

Wednesday's Letters to the Editor

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KEEPING PROMISES

EDITOR: In his Oct. 5 letter ("Approve Roblar"), Damon Calegari argued that John Barella's use of land protected by an Open Space District conservation easement is a small price to pay for what's being offered in return.

To be clear: the Open Space District spent millions of taxpayer dollars to protect the property Barella proposes to drive his trucks over. A conservation easement represents a promise to the public that land will be preserved in perpetuity, not just until a better offer comes along. No donation can make up for a broken promise.

Calegari reminds readers that "hard-working people" voted for the Open Space District tax and "not just the hikers and bikers." This needs no rebuttal, except to say I'm disturbed that the president of the local Engineering Contractors Association would resort to such denigration.

Interestingly, Calegari skewers quarry opponents as "bent on running both agriculture and productive, job-creating proposals into the ground." This statement is curious given that more than 40 individuals from dairies, farms and ranches signed a letter imploring the Board of Supervisors to support their productive, job-producing businesses by saying no to the quarry.

JUSTIN MERRICK

Petaluma

DECEPTIVE MEASURE

EDITOR: Who dropped the ball in ensuring that the ballot language for Measure W is fair and accurate?

The fine print states that Measure W proposes to spend 60 percent of the tax on "transit service expansion," such as large buses that often carry four or fewer passengers. It proposes to spend 23 percent on "pothole repair, bikeway paving and maintenance" and some other projects. In other words, perhaps 10 percent will be spent to fix potholes.

With the worst county roads in California, Sonoma County desperately needs funds to fix potholes. But why does the ballot list potholes first and local bus service last? The ballot is very misleading. This type of deception is what makes voters cynical and angry at their elected officials.

CRAIG S. HARRISON

Santa Rosa

PRESUMED GUILTY

EDITOR: Democrats now have a new liberal standard: adversarial organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce are guilty until proven innocent.

President Barack Obama says the chamber regularly takes in money from foreign corporations and is spending huge sums to influence American elections. However, according to the New York Times, “a closer examination shows that there is little evidence that what the chamber does in collecting overseas dues is improper or even unusual . . .” and that even “liberal (organizations) like the AFL-CIO and the Sierra Club . . . have international affiliations and get money from foreign entities while at the same time pushing political causes in the United States.”

The Baltimore Sun notes that “when CBS newsman Bob Schieffer Sunday asks David Axelrod if there is any proof for the claim, the senior Obama aide says they don't need proof — it's up to the Chamber of Commerce to prove it isn't true.”

With Democrats, it's a brave new world.

MICHAEL B. COMBS

Gualala

AND CONGRESS?

EDITOR: As we all have read by now, Social Security recipients will not receive a cost-of-living increase for the second consecutive year. I wonder if Congress is governed by the same formula to calculate its pay increases for 2011.

CHARLOTTE SAUNDERS

Albion

HASTY VOTE

EDITOR: The race to approve Dutra's asphalt plant proposal was because Dutra will be the only clear loser in the upcoming election.

Sadly, it is an example of a back room deal that favors business interests over those of the community. As long as local government colludes with business to trump the rights of citizens, we are going to continue to see a radicalization of our local politics.

The truth is that Dutra is a case of the wrong place at the wrong time. In 1984, Petaluma was a very different town. More rural than urban, Petaluma was a good location for Dutra. Fast forward 30 years, Petaluma is more urban as livable, walkable development has grown up on both sides of the river. Moving a half-mile keeps Dutra at the center of human activity. A different proposal is just different. A reasonable person still has to ask, “Do the economic benefits outweigh questionable environmental risks?”

General plans and zoning serve as the template for a shared vision of a community. Hastily voting to overturn both, the Board of Supervisors violated the public trust; the consequence of which I am sure will be seen at the polls in November.

LYN DE L'EAU

Penngrove

ECONOMIC SECURITY

EDITOR: As a 72-year-old mother and grandmother and a Healdsburg resident, I am fortunate to live where we have two House members, Reps. Mike Thompson and Lynn Woolsey, who strongly supports Social Security and Medicare. Both have earned a 100 percent scorecard rating from the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare for their votes on these programs.

Thompson and Woolsey understand that working Americans who pay into Social

Security and Medicare have earned, deserve and need their benefits. The bad economic times and home equity, pension and 401(k) losses and low interest on savings underscore the urgency of electing representatives whom we can trust to keep the Social Security and Medicare promise to the all Americas and their families.

Social Security is key to the economic security and stability of older persons and the economy, including hundreds of thousands of younger war disabled and those killed, their surviving children and spouses. It is not surprising that millions of young people believe that Social Security is the only thing left to rely on.

CARROLL L. ESTES

Chairwoman, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare

Healdsburg

PRACTICAL IDEAS

EDITOR: George Barich has the common sense and realistic values currently needed at Cotati City Hall. I registered to vote for the first time in more than five years and want to take an active part in the compassionate stewardship of my community because of Barich's dedication and amazing spirit. He has a lot of good and very practical ideas. Isn't this the kind of person we want to represent us right now?

AMANAA RENDALL

Cotati

PUBLIC SECTOR CRYING

EDITOR: As are many others, I am retired from the private sector. My pension is zero. I survive on the funds we saved during my working career and Social Security. Stop crying about having sacrificed wages in the public sector. During my career, most public sector jobs paid more than the private sector.

Retiring at age 52, then taking another job in the public sector is common and should be illegal. The public sector has not sacrificed wages or benefits, and in my opinion, public employees are overpaid and have pensions that are unsustainable under any circumstance.

No wonder Santa Rosa and California are essentially bankrupt.

GEORGE MACAULAY

Santa Rosa

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