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NEWSPAPER
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Six candidates vie to fill three seats on the Orinda City Council

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House recently retired from the OUSD, where he served for many years as Director of Facilities. House noted that, "as an African American and former civil rights worker, I have dedicated my life to fighting for the rights of all people." House has worked for local, state and national governments, is a licensed contractor and has built 1,300 homes for Native Americans. A native of Michigan, he once ran the Michigan Senate and worked on Jimmy Carter's campaign for the presidency.

Iverson, chair of the Orinda Planning Commission

on which she has served for seven years, emphasized her 20 years of experience in commercial real estate. She graduated from Stanford with a degree in economics and architecture and also has an MBA and a law degree. Her parents were real estate developers who built Calistoga Ranch.

Janet Riley is also an attorney, who worked as a business and tax attorney for small businesses and nonprofits, before she had children. Since then, Riley has 30 years of experience volunteering in Orinda, from chairing the Fourth of July Parade to being president of the Educational Foundation of Orinda,

now ONE Orinda. She runs the social justice committee at Santa Maria Church, which has brought three refugee families to Orinda.

Rajaraman has started multiple technology companies, but credits his experience as being a dad of two young daughters at Wagner Ranch Elementary School as keeping him energetic and on alert at all times, while also giving him a firsthand look into the community, where he plans to remain for a long time.

Responding to public questions at the candidates' forum, all of the candidates acknowledged that private roads are of concern in

Orinda, but all thought that they would need further study before they could express an opinion or offer a solution. In response to a question of gun violence, most expressed the opinion that Orinda does not have a real problem with gun violence at this time. House pointed out that most gun violence results in suicide and domestic violence, which, he added, is really hard to regulate. However Malkani suggested that gun violence should be a big priority for Orinda, as gun violence is on the rise everywhere. Education is key, she said. House also noted, in a rebuttal answer, that he had been responsible for school safety at

the OUSD and had done a number of things. However, he said he is afraid of arming all teachers: "That's not a direction in which we should go."

All the candidates supported making Juneteenth an official holiday for Orinda, but wouldn't commit to banning gas leaf blowers, noting the potential effects on gardeners. Election day is Nov. 8. All citizens were mailed ballots on Oct. 10, which can be returned by mail, to secure ballot boxes, or to polling places. In-person early voting will take place on Nov. 4, Nov. 5 and Nov. 7. The closest early voting polling place to Lamorinda is Walnut Creek City Hall.

Letters to the editor ... continued

Chen, Kendzierski and Severson for AUHSD board

The Acalanes Union High School District's excellent high schools are the foundation of our communities and for generations have provided our students with a superb education, outstanding extra-curricular activities, and enrichment programs.

To ensure the continuation of this tradition of excellence, we enthusiastically endorse Jennifer Chen, Nancy Kendzierski and Chris Severson for the AUHSD governing board.

Chris and Nancy's prudent leadership and knowledge of complex educational issues have enabled the district to maintain its excellence, even amid the tremendous challenges faced in the last several years. Jennifer's deep familiarity with our schools, her commitment to all students, and sharp analytical skills will make her a productive and valuable member of the AUHSD board.

These are strong leaders who can be trusted, now and well into the future.

A vote for Jennifer Chen, Nancy Kendzierski and Chris Severson in the Nov. 8 election is a vote for continued academic and overall excellence in our high schools and a vote for all the students in the district. Teresa Gerring, Mayor of Lafayette

Matt Francois, Mayor of Walnut Creek

Steve Woehleke, Mayor of Moraga

Amy Worth, Orinda City Council Member

Severson for AUHSD board

As a former Orinda school board member, I know that in these tumultuous times it is more important than ever to remember the qualities that make a good trustee: the ability to listen to all viewpoints, to work together collaboratively, and to always keep in mind the best interests of the students. Chris Severson embodies these qualities and deserves your vote for re-election in November to the Governing Board Member of the Acalanes Union High School District.

Chris has been a strong advocate for public education for many years. He has the benefit of experience — not only has Chris served as trustee of the high school district these past four years, he served with me on the board of the Orinda Union School District from 2010-2014. As a fellow trustee, Chris always acted with the utmost integrity, and always kept the focus on what is best for students.

Chris will provide a voice for the Orinda community on the board. The high school district is composed of schools in

four communities: Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette, and Walnut Creek. Chris is the only current trustee from Orinda, and is the only school board candidate from our city as well. Despite the fact that Chris lives in Orinda, he also brings a uniquely balanced perspective to this role: Chris's children have attended Miramonte, Acalanes, and Campolindo high schools.

Chris is committed to maintaining and improving upon the excellent education our high schools provide. I urge you to vote for Chris Severson for Governing Board Member of the Acalanes Union High School District.

Julie Rossiter
Former Trustee, Orinda Union School Board (2010-2018)

Support for Chen, Kendzierski and Severson for AUHSD board

We can be very proud of the accomplishments of the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) over the past years and now. This is a dedicated community that cares deeply about Excellence in Education for all students.

We would like to recommend strong support for the following candidates for the AUHSD board to continue that excellence: Jennifer Chen, Nancy Kendzierski and Chris Severson. We know that these candidates have shown their dedication to lead in our communities. Their knowledge of the issues has been and will continue to be demonstrated. These are strong leaders who can be trusted. Please vote for these candidates in the Nov. 8 election to continue the excellence in our schools.

Former Acalanes Union High School Board Members:

Judy Carney
Kathy Coppersmith
Vanessa Crews
Tom Mulvaney
Margot Tobias
Fred Weil
Richard Whitmore

Shogan for OUSD Board

I have had the pleasure of getting to know Katie as she took on increasing roles of responsibility on our elementary school board while she simultaneously became a founding member of ONE Orinda, which is a critically important organization that supports our schools. In both of these volunteer roles Katie brought her wealth of knowledge regarding education, as well as her impressive leadership and personal skills. Katie is exceptional at getting things done, cutting to the heart of the matter and engaging with others with respect and diplomacy but also with a bias for action. Her past experience as a school board member and a California public

school teacher and administrator gives her incredible depth of knowledge about the challenges our schools are facing. Between her professional experience and what she has learned about our schools in her current roles, she is extremely qualified and would be an important addition to our school board. Please join me in voting for Katie Shogan for one of the three open seats on the Orinda Union School District Board.

Sara Cherry
Orinda

The choice is clear

Candidates should want to be heard by as many people as possible. Candidates should want to take advantage of every opportunity to engage with our community. They should make it easy for you to access their message and understand their platform. In return, they should make it easy for you to share your questions and concerns. If someone doesn't show up for you and our community, they haven't earned your vote.

School board members have to speak in front of people who are not necessarily their friends, who don't agree with them, or who even speak out against them. It's part of the job. Showing up for public forums is a basic prerequisite to show you have the skills to do what is asked of a public official.

Katy Foreman, Dave Smith, and Rob Sturm showed up for Lafayette on October 3rd, by appearing at the non-partisan forum hosted by the League of Women Voters - Diablo Valley and the Las Trampas Creek Council of PTAs. The other candidates did not.

The choice is clear. When you receive your ballots, please vote for Foreman, Smith, and Sturm for Lafayette School District Governing Board.
Justine Parmelee
Lafayette

Keep toxic national politics out of our school boards

MAGA partisans are attempting to invade and politicize our schools. Last year, a handful of Trump conspiracy theorists protested on the CA24 overpass after the 2020 election, bringing unwanted statewide attention to our otherwise friendly and politically moderate community. Recently, I learned that these same rabble-rousing elements are trying to turn our award-winning schools into a culture war battleground. Lisa Disbrow, one of the organizers of the Overpass Protests according to an interview she granted The DVC Inquirer, is running for Contra Costa Board of Education District 2, which includes Lamorinda.

Closer to home, Renee Nowac, Mark Woolway, and

Gabe Ledeen are attempting to gain seats on the Acalanes Union school board. Woolway was on Trump's 2016 transition team, and Ledeen is a member of the Federalist Society. If they win, we can look forward to board debates on banning books and "wokeness," directing attention away from improving our children's educations. Our top schools are the bedrock of our communities and the foundation of our property values. We cannot afford to sacrifice them at the altar of the right-wing culture war.

Mike Greene
Orinda

AUHSD governing board election

It has been a privilege to have served the students, and represented the residents, of the Acalanes Union High School District as a Board Member for the past eight years. Although I am not seeking a third term on the Board in November, the commitment to a high quality, inclusive, and thorough educational experience for every AUHSD student remains.

Thus, it is essential to reelect Nancy Kendzierski and Chris Severson. Our students and community will continue to benefit from their leadership, knowledge, and experience. Both have continually demonstrated a thoughtful insight into, and deep commitment for, meeting the needs of each one of our students.

It is also very important to elect Jennifer Chen. Jennifer is highly qualified, very knowledgeable, and will be a valuable addition to the Board.

I urge all AUHSD voters to cast their votes for Kendzierski, Severson, and Chen.

Bob Hockett
AUHSD Board Member
2014-2022

School elections more important than ever

I've never been more proud of our community. What should have been a sleepy election has unexpectedly turned into an urgent call of action heard by parents to reject an organized conservative ideological takeover of our excellent school system. And local families have responded with letters, posts, and donations of time and money.

The "trio" campaigns of Lind Larsen McSorley and Ledeen Nowac Woolway are part of a larger Republican movement in California to take over school boards to promote right-wing changes. "Revolt California" and "Leadership Institute" provide support and training, including videos from Ted Cruz on Critical Race Theory. If elected, these Takeover Trios will have majority voting power, thereby jeopardiz-

ing recent gains made in school issues including mental health, diversity and inclusion, sexual education, gender identity, belonging, and school safety. Furthermore, Lisa Disbrow is running for CCC Board of Education. If that name is familiar, she is the organizer of all the Trump "Stop the Steal" rallies on El Curtola Bridge. I shudder to think of the changes they could force on our children.

Let's not elect ideological, inexperienced voting blocks that are out of step with most Lafayette voters. I urge you to vote for Dave Smith, Katy Foreman, and Rob Sturm for LSD; Jennifer Chen, Christopher Severson, and Nancy Kendzierski for AUHSD; and Sarah Butler for CCC Board of Education. Michael Dawson
Lafayette

'No' on all school board incumbents

I ran for the Lafayette School Board in 2012 and won. As an establishment candidate I was supported by the self-appointed Lafayette "elite". My supporters included local politicians, philanthropists, then current and future superintendents, and the school board.

I'd checked all the right boxes - parent club president, parcel tax committee volunteer, member of the Lafayette Community Foundation Board, etc. I believed that bipartisanship was real and that people here wanted good things for everyone.

I took my Oath of Office seriously and, in 2016, I questioned deficit projections in the school district budget and opposed changes that diminished the math opportunities at Stanley. The backlash was significant and continues - my concerns were and are still unwelcome. The board culture of deference to the administration is not negotiable.

Sausage making is ugly and our non-partisan school board elections exemplify the process. "Unselected" parents, who don't hold political aspirations, have dared to place their names on the ballot. They've been ridiculed on local social media, and their children have been bullied at school. The incumbent and status-quo candidates, who self-identify as kind and inclusive upstanders, have shown themselves to be silent bystanders.

School boards exist to serve communities and students. However, the focus has shifted to political aspirations, social agendas and legacies. Vote "no" on all school board incumbents and establishment candidates this year and vote "yes" for kids.

Jean Follmer
Current Lafayette School District Governing Board Member