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## Letters to the Editor

Editor:

It was always a rule in my family that talking politics was rude. Reading about budgets or even knowing who my state senator was, was never important to me. Maybe unfortunately, but I think I am most people. I'm ordinary. I'm regular. I'm a 35 year old wife, mother and businesswoman who votes but votes republican at times and democrat at others. I vote from my gut and I vote on issues. I'd rather read Us Weekly than most newspapers (present company excluded).

Not anymore. Over the past few weeks I have learned more than I ever wanted to about tax extensions, budgets and who is my representation in Sacramento. Why have things changed? My child's school is about to lose their science lab program, their K-5 music program, many days of school and teacher's aides. This is a short list of the things she will lose and I live in an advantaged district where parents kick back \$1000 a year to help save some programs. Most children are not that lucky.

Things have changed for me because statistics like "California is ranked 47th in the country on school spending" really get to me. The idea that teachers are the bad guys kills me. My daughter's teacher spends more time with her than I do and in no way does she deserve a pink slip every March. That is no "thank you" for what she does every day.

I am a level headed person that likes to understand both sides (see my voting record) but whoever works PR for the GOP needs to get the boot. CA GOP is looking pretty evil right about now. I know that many members of GOP leadership have kids that are teachers or grandkids that are students. I have to think they care about schools and are smart enough to understand that consistent and well funded schools are good for the future of California. I think they are smart enough to listen to the people who voted them in when they say that they want tax extensions (these aren't even new taxes!) to make sure schools in their own districts don't lose more and more programs. This week is going to be a big week in Sacramento. Many decisions will be made that will impact California children. I hope that all members will look back to what they learned in their early years of school: work together.

Now let me get back to my Us Weekly.

Andrea Rich

Lafayette

Editor:

The 2010-11 Tri-Agency Meetings ended inconclusively on April 11. FAIR and OrindaCARES presented two different analyses regarding tax funding of MOFD which produced two very different conclusions.

FAIR based its analysis on the concept upon which Orinda voters created MOFD: that taxes from Orinda taxpayers should be used for services in Orinda. To the extent that firefighters based in Orinda provide significant services to outside Orinda, Orinda should be compensated. To the extent that Orinda residents receive significant services from outside Orinda, the taxpayers should be willing to pay for those. Using actual tax and operation records, FAIR demonstrated that Orinda taxpayers are currently paying over \$1 million annually for services they are not receiving. In fact, they are subsidizing the services used in Moraga, have been doing so for years, and the problem will become worse in the future if adjustments are not made. This was not what Orinda taxpayers voted for in 1997 when they agreed to form MOFD.

OrindaCARES based its analysis on the same concept that MOFD used at an earlier Tri-Agency meeting: That there is a service dividing line about a mile north of the Orinda-Moraga border. They claim that all service north of that line is provided by Orinda stations and all service south of the line is provided by Moraga stations. Dividing taxes along this line, with \$800,000 of Orinda property taxes going to pay for Moraga stations, they believe proves that there is no funding inequity. The flaws in their argument are (1) the line they chose was based on assumed operations and not actual operations and (2) there is no such line as a wide area on both sides of the border is served by both Orinda and Moraga based units. In reality, 15% of all Orinda equipment operations are to incidents south of the supposed "dividing line" and 8% of all first responders to incidents south of this line come from Orinda stations. If you do use their "dividing line" to separate taxes paid but adjust for actual operations that cross the line, the analysis results in the same funding inequity by Orinda taxpayers that the FAIR analysis shows; over \$1 million annually.

Details of this comparison of the FAIR and OrindaCARES analyses can be found on the FAIR website: [www.FairForOrinda.org](http://www.FairForOrinda.org).

At the conclusion of its presentation to the Tri-Agency, FAIR called on the Orinda City Council to create a Citizens Emergency Services Task Force to thoroughly investigate the funding inequity claims including the fact that MOFD can solve this with no harm to itself. The Task Force should also generally review the status, needs and desires of the community with regards emergency services so that Orinda is aware of and can reasonably manage its emergency services.

Steve Cohn

Orinda

Editor:

Lafayette's committee to raise taxes wants more money from residents. Road & Drain tax #4 is in the works. This committee is secretly spending \$6.4 million to convert the old library into city offices. Their deeply indebted redevelopment agency secretly borrowed \$5.2 million from the general fund. That totals \$11.6 million that could have been spent on roads, if the committee to raise taxes chose to. Since Road & Drain tax #1 passed in 1995, they have tried Road & Drain taxes two more times. In 2004 they based it on assessed valuations. In 2007 they based it on units. Both times they wanted to go deeper into debt. They raised \$32,768 for propaganda, to the opposition's zero in 2007.

In the 2007 election, voters were required to phone the city office to receive information about the debt and their unit assessment. The directions were at the end of the voter information pamphlet's legal analysis, What a sneaky low down trick. .

This committee to raise taxes, is everyone on the Lafayette City Council, The Lafayette Homeowners Council, The Lafayette Taxpayers Association, The Chamber of Commerce, some Realtors & some members of the various school boards. According to the city clerks records, Republicans Don Tatzin & Don Lively have put their names & money on the most city tax measures with four each..

Republicans also initiated two police tax measures. Their monetary support came from bankers, venture capitalists, lawyers, developers & CEO's.

The money to support the three Road & Drain measures came from city council members, city commissioners, Realtors, developers & firms who have received or are expecting to receive contracts from the city.

Bruce R. Peterson  
Lafayette

Editor:

Thanks to the support of this wonderful community, Measure B passed with a strong 74% of the voters' support and, as a result, the Lafayette public elementary and middle schools will receive approximately \$6.4 million in stable funding over the next four years. This means a great deal to the 3,200 students who are currently in these schools, as well as those who will follow them. We truly appreciate your help as we try to maintain excellence in our schools during these tough economic times. We could not do it without you and we thank you for being our partners. While many people in Lafayette recognize how lucky they are to live in this amazing community, we feel especially fortunate. Thank you for reinforcing our schools and reminding us of one of the many reasons we continue to "Love Lafayette."

Gratefully yours,

Juleen Lapporte and Corrine Christensen  
Lafayette

Editor:

A successful community event like the Moraga Community Faire on Saturday, May 14, is successful only because so many people and organizations come forward with their time, talents, and financial contributions. The Moraga Chamber of Commerce is grateful to its members who took significant jobs, but also to the many members of the community at large who put their leadership skills and creativity towards this event. The Chamber is indebted as well to 14 Moraga businesses who contributed financially as Faire sponsors. The Moraga Country Club was the premier sponsor this year. The other businesses that gave substantial support were: CVS/Pharmacy, 5A Rent a Space, Mechanics Bank, and Moraga Royale, as well as the Lamorinda Weekly, Neighborhood Computers, Dr. Scott Lothamer, DDS, Wells Fargo, Moraga Retreat Care Homes, LamorindaWeb, Rheem Valley Shopping Center, and Senior Helpers. Though not a business, the Moraga Park Foundation funded the climbing wall. Several smaller businesses contributed prizes for the Happy Hour raffle drawing, while still others gave discounts for services rendered and/or a donation of their service. A BIG THANK YOU to ALL for your support. Businesses like these deserve the support of all Moraga residents, and we can give this by remembering to "SHOP MORAGA FIRST" all year long.

Ellen Beans  
Moraga

Editor:

Ellen Beans! She is a champion. She is my hero. She is a role model for all who aspire to being a leader. She is the one responsible for the terrific Moraga Community Faire. Oh, yes, she had a lot of help. But it is Ellen who organized the venture, who rounded up the wonderful and generous sponsors, the one who organized 80 folks to set up a booth that entertained, fed and educated us all, the one who convinced the myriad of volunteers to sign up and serve and the one who marshaled all these varied elements into the cohesive force that produced the most successful Faire yet! (She's already started arranging for the sun to come out next year).

Ellen is just about the most modest and dedicated community leader I have had the pleasure to know and work with. Well, one of three anyway. She is a behind the scenes kind of leader who never seeks the spotlight. She just

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