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Letters to the Editor
... continued

Editor:
I urge all residents of Lafayette to vote for incumbents Don Tatzin and Brandt Andersson for City Council. They have worked hard and long for all of us and they deserve our support. Unlike many cities, Lafayette holds a AAA bond rating and does not have pension problems dragging down its finances. We also have a beautiful library and ample amounts of open space. All these wonderful attributes were provided under the careful and watchful eyes of these two Councilmembers. I was so sad to see one candidate, Traci Reilly, resort to distasteful and incorrect criticism of these Councilmembers in an effort to gain votes. Please help me in retaining our fair, open-minded and honest incumbents in office.
Pattie Tinley
Lafayette

Editor:
This letter is in support of Lafayette City Council Candidates Don Tatzin and Brandt Andersson, and at the same time critical of campaign information disseminated by challenger Traci Reilly. I know Don and Brandt to be excellent council members who are hard working, respectful of differing viewpoints and accessible to residents of Lafayette. This is opposite of what Reilly points to in her campaign material; she refers to them as "entrenched and insular." That characterization is unfair, unkind and inaccurate. The city of Lafayette enjoys financial stability because of thoughtful management by the council and staff. Reilly's literature says that the city projects "huge deficits in 3-5 years." This is a half-truth that doesn't recognize that the city has long-range forecasting and makes mid-course corrections as needed. As a result, the City has run General Fund surpluses for the past 10 years. In addition the City has ample reserves. Lafayette's redevelopment agency can be credited with upgrading and improving the quality of life in our downtown, and for being part of the funding package for the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center and Veteran's Memorial building. Reilly's advertisements charge the city with "wasteful spending" and borrowing with "low bond ratings." In fact, Lafayette is one of 169 cities nationally with a AAA credit rating. The RDA's latest bond was rated "A."

Reilly said the Redevelopment Agency is "out of business," but that is playing fast and loose with the facts. Yes, the State took redevelopment funds from all cities this year, but the RDA will receive more tax money next year, and for 14 more years. The library is a wonderful asset to the community. The project did, in fact, require a General Plan Amendment to increase height limits along Golden Gate Way. Candidate Reilly's material paints with a broad brush; it claims the city amended the general plan eight times in the past eight years "in favor of higher density and increased height limits." On the surface that would sound irresponsible, unless the context for each decision is taken into account. I've learned over the years that it's best to try to correct misinformation promptly and directly. Before writing this letter I addressed some of these points personally to candidate Reilly at the candidates' night at the community center, specifically concerning her misinformation about the Redevelopment Agency, and asked that she correct her campaign information. She chose to ignore that request.
Sincerely,
Anne Grodin
Lafayette

Editor:
I urge you to vote for Brandt Andersson and Don Tatzin for Lafayette City Council. Both men have proven themselves to be intelligent, effective, hard-working, responsible public servants. They approach situations with astute insight, balanced and thoughtful reasoning and clear understanding of the needs and values of our community. These challenging times call for the type of capable leadership which Brandt and Don provide.
Sincerely,
Janet Thomas
Lafayette

Editor:
I have had the privilege of working closely with Brandt Andersson on Lafayette's Environmental Task Force. I've found Brandt to be a highly intelligent, thoughtful, diplomatic leader who knows how to listen and can make sense of complex issues. The bottom line is that I trust his judgement and rest easy knowing that he's helping to make smart decisions for Lafayette. Brandt's dedication and experience serving the community is truly impressive and I sense that he cares deeply about the quality of life in Lafayette. Prior to serving on the Council, Brandt was Director of the Lafayette Community Foundation, Chair of the Lamorinda Trails Committee, and Chair of the Lafayette Public Safety Implementation Committee. I hear complaints about city council members from friends in other cities, but I don't have any. On the contrary, I feel incredibly lucky and grateful to have such a highly effective city council, who have combined prudent management of city funds, with great accomplish-

ments like the new Library and Acalanes Ridge acquisition, and constant improvements downtown. Lafayette is truly a thriving city compared to other similar cities and the current council deserves some of the credit. I urge Lafayette residents to re-elect Brandt Andersson to the Lafayette City Council.
Thanks,
Steve Richard
Lafayette

Editor:
I am writing to support Brandt Andersson and Don Tatzin for Lafayette City Council. I believe their ability to manage Lafayette's finances prudently and thoughtfully both historically and going forward will serve Lafayette well in this critical period of challenging economic times. In 2008, I served as Chair of the Lafayette Finance Review Committee. Following months of rigorous review and analysis by our resident committee, we found Lafayette has generally done a very good job of identifying and capturing opportunities to manage the taxpayer's money with prudence without significantly altering the provision of city services. In fact, the city has identified and executed several impressive projects by leveraging outside sources of revenue, requiring very little if any general fund dollars. In addition, the committee found that Lafayette's expenditures are in line with peer cities and in some instances, Lafayette appears to be more fiscally prudent than many of the cities in our study. The Committee did identify cost reduction opportunities, and recommended the city pursue some but not all of these opportunities, weighing the cost savings against the risk of lost or reduced services to the community. The City Council implemented many of our recommendations, including using parking revenue to maintain the downtown, renegotiating contracts at lower rates with many vendors, adopting a mandatory staff furlough, analyzing options for acquiring police services from another provider, and directing city commissions to fund more of their activities themselves. There is certainly more work to be done and I am confident that Brandt and Don will lead the effort to spend the money available to the City wisely. I encourage my fellow residents to re-elect Don and Brandt to the Lafayette City Council.
Daniel Deitrick
Lafayette

Editor:
In Lafayette's upcoming City Council election, Brandt Andersson and Don Tatzin offer leadership proven through accomplishments that have protected and enhanced our town and the lives of its citizens. In these difficult economic times, Lafayette has remained fiscally sound with consistently balanced budgets and healthy reserves. We have a vibrant downtown supported by public landscaping and parking. We have protected hillsides, conserving the landscape that is so much part of our identity. We have a first class library serving all generations with innovative learning programs. We have new community institutions, like our recently initiated Farmers Market, which bring neighbors together. Each is a remarkable accomplishment and the result of the committed, quiet, thoughtful, and open leadership demonstrated by Brandt and Don. Don brings tremendous experience and knowledge to the Council. He has consistently worked for the values that make Lafayette the community that it is. He chaired the committee that developed the regulations that now protect our hills. He provided the leadership that brought our community together to build our new Lafayette Library. Having served on many volunteer citizen committees with Brandt, I have seen first hand the qualities I expect of a candidate for Lafayette's City Council. He is a person of integrity and values, first of which is a commitment to listen and bring together diverse points of view in solving problems. We need leaders who can weave together the varied interests in our community, who see the common thread in the many voices of our town. It was Brandt who defined the concept of a semi-rural community for Orinda, a value that I have seen him promote in governing Lafayette. His work on Lafayette's Environmental Task Force, from which the Farmer's Market emerged, has worked to give Lafayette a sustainable future.

For Lafayette, the challenge lies in what seems like an increasingly unsure future. Wise, thoughtful, experienced leadership has never been more important. Brandt and Don bring precisely that and I urge my neighbors and fellow citizens to support them on election day.
Tom Chastain
Lafayette

Editor:
As longtime community volunteers and former elected officials, we both share a keen interest in our community and its leadership. We have each had the opportunity to work with our Mayor, Brandt Andersson and Council Member Don Tatzin in varied situations, from library fundraisers to community liaison meetings to city council meetings. We have always found them both well-informed on all topics related to Lafayette's city government. They are creative and cooperative in developing solutions to all problems that arise, and are always open to differing viewpoints regardless of the source. It is clear that they see themselves as part of a governing team

that includes not only their fellow council members and Lafayette's many commissions and committees, but community groups and citizens. Lafayette has a tradition of cooperative, creative government, and Brandt and Don are a key part of that successful tradition. We are pleased to support them for re-election to the Lafayette City Council and urge our fellow citizens to support them as well.
Judy Carney, Mary McCosker
Lafayette

MORAGA CANDIDATES

Editor:
I am writing to proudly support Ken Chew for re-election to the Moraga Town Council. I believe Mr. Chew to be a tireless and an almost unbelievably dedicated volunteer in service of the people of the Town of Moraga. I have seen him at all the events around town that I have attended or participated in myself. I am grateful for Ken's support of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce where I serve as a volunteer. Ken's achievements while serving on the Town Council are many and vital. As this year's mayor Ken has presided over a balanced budget. He has begun the process of evaluation and potential enactment of recommendations of the Revenue Enhancement Committee. He has engaged Kimco as they've reorganized their ownership of the Rheem Park Center. He has begun the process to update the Town's website. He is involved, along with the Chamber of Commerce, in bringing St. Mary's College more into the life of the town. He has overseen the completion of the Moraga Center Specific Plan. Did I mention his involvement with the Hacienda, the Moraga School District and our police protection? And he does all this with a full time job and family to care for.
Please vote to re-elect Ken Chew.
Larry Tessler
Moraga

Editor:
The Town of Moraga needs Dave Trotter on the Town Council. In my dealing with Dave over the years I've always found him to be an individual who is capable of looking for solutions to problems that often polarize the Town. He exhibits the essential traits necessary for a Town official. Dave takes the time to be knowledgeable about the issues and respectful of differing points of views. Too often issues become emotional and it's important to have members of the Town Council who can rise above fray and create common sense solutions. This is why I will be casting my vote for Dave Trotter for Town Council.
Christina DaRozza
Moraga

ORINDA CANDIDATES

Editor:
I urge your vote to re-elect Sue Severson for Orinda City Council. Sue is a tireless citizen leader who has been dedicated to building a strong community for the 20+ years I have lived in Orinda. Her service on the Orinda City Council for the past four years have been a logical extension of many years of service on the Orinda School Board, Orinda school parent club boards, and church and humanitarian service. As a member of the City Council, Sue has been unique for her personal efforts to increase ongoing communications that build strong communities. She regularly sends emails about issues in our community, to encourage citizens and families to reach out and get involved in Orinda Clean-Up Days and other community service events and celebrations. Sue is hard-working, thorough, meticulous, and frugal. She is well-equipped to balance strategic initiatives with an understanding of the nuts and bolts needed to get the job done efficiently and cost-effectively. In a small town with very limited resources, we need City Council members who can justify priorities and funding obligations to keep Orinda a thriving, vital community.
Re-elect Sue Severson.
Diane Oshima
Orinda

Editor:
For the 8 years I have known Sarah Butler, she has been actively involved with Orinda schools, working long and hard to help the children and the community. Sarah has demonstrated year after year her passion for making Orinda schools better. She is the most knowledgeable and active person running for the School Board. As a former Parents Club President of Glorietta Elementary School, I had the opportunity to work with Sarah. She consistently volunteered to help on issue after issue. She had a good attention for detail, and would tirelessly work on issues until they were resolved. Sarah has experience at all educational levels - class room volunteer, Parents Club Board Member, active leader for EFO and both Measure A and Measure B, Co-Chair of the Las Trampas State Legislative Team - and much more. She has done it all - and still has the passion to give her all to the School Board. She knows the issues facing the Orinda Unified School District, and is prepared to take action. Sarah Butler would be an outstanding School Board

member - that is why I, and my husband Bruce, are supporting her and ask that you do too!
Diane Ramsey
Orinda

Editor:
Those of us in Orinda have an opportunity to impact the future of our children by voting for three new members of the School Board. Julie Rossiter is a candidate who we believe should get your vote. Julie is extremely hard-working. She has been actively involved in Orinda schools, volunteering in a variety of roles for the Parents' Club at Del Rey. She is thoughtful and analytical - skills that are key for addressing the current and future challenges in our district. With increasing budget constraints, there are no easy fixes. It will take innovation and collaboration. Julie is well-suited for the job - she brings the necessary skills, plus a proven ability to solve problems. As a Board member, she will be a good listener and communicator, and will work effectively with all constituents. Julie's slogan, "Committed to Excellence," is an apt description. We believe that Julie will be a committed school board member, who will strive to represent the community, and who will work hard to maintain and improve our excellent schools.
Julia & Chris Stenzel
Orinda

Editor:
As parents of children in the Orinda schools, we have had the opportunity to work alongside many parents, teachers, school board members and district administrators in our community. We have all been involved in leadership positions within our schools and community supporting education. Several of us attended the candidates for the Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees forum last week and walked away concerned about the confrontational approach of some of the candidates. While there is always room for improvement and opportunities to think "outside the box" to bring efficiencies to our district, it would be very destructive for our community and our schools for board members to bring a negative attitude to this process. It has only been through hard work, respect and partnership that our school district has weathered these tough budget years with many programs and small class sizes intact. Though there are areas for improvement, our district is not broken. With this in mind, we whole-heartedly endorse Julie Rossiter, Chris Severson and Sarah Butler for OUSD Board of Trustees. We believe these individuals are smart, thoughtful and collaborative. While they are not opposed to new ideas and taking a hard look within our own walls, they will work toward solutions in a positive way. More tough decisions lie ahead for our schools, and we strongly feel the OUSD will be in a more sound and productive place with these individuals working on behalf of our children. We urge you to support these candidates on Election Day.
Mindy Becker, Wendy Bond, Courtney Chandler, Amber Gates, Joan Kiekhaefer, Yosh Neugebauer, Janet Riley, Shauna Simmonds
Orinda

Editor:
With regard to the proposed Downtown Plan to raise the building height in Orinda on the block that includes our most vibrant area of commercialism (which includes Nation's, Europa Hof Brau, our Hardware Store, Loard's Ice Cream to name a few that would be demolished, never to return, should this Downtown Plan be enacted) it's easy to sit back in an armchair and say, "wait, I don't like that plan and we should be not Re-Develop under the guise of "Revitalize" our downtown with multi-story condos and cookie cutter retailers that have no relevance to me." It is another thing altogether to say that, and then actually do something about it, like what Scott Zeller is doing. Zeller is an experienced leader, trustworthy, and believes the future of Orinda is best decided by the majority of all people in Orinda collectively versus a small group. With his help, we can have a real "revitalization" with improved storefront facades, more greenery, and a boost to small businesses that are indeed relevant to our community. We have five candidates running for Orinda City Council, and each voter may select up to three on the ballot. Scott Zeller has my vote, and hopefully one of yours to preserve all of the semi-rural characteristics that enticed me, and perhaps you, to move to Orinda.
Respectfully,
Susan Winchester
Orinda

Please submit
Letters and Opinions:
letters@lamorinda
weekly.com