



Letters to the Editor



Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. **email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com**; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

"Throw the Bums Out!"

The cry of some letters to the editor regarding the upcoming Orinda City Council election. These opposition letters reject four candidates for City Council as unworthy. The letters support two inexperienced, nonetheless passionate, candidates. Letters supporting these opposition candidates are fervid. Choleric. Exaggerated.

Misbegotten, Misdirected.

To the contrary, the Council has been careful, deliberative, "tuned-in," seeing the "big picture."

1. Road repair: The Council commissioned an independent poll and saw 2/3 support for a \$20 Million bond issue. Measure J, passed (June 2014; 75% yes vote) reflected such community views. A textbook example of the Council staying in touch. (One of the two opposition candidates for City Council signed the ballot argument urging rejection of Measure J.) Now the opposition complains that Measure J's victory didn't represent Orindans' views. "Our way or the highway!"

2. Housing: The Council followed California law (protecting losses in road funding) by zoning a small, land-locked parcel at Santa Maria Church for higher density. This zoning may never lead to construction of moderately priced housing. The Council adopted a deft, locally based approach. Not enough for the opposition.

3. The Council applied the City's General Plan and zoning ordinances squarely, evenly to deny placement of a nursery school in the downtown retail area. (The Planning Department advised the nursery school that success was a "long shot.") Opposition letters? The Council is an enemy of "family values."

4. The City has a slowly deteriorating downtown. Opponents have no plan, nor interest, to attract downtown investment. Instead they cry of an unholy alliance of the Council with "collaborating, crony developers."

As forty-year residents of Orinda, we believe that four candidates for City Council would most appropriately occupy a City Council seat: Two community members (Robert Thompson [Chair, Finance Advisory Council] and Carlos Baltodano (former Chair, Planning Commission) and two current council persons (Amy Worth and Dean Orr). Though three council seats are open this election, all four are worthy of our respect and support. They represent caution, care, compromise, listening to the community, respect for law, the big picture.

Respectfully submitted,

David W. and Sandra S. Anderson
Orinda

Editor:

A pernicious assertion that I've heard repeatedly from Orinda's civic leaders and at least one candidate for City Council is that older Orindans need and want to move from our homes in the hills, presumably into apartments concentrated in downtown Orinda.

Nothing could be further from the truth. I'm one of those aging Orindans. I've lived here for 36 years and spoken to a great many Orindans during that time. None—not one—has ever evinced a desire to do that. In fact we moved here specifically to avoid living cheek by jowl with our neighbors. We spent many years paying for our homes, paying taxes, supporting government services and schools, and working at jobs to allow us to remain in our semi-rural homes in our older years, finally able to enjoy the fruits of our labors.

Please don't use an "aging" population to justify construction of densely packed small houses and apartments in downtown Orinda. The putative "demand" for these units by older residents is a complete fabrication.

Bill Brown
Orinda

Editor:

In our era of sound bite news, it's much easier to be opinionated than informed, and it's all too easy to cast disagreement as a lack of listening. In a democracy, we need to do better.

Having had the distinct privilege of serving on the Orinda school board for 12 years, I have come to understand the qualities needed for successful governance. Community trust is, perhaps, the single greatest asset any elected official can hope to earn. I can say without hesitation that each of the 12 individuals I served with over the years always acted in a manner that earned that trust.

I also understand the frustration of having to make solid decisions when there are no perfect solutions; of adhering to the very laws intended to ensure open communication or protect students' and employees' rights to privacy that, at times, appear to stifle open dialogue; and the necessity of balancing competing demands for limited resources. The issues may change, but the people we elect next month will deal with these difficult challenges as they work on our collective behalf.

School board incumbent Julie Rossiter, and city council incumbents Dean Orr and Amy Worth have proven their mettle. They are honest, fair-minded, intelligent, problem solvers who deserve to be re-elected. Similarly, school board candidates Hillary Weiner and Jason Kaune, and city council candidate Robert Thompson have been vetted through their countless hours of volunteer work on behalf of our schools and community. Each of these candidates are motivated by giving back to the community and moving us forward to keep our schools strong and Orinda the place we want to call home. They have earned my trust and my vote.

Pat Rudebusch
Orinda

Editor:

Julie Rossiter is running for reelection to the Orinda School Board. She is the candidate who has my vote. I encourage each and every voter in Orinda to vote to re-elect Julie Rossiter to the school board.

Julie has been a dedicated member of the school board for the last four years. As a returning trustee, the experience Julie Rossiter brings to the Board will be invaluable.

Julie is dynamic, committed and honest. She truly values excellence in education and is passionate about public school education in Orinda. She uses her background as a former attorney to get things done. She is the mother of three school-aged children who have been attending Orinda schools for the last 10 years. She is incredibly knowledgeable about our school district.

Experience, unwavering commitment and the vision of a team that will work hand-in-hand with parents, teachers, administrators, students and the community are crucial. With Julie's strong, experienced leadership and perseverance, excellence will continue to be the standard for our district.

Endorsed by current and former school board trustees, all five city council members, as well as numerous education leaders, Julie Rossiter is the leading candidate. I wholeheartedly support Julie Rossiter in her re-election to the Orinda School Board and ask you to vote for her as well.

Sincerely yours,
Kimberly Thomas
Orinda

Editor:

After four years on the OUSD Board of Trustees and as current President, I have decided to not seek re-election. In large part, this came about by my knowing we have two great, new candidates who have stepped up to serve on this important board.

Jason Kaune, an Orinda native and now Sleepy Hollow parent, has the talent and the independence to be a valuable member of the OUSD board. He is fiscally minded and brings a tremendous amount of collaborative energy. Most recently, he has been helping Orinda tackle the tough problem of improving our roads.

Hillary Weiner has a passion and enthusiasm for Orinda schools and education. As an OUSD board member, she will bring valuable experience coordinating efforts as a parent club president between students, parents, school staff, EFO and the broader community.

Despite difficult constraints and decreasing funding from the state of California, Orinda has remained outstanding in student education. This excellence draws families to the area and maintains home values. Julie Rossiter has served with me on OUSD's board since 2010 and has been everything I had hoped for in a team member. Under this board's direction, we have increased communication and transparency, hired many new excellent teachers, principals and staff, and provided superior education all without raising taxes.

I encourage you to join me in voting for Jason Kaune, Hillary Weiner and Julie Rossiter as the best candidates to lead our Orinda schools into the future.

Christopher Severson
Orinda

Editor:

Orinda schools are important. Have you ever heard a candidate for Orinda City Council say that good schools are not a priority? Neither have I. Do you think the following actions demonstrate genuine concern for our schools: voting against an application to re-build a long-standing Orinda Montessori preschool in another part of the city, or voting to overturn a 5-2 Planning Commission approval of this application? How about encouraging high-density housing in Orinda without considering the consequences of the influx of new students on our classrooms; is this evidence of high regard for our schools? I don't think so, either. Eve Phillips, former Miramonte valedictorian, will actually take steps to preserve the academic excellence that formed the foundation for her academic achievements at MIT and Stanford and subsequent career accomplishments in the Financial and Technology sectors. Linda Delehunt has spent a career in Education and truly understands its value to our community. That's why I'm voting for only Eve Phillips and Linda Delehunt in the Orinda City Council election.

Bruce London
Orinda

Editor:

Please join me in supporting Dean Orr and Amy Worth for reelection to the Orinda City Council.

I have had the honor of serving on the Council with Amy and Dean, and I have a deep appreciation for their individual areas of expertise and knowledge.

Amy has accomplished so much for Orinda: from working collaboratively with the School District to build the Wagner Ranch gym for the community, to crafting a private-public partnership to build the Orinda Library and provide the highest number of open hours in the County. Serving as our representative on many regional agencies, Amy has brought us additional dollars for senior transportation, increased recycling choices, and completed the fourth bore of the Caldecott tunnel on time and under budget.

Because of Dean's ability to work through every detail with the builder, we now have world class playing fields at Wilder, as well as at the new Pine Grove Park field. Dean has demonstrated his fiscal prudence by balancing our budget, increasing our reserves, and ensuring that Orinda has no unfunded liabilities. And as the parent of 2 OUSD students, Dean and his wife Alissa have been active school volunteers and Dean has worked to deepen the strong relationship between the City and the School District.

And have I mentioned the roads?! Both Amy and Dean have been instrumental in creating the plan to repair Orinda's roads and drains, and, more importantly, actually implementing that plan. We are now beginning to see the result of their hard work, as road projects are underway throughout the City!

Amy and Dean are doers, not talkers. Because of them, we have accomplished a great deal during the last few years. But there is more to do; finding additional revenues to complete our road repairs, working closely with the community to make sure we continue to have a very safe community, and working to provide more services and amenities in our downtown.

Please join me in sending Dean and Amy back to work on the Orinda City Council!
Victoria Smith
Orinda

... Letters to the Editor continued on page A10

Why Buy A New Car?

2015



\$52,950 +

Higher Insurance Costs \$
Higher Financing Fees \$\$
Higher DMV Fees \$\$\$

Does your current car still fit your needs?

Studies indicate it is more economical to repair vs replace.



2008

PAID FOR

Do you need a free honest consultation about whether or not your vehicle is worth keeping?

Our services cost less than you may think!

Orinda Motors

Your Affordable One-Stop Solution for Service You Can Trust!

63 Orinda Way, Orinda, Ca. 94563 (925) 254-2012