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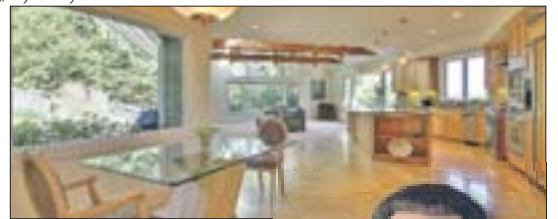
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Orinda School Board Candidates Discuss Key Issues

By Laurie Snyder



Jason Lurie, Sarah Genn Butler, and Matt Moran (left to right) engaged in thoughtful, civil debate at the October 15 school board candidate debate. Photo Ohlen Alexander

Three of the four candidates running for the Orinda Union School Board engaged in thoughtful dialogue October 15 before a crowd of parents, community members, and school district personnel. The fourth candidate, Bekki Gilbert, was unable to participate due to a family emergency. Ann Flynn of the League of Women Voters, Diablo Valley served as the moderator.

Each candidate identified school funding as the greatest challenge to be addressed by the school board over the next two years, and urged voters to pass both Propositions 30 and 38. All three demonstrated their understanding of the impact California's budget situation is likely to have on Orinda's schools if those ballot measures fail. (Read a related article on page B3.)

Sarah Genn Butler stated she is focusing on Proposition 30 because it is what was agreed upon when the State budget passed in June. The budget was, she pointed out, approved with a shortfall and is "dependent on the tax initiative, which is what we now have as Proposition 30. If Prop 30 doesn't pass, it's \$6 billion in cuts, and \$5 billion of that is from education.... If Prop 38 were to pass and Prop 30 failed... we'd still have trigger cuts."

Asked how to address any resulting million dollar cut to the District's budget, Jason Lurie said OUSD has made cuts all along the way since 2007-08. "The District runs pretty lean. I don't want to see us forfeit what makes our District so terrific... I'd like to look at revenue enhancement options, such as potentially another parcel tax. Nobody wants to pay more in taxes. I certainly don't, but I would support it for our kids." As for cuts, he said those should be a collaborative effort.

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