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Letters to the Editor

... continued

Editor:
What is Proven Leadership?
I strongly urge Orinda voters to consider a PROVEN LEADER, Scott Zeller, for Orinda City Council.
This is a critical time for Orinda. Insider forces want to change the semi-rural nature and village character of our city.
Scott Zeller has demonstrated an uncommon sensitivity and understanding of why Orinda voters choose to live here. It's more than the excellent schools, the safe, clean neighborhoods, and proximity to a BART station. It's about a semi-rural way of life, a village character to the downtown, and all of the intangibles, which that implies.
Scott Zeller is the ONLY CANDIDATE asking these questions. Why won't this city council conduct a wide-spread, professional survey of what Orinda citizens want in the downtown? Why does this city council tolerate a Planning Director, who should be a steward of the citizens, serve as the salesman for an insider-spawned, downtown re-development plan? What won't this city council put the Proposed Downtown Plan on the ballot for a vote by the citizens? Why won't this city council listen to Orinda's citizens?
Scott Zeller has more actual LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE, than any of the other candidates, with more than 15 years heading up a government agency with a larger budget and more employees than the City of Orinda. Scott Zeller knows how to oversee a large organization and how to interact with various constituencies, including unions. He is also NOT a real estate, pro-developer insider. Scott Zeller has pledged not to take campaign contributions from them, and won't be beholden to them.
Cherish Orinda, as Scott Zeller does.

Owen Murphy
Orinda

Editor:
One overlooked function of a city council is to support or oppose legislation in the state Legislature. On February 17, 2009, the council passed Resolution 18-09 by a vote of 5-0 to endorse Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 9 by Assemblyman Jared Huffman. That ACA would have made it easier to raise taxes on Orindans by lowering the voter threshold for approving special taxes from 2/3 to 55 per cent. I voted for McCormick, Severson, and Worth in their last bids for council, but their support for state legislation to make it easier to raise taxes on homeowners in a difficult economy has forced me to withdraw my support this November and I would urge other Orindans to not support them, either.
Thank you for consideration of my views.

Cordially,
William Weber
Orinda

Editor:
For many years, Sue Severson has brought great energy and resourcefulness to the many challenges facing Orinda. From infrastructure to the arts, Sue has worked to bring the community together to meet these challenges. Sue actively involves all interested parties in the community, listens to every point of view and attempts to build consensus to develop the best plan of action for Orinda. Her approach in public service is to maintain a respectful attitude toward all participants in the process, foster open and responsive communication, and focus intently on fiscal responsibility.
In her current term on the City Council, she serves on several key City committees, including the Audit Committee, the Finance Advisory Committee, the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee; the Public Works Aesthetics Review and the Lamorinda School Bus Program.
Our city has benefited greatly from all of her hard work both on our City Council and in her previous role as Orinda School Board Member. Orinda needs capable, responsible City Council members like Sue to keep our city strong. Sue believes that we succeed in maximizing the quality of life in Orinda only through a collaborative effort partnering with the community, schools and business.
Please join us in voting for Sue Severson for Orinda City Council.
Thank you.

Mark and Marcie Tuttle
Orinda

Editor:
The five of us are former mayors of Orinda and have a continuing interest in our community. Because that interest includes Orinda's future, we are enthusiastically endorsing two candidates, Amy Worth and Dean Orr for the City Council election in November.
We served on the Council with Amy Worth and know firsthand that she is a dedicated, hard working Council member whose experience will be valuable to the Council as it moves forward with the important issues Orinda faces. Dean Orr will be a new member of the Council, but we have had the privilege to observe him on the Orinda Planning Commission for the past six years. He has been an outstanding member of the Commission and has served as its Chairman the past 3 years. We have been impressed with his fair, open minded and practical approach to the issues with which the Planning Commission deals. He has no agenda except to do what is right for Orinda. We are confident he will be an excellent member of the Orinda City Council.
Please join us in voting for Dean Orr and Amy Worth.

Sincerely,
Bill Judge, Joyce Hawkins, Laura Abrams, Gregg Wheatland, Allan Tabor
Orinda

Editor:
Voting day is fast approaching on November 2, 2010. We would like to ask the residents of Orinda to join us and give Julie Rossiter their vote of support for Orinda School Board. Julie is an ideal candidate for this important role.
Julie has lived in Orinda for over 6 years. Her children and family love the schools and community that they have called home. Previously, Julie has

volunteered in the classrooms, as Del Rey Parents' Club Annual Fund Treasurer, Co-Chair of Operations on the school auction, Co-Chair of the annual parents gathering, Representative of the parcel tax campaign, and is the current Del Rey Legislative Representative to the Las Trampas Creek Council. Julie became an attorney and practiced as a litigator in employment law. She will work hard and serve the Orinda School Board well. She has the ability to understand complicated issues. She will negotiate with others in a style that is positive, yet effective to navigate through this difficult time when funding is immensely challenged.

We have known Julie and her family for 6 years. She is the kind of person we want representing us! She is kind, thoughtful, smart, an engaged mother, friend, wife and active member of our community.
Julie is endorsed by all five current members of the Orinda School Board: Jack Bontemps, Matt Moran, Pat Rudebush, Riki Sorenson and Pam West. Please join us in supporting Julie Rossiter for one of the three open seats for the Orinda School Board. She will serve us all well!

Best,
Karla and Michael Vukelich
Orinda

Editor:
Choose the Right...Vote for Sue
There are lots of voices that want to be heard in Orinda on any issue, but few choose to step forward to truly and selflessly serve the people. Sue Severson is one of those.
Sue has helped lead our community through these tight and challenging times, and no one can refute that she has had the best interests of all Orindans, especially our youth, always at the forefront of her agenda and her actions. She has demonstrated this long before her current council term through her many years of dedicated volunteer service on numerous Orinda causes, and is deserving of your vote this election to another successful term on the city council.
Vote for fairness, honesty, and dedication. Vote for Sue Severson.

Michael & Annette Linney
Orinda

Editor:
I urge your vote to elect Sarah Butler to the Orinda School District Governing Board.
Sarah has worked as a volunteer at all levels to support Orinda schools and to protect its excellent, cost-effective educational programs. For over 10 years, she has served on school site councils, Glorietta, OIS and Miramonte parent clubs, and the Education Foundation of Orinda. That work has given Sarah a broad perspective and understanding of key issues that the Orinda School Board will need to manage to maintain its excellent schools with shrinking resources.
Having also headed the Las Trampas Education Legislation Team, Sarah is a go-to person about State budget and legislative issues that affect our schools. More than ever, the future of our public schools and budgeting will require sophisticated knowledge about what's happening in Sacramento, and Sarah is uniquely qualified to address the challenges ahead.
Elect Sarah Butler to the Orinda School Board.

Diane Oshima
Orinda

Editor:
Chris Severson is an Orinda native who is passionate about Orinda and its schools. He greatly appreciates the excellent education he received here and is committed to keeping the quality of education high for all current and future Orinda students. Chris will work hard to use our limited resources efficiently and to keep class sizes small. Chris served as Chairman of the Orinda Family Science night in 2008 and has worked on numerous school fund raising projects to bring in additional funds to supplement the schools. Chris will bring great energy, intelligence and collaboration to the difficult task of navigating our schools through the upcoming challenges. In these difficult times, we need leaders like Chris who will listen to the community and work with all stakeholders to come up with the very best solutions for our children.
Please join us in supporting Chris Severson for Orinda School Board.

Rick & Nancy Booth
Orinda

Editor:
I am writing to recommend Julie Rossiter, Chris Severson, and Sarah Butler for Orinda's school board. They are all well-informed community volunteers who have a good understanding of the issues the district faces. Furthermore, they all are focused on student learning and maintaining the excellence of the district.
School board members need to have a broad view, encompassing all students and all schools. I strongly believe that Rossiter, Severson, and Butler are the best candidates to fulfill this important civic duty. They embody Orinda's values—excellent education for all students.

Linda Landau
Orinda

Editor:
In a town that prides itself on its schools and a longstanding tradition of community support, one candidate sees the Orinda School District as a train wreck. In trying times of severe budget cuts, electing a candidate who is angry, confrontational, and arrives with an agenda will sow distrust and disunity, and waste time that should be spent addressing the issues facing the district.
Bekki Van Voorhis-Gilbert showed her true colors at the Candidates' Forum on October 7th, flaunting the fact that she is not endorsed by any current board members (nor any Orinda public officials, I note). And it is no wonder, with her abrasive attitude and negativity.
It appears that Ms. Gilbert has spent substantial sums on her campaign, yet failed to disclose her expenditures to the county elections office by the October 5th deadline -- rather hypocritical, given that "disclosure and transparency" are central to her stated platform. When angered about yard sign limits imposed by the city, she brought in the ACLU to engage the city attorney (at Orinda taxpayers' expense).

We need officials who will roll up their sleeves and work for our kids, not throw punches. Please elect Sarah Butler, Julie Rossiter and Chris Severson for the good of our community.

Jim Landau
Orinda

Lafayette Candidates

Editor:
Lafayette City Council Needs Traci Reilly!
In the upcoming November election, Lafayette residents will vote to fill two City Council seats. I strongly encourage you to vote for Traci Reilly. One of the impressive qualities of Traci's is her commitment to community service and civic duty. I met Traci through Lafayette Juniors, a women's service organization in town dedicated to helping those in need, where she demonstrated polished leadership skills in several board and chair positions, including two terms as president. For ten years Traci dedicated countless hours that helped people in our community. Whether it was heading up one of our fundraisers for the year (Kitchen Tour and Rummage Sale) or through delivering Meals on Wheels, making comfort pillows for women with breast cancer, making blankets for foster children, and cleaning up the Community Center Tot Lot, Traci worked with enthusiasm and terrific organization.
In recent years it is evident that Traci's involvement with city issues has taken the forefront of her efforts. Public safety is a major focus as seen through her time spent to increase police staffing, serving on the Crime Prevention Commission, and her leadership in the passing of the solicitor's ordinance.
Traci has the ability to make everyone feel connected to the community. She is an interested listener and also an effective communicator who has a genuine understanding of the public's interests. Her interest in civic affairs and service is clearly evident and her community experience is solid. Traci is a natural fit for Lafayette City Council, and I encourage all Lafayette residents to vote for Traci Reilly!

Amy Parlett
Lafayette

Editor:
In this year's Lafayette City Council race, Don Tatzin offers years of experience and brings demonstrated commitment, innovative solutions, a history of careful land-use planning, and a prudent fiscal management style to the position.
Don knows that good schools are a critical element of a successful community and sought greater cooperation with the school districts. At the request of the Lafayette School District Governing Board, Don participated in the recent strategic planning process.
Don conceived of the first citizen Financial Review Committee in the 1990's, which resulted in the Council improving the efficiency of government services. During the past decade, the City has put more money into police services and roads while maintaining a balanced budget. We have lived in Lafayette since 1968 and have seen the downtown become more vibrant with improved public landscaping and more shopping choices. Simultaneously, neighborhoods are protected from excessive development and the views of largely undeveloped ridgelines remain. Don chaired the Hillside and Ridgeline Committee that created enhanced protections for our most visually attractive ridges.
We support Don because he will bring four more years of thoughtful leadership to the Council.

Carol and Bob Singer
Lafayette

Editor:
The Lafayette Homeowners Council Candidate's Night on September 30 ended while residents were still attempting to pose questions. This is an open letter to Brandt Andersson that states what I did not get to say then. The very character of Lafayette is under attack. It has been under attack throughout the entire Downtown Specific Plan process, and it is under attack by you. These attacks, if they succeed, will be irreversible.
Here are my observations. You feel that in deciding the fundamental character of our town you have the right to totally disregard the views of the overwhelming majority of residents. And you are misrepresenting your record and views during this election.
When zoning for the "Christmas Tree Lot" diagonally across from Acalanes High School was before the City Council this year, dozens of residents and their homeowners' associations voiced their views. They unanimously opposed multifamily zoning that would allow apartments and condominiums. They wanted to preserve the semi-rural character of this vital gateway to Lafayette, and wanted to avoid exacerbating traffic problems. You belittled their understanding of the measure up for vote, utterly disregarded the sentiments they were expressing, and voted for multifamily zoning.
With respect to the DSP, repeated surveys and public statement, including from the LHC, other homeowners' associations and dozens of residents, have expressed overwhelming support for maintaining the small town character of the Downtown that is enshrined in the current General Plan. You have not. My involvement in battling the DSP was prompted in significant part by your statement that you favored urbanizing ("semi-urban," you called it) the Downtown. You have consistently supported substantially increased building heights and population densities throughout the Downtown that, if adopted, would dramatically change it.
Your campaign hides all of these facts. Your introductory speech at the LHC Candidate's Night talked about "keeping an open mind" and listening to residents. You have not done so. You do not respect our wishes. And now, in this campaign you do not candidly state your record or your views.

Eliot Hudson
Lafayette