



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published October 10th, 2012

## Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Make your vote count.

In a few short weeks, US citizens will have the privilege of voting. Along with that privilege comes the responsibility to become informed and to vote intelligently -- to make their vote count.

But how do you assure that your vote counts - that it actually supports your objective and your candidate - especially for those contests in which multiple positions are available (for example, the Town Council elections in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda)? Two points, in particular, should be understood by the informed voter:

1. If there are three positions available in an election contest, for example, the voter is neither obligated nor required to vote for three candidates. The voter may cast a ballot for zero, one, two or three candidates, depending on the voter's decision to support, specific candidates.
2. If the voter chooses to specifically support only two candidates, for example, and there are three open positions, casting a casual vote for a third candidate is called a "throwaway" vote. History has shown that throwaway votes can be very detrimental to the voter's intent - to elect their preferred candidates. In order to make this point crystal clear, consider the following simple example. It is quite possible that, after all votes are counted on election day eve, one of the voter's preferred candidates may have finished in fourth place - one vote behind the candidate for whom the voter cast a "throwaway" vote. This certainly was not the voter's intent and it absolutely was within the voter's power to control while completing the ballot.

Vote only for the candidates that you support. Think carefully before you cast a throwaway vote. The candidate that you defeat may be your own.

Frank Comprelli

Moraga

Orinda Elections

Editor:

Orinda has outstanding schools, among the best in the state. Credit for this belongs to the current school board in general and Matt Moran in particular, who have maintained this strong legacy in very difficult times.

This success is an ongoing challenge, especially regarding funding. The primary source of school funding in California is property taxes that are collected by the state, which doles them out to local districts based on ancient formulas.

On a per pupil basis, Orinda Union (OUSD) is near the bottom of the list. To keep our schools top notch, the community makes up the rest, providing about one third of OUSD funding.

Maintaining this fiscal foundation while emphasizing quality education is very challenging. In his tenure on the OUSD Board and as its President, Matt Moran has worked with the Board, the administration and the community to maintain a full 180 day school year; class size reduction in grades K -3; professional development for our teachers; and upgrades in technology infrastructure.

During his tenure, the Board has been collaborative and productive, which has made it very effective. Matt Moran has been critical in this success.

So please join us in voting for Matt Moran. Let's continue under his leadership to maintain the quality, fiscal foundation, and effective governance that keep our schools at the top.

Carol and Mark Penskar

Orinda

Editor:

In the words of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education." As November 6 approaches, "We the People" properly focus on the selection of individuals to serve us on the National, State and Local levels. As education is critical to our community and our nation, thought and care should be exercised when voting for our local School Board members. We write today in support of the reelection of Matthew Moran to the Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees.

Matt Moran has tirelessly served the Orinda Union School District for the last four years. As a member of the OUSD Board of Trustees, he has doggedly worked to provide the highest quality education for our children in this community. During this time of economic challenges, Matt's work with his fellow trustees has shielded our children from the impact of reduced funding from the State of California. He is committed to a balanced and rounded educational environment for all of our children. He has worked in a spirit of partnership with our teachers, administrators and parents. His focus and determination have been to provide the best educational opportunities to the children of the district.

We have reaped the harvest of Matt's toil. Our three children have benefitted immensely by the unparalleled education provided by the Wagner Ranch School and the Orinda Intermediate School. Matt has served them well for the previous four years. Were our children Orinda-registered voters, we have no doubt that they, too, would vote for Matt. Perhaps you fear our view is clouded by nearly a decade of friendship with the Morans? Do not only consider

the opinion of the Atkinsons. Matt Moran is also endorsed for reelection by every member of the Orinda City Council and four out of five Trustees of the Orinda Union School Board. Matthew Moran has selflessly served this community for four years. He is willing to serve again for the benefit of our children. We owe it to ourselves, our children, and our community to ensure that Matthew Moran be elected to continue his support for our students.

Respectfully,  
Dick and Julie Atkinson  
Orinda

Editor:

There will be a measure on the Orinda November ballot proposing a 1/2% sales tax on purchases in Orinda and on large purchases, such as automobiles, bought anywhere in the Bay Area. The proponents of the tax claim that some of the tax will go to Orinda residential streets. However, the Orinda City Manager refuses to state: (1) what portion of the tax will go to arterial and collector streets and what portion (if any) will go to residential streets, (2) which residential streets will get the tax money and what the repair will consist of, (3) when the repair will be done, if at all, in the 10-year duration of the tax.

Since the policy of the City in the past has been to spend road money only on arterial and collector streets, what reason do we have to believe that any of the 1/2% sales tax will bring any road repairs to Orinda residential streets? Since the tax goes into the City's general fund and can be used for anything, why won't the City give residents of private roads their fair share of the tax?

The Contra Costa County Grand Juries have repeatedly criticized the Moraga/Orinda Fire District for gross waste; however, Orinda City Council members Smith and Glazer voted not to appoint a committee to investigate how a financially effective Fire District could help in upgrading Orinda roads, an essential requirement for fire and ambulance service.

The City Council majority, including members Smith and Glazier, when asked to appoint a committee to investigate the waste in the Fire District, stated that it was not in their "purview" to review the service that another agency provides to Orinda residents. In other words, their buddy-buddy relationship with members of the Fire District Board of Directors was more important than reducing the waste in the Fire District.

We need new blood in the Orinda City Council instead of ineffectual new taxes. Please join me in voting NO on the 1/2% sales tax and in voting ONLY for Linda Delehunt for the Orinda City Council. She is in touch with reality.

Clyde Vaughn  
Orinda

Editor:

I've been Steve Glazer's campaign treasurer since he first ran for the Orinda City Council in 2004. So I know firsthand how hard he works to represent us fairly. Steve has brought a more analytical and thorough approach to the city council, and I think we've benefited as a result. He hears both sides before he makes a decision. He's worked to improve Orinda's home remodeling process, which was notorious for its difficulty.

He's also spent a lot of time and energy trying to get more funding for road repairs, and creating new citizen committees on infrastructure, finance, and safety. He listens, thinks, and has thoughtful responses to people and situations. He works hard for all of us.

Before he was on the city council, Steve was a long-time volunteer who, among other things, co-chaired two Orinda school parcel tax campaigns that have helped protect our schools from state budget cuts. He's done a lot of other volunteer work as well, at schools, swim meets, and other community events since moving to Orinda in 1996.

Steve (and our other incumbent city councilmember, Victoria Smith) has been endorsed by the Contra Costa Times. Let's re-elect a good city councilmember, Steve Glazer.

Linda Landau  
Orinda

Editor:

**We Need To Fix Our Roads!**

As a local Realtor I get to drive more of Orinda's roads than the average resident and I can tell you the condition of the roads drops off quickly once you get off the main through streets. I also get to see the look on home buyer's faces when we hit really rough patches or when I have to slow down to maneuver past potholes. One client remarked the roads looked like those in a third world country. As a real estate agent and as an Orinda homeowner I urge Orindans to VOTE YES ON MEASURE L because maintaining our roads is important to maintaining our home values.

Rick Booth  
Orinda

Editor:

**Is Measure L the Right Tax to Fix Orinda's Roads?**

While the City of Orinda will never fix its roads without new taxes, Measure L is not the way to get there. It is the first leg of a three part plan in which the other two parts (1) provide 85% of the total funding and (2) will never happen. If you want to have to wait five to ten years before you find out your roads will not be fixed, support Measure L. If you want your roads fixed sooner, reject Measure L and force the City to create a plan that will really fix Orinda's roads.

The Measure L sales tax will only provide \$650,000 per year. This is half the money the city needs to just maintain the current system. No money will be available for the 45 miles of poor and failed residential streets unless the major roads repaired over the past six years are again ignored.

The second and third legs of the plan are two \$20 million bond measures which will cost about \$200 per household each and require a 2/3 supermajority to pass. The recent Orinda poll said that only 46% of the voters would support a \$200 parcel tax. How many would support this second tax on top of a \$100 sales tax? Last year Lafayette voters rejected a similar tax that was only going to cost each household \$90.

The voters should also consider how such a failed plan came to be. It was a product of a City Council Road Sub Committee led by Mayor Glazer. During his 2008 campaign he stated that his top area of concern was roads. But it took him two and a half years to form a Road Sub Committee. The ten-year plan appeared for the first time eight months after the last public meeting of that committee. The plan was voted for unanimously by the full Council, including the second incumbent candidate Victoria Smith, four days after it was first made public by the Council. Maybe we need some new blood on the Council to come up with a real plan to fix our roads.

For more thoughts and details see [www.RoadToNowhere.info](http://www.RoadToNowhere.info).

Steve Cohn

Orinda

Moraga Elections

Editor:

Dexter Louie has our enthusiastic endorsement for reelection to the Moraga School District Governing Board. We both first got to know Dexter when we worked on his initial school board campaign 14 years ago! At that time we were both very involved in the Moraga schools and were very grateful that Dexter was willing to run for the School Board even though he had a very busy schedule with a full-time medical practice in San Francisco and positions on several volunteer boards. The Moraga School District was experiencing a period of extreme instability during that time with six different people occupying the Superintendent's office between May 1998 and June of 2000 when Rick Schafer was hired. Dexter was elected to the School Board in the midst of this turmoil and was instrumental in turning things around. Since that time, Dexter has gained valuable experience dealing with repeated painful budget cuts to our schools while working with the Superintendent to keep the district strong and innovative. His steadiness, experience and leadership will be particularly crucial for the next four years, given that the district will have a relatively new superintendent and two new principals and a majority of the school board members will be relatively new to the board.

Please visit Dexter's campaign website at [www.dexterlouie.com](http://www.dexterlouie.com) for more details about his background, experience and goals for the district. His background and involvement in community organizations are truly extraordinary. Moraga is very lucky to have such a dedicated public servant willing to continue to represent us for another term. We hope you will join us in voting for Dexter in November. Your support does make a difference to our schools and our community.

Trish Bare

Connie Barnard

Moraga

Editor:

We are excited to endorse Parker Colvin for the Moraga School District Governing Board in the general election on November 6th. Parker is a talented, thoughtful young man with the energy and skills that are needed in positions of leadership in our community in the current environment. Parker has an expertise in California public school finance that any school board would be fortunate to have. We should take advantage of his experience and willingness to serve. He also has skin in the game, folks, in the form of three adorable little kids. Parker has worked very hard to become an industry leader in California public finance. I know he will work just as hard on behalf of our schools and the kids in our community to ensure they have the same opportunity and preparation for success that our kids enjoyed. Cheryl and I chose to raise our boys in Moraga. Like the parents of their peers, we got involved early and stayed involved. Thanks to our schools and our community, our boys benefited from great academic and athletic experiences that prepared them extremely well for the college experiences they are now enjoying. We are so pleased to see young families like Parker's get involved to maintain our tradition of achievement and success. We can think of no one better to step up and contribute to our board, now more than ever, when financial expertise is so desperately needed in positions of leadership. Please join us in voting for Parker Colvin this November.

Thanks,

Joe and Cheryl Cushing

Moraga

Editor:

It is always a difficult process for me to choose who to vote for in the town council race. I keep returning to what brought my family to Moraga in the first place. For us, like many of you, it was for the schools, the beautiful open space and a sense of community.

Over the years we have witnessed these jewels of Moraga threatened. Our open space is shrinking under development pressures, our schools are vulnerable to the state budget crisis and lackluster economy, and the contentious relationship between the current town council and the community is discouraging.

Who among the candidates has demonstrated that these issues are a priority to him? As a member of the planning commission, Roger Wykle has upheld the General Plan's policies protecting open space even when he was the lone voice. With school-aged children of his own, he knows first-hand the struggles the schools are facing and has vowed to create a supportive relationship between the town council and the school board.

Most importantly to me, he has demonstrated respect for community members who wish to participate in the democratic process of running our small town. He listens with an open mind and a willingness to engage in

discussion. He has acted with integrity and the bottom line is that when I cast my ballot, integrity is the characteristic I seek. I urge you to vote for Roger Wykle for Moraga town council.

Kathy Macchi  
Moraga

Editor:

I'm writing to express my strong support for Roger Wykle for Moraga Town Council. I have observed him on the Planning Commission over the past several years where he has steadfastly defended the principles of the Moraga Open Space Ordinance (referred to as 'MOSO').

For example, when a developer proposed a subdivision ("Hetfield Estates") on MOSO-zoned open space that would have required nearly 200,000 cubic yards of grading and landslide repairs, Wykle objected, citing MOSO's purpose to "restrict development on steep and unstable slopes". When the developer pushed for a density increase to build 8 houses even though the land was entitled to only 2 houses under MOSO, Wykle argued for lower density consistent with MOSO. And when the Planning Commission ultimately approved a 7-home subdivision on this land, Wykle was the only commissioner to vote against the project based on the provisions of MOSO.

On this issue and others, Roger has a proven record of upholding the true intent of the Town's laws protecting open space. In light of the Town Council's 2010 approval of the Rancho Laguna II development which will grade the top off a portion of Rheem Ridge to build homes, and its subsequent attempt to sell town-owned open space to developers to fund a building remodel, we clearly need a person like Roger on the Council speaking up for our diminishing open space.

Please vote for Roger Wykle on November 6.

Tim Meltzer  
Moraga

Editor:

Candidates Night (Oct. 4) revealed a few stark differences among the four candidates running for the Moraga Town Council who attended. Two stand out: First, two of the candidates clearly want to strengthen Moraga's open space ordinance (Seth Freeman and Roger Wykle), a position which we wholeheartedly support. Karen Mendonca and Phil Arth appear to be less vigilant.

Second, Mendonca and Arth want to re-open the debate about Rancho Laguna Park! Four years of citizen and staff committees, countless hours spent by staff and Council, over \$100,000 in legal expenses to fight what the Town now concedes was a plan in violation of CEQA, bitter exchanges between citizens and Council members, all culminating in a Council ordinance that was subsequently repealed after a petition calling for a referendum on the ordinance was signed by more than 1800 Moraga voters. Do we really want to do that for another four years?

Both Mendonca and Arth claim that a fence dividing the park is necessary in order to protect children. This is not sound public policy. People walking dogs off leash do so at limited hours in the early morning and evening. There is now a fenced playground area that children can use even during off-leash hours. Rancho Laguna is being shared today as it has over the last 30 years, preserving the natural rustic setting of Rancho Laguna, with no cost. Building a fence will damage the beautiful park and be very costly. Mendonca and Arth's position is contrary to any reasoned policy.

In this confusing election season, it is helpful to have one very clear choice. We do not want a repeat of the controversy of the past four years and for that reason we will not support Karen Mendonca or Phil Arth for the Moraga Town Council.

Tina Brier, Barry Behr, Sue Behr, Laszlo Bonnyay, Scott Bowhay, Gordon Erspamer, David Shapiro, Trish Bare  
Moraga

## Lafayette Elections

Editor:

We are writing to wholeheartedly express our support for Nancy Wallace for the Lafayette School Board. We've had the pleasure of knowing Nancy and her family for 6 years. Nancy has been a leader in our district and in our community for almost a decade. Nancy was VP and Secretary of the Springhill Parent Faculty club, where she increased parent fund contributions from under 50% to over 80%, she was a long term member of the Director of Student Services' Parent Advisory Committee, President of the Diablo Valley Montessori School Board, Co Chair of the Springhill Auction, Member of Rapport, Member of the LASF (now LPIE) Auction Committee and a Girl Scout Leader. She is extremely knowledgeable about issues facing our school district, for kids from preschool through middle school and I've had the pleasure of attending many school board meetings alongside her over the years. Nancy's professional background as a former attorney and actuary contributes greatly to her ability to understand the complex financial issues that our School Board routinely faces, especially with the uncertainty of prop 30 passing. Nancy has worked closely on issues at the individual school level and at the district level. She is prepared to step in and begin work right away, which is particularly important as we lose two school board members with over two decades of combined experience on the Board.

Nancy is a skilled fundraiser and grant writer who has looked beyond traditional school auctions to generate funds for our district. In addition to co-creating the District Grant Writing Committee, she created a foundation that has raised close to \$60,000 to help fund education in Lafayette, mostly through grants. Insufficient funding for California schools is a serious problem. Families move to Lafayette for our top rated schools, and we need Nancy on the Board to ensure a world class education for Lafayette children.

Respectfully,  
Steve and Kathi Barron

Lafayette

Editor:

Most people move to Lafayette because of the quality of our public schools and subsequently come to appreciate the other features Lafayette offers. Regardless of whether you have children in school or not, as a Lafayette resident you benefit from living in a community with good public schools: home values are higher than in surrounding communities and your fellow residents are likely to care about their community.

That is why as a city council member I think who is on our school board is important to all residents, not just parents of current students. This year, Shayne Silva and Stephenie Teichman, both of whom have served with distinction, are retiring from the Lafayette School District Board. We should all thank them for their years of volunteer service.

Fortunately for us, four good candidates stepped forward to take their places. While the choice is hard, I am enthusiastically voting for Jean Follmer and Quinlan Tom. Both Jean and Quinlan moved to Lafayette primarily because of the quality of our schools and each has children in Lafayette schools. They have been active in school activities for several years. Jean was President of the Parent-Faculty Club at Springhill School and Quinlan was President of the Parent-Teachers Association for Lafayette School. They also worked for passage of Measure B, which kept our schools from having to reduce programs or increase class sizes as state support dropped during the recession. They are also both active with Lafayette Partners in Education, our community's highly successful non-profit organization that provides additional funding and programs for schools. Each supports rigorous academic programs, predictable funding, and careful management of available funds. I am confident that they will work well with the other board members and with their constituencies. I look forward to helping them build on the top quality results our schools have achieved.

Please join me in voting for Jean Follmer and Quinlan Tom for Lafayette School District Board on November 6.

Don Tatzin

Lafayette

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA