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Letters to the Editor

Editor



Dear Editor,

I read a letter to the Editor in the August 20th Weekly about a middle school trip to Costa Rica. I just wanted to let parents know that my son had a fabulous time on his trip with the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. They traveled with a company called Worldstrides, which had more than enough chaperones and set up an excellent program for the kids. On my son's trip there were 10 students and 3 adults including the JM teacher, Kim Lockett. A program leader from Worldstrides met up with them in Costa Rica and stayed with them the entire time they were there. The company plans out a safe and fun trip for the students, with a strong focus on learning science and ecology first hand. They studied a lot about biodiversity and how it relates to the different plants and animals they came into contact with in area of Costa Rica. They traveled to the Tirimbina Rainforest, Arenal volcano, the Santa Elena Cloud Forest, and Monteverde. It was a week long science camp that was very well run and I would recommend it to any parent of a 7th grader in Moraga.

Eric Andresen
Moraga

Dear Editor,

We need Steve Glazer on the Orinda City Council. As the neighborhood association representative in our community for many years I worked very closely with Mr. Glazer on several long term issues regarding EBMUD's proposed expansion of the Orinda Filter Plant. Mr. Glazer rallied against EBMUD expansion with strength and intelligence. He negotiated effectively and represented the interests of our neighborhood for the benefit of all Orindans. We worked closely for more than 2 years on this issue to a satisfactory resolution. Mr. Glazer operates calmly, consistently and with the highest integrity even when attacked by individuals that seek to further their own interests. He has many accomplishments during his term: reforming the planning & design review process; furthering retail interest in Orinda; effectively managing our limited funds for road repair; adding much needed transparency in our small town government and so much more. Mr. Glazer has proven himself to be an honest, balanced and intelligent representative for Orinda. I whole heartedly support his re-election and hope you will vote with me for Steve Glazer in November.

Brandt Williams
Orinda

Dear Editor,

I have known Steve Glazer for over 20 years and he is a tremendously dedicated, hard-working, civic-minded person. He has brought a fresh perspective to the City Council and has accomplished much to improve the quality of life in Orinda.

I worked closely with him to improve our wonderful library. He is a leader in our community efforts to support our schools. His service on the Fire Committee helped bring paramedics to our fire stations. He has urged me and my friends to be better prepared in a disaster and through the Orinda Association has promoted the sale of emergency supplies to me and my neighbors.

Steve takes this volunteer Council position very seriously but is the first to say he doesn't have all the answers. When I have raised concerns, he shares his knowledge and then usually follows up with "why don't you get involved and help your city." I don't always have the time but I certainly appreciate that he does. I enthusiastically urge Steve Glazer's re-election to the City Council.

Susie Epstein
Orinda

Dear Editor,

I want to encourage my friends and neighbors in Orinda to join with me in supporting Steve Glazer's re-election to the City Council. Steve's first two years on the Council were particularly challenging because many of his common sense ideas were rejected by the old establishment. He wanted better feedback from residents through customer surveys, criteria for road repairs so the major streets were given a higher priority than cul-de-sacs, greater transparency in government decision-making, tighter fiscal controls on spending and the curtailing of sole source contracts. I am happy to see that in his last two years on the newly configured Council he was able to accomplish all of these reforms. There is now a lot of positive momentum and civic pride in Orinda and we congratulate Steve and the new City Council for leading the way. Thank you Steve!

Best,
Charles "Chip" Wiser
Orinda

Dear Editor,

I have lived in Orinda for over 13 years. Supporting local businesses is and always has been a high priority for me. But over the years, the quality of our local Safeway really suffered, both in variety and quality of products, as well as general appearance, especially compared to nearby competitors. I, like many others, began to do more and more of my food shopping outside of my town (Diablo Foods, Whole Foods, Costco).

During Steve Glazer's first year on the City Council, he sent me and many other Orinda residents an e-mail saying he had heard of my concern about the condition and product offerings at our local Safeway and asked if I wanted to be involved in a meeting with company executives to request improvements. I readily accepted the opportunity to voice my concerns and was very impressed with the willingness to hear feedback from a variety of community members.

I was pleased to attend several meetings organized by Steve with Safeway executives, planners and architects who committed to working with us to make changes to improve the situation. The company had indicated that they had received a less than open arms reception in previous years but was willing to take another try and appreciated the offers of help from Councilman Glazer and the residents in attendance.

Well we all know how this story ends. I was amazed at how quickly Safeway responded and how efficient and speedy the remodeling process went. While Safeway still does not meet all my needs, it is a vast improvement, and I make every attempt to shop there as much as I can.

This is only one of a number of reasons that I will vote for Steve Glazer for Orinda City Council. He took a long-standing problem and brought effective and immediate results. I encourage my friends and all Orinda residents who know of his hard work on our behalf to do likewise.

Sincerely,
Dvora Citron

Dear Editor,

I would like to encourage all Orinda citizens to re-elect Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith. The Orinda City Council has come a long way in the last four years and we need to make sure that the council stays on the right track. With great progress coming in so many different areas- road improvements despite very limited funding, transparency in government, public safety and emergency preparedness, and vastly improved relationships with stakeholders- it would be a huge mistake to interfere with the process at this critical point. We all owe a debt a gratitude to our volunteers on the City Council for their long hours and excellent work. Please cast your votes for Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith in the upcoming election!

Glenn Alper , MD
Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees

Dear Editor,

As an active and involved community member, I have had the chance to observe the work of the City Council these past few years. The Council is working with limited resources yet have high demands from residents who want better roads, balanced and timely consideration of remodeling permits, safety programs and fiscal responsibility. It is not an easy job.

I want to call out the fine work of last year Mayor and current Councilmember Steve Glazer for his excellent leadership in bringing all elements of the city together to make progress on all the

matters mentioned above. His open and consensus driven stewardship has provided a place for all citizens at the decision making table. He does not view his job as having all the answers but rather working with interested and knowledgeable residents to find the best solutions.

In particular, I want to mention Steve's leadership in keeping the School District's Pine Grove plan from collapsing. About 20 months ago, our developer, Pulte Homes, was in a technical default position due to unhappiness with excessive regulations from the City. The School District stood to gain \$25 million from the completion of this project for much needed capital improvements. Steve's chaired an emergency Council and Planning Commission committee comprised of one other council member, city staff, school district staff and school board members, to review the problem and search for common ground. The project plans were revised. Compromises were made. The Orinda Union School District staff and board members were delighted when the Council approved the project last week. It is worth noting the vote was unanimous with no member of the public objecting. I would like to sincerely thank all members of the Council – Sue Severson, Victoria Smith, Tom McCormack and Amy Worth – but want to especially recognize Steve Glazer's good work. The level of trust, cooperation and responsiveness toward the school district has increased dramatically during Steve's tenure and is much appreciated. I hope you will join me in supporting his re-election to the Council.

Pamela West

Dear Editor,

We are happily endorsing Steve Glazer in his campaign for re-election to the City Council. We appreciate his earnest and hardworking approach to the job, and we are gratified by changes we have seen in the Orinda city government during his first term.

Steve has been a driving force in involving more citizens in the key issues facing our the City Government. Two years ago there were only around 35 residents on city committees and commission. Now, over 70 citizens are involved in committees dealing with the Budget, Planning Reform, Revenue Enhancement, Audit and Infrastructure Oversight.

He has led the effort on the Council to institute objective criteria for funding road repairs. We all know there are not enough funds to fix our roads but at least the money we do have is going toward the main roads. We certainly appreciate having Moraga Way, Glorietta, Camino Pablo and parts of Lombardy repaired. Also, the budget has been squeezed and a lot more money is now being spent on roads than prior to his service on the Council. We so much appreciated his leadership in the successful effort to keep our Library open longer each week. Our community spent millions to build this new and beautiful building. It would have been a huge disappointment if the hours of operation had been cut down to just 35 hours a week. In addition, he led the community effort to get Safeway to upgrade and remodel their store.

Finally, Steve campaigned four years ago for reforms to the planning and design review process. The Council has acted to make the process fairer and more timely and they are continuing to work on additional improvements.

We have a great city but we like the many efforts by Steve and the Council to not rest in working to make things even better. We urge a vote for Steve Glazer for Council.

Sincerely,
Jim and Carol Brovelli

Dear Editor,

Steve Glazer has been a breath of fresh air in Orinda City Government. Originally elected four years ago in what can only be termed a landslide vote, he has served the best interests of our community diligently and effectively. At the outset he met opposition on every front from the "old guard" who seemed fixated on returning Orinda to the insular and arrogant "Father Knows Best" days. Ultimately, Steve has turned things around and we now enjoy a more open and inclusive city government. Steve is now being subjected to criticism, which can only be labeled ridiculous, for recusing himself on matters relating to the Wilder (formerly Gateway) development. It is curious that he is being castigated for obeying the law, which requires that he recuse himself. Steve deserves not only our vote for re-election, but our applause and praise for truly representing Orinda voters, in the face of unwarranted criticism. Let's re-elect Steve Glazer in an even more resounding fashion than in 2004.

Ralph Severson

Dear Editor,

Vote Yes on Measure K to prevent more traffic.

Our commutes on Moraga Road and Moraga Way are bad enough. And yet Moraga has already approved 200 new houses and the traffic that goes with them, while several hundred more are in the pipeline. Professional traffic studies indicate that each new single-family home in a community such as Moraga generates over 10 car trips per day (not hard to believe when you consider work, school, housekeepers, gardeners, babysitters, and soccer practice). The Town estimates that under the existing General Plan another 360 houses could be built in open space areas, potentially adding 3,600 more car trips each day. By amending the General Plan to reign in the amount of development allowed in open space areas, Measure K would eliminate 3,000 of those trips. We need to face the fact that Moraga is essentially a cul-de-sac and our roads can't handle more cars. We can't afford to let Moraga's future be dictated by developers' interests. Measure K gives voters the power to protect Moraga's open space from too much growth and the unmanageable traffic it will bring. We need Measure K to put the brakes on traffic.

Verna Osborn
Moraga

Dear Editor,

As the CC Times correctly noted in an editorial about Moraga: "Town officials and residents need to be careful about how much residential development they approve because housing usually does not provide enough tax revenue to cover the cost of services." (2/27/08) Moragans need to give this issue serious thought, especially before they vote on Measures J and K.

New development increases demands on police, fire, emergency medical response, and local government. More residents mean more cars and more potholes to fix. But won't the property taxes from the new houses pick up the tab? Not for long, because property taxes can't keep up with rising costs. Under Proposition 13, property tax increases are capped at 2% per year while most Town costs increase 5% a year. Soon the expenditures exceed the revenues causing deficits.

Measure J is a developer's initiative designed to encourage large new subdivisions in open space areas, bringing more costs to the Town along with them. In contrast, Measure K is a citizens' initiative limiting new subdivisions and preserving open space. Measure K gives voters the chance to protect Moraga from overdevelopment it can't afford. That's why I'm voting NO on J and YES on K.

Tom Marnane
Moraga



Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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