

# Letters to the editor

## Anonymous fear mongering can't win the hearts and minds of Lafayette residents

Having recently moved back to Lafayette, we were shocked to see a bright yellow flyer taped to a utility pole at St. Mary's and Moraga Roads on a recent morning walk.

With no group or affiliation listed, it boldly shouted a hysteric warning about the Lafayette School District, "Shhhh... WHAT THEY WON'T TELL YOU!" Upon review, it contained information out of context and links to anonymous web pages in what appeared to be a thinly veiled attempt to stir worry, fear, intimidation, and mistrust among our community's parents and students.

The flyer was posted on a corner frequented by students and parents walking to Stanley Middle School and Lafayette Elementary School. We have come to learn it was also distributed outside of a Lafayette School District parent education night in August.

Regardless of your views on the roles and responsibilities of public education, we are troubled by this misguided attempt to "inform" Lafayette residents. Is Lafayette a community that now silently tolerates fear mongering through this kind of odd, anonymous propaganda?

When our community has important topics to discuss, we should hear directly from elected local leaders and candidates. We need civic debate and discussion through public and transparent channels - not through anonymously posted outrage and hostility. And when we see nebulous, incendiary innuendo distributed in public, it is our responsibility to question the motivations of those spreading the information and to wonder why they won't have their identities attributed to the content.

We hope that in this election season, Lafayette models what it means to openly discuss and debate issues that are on peoples' minds - even when it's uncomfortable - in the public spaces and places designed to do so. We also hope that each individual local candidate will take a public stand against this kind of propaganda. It sits squarely in opposition to the character building which parents and schools work on daily with our children. Let's model what it looks like to take responsibility, be accountable for our words and actions and think critically!

Jon Deane and Laney Whitcanack Lafayette

**Lind, Larsen, and McSorely for the Lafayette School Board**  
I am writing to ask for your support in voting for Sarah Lind, Neils Larsen, and Robb McSorely in the upcoming election for the Lafayette School Board. I have a son at Burton Valley Elementary School and a daughter at Stanley Middle School. I am a former teacher in the district and have worked with the youth in our community in many capacities. I currently substitute teach in our Lafayette schools and care deeply about the future of our students.

Like many parents, I had never been to a school board meeting until our schools were forced to close their doors in March of 2020. At that point I spent many evenings attending board meetings and was disillusioned by the apparent disconnect between the voices of the families and the decisions of the board.

Lind, Larsen, and McSorely have children in our district and are dedicated members of our community. They are focused on partnering with parents and teachers to keep their voices and the student needs at the center of their decision making process. They believe in keeping our students safe, promoting academic excellence, and fiscal responsibility (which includes responding to the enrollment declines our district experienced over the last few years).

Join me in voting for Sarah Lind, Neils Larsen, and Robb McSorely for the Lafayette School Board.  
Tracy Morrison Lafayette

## In Support of Mike Roemer for MOFD Director

I've known Mike Roemer for almost 20 years through my lifelong friendship with his son Conor. Mike is deeply knowledgeable about fire safety through his years of volunteer work and has a proven track record in community leadership from his years in the DA's office. Even more important, Mike cares deeply about his neighbors and has a sense of integrity befitting a reputable community servant. At a time when fire safety in Lamorinda is more critical than ever before, we must elect leaders who will prioritize community safety and wellbeing above niche special interests. I'm confident that as a MOFD Director, Mike would look after the safety and best interests of all Orinda and Moraga residents in the same way he does his immediate family, and would devote fair and analytical deliberation to each and every decision. I hope to never see the day that Orinda is seriously threatened by wildfires, but the reality is that we face growing danger with the passing of each and every year. Now, more than ever, we need protectors on the MOFD board to ensure that our community is ready for all eventualities. Based on my almost 20 years of being around Mike, I can confidently say that if you value safety and integrity, and you want a MOFD director who will make the same decisions for the community that he would for his own family, then voting for Mike is the easiest choice you'll make during this election cycle.

Declan McManus Orinda

## Steven Danziger for MOFD Director

As a 50 year resident I have seen many changes in our area. One of the most dramatic changes in recent years has been the amount of property clearing that has been done, particularly along the evacuation routes. The MOFD Chief and the Fire Board have done a great job to make us all safer from wildfire. I believe we are very fortunate to have Director Steven Danziger as District 3 representative on the Board. Steven has impressed me with his understanding of the issues, his leadership, qualifications and responsiveness. Steven understands local government particularly operations of a Fire Agency.

Steven is running for reelection against an opponent who does not appear to have any experience in public service or fire. Steven has over 35 years in government including twenty years as Administrative Manager for the Oakland Fire Department. Steven was MOFD Board President for two terms and is now Vice President. Additionally, he is a MOFD Ambassador, member of the CERT Team, Chair of the Orinda Parks and Rec Commission, volunteers at the Orinda Library and the Orinda Nature Area at Wagner Ranch. If that isn't enough Steven is a Red Cross Super Donor who has organized blood drives and will soon make his 100th donation!

Steven knows the fire service at every level including operations. There is still much to be done and I know Steven is ready to continue the efforts to make our community safer. Please join me in re-electing Director Steven Danziger to the MOFD Board.

John "Bob" Heath Orinda

## Michael Roemer for MOFD Board

We have been residents of Orinda for the past 20 years where we have raised our family. Our children have attended Glorietta Elementary, OIS and Miramonte. We have enjoyed living in this great Lamorinda community having developed many deep and long lasting friendships. One of our dear friends is Michael Roemer who is running for a seat on MOFD Board.

We have know Michael and his beautiful family, his wife Julie, children Conor & Erin from the day when our children

attended Glorietta Elementary school over a decade ago. Michael has many strong qualities that makes him an ideal candidate to not only serve but do an amazing job in making our community an even safer place to live and raise a family. Michaels strong intellect, his integrity, humbleness, desire to make our community and the world a better place to live, truly sets him apart.

Join the Akazawa Family in supporting the Roemer family. Michael is a rare type of leader of which we strongly need more of, please elect him to serve on the MOFD Board.

Kindly Dean & Catherine Akazawa Orinda

## Public Comment on the Downtown Precise Plan (DPP)

Downtown Orinda as we have known it will be destroyed. The Vision, Guidance and Zoning proposed are not appropriate for Orinda to retain its village character. These documents are crafted to benefit developers and current landowners to destroy existing structures and build tall buildings with almost no parking in the DPP area. The economic reality is that commercial revitalization is not possible in Orinda - as is demonstrated by vacancies and stalled projects.

It is nonetheless realistic to encourage lower income housing to be developed outside the DPP particularly by increasing the allowed density on church properties and increasing the permissible size of auxiliary dwelling units (ADUs).

Orinda is and should remain a family-oriented bedroom community with excellent schools and not try to compete with adjacent cities for businesses.

I strongly object to what is proposed.

Charles Porges Orinda

## Support for Sturm, Smith and Foreman

The upcoming election for the Lafayette School District Governing Board has drawn deserved interest, with six candidates vying for three seats. For a community which prides itself on "Green Hills, Great Schools," it is imperative that the most qualified candidates serve our youth. Lafayette has three outstanding candidates to move our schools forward at this critical juncture: incumbents Rob Sturm and Dave Smith, and parent leader Katy Foreman.

Rob Sturm is in his second term as the District's Governing Board President. Under Rob's leadership, the Board significantly increased its meeting schedule to provide transparency and an opportunity for public input, led policy development resulting in new and un-

precedented fiscal reserves for the District which will mitigate any future challenges in state funding, kept student learning in the forefront with high expectations for academic excellence, and engaged in critical dialogue about diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging for all students and all families.

Dave Smith joined the Board in June 2021 after active parent involvement and a leadership role in the 2020 parcel tax election. Dave's participation in the Board has resulted in an increased focus on parent voice, new enthusiasm for sustainability initiatives, and an unwavering commitment to continued improvement in student achievement alongside the need for a focus on student wellness. He has been a foundational voice in efforts to highlight kindness in our schools and in the Lafayette community.

Katy Foreman has been a non-stop volunteer in the District, leading the Lafayette Elementary PTA, the District-wide parent committee, and connecting to policy issues through her work on the regional Las Trampas Council of PTA. Katy was the key planner for successful advocacy weeks that have brought elected officials into our schools to hear directly from parents. She led efforts to support traffic and safety improvements around schools, distribute COVID-19 home test kits, and served on the District-wide DEIB committee. Through her volunteer work, she has become an expert on school finance and policies.

These talented individuals representing the best of Lafayette deserve your vote and the opportunity to continue their service to our schools.

Karen Mulvaney Lafayette Citizen of the Year 2011 Lafayette Library Foundation Board 2006 - Present Tom Mulvaney AUHSD Board 2006-2014 LPIE Board 2006-Present

## Lafayette School Board Endorsement

To my fellow Lafayette resi-

dents: I support and endorse Katy Foreman, Dave Smith and Rob Sturm's candidacy for the Lafayette School Board and I want to share why. This November there will be three board seats open on our Lafayette Governing Board and who they are filled by will have a deep and lasting impact on our children's educational experience. As an involved school leader and former PFC President at Springhill Elementary, I have witnessed firsthand the opposition to valuing diversity in all forms, especially during board meetings the last few years. For me, our community's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) efforts in the schools matter. Supporting the creation of a culture of inclusion and belonging and preparing our children for the diverse world they are entering is important to me personally and I believe it is important for our community too. Dave and Rob have demonstrated to me time and again through their actions on the board to date that they are allies. Katy, while a new candidate, is deeply committed to DEIB efforts and I have personally spent countless hours with her in workshops and community building initiatives. I believe that supporting any candidates besides Katy, Dave and Rob would mean a major step backwards in terms of the progress and positive impact we've made as a community on DEIB matters.

It is important that Katy Foreman, Dave Smith, and Rob Sturm be elected because the other candidates and their vocal supporters have made it clear that they want to reverse the momentum we've built. Their "Back to Education" platform is an insult to the current teachers and administration in the district, and principally against what our family stands for. My hope is that you dig a little deeper into the details of all the candidates and what they stand for and who they stand with. To me the choice is crystal clear. Vote Katy, Dave and Rob!

Jeni Kim Lafayette

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 must be factually accurate and be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Lamorinda Weekly reserves the right to refuse publishing a letter submission. Visit [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) for submission guidelines. Email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, 1480 Moraga Road STE C #202, Moraga, CA 94556

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