



Posted on Sun, Oct. 02, 2011

Letters to the Editor 10/3

A pivotal role

As a high school senior, I've had at least 20 different high school teachers during the past four years. Some teachers I've grown to love, and some teachers I've grown to loathe. However, I am absolutely certain of one thing: High school teachers are underappreciated.

Someone who believes that teachers only work from seven in the morning to three in the afternoon needs to have his or her mind adjusted.

Teachers have lessons to plan, papers to grade and students to baby-sit. Teachers aren't paid overtime for all of the effort they put into the classroom outside of school.

Moreover, a teacher's role in our society is pivotal. A society without teachers is a society of anarchy: Everything would descend into chaos. Without teachers, our society would be filled with the uneducated and the ignorant.

To assert that a teacher's job is easy is about as audacious as to assert that stay-at-home mothers have an easy job: Such a comment is incompetent and foolish. Teachers work beyond expectations every day of the year, and they deserve more respect than they receive.

Matthew Russell

Atascadero

Council knows best?

Paso Robles City Manager Jim App knows best how to spend our money and seems to wait until it is a "crisis" to spend it. In the past, I have toured the Paso Robles Wastewater Treatment Plant once or twice each year to visit city employees and view first-hand the concerns they have expressed about our sewage treatment plant. I have asked local media to accompany me on these tours, and some have.

If you attend City Council meetings now and back then, you will discover that the treatment plant receives little public attention but gains a lot of behind-the-scenes attention. It is an embarrassment because today's city leadership doesn't hear its own employees until it is too late.

Remember the water rate increase debate? Only 30 percent of the water you receive goes back to the sewage treatment plant! Our sewer bill should be based on that same 30 percent of water used that goes back to the sewer treatment plant.

The other suggestion I have for App and the City Council knowing best is to install pay public toilets. This way you truly pay as you "go."

Considering the water rate, sewer rate and tax rate increases, what's

next?

Gary Nemeth

Paso Robles

Be wary of deniers

The Mesa Community Alliance presentation of Sept. 8 made it clear that they oppose the Waterline Intertie Project to bring water from Santa Maria to Nipomo. A chart purporting to be WIP costs includes unrelated fixed sewer costs and a nonexistent bond, which is really a sinking fund that is already incorporated in the NCSA annual budget.

Later in the MCA presentation desalination is offered as an example of a cheaper alternative by omitting these costs.

Seawater intrusion is denied, which is true now within the Nipomo Mesa Management Area but the 2009 Northern Cities Management Area report clearly showed large increases in chlorides in August and October in Oceano. Seawater was then pushed back by increased rainfall and reduced ground water pumping — an option that Nipomo does not have without the WIP.

The MCA claims the WIP merely pumps water from one part of the aquifer to another. In reality the delivered water will be a blend with at least 50 percent state water.

We must be wary of a small vocal group of deniers who might postpone the inevitable as was done for the Los Osos sewer project, resulting in a considerable cost increase.

Ken Shamordola

Nipomo

Unhealthy growth

I'm saddened to read that Pismo officials are seriously considering the urbanization of Price Canyon. Killing the goose that lays the golden eggs is a story that should be required reading for all elected public officials.

I grew up in Santa Barbara, which used to be a lovely town and was a wonderful place to live. At some point, its direction was turned over to the Chamber of Commerce and real estate investors. Santa Barbara has changed into a town where the planters downtown are full of drunk college students and 20-somethings because there are too many bars downtown.

On the main street there are almost no stores that don't cater to the wealthy.

I could go on for pages, but you get the idea. Nice little beach towns get wrecked so that developers can become even more wealthy.

Unfettered growth is not healthy for a community, and increased burdens on the infrastructure are always underestimated by the developers and their enablers in positions of power because if the local citizens could see the objective reality, they wouldn't stand for these large developments for a minute. Pismo already knows that it has a water problem.

Don't do it, Pismo. You'll regret it.

Katy Crawford

Los Osos

Bags that important?

What is wrong with those of you who apparently won't give up plastic bags until we "... pry them from your cold, dead hands"?

Aren't you at all concerned that we use 102 billion bags annually in the United States alone? Don't you care that it takes about 1,000 years for these bags to decompose? Does it not bother you that plastic bags in landfills leach toxic chemicals into soils, lakes and the ocean? Haven't you heard that they clog drainage systems, contribute to floating marine debris, and strangle and kill wildlife and sea life?

Perhaps all the whiners and complainers are under 30. Or maybe they just forgot that up until the mid-'80s we managed just fine without plastic grocery bags, thank you very much. Other countries, other states, other cities have reduced bag usage and life has gone on.

So what is the big deal? Get some cloth bags and take them with you.

Some of us have been doing it for years.

Mimi Kalland

Baywood Park

Declare moratorium

Those of us attending last month's water meeting at Nipomo High School were told that the current supply of water is dangerously low. The primary cause was the rapidly growing population as well as our dependence on the aquifer as our only source of water.

The only solution offered was to purchase a limited, and expensive, supply of water from Santa Maria. The last item on the agenda suggested that a building moratorium would be useless.

It wouldn't take too much imagination to realize that, when our supervisors saw the population growing rapidly, a moratorium five years ago would have prevented our present shortage.

More importantly, if a building moratorium were to be imposed now, we might not be facing this same problem in the near future.

I join the majority of the population in giving low grades to our politicians; it would be a nice surprise to see our local politicians, who seem beholden to the area developers, declare a Level of Severity III for water, thus giving them the right to declare a moratorium until the water problem is solved with more than a bandage.

Gene Slattery

Nipomo

Incredible denials

The extreme element of the Republican Party denies climate change is occurring, wants to completely dismantle the only government agency

that's doing anything about it (albeit, perhaps zealously) and now wants to deny aid to the victims of weather disasters that occur as a result unless green jobs that might offer solutions from the economic sector are cut. Am I interpreting these news stories correctly? It seems absolutely incredible to me.

Anne Quinn

Atascadero

An amazing place

You can imagine my surprise to see Cabo Pulmo on the front cover of our local newspaper, we couldn't believe our eyes.

We own property in Cabo Pulmo, which we bought two years ago. We are the few that you mentioned as being the Americans to share the land/reef with our fellow Mexican neighbors, the Castros.

It truly is an amazing place, the coral reef, numerous fish, clean water, no trash, no crime. We're hoping to keep it that way for our kids and grandkids to enjoy.

We attend numerous workshops, and yes, we are very concerned with the development that has been proposed. One minute it seems as though we have won, the next it seems like development is moving forward. As of now, it seems like we are agreeing to disagree to the development in a much smaller scale, while at the same time wanting them to be more eco/tourism based.

Garry and Debbie Wesch

Atascadero

Budget reform

The politicians in Sacramento led by the governor passed a budget loaded with borrowing and rosy-future revenue projections.

The special rural fire protection fee is just another way to raise property taxes. Cutting health, education and human services to maintain government "status quo" is criminal.

San Luis Obispo got brave and set an example to improve control of spending. The passage of Measures A and B returned control of union compensation back to the city where "the buck stops here." More than 70 percent of voters used their power of the voting booth wisely. This suggests a watchdog group similar to the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association may now have a fair chance of initiating voter-mandated state budget reform.

The abandoned 2004 California Performance Review resolved this issue with a projected savings of \$32 billion.

Werner Koch

Cambria

Meet requirements

Copy of document found at www.NoNewWipTax.com

I am grateful that the air board decided to cap the dust created at Oceano

Dunes.

However, the timeline of three to four years seems to indicate that the state park system can operate without regard to pollution controls that every business in the Nipomo area has to follow.

If the ConocoPhillips refinery were to release pollution on the same level as the Oceano state park is allowed, its operations would be immediately shut down by the air board. Yes, the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area is a business that brings in so much money that the county/state cannot function without the income, even if the residents close to the Oceano Dunes are made to inhale dust for four more years. Please contact Gov. Brown at <http://govnews.ca.gov/gov39mail/mail.php> to request that state parks have to meet local air quality requirements before they can operate.

John Phipps

Nipomo

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