

Letters to the Editor

Note from the Editor:

Due to an incredibly large volume of candidate letters, for and against, we were only able to include one letter per candidate, but have noted if multiple letters were received.

Dennis Fay gets our vote

Dennis Fay was our neighbor for several years and was always a friendly “hello” over the back fence. His friendliness and interest in participating in neighborhood events showed a concern for what was happening on our street and in our town.

Dennis was an excellent appointment to the Roads Committee. With his background as the executive director of the Alameda County Transportation Committee, he was a perfect member for our Infrastructure Oversight Commission. Further, the fact that he was made chairman of the committee, suggests his fellow committee members recognized his leadership abilities and willingness to get involved. The committee should be proud of the major decisions they made for our city and its infrastructure... with Dennis at the helm.

We believe Dennis understands the issues facing us now and the budget constraints to carry them out. He has our city's interests at heart, now and for the future. We will be voting for him. Join us. Gayl and Harlan Hirschfeld
Orinda

(Other endorsements received by Orinda residents Richard Nelson, Elisabeth Jewel, Marcia Fick, Bill Judge, Jill Fernald and Charles Levine)

Amy Worth for Council

My husband and I enthusiastically endorse Amy Worth for the Orinda City Council. We have attended city council meetings and have been able to watch her as a representative of our city.

Amy listens to people, acts unselfishly in her decisions, and has a vision for the city. She responds quickly to concerns from citizens and is able to deal fairly with a variety of personalities. She works on solutions that will benefit the entire city as a whole.

Amy has integrity and is committed to public service. Please vote for Amy Worth for Orinda City Council.
Doreen and Bill Wagner
Orinda

(Other endorsements received from Orinda residents Ellen Dale and Bill Judge)

Stanley student raises concerns

I'm a student going to Stanley Middle School and I'm concerned about the route that me and many others bike riders take to school each day.. Going down Pleasant Hill Road is very dangerous and risk-taking for bike riders. I feel as if the cars coming from the freeway can lead to potential injury. I feel this way because there is vegetation blocking the visibility of the cars coming off the freeway. To solve this problem, I deem it necessary to cut some of the plants and bushes clearing it and making it easier to see cars is coming down.

Chase Caicedo
Stanley Middle School student

Greg Baitx, MOFD Board Division 1

I am writing to endorse Greg Baitx for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors Division 1. In recent years, MOFD has been governed by directors that do not put public safety as their top priority. After attending dozens of board meetings, it is very clear to me that a majority of the current directors have little to no understanding of how a fire department operates, other than the financial aspect. And based on Fire Station 43 being \$1.6 over budget and 18 months behind schedule, I question if that's considered a strength.

Greg's opposing candidate for Division 1 claims his top priorities are “high service levels, including greater emphasis on prevention through community education” and “fast emergency response times”. I'm curious as to how someone with zero background in “prevention” or the fire service in general, plans to accomplish these goals. This is where Greg Baitx's professional experience and expertise come into play. Greg knows the ups and downs of fire prevention, the history, why it exists, and most importantly, how to effectively implement and improve prevention in MOFD. With respect to response times, Greg has walked the walk, having worked in the fire service from coast to coast. From FDNY, to multiple fire agencies on the west coast, Greg knows what goes into making faster

response times because he has faced those challenges in the past.

It's time for a change; we need a director who doesn't have a one-track mind, instead, knows the intricacies of what is required to make the Moraga-Orinda Fire District a great organization that provides the best service levels possible to its citizens. Please vote for Greg Baitx for MOFD Division 1.
Chris Davies
Moraga

(Other endorsement received from Jackie Hoover of Moraga)

Michael Donner, MOFD Division 4

We are writing in support of Michael Donner who is running for the Moraga-Orinda Fire Department Board of Directors in District 4. We can say without reservation that Michael will be a tireless director who is committed to planning for and insuring public fire safety. In these times of severe fire events Michael brings his 30 years of experience to protect our community.

We have known Michael for over 10 years and have seen him work in numerous volunteer capacities. When we first met him, he was making sure our family had a plan for fire evacuation in our home and what we should do when we traveled. Some examples of his community involvement are: visiting kids classes and educating our youth on fire safety, managing Glorietta Elementary's Emergency Response shelter and the Great ShakeOut earthquake drills. He has also worked as a coach, and a board member of the non-profit, Random Acts, for over 14 years.

He is a committed community member, an amazing parent and a steadfast volunteer. Our community should be so lucky to have him on the Board.

Julianne & Chris Viadro
(Other endorsement received from Scott Mollahan, and Brian and Laura Millham of Orinda)

Nathan Bell for MOFD Division 1 for Fiscal Responsibility

As one who served as a CFO for a large public financial institution, I know the financial management of large organizations can be complex. While tempting to leave the “details” to middle management, ultimately, the senior officers and board of directors are responsible. I write today to encourage my fellow Moragans to vote for Nathan Bell for the office of Director of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, Division 1. I have known Mr. Bell for more than 25 years as a neighbor, friend and a member of my church. I know him to be a person of good will, well-educated and with significant financial acumen.

As previously reported, past MOFD boards of directors have allowed the MOFD deficit to exceed \$50 million on a net present value basis (assuming a 7% discount rate). If earnings on the funds set aside to provide for this liability fall short of 7% per year, which is very possible, if not likely, the deficit will balloon. For example, if a 6% discount rate is assumed, the deficit would be about \$75 million. For the sake of our children and future Moragans, we need to elect financially savvy individuals to the MOFD Board. Nathan Bell is such a person and I encourage your vote being cast in his favor.

Lou Helvey
Moraga

No for Baker

I thought dirty tricks went out with Tricky Dick Nixon! I was stunned yesterday to open my mailbox and see a mailer from Catharine Baker's Assembly campaign that tried to trick me into believing Governor Brown has endorsed her. The mailer contains a large picture of Governor Brown and a quotation about Catharine Baker, with a giant headline, “What does Democratic Governor Jerry Brown say about Assemblywoman Catharine Baker?” Anyone looking at this mailer would think Brown has endorsed Republican Baker. I couldn't believe my eyes, so I called Governor Brown's office and was told that no, Governor Brown has not endorsed her. So, what gives? In these tricky times, I need a candidate I can trust who has integrity and I will not settle for anything less. Catharine Baker just lost my vote. I am now supporting Democrat Rebecca Bauer-Kahan.

John T. Johnston
Orinda

Candidate Nick Kosla Supports Revitalizing Orinda's Downtown

For years, Orindans have looked on while

of our downtown has become...more tired, sleepy. I support a City Council candidate this November who supports a thriving downtown.

Nick Kosla grew up in Orinda. He and his wife Larissa, also an Orinda native, are raising their daughters here. Nick served as Chair of the Orinda Planning Commission and knows from experience what works and what won't in a small downtown. Nick focuses on listening to all.

Nick Kosla: Thoughtful, balanced, experienced, collaborative, committed.
David W. Anderson
Orinda

(Other endorsement received from Janet Pease of Orinda)

McCluer for Moraga

Please support Mike McCluer for Moraga Town Council to protect Moraga's hills, ridges, and open spaces.

Mike McCluer has an impressive record of service to Moraga, helping to realize the brand new All-Access Playground at the Commons with Moraga Rotary, and currently serving as a Moraga Planning Commissioner. With a successful career as a CFO under his belt, he can also offer valuable financial expertise to the Town.

In addition, McCluer has made open space preservation a priority, actively supporting stronger regulations protecting Moraga's undeveloped hills and ridges. The Town Council recently adopted such changes, making revisions to the General Plan and other codes, and McCluer was an active member of the community during that multi-year process, attending workshops and submitting comments in favor of greater protection for open space.

Now, the Bollinger Valley proposal for 85 new houses will come before the Council very soon. Moraga needs McCluer, with his long-standing commitment on this issue, to help ensure that Bollinger's prominent ridgeline, landslides, and steep hills are spared from the kind of excessive grading that just occurred at the Bellavista development on Rheem Blvd.

Moraga's candidates usually say they'll adhere to the General Plan's vision of preserving Moraga's ridges, hills, and scenery, but when the pressure is on that's easier said than done. Please vote for McCluer, who took the initiative to work for open space protection even before he became a candidate.

Jan Blumer
Moraga

Steven Michael Danziger for the MOFD Division 3

For the first time in 8 years voters will have a choice of candidates in the Moraga Orinda Fire Division 3 election. The choice should be a “no brainer” as only Steven Michael Danziger has any Fire Service or governmental experience. We emphatically endorse Steven Michael Danziger for the MOFD Board and urge others in the District to do the same.

We met Steven over 35 years ago when he was serving as a Commissioner in Hayward. Since then he has retired after an outstanding career with the City of Oakland, with his wife Leesa raised two sons here, and is known for his long history of volunteering with youth and community organizations. For his entire working life he was in the public sector. He worked 20 years as a civilian Administrative Manager with the Oakland Fire Department responsible for HR for approximately 700 employees. He speaks proudly of his work managing the care of firefighters on Workers' Comp and disability, and in the Oakland Fiance and City Managers Office under legendary City Manager Henry Gardner.

Steven's volunteering in the community goes back over 20 years. He was an OBA & OYA sports coach, Scoutmaster of Troop 57, and VP of a swim club. Steven is presently an Orinda Parks & Rec Commissioner, member of the Art in Public Places Committee and a UC Master Gardener. As an avid gardener he can be found monthly at the Moraga Farmer's Market speaking about UC based research and pesticide free gardening. He recently made his 69th Red Cross blood donation. He cares about others and is dedicated to public service

Steven understands how the fire service operates, he wants to make Moraga, Orinda

and Canyon a safer place to live, he knows about governmental budgets and loves living in this community. Steven will bring a unique perspective to the Board-someone who has experience in the Fire Service.

and government. Please consider voting STEVEN MICHAEL DANZIGER for MOFD District 3 Director.
Mark Dulberg and Marlene Ehlers-Dulberg
Orinda

Support for Gerringer

Teresa Gerringer is the best candidate for Lafayette City Council. I say this as a past Mayor and member of the City Council. Teresa has been a 19-year member of the Lafayette School board, active in her church, a 17-year member of the Lafayette Community Foundation, and on the committee to raise funds to build the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, as well as a past member of that board.

Teresa is an experienced, proven leader who knows every neighborhood and the many issues facing our city. She will further her work strengthening the city-schools partnership. Teresa will work to manage growth in Lafayette by adhering to the General Plan, to safeguard schools, traffic and safety impacts, while ensuring that we balance economic vitality and our community's special character. She will engage the community and listen to concerns and work collaboratively to find solutions, as she has in the past. And, Teresa will keep our city's government and finances transparent and accountable.

Teresa has already proven that she can roll up her sleeves and do the work to make our city the best it can be.

Anne Grodin
Former Mayor Lafayette

Support Dave Trotter for re-election

I encourage Moraga voters to support Dave Trotter for re-election to the Town Council. He has worked tirelessly for Moraga and his accomplishments bear that out.

As Mayor five years ago, Trotter proposed a process to update Moraga's rules regarding open space development to better reflect the values and priorities of Moraga residents. His efforts were effective and, after extensive public hearings, the Town drafted and successfully adopted last spring new rules that offer much more robust limits on ridgeline and hillside development.

Our town was recently hit with two major calamities in the space of one year—the Rheem sinkhole and failure of the Canyon Bridge—and yet, under Trotter's and other Councilmembers' leadership, the Rheem sinkhole has been fixed and the bridge was promptly reopened. Thanks to careful financial management over his past decade of service, Moraga had sufficient funds to draw from to pay for these major unbudgeted projects, and now approximately 90% of those costs are being paid back to the Town from state and federal funds.

Trotter has consistently demonstrated a strategic approach to issues, seeking the right solution with the interests of multiple parties in mind.

In 2007, he helped negotiate \$17 million dollars in developer payments to Moraga to compensate for the elimination of the golf course from the Palos Colorados development; in 2012 he campaigned hard to gain community support for Moraga's voter-approved 1-cent sales tax to fund street repairs; and in 2016 he helped find a practical solution to the Livable Moraga Road project which allowed for the creation of bike lanes, without sacrificing any vehicle lanes, as commuters insisted upon. These are just a few of his long list of accomplishments for the Town

I haven't agreed with Trotter on every issue, nor would I expect that in every case. But what matters in the end is the magnitude of his commitment and dedication to this Town, the untold hours he has given without compensation, and the consistent benefits he has produced for all of us.

Dave Trotter has been good for this Town, and we would do well to keep him on the Council.

Timothy Meltzer
Moraga