Grapes, Wine, and Friends—A Perfect Mix

By Andrea A. Firth

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St. Mary's Students Speak Out

By Toby Wendtland

With just weeks to go before the historic presidential election on November fourth, the Lamorinda Weekly informally polled a group of Saint Mary's students to help gauge the overall political climate on campus. The students of Saint Mary's College come from as near as the Lamorinda area to all over the country and were asked to comment on and identify local, state and national issues that affected

how they were voting in the upcoming election.

Addressing one of the most important issues in the upcoming election for the town of Moraga are the two open space initiatives, Measures J and K. While the majority of students polled are not registered to vote locally, they nevertheless had strong opinions about these initiatives and how they would affect Moraga.

Junior Scott Maurer believes that the open space

regulations should be toned down to allow more development. He tells us, "I honestly think there should be more people here, not city big, but more identity comes with more people." He also added that with more development, "I'd be more apt to stay in northern California instead of heading back down to Los Angeles."

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Lamorindans to Vote on Measure E—AUHSD Facilities Bond

By Andrea A. Firth



Among the alphabet soup of measures that voters in Lamorinda will decide upon in November is Measure E, a \$93 million facilities bond for Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD), which extends three existing voter-approved AUHSD bonds.

Measure E funds are earmarked for infrastructure projects at the District's four traditional high schools; renovations and expansions at the Adult Education Center; and a 10-year technology fund. If the measure passes, Campolindo High School will receive several infrastructure improvements including a new roof. "Campolindo is the newest school in the District, but it is almost 50 years old. It needs to be brought into the 21st century," states Cheryl Noll, Chairman of the Measure E Campaign and the mother of two Campolindo students. "Our school district is number one in the state, despite being one of the lowest funded [by the state]. This is tribute to the tremendous community support," she adds.

"[With passage of the Measure] a six million dollar technology fund will be established and spent over ten years," adds Acalanes Union High School Governing Board member Tom Mulvaney. "This will enable the District to keep up with technology as it changes so quickly." Other projects identified for completion with Measure E funds include converting obsolete facilities into additional classroom space and upgrading energy management systems to improve energy efficiency at each school.

The previous AUHSD bond measure passed in 2002 with 71% of voters in support of an annual prop-

erty tax of up to \$35.58 per \$100,000 of assessed value. According to Mulvaney, residents have been paying at a rate of around \$30 per \$100,000 of assessed value, and the new bond measure will maintain this rate. When asked about the potential impact of the current financial environment on bond interest rates, Mulvaney stated that the District could delay issuing the bonds. "Given the current financial situation, we will carefully assess the financial marketplace, and we will be very prudent on when we issue the bonds," states Mulvaney.

Opponents to Measure E argue that although tax rates may not increase, Measure E represents a new tax by extending the existing tax. Because payment on Measure E bonds will not begin until the previous bonds are retired but interest will accrue as soon as the new bonds are issued, opponents question that delaying payment increases the interest cost to taxpayers.

"This is the way we have always financed schools," states Mulvaney. Earlier school bond measures were passed in 1988 and 1997. Bonds from all three

previous measures ('88, '97, and '02) were refinanced in 2004, and the District currently pays an interest rate of 4.8%. All of the existing bonds will be retired by 2025.

In addition, some protest that passage of Measure E will place an unfair burden on seniors, because no senior tax exemption is provided. "Senior citizens are already being buffeted by huge losses in the stock market. Stocks and bonds are a major source of income for seniors," states Orinda resident Richard Colman.

Under state law, Proposition 39 bonds, like the bonds that would be issued through Measure E, can only be used for capital improvements, and senior tax exemptions are not allowed. Bonds measures differ from parcel taxes, which are used to fund school programs, not buildings, and can include senior exemptions.

Passage of Measure E requires a 55% majority for approval.

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