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HAPPY NEW YEAR
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Lamorinda board elections shatter tradition and protocol

By Nick Marnell

The reorganization of several Lamorinda public governing boards has been anything but routine the past two years.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District, which set the tone with an unprecedented reorganization in 2018, added to its legacy by electing Steven Danziger to a second consecutive term as board president Dec. 18. Traditionally – and that word has assumed less and less significance in MOFD elections – the district vice president is elected president for the succeeding year, but Craig Jorgens returned as vice president for 2020 after the board re-elected Danziger.

In 2018, the district bucked precedent by electing Danziger – a first-time board member – to the presidency to the dismay and disapproval of many district residents, who feared that Danziger, along with his two newly elected, union-backed directors, were plotting for the fire-fighters union to “take over the fire district,” as one

speaker warned at the 2018 election meeting.

The city of Lafayette also eschewed tradition and re-elected its mayor, though the reorganization came as no surprise and was fully endorsed by the vice mayor. Mike Anderson, who took over for Cam Burks after Burks stepped down as mayor in April, was re-elected by the city council Dec. 9. “I have a lot of learning to do before possibly filling in next year for Mike. I am very thankful that he is going to take this next year,” said Vice Mayor Susan Candell, who would traditionally have been elected to the mayoral post.

An unexpected twist occurred Dec. 17 during the Moraga town council reorganization. According to protocol and based on seniority, Council Member Renata Sos was next in line to be vice mayor. But two fellow council members argued that Sos, having been appointed and not elected to the council, should not assume a position putting her one heartbeat away from becoming town mayor. Sos withdrew her

nomination for vice mayor, not once, but twice. “It would be difficult for me to perform the job given the comments that have been made,” Sos said, and the council elected Kymberleigh Korpus mayor and Mike McCluer vice mayor for 2020.

Only the Orinda City Council facilitated a traditional reorganization, with Vice Mayor Darlene Gee succeeding Inga Miller as mayor Dec. 3.

Contra Costa County Supervisor Candace Andersen, whose District 2 includes Lamorinda, virtually won re-election because no one else filed with the county Elections Division in time to appear on the ballot. The only person who could oppose Andersen in 2020 is a write-in candidate.

Based on the recent history of elections of Lamorinda public officials, Andersen is taking nothing for granted. “If someone launches a write-in campaign, I will respond accordingly and run a full campaign myself,” Andersen said.

An open letter to State Sen. Steve Glazer and Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan

Dear Sen. Glazer and Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan,

California Assembly Bill 5, which affects how freelance journalists and independent contractors are classified and compensated, is now in effect as of Jan. 1.

Since the summer of last year we have spent countless hours trying to figure out how AB5 would affect the Lamorinda Weekly, the paper your offices once commended when we were honored as the Business Persons of the Year in Lafayette.

While shopping at the Farmers' Market today a resident identified me as the publisher of the paper and started to talk to me. (It happens occasionally.) The woman was explaining how important the paper is and how much she enjoys its existence before she turned sad, telling me about the closure of the Martinez Gazette, a long standing paper.

Are we next in line to go? I don't know yet. What I know is that our writers are expressing a "lost spirit" and I'm tired of dealing with issues that have nothing to do with bringing news to the community. I feel like my life has been turned upside down and I don't know how I deserve this. I'm told by the Publishers Association to get legal advice. As much I appreciate their support, this is a joke! I'm in an industry making pennies and I should hire a lawyer who makes \$500 an hour for a case in which I have not done anything wrong or created something that wasn't a problem to anybody?

AB5 is telling the news industry how to run this business, but I thought I was in "The Land of the Free." Or is this a country where the government wants to take over running the news? There might be good reasons for AB5 but when it comes to its effect on the news industry, it just erects more coffins waiting to be filled.

We contacted your offices before the vote on AB5 to sit down and give you detailed insight about our situation. The offer still stands. Have you ever thought of a bill exempting the news industry from AB5??

Happy New Year and all the best to you and your families.

Andy Scheck
Publisher

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