

Letters to the Editor ... continued

Lafayette School Board

Sturm for Lafayette School District Board

Dear Editor,

As a Lafayette Unified School Board member, I have worked to ensure a world-class education for all students while maintaining fiscal responsibility. I support Rob Sturm because he embraces this same ideal. Rob believes, "We are fortunate to have a wonderful school district and superintendent and fantastic teachers and staff. Nevertheless, there are opportunities to regain fiscal stability and improve upon Lafayette's academic preeminence."

California's unstable school funding requires districts be fiscally disciplined. To protect against cuts in down economies, our district maintains reserves which we have historically avoided spending in up economies. However, we recently approved a budget with an \$800,000-plus deficit which leaves us below reserve levels recommended by experts. Projections show our reserves being exhausted within the next two years. When asked about this at a candidates' forum, the other candidates gave flip responses about passing another parcel tax. Rob Sturm was the only candidate to answer that a parcel tax should only be used as a last resort, particularly given that we recently passed a \$70 million bond and a permanent parcel tax. Rob used his professional training to review our budget and identify areas of inefficiency that could be addressed without affecting the education students receive. His assessment is sophisticated, substantive and reflects his professional expertise and a respect for the burden that parcel taxes place on our residents. We need that kind of thinking on our board.

Rob is also dedicated to ensuring a preeminent education for all our students. We provide an exceptional education to most of our students. However, there are valid concerns that we may not be adequately serving our special needs and gifted students. As an attorney with experience providing equal opportunity counseling, Rob has expertise that will benefit our special needs community and our district by avoiding unnecessary legal expenses. Rob also wants to see our district actively consider accelerated academic offerings (an area we have recently reduced). Rob will be an advocate for all our students.

Please vote Charles ("Robert") Sturm for Lafayette School Board. Nancy Wallace Lafayette

Vote Meade and Kindhouse

Dear Editor,

I am writing today to express my concerns regarding recent posts on "Nextdoor" and statements at a recent debate by one of the candidates running for Lafayette School Board.

Last week, a candidate posted messages stating that the Lafayette School District was in dire financial condition. Then, during the PTA Candidate Forum on October 25th, the candidate stated again that the district would be fiscally insolvent by 2018. This type of alarmist rhetoric is concerning. Uninformed stakeholders can easily over react to such language: teachers wonder whether they should look for new jobs; parents worry about losing educational programs; seniors wonder what a district bankruptcy might mean for housing values.

I have been in banking and finance my whole career, I have a pretty solid understanding of what insolvency means: it means your long-term liabilities are greater than your assets and that you do not have the cash flow to service those liabilities. It means you are on a path to bankruptcy or, in the case of a school district, a potential take-

over. The Lafayette School District is not insolvent, far from it.

Not only is it supported by an affluent and growing local tax base, but the district owns property all over town (e.g. White Pony) and has millions of dollars of assets with substantial equity value. For these reasons, I was discouraged by what Rob Sturm had posted on "Nextdoor." I felt sure that going bankrupt in one year wasn't feasible – and a bit of research proved that feeling to be true.

When Rob claimed district insolvency again during the recent PTA debate, the other two candidates jumped in to correct him. They referenced district data and pointed people to the district website.

I've never written a letter to a newspaper before, but what the community is hearing and seeing is distressing. No election is worth causing fear amongst parents, teachers, and citizens of our district. For these reasons, I am clear in who I am voting to be added to the Lafayette School Board: Meredith Meade and Mark Kindhouse. I urge you to do the same.

Alec Thompson Lafayette

Sturm for Lafayette Schools

Dear Editor,

One of the primary reasons my family moved to Lafayette in 2010 was because of its schools. My family, and the entire Lafayette community, place enormous importance on the level of education provided to our children. We have the best teachers, aides, assistants, staff, administration and school board in the world and, as a family, we are profoundly grateful to them.

I know that Rob Sturm feels the same. It's imperative that we continue to enable premier education for our kids and I have complete trust and confidence in Rob to work collaboratively with the board to do so. I'm voting for Rob for Lafayette School Board and I encourage you to do the same.

Rob brings a seasoned background and skills that will aid the District in meeting the need to maintain and enhance high-quality academic standards while also ensuring that Lafayette's School District is operating as cost-efficiently as possible. His experience as a nearly 25-year attorney with a proven track record of fiscal diligence and problem-solving will help the district save substantially in order to ensure fiscal stability and redirect non-value-added spend to productive purposes such as enhanced academic offerings and teacher pay and eliminating the District's deficit spending.

Not only will Rob will provide the board with a proven leader who has a well-established record of success and ability to bring fresh perspectives to the table, he is a thoughtful, kind and committed resident of Lafayette -- and an exemplary father -- who is fully dedicated to supporting the future of our incredible community.

Please join me in voting for Rob Sturm for Lafayette School Board.

Cameron Burks Lafayette

Orinda School Board

Weiner, Hoxie for OUSD

Dear Editor,

I am writing to recommend both Hillary Weiner and Cara Hoxie for OUSD school board. I know each of them personally and "professionally" through serving together on the EFO Executive Board. We're lucky that these two competent women have stepped forward to offer their skills to help ensure the continued excellence of Orinda K-8 schools.

Hillary is the only candidate who has students in the district and will lend this perspective along with her experience holding executive level

positions on both the Parents' Club and EFO boards. Cara's three-year leadership as co-president of EFO, her proven ability to work with all types of groups and stakeholders and knowledge of this community where she grew up and raised her children are also invaluable assets.

It takes decisiveness, diplomacy and collaboration to get things done on the Orinda school board and these women have those qualities in spades.

Wendy Bond Orinda

Moraga Town Council

Korpus Has What it Takes

Dear Editor,

I have served on the Moraga Planning Commission with Kymberleigh Korpus since her appointment several months ago. Since joining the commission I have found her to be thoughtful, attentive to detail, and open to the views of her fellow commissioners. She frequently elevates the quality of both the discussions and decisions. She is always well prepared.

Conflict is to be expected when dealing with some of the complex and contentious issues before us. Each of us brings our own experience and style to the meetings. I believe some of the conflict that has resulted in apparent negative feelings towards Commissioner Korpus is a result of style differences. Her process is lawyerly and methodical. In planning meetings her questions build a structure of facts that moves toward an informed decision of the situation at hand. She often brings to light information that would otherwise not be explored without her persistence.

For the time she has been on the commission, I have found her to be intelligent and analytical; she does thorough research on the topics presented. Her legal training enables her ability to thoroughly analyze the decisions before us. She is aware of the potential loss of our semi-rural look, school over-crowding and increasing traffic congestion due to consequence of growth.

I support Kymberleigh Korpus in her run for Town Council. As a longtime Moragan she is committed to maintaining the quality of life and character of our town, which makes Moraga the special place it is.

I have written the above opinion as a private citizen. Suzanne D'Arcy Moraga

Fritzky for Town Council

Dear Editor,

I am a mom active in a BSA Troop #234 in Moraga. I have assisted serving on the parent committee for our troop with town council candidate Jeanette Fritzky when she was the troop's Treasurer. I would like to share with you why I feel that this woman is the person for the position on the Moraga Town Council for this upcoming election.

I was very secure and confident with Jeanette Fritzky when she was our BSA Troop Treasurer. She has the skilled communication that facilitates understanding of financial details with poise. She demonstrated being able to communicate effectively not only to the parents in the troop/parent committee, but to the Scout Master, other scout leaders and to our local scout district. She accounted for our financial budget and assisted with planning, fundraising and cost-cutting where needed.

Many members in our parent committee not only are active in our troop as scout leaders, but have very high level positions of responsibility during their daily professional lives as business and government leaders. They all respected her integrity, consistency and ability to help maintain a balanced budget of the Troop.

These parent members all appreciated Jeanette's impeccable manner in documenting, and reporting with transparency and consistency in a timely manner. When Jeanette suggested needed interventions or changes, the Troop Committee too acted by listening to her. This is where the Jeanette's philosophy for her campaign of "LISTEN. REASON. ACT." stands out to be tried, and true to me.

Jeanette, also dedicated her time and talent to our troop even though her son had accomplished his Rank of Eagle Scout. I trusted her credibility, not only by working with her on a monthly basis for a year. I am also impressed by her educational and professional work history as well.

She has also worked on the Survey For Moraga Residents involving our major shopping area in Moraga, as well as having served on the Moraga Park's & Recreational Committee. I believe Jeanette Fritzky is not only capable but also has the ethical professionalism to become elected to the Moraga Town Council. Cheryl Ku Moraga

Wykle, Korpus for Town Council

Dear Editor,

The Town of Moraga is losing its precious semi-rural character and quality of life. The upcoming Town Council election will determine the future of Moraga.

Graig Crossley, commendable as his many years of public service are, cannot be counted on to protect Moraga's scenic corridors, hillsides, ridgelines and vistas from over-development. He fought against MOSO as a former council member, and he has not changed. He is part of Moraga's old guard, which has given all it could and earned the right to retire.

Jeanette Fritzky, though apparently accomplished in her private and professional life, has no experience in Town planning and processes. She has yet to develop a voice of her own, and appears to take guidance and direction from Moraga's old guard.

What is needed now is an infusion of new energy by those who have shown leadership and dedication to Moraga's core values and principles. An ideal candidate would also demand greater governmental transparency and accountability, while encouraging a more openly participatory process.

Kymberleigh Korpus is such a candidate. As my colleague on the Moraga Planning Commission, I have seen her carefully examine facts, listen to and challenge opinions, and actively engage the public. She asks tough questions from all sides of the issues, and gives clear reasons for her decisions. Even though some Planning Commissioners have opposed her candidacy because they object to her willingness to question the merits of others' decisions and to take a stand against the approval of the City Ventures project, they have come to grudgingly respect her due diligence and ability to identify important issues. She has demonstrated the needed experience and leadership, and needs your support to ensure the town adheres to its own policies and procedures, and is held accountable (e.g., Key Performance Indicator metrics).

Roger Wykle will bring his calm, capable, and creative analytical skills to enable the new solid majority in the Town Council to ensure Moraga's bright future.

Thus, as a private citizen, I urge you to vote for Korpus and Wykle for Moraga Town Council.

Ferenc Kovac Moraga

Candidate Responds to Criticism

Dear Editor,

This letter is in response to Mr.

Immel's letter dated Oct. 19.

Mr. Immel is making his recommendation based on 30-year-old information. Who makes decisions for tomorrow and the future based on 30-year-old information? I hope Moraga does not.

Let me be clear: I am absolutely in favor of preserving and maintaining Moraga's open space and ridge lines. Open space was one of the main reasons my wife and I were drawn to Moraga, as is true for many Moragans.

In terms of the issue from 30 years ago, at the time the Town Council felt that the Moraga Open Space Ordinance (MOSO) would actually limit the council's ability to preserve and protect open space. After the vote to pass MOSO, developers filed suit to overturn the vote of the residents. The town council, including myself, used all of our legal means, then costing tens of thousands of dollars, to successfully defend the MOSO vote in court.

Two items he did not include: First, when mentioning Mulholland Ridge, he missed the briefing I received from the then Planning Director where he said I could not start from "0 units" when considering this development. The end result was several streets capped off with a few houses and over 300 acres of open space from behind Scofield Drive across the Mulholland Ridge to Camino Ricardo.

Second, in 1974, when the town incorporated, the county projected a population over 50,000 for Moraga. The town council, including myself, worked to eliminate the freeways through town that would have supported that population. Instead, the Moraga Country Club has a longterm lease providing open space and adding nine holes for their golf course.

In the past decades, it is clear MOSO is the cornerstone protecting Moraga's open space and ridgelines. Mr. Immel and I may have disagreed on the method, but I did and continue to support preserving Moraga's open space and ridgelines.

Graig Crossley Moraga

Out Town, Our Future

Dear Editor:

I ask with great urgency that Moragans vote for Roger Wykle. I keep hearing so many comments about the size and density of projects that are being built now -- e.g., on Moraga Road across from the Rheem shopping center, and on Camino Ricardo (where the homes are now spilling over on the backside of that hill and can be seen from the Moraga shopping center). Don't know about you, but the "story poles" that once were put up relating to these developments NEVER gave me any idea of the true mass of these buildings. And that's only the visual impact. The traffic and other results of the fine folks who move in aren't things that can be reversed. But the MANY future proposed developments are still in our hands right now with this election!

Roger Wykle was one of the few town council members who voted against these projects, who has championed a cautious approach to development, and who has stood firm for the protection of Moraga's remaining open space. Because the town is about to adopt new rules governing hillside and ridgeline development, we absolutely need his voice on the next council to protect what remains of our semi-rural town.

And for those wondering, I believe Korpus and Fritzky also have histories that display thoughtful support for our Town in this way, and will receive my vote.

Karen Chin Moraga

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.

Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorindaweekly.com