



The Cotati Independent

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City Budget a Whitewash

Story and opinion by George Barich

(Cotati, CA) Is Cotati on a fast track to following other cities like Vallejo, Stockton, Mammoth Lakes, and San Bernardino, CA into filing for Chapter 9 bankruptcy protection? One cursory inspection of the Cotati 2011-2012 city budget, which passed unanimously on June 25th, would make some looking at the bottom line think that everything appears fine and Cotati's on the right track. But the truth behind the numbers tells a much

different and horrible story about the city's financial woes.

Numbers are only as good as the people using them, and city officials have a lot to lose if the truth gets out in this election year about how dishonest Cotati's budget really is. Most cities have been hoodwinking the public about their budgets for years by fudging the numbers. Fact is, most cities are obligated to pay out more than they will actually bring in in the years to come. They intentionally turn a blind

eye to necessary city repairs and upgrades to the city's infrastructure, which is deteriorating at a rapid pace. There are also unfunded liabilities of future retirement and healthcare costs which can't be estimated with any certainty. Hence, many cities like Cotati are in deep financial trouble, despite their budgets that are designed to give the impression there is nothing in the least to worry about.

Creative accounting tricks have been used by Cotati's finance director, Jone Hayes, for

many years, and many concerned citizens have warned city officials about this fact. But they have ignored the problem hoping for some miracle. With a city budget of less than five million dollars, half of which goes to fund public safety alone, it doesn't take much to hurl a city budget into the red and have city leaders scrambling for emergency measures like cries for more local taxes or more desperate pleas for more federal handouts.

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City Announces Third "Study" on Roundabouts

Story and opinion by Greg Karraker.

(Cotati, CA) For months, citizens, merchants, and public safety officials have made it clear to the city council that the city's one-lane Village Main Street Plan will choke traffic, create backups, kill businesses, and create dangerous response time problems for emergency vehicles.

At the June 27th city council meeting, the city reluctantly admitted that they had re-



ceived a petition from the NO ROUNDABOUTS movement with 579 verified signatures from Cotati citizens who want to stop this traffic-choking plan forever. This gave the city council two choices: They could adopt an ordinance banning roundabouts, as the overwhelming majority of citizens are demanding, or put it up to a vote, and hope that somehow they can talk you into voting for their badly flawed plan.

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"Newspaper Destroyer" Lilly Gomes Finally Ordered to Pay Restitution

(Santa Rosa, CA) On July, 5, 2012, the Sonoma County Superior Court ordered Lilly Gomez of Rohnert Park to pay restitution to The Cotati Independent newspaper for her alleged involvement in seeking out and destroying newspapers at three separate outdoor news racks in Cotati.

According to the police report, Gomez (photo right) was seen in the act in the wee hours of the morning of Nov. 14, 2011 tearing up newspapers when she assumed nobody was watching. Gomez confessed to police shortly after being caught red-handed in a stakeout by publisher George Barich who took this photo and many more. Gomez, who continues to distribute newspapers for The Press Democrat in Cotati, contends Barich "deserved it" and to this day has shown no remorse whatsoever.

The Press Democrat has refused to run any part of this story after repeated requests by citizens in the county to do so. No Press Democrat reporter was present at any of the court hearings, including the final disposition of the Gomez case. The Press Democrat has repeatedly refused to comment on the case nor returned our phone calls. The criminal case against Gomez was dismissed on July 5th after Gomez successfully completed a diversion program and agreed to pay restitu-



tion in the amount of \$150 for one day of alleged malicious mischief.

The Cotati Independent alleges Gomez is responsible for destroying its newspapers for over 90 days in a row in Cotati and creating fear among members of the all volunteer staff, and plans to file suit in Sonoma County Small Claims Court for the remainder of the damages owed. Barich says The Press Democrat will be named as a co-defendant and plans to seek the maximum amount of damages allowed by law. The Cotati police have refused to release the home address of Gomez so a civil suit can be filed.

The Cotati Independent Newspaper Celebrates One Year; Still Going Strong

Story and opinion by George Barich

(Cotati, CA) August 1, 2012 marks one year in business for The Cotati Independent all volunteer monthly newspaper. "Last year, I never thought there was enough news in Cotati to fill a monthly newspaper," says CI reporter Greg Karraker. "Since then, I've learned there are enough problems in this town to fill a book." The newspaper which is delivered free to over 3,500 homes and businesses inside Cotati city limits has been warmly accepted by the community. To date, those who have actually declined delivery or threatened bodily harm if the newspaper lands on their property again is less than forty people in a town of well over 7,500.

Financial contributions have been the primary source of funding for the newspaper which has received very generous contributions from as far away as Capitola, CA. Even prior residents of Cotati who have long since left the city have sent in contributions to support the effort.

Although the newspaper has been unoffi-

cially banned at Cotati City Hall because it fails to publish the propaganda put out by the city manager's office, many other locations in Cotati proudly display the newspaper as "...an alternative source of information and news people can't get anywhere else", says Brett Sandquist, longtime resident of Cotati.

Despite the fact that some people have personally visited our advertisers to convey they will not be frequenting their business in the future, all but one business has said they are glad to lose those customers as simply mean-spirited and an affront to free speech and a free press.

The CI plans on continuing with its fresh approach to honest reporting and takes pride in delivering to every location in town free of charge. "The American Revolution was greatly helped by small leaflets that convinced citizens to rise up and protect their personal liberties and private property rights", according to Karraker. "I'm proud we are following in that fine tradition."

Mayor Harvey Commits a Brown Act Violation

Story by staff reporters

(Cotati, CA) At the June 27th regular meeting of the Cotati City Council, two local citizens who were out of town requested former city councilman George Barich to speak on their behalf. One asked him to read his request for public records to the council. The entire letter would have taken but about two minutes to read aloud



on the record, but that was too much for Mayor Harvey to put up with.

Barich first submitted two powers of attorney that were prepared by the absent couple to Mayor Harvey for her review before going forward with attempting to speak on their behalf. City Attorney Rudnanski interjected that he had never seen a power of attorney used like this before, and

advised the mayor to not allow Mr. Barich to speak on behalf of anyone other than himself, anytime, and to restrict Barich to only three minutes maximum, denying those absent to address the council through an designated agent or attorney.

The power of attorney documents were perfectly legal in every way and were served appropriately. But even with no other citizens in the room who might have been waiting to speak next, the mayor denied Councilman Barich his right to speak on behalf of anyone else but himself, and in doing so broke the law. Barich objected on the record without further incident.

By her actions, Mayor Susan Harvey denied those not physically present to be represented by another without any legal justification which constituted a Brown Act violation, a misdemeanor.

Complaints are currently being filed with the local district attorney to take action against Mayor Harvey for overstepping her authority in denying citizens their rights to address their elected officials; thus violating open meeting laws. The mayor has refused to comment on the incident, and it is uncertain whether or not the Sonoma County District Attorney's Office will follow through on any formal criminal complaint, or simply order the city to cease and desist such actions in the future.

City Steals Money for Years, Then Hides Behind Attorney

Story and opinion by Greg Karraker

(Cotati, CA) Cotati CA: For months, this paper has brought you updates on the City's blatant illegal overcharging of Document

Transfer Taxes on homes sold in Cotati between October, 1991 and October 2011. It is our estimate that these overcharges could be close to a million dollars.

Last month, we published the text of the City's rude response to a homeowner who believed she was victimized by the city's overcharges. In a nutshell, the city denied her claim because it was "barred by the applicable statute of limitations." So as promised, this reporter filed a formal Public Records Request with the city. One of the questions was: "What, precisely, is

the statute of limitations?" This is not a complicated or unreasonable question. If citizens feel they could be entitled to a refund, they should know how the city defines the statute of limitations. As cynical as I am about the city's transparency and honesty, their response shocked even me: *The city claimed attorney/client privilege and refused to answer the question at all.* In a letter "written by the Deputy City Clerk in consultation with the City Attorney," there was only one straight answer, surrounded by a stream of legal gibberish. In all, the city cited two sections of the California Public Records Act, one section of the California Evidence Code, one section of the Code of Civil Procedure, and two court decisions: Wilson v. Superior Court, and Times-Mirror Co. v Superior Court. What does all this tell you? That the city attorney spent a lot of time finding ways to keep the city from answering a simple question in the public interest.

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Dennis Anderson Comes Clean and Apologizes

Story and opinion by George Barich



(Cotati, CA) In a lengthy interview, Dennis Anderson of Rohnert Park, CA admitted he only attempted to get feedback on his Facebook page when he posted his desire to run for city council last April. Anderson stopped short of calling it all a publicity stunt and admitted he is only on Facebook to promote his small home-based business which specializes in providing DJ services and nothing more. He has since apologized for misleading the public as to his real intent. Anderson claimed that since he has a family member somewhere who has served as an elected official, that he could get elected too if he really wanted to

give it a try.

Anderson has declined to comment whether or not he has ever been to a city council meeting in Rohnert Park or Cotati, or has any credentials that would make him a viable candidate in any of the upcoming city council races.

Anderson is best known in Cotati for hosting White Trash Parties where people dress up as poor white people at local bars like Friar Tucks Pub in Cotati and make fun of what he says is a particular class of people. Anderson claims that making fun of your own race is not racist at all, but just harmless fun.



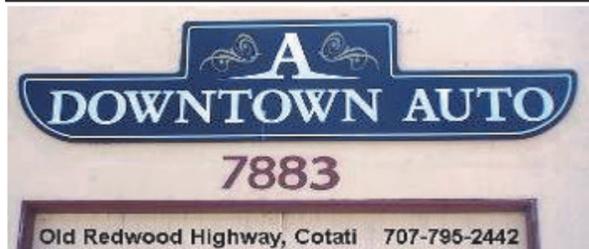
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Poli-tricks at the root of the city budget

Cotati City officials unanimously passed the 2012-2013 city budget on June 27th without allowing for any public comment and claimed the budget is “balanced” under a cloud of deception. The city council placed the budget item on the Consent Calendar, and in doing so for the first time ever refused to allow further public comment outside the three minutes allotted each citizen under “Citizen’s Business”. Citizens should be outraged that these shenanigans continue in 2012.

With little or no cash reserves on hand, Cotati’s so called “balanced budget” is just one more city budget in California that is nothing less than a disaster in the making, if for no other reason that it lacks liquidity as much as it lacks honesty. Cities like Cotati can’t borrow more money like the feds can, and surely can’t pass any more bonds if they want to make any significant repairs or improvements in town. In an attempt to buy time, the new city budget shows inflated revenue projections while omitting critical future city expenditures the city should be planning for, but clearly is not.

Cotati is currently on the hook for millions of dollars of unfunded liabilities in pension and healthcare benefits for past and present city employees it can’t determine with any kind of accuracy. The city desperately needs to repair its crumbling infrastructure which includes streets, water and sewer pipes, some of which are over 40 years old. City Hall desperately needs earthquake retrofitting if they expect citizens like us to sit there and be lectured to, or they need to build a new one that is safe. Where do they think all the money will come from? Computers and even city vehicles are now leased instead of purchased outright, which begs the question: How did we allow this to happen?

Cities like Fairfield, El Monte, Lancaster, Monrovia, CA and others are in serious financial trouble. Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Diego have been throwing the term bankruptcy around as well. Cotati’s own city manager talked about bankruptcy protection for Cotati during the city’s Emergency Budget session in 2010 to set the groundwork for putting Measure A on the local ballot to raise sales taxes. So it’s clear the city will use the term bankruptcy when it is in their best interest to do so.

Right now during campaign season, the word bankruptcy has been unofficially banned at Cotati City Hall. In addition, raising sales taxes during this recession has also hurt Cotati dearly by a loss in revenue from shoppers who simply went elsewhere out of resentment of the new higher sales tax rate. Many people swore that if Measure A passed, they were planning to take their retail purchases elsewhere. To some extent they certainly have, and in doing so told Cotati, “Kiss our rear ends.”

California Lieutenant Governor Newsom has said, “We, (local governments) haven’t been good fiduciaries in terms of our fiscal budgets and municipal budgets, and we are now seeing the price being paid for that...” The fact is, Cotati has flat-lined with regards to revenues (as I warned would happen) and this was never budgeted for in years past, leaving Cotati in a dilemma, to whitewash the facts with inflated revenue projections and omitting critical infrastructure projects, or facing up to the public and being honest. The council has chosen cover-up for political expediency; plus they can always use the city manager as a scapegoat if things get much worse and send her down the road. Remember, the city recently fired its long time city planner Marsha Sue Lustig as the most recent sacrificial lamb for the failed Cotati Downtown Specific Plan. The city wasted millions on the DSP and has no money today to implement one inch of it.

The same perfect storm that recently hit San Bernardino and Stockton, CA could hit Cotati. The signs of impending financial collapse have been evident in Cotati for years now: small and large businesses leaving Cotati for “greener pastures”, fewer businesses coming to town, more locals shopping out of town for better products, better service, better warranties and lower prices. Declining revenues and more empty storefronts in Cotati is old news. Home foreclosures are also a serious problem no one wants to talk about at City Hall. Skyrocketing costs for consumers and higher taxes and water rates have been demoralizing to local consumers as well. More people are unemployed, not earning income, and thus not spending or paying taxes.

San Bernardino is just a microcosm of every other city in America. Balanced budget or not, city services in Cotati are going to continue to be cut, including police, fire, and even schools that are outside the city’s control. Some park bathrooms may never reopened again. Now that Measure D, the local school tax, has passed by only 20 votes, the state has already decided to cut back state funding to schools as many predicted they would. Potholes and cracked city streets and sidewalks are on the rise in many cities, not just Cotati.

In order to turn around a city budget in trouble, Cotati will be forced to reduce staffing further or cut salaries and benefits in light of the economy showing no sign of improving at a pace that can make up for the wear and tear on city resources we see on any given day in town. Cotati gave city employees and managers a 3% increase just last year as a thank you for helping get Pat Gilardi re-elected and Mark Landmine elected to the city council.

Many would say the actions of cities like Cotati have bordered on criminal negligence for playing fast and loose with the city budgets for so many years. In a recent interview with Victor Gonzalez who represented Monahan Pacific in Cotati for almost ten years (the flashy folks who brought us the LOWES store and the surrounding acreage with the Cotati Cottages that were supposed to house LOWES employees), Victor said all that vacant land went back to the bank and he no longer works for Monahan Pacific. After all the promises Monahan Pacific made of the revenue they would bring to Cotati, it appears now to be all just a bad dream. Gonzalez says most likely the land will be undeveloped



Former Cotati City Councilman
George Barich

“Just My Two Cents”

for many years to come, so get used to it.

Cotati now has serious embedded costs it has to deal with which include union contracts with lavish retirement plans that simply cannot be paid much longer if the economy does not drastically improve. That fact, coupled with very little or no cash reserves on hand in the General Fund, means Cotati is running on fumes. The sad reality is that this crop of city leaders were warned about this scenario for years to cut spending, to begin saving for a rainy day, and to become more business friendly, but it was like talking to a wall. These people have had no formal business training whatsoever and never made a payroll in their lives.

If any of us in business kept our books and ran our businesses like Cotati runs our city, we would go to jail for fraud. The city can make whatever promises it wants, make any budget it wants, and does not have to deliver anything real and feels it doesn’t have to honor its commitment to keep the town safe, the water running, or the traffic flowing. They feel they have no responsibility but to show up for the meetings, tell people to limit their comments to three minutes, never disagree with the city manager, tell people with valid claims and grievances to go away, grab their paychecks and go home. That’s all they do. They are hand fed misinformation by the city manager who has no concern for the city’s future. She continues to drain Cotati dry while setting her eyes on looking down the road and is simply using Cotati as a stepping stone to something bigger and better.

The other option Cotati City Manager Dianne Thompson spoke about a couple of years ago is the possibility that Cotati simply consolidate city services with either the County, Rohnert Park, Petaluma, or merge with Rohnert Park, or simply dis-incorporate altogether and revert the area back to the County of Sonoma which can provide services cheaper and even possibly better without all the overhead.



For the time being, Cotati is doubling down on unrealistic and dishonest budgets and hoping for the best or maybe even another Obama bailout to cities during his second term in office, should he be re-elected. The new city budget may be theoretically a balanced budget, but it is not an honest budget, and therein lies the ticking time bomb. For incumbent city council members, it’s play along and attack anyone who exposes this budget hoax for what it is. They will attack any and all those who dare to question their tactics or their motives in order to keep a strong stranglehold on power in Cotati. They are ALL committed to more centralized control over our lives, and taking away more of our personal property rights.

The budget is an important tool in the arsenal of city officials and city staff members, and they spend thousands of dollars to ensure that it is believable to the average Joe. The problem is, this con game is not going to end well. At some point, even the citizens realize the buildings in town have outlived their usefulness, as they did in Rohnert Park with regards to its city hall. People realize we live in earthquake country, and city buildings need to be brought up to earthquake standards. People realize that without emergency supplies at City Hall and proper police protection, our quality of life can suffer in the blink of an eye. People realize that the state of California going broke means Cotati receives no more free handouts and will have to go without or do something to bring new revenue to town.

Dishonest city budgets also can be grounds for recall efforts to have city officials removed from office, too. That’s your call, folks. In the meantime, their little secret is out. Playing poli-tricks with city budgets has consequences.

The Cotati City Budget, A Game Cotati Cannot Afford to Play Much Longer

(From Page One)

For years now, the City of Cotati has been inflating future revenue projections in city budgets in the attempt to balance the city budget. One way was by overestimating what stores like LOWES Home Improvement store would be bringing to Cotati in the form of sales taxes. To sell the new store to city leaders, LOWES executives showed the city that its leading stores across the nation brought in over a million dollars a year in new tax revenues to other towns.

The city council at the time bought that soft promise hook, line, and sinker and plugged that million dollar number into its budget as soon as LOWES opened its doors. A few citizens objected and warned the city this was unrealistic and was risky business. Only a third of that amount of money has been coming into Cotati in past years, which caused the city's cash reserves to be completely depleted in recent years.

The city also is omitting future city expenses like saving for what it will need to replace. This has become nothing less than a deceptive attempt to make the city budget appear balanced which can have catastrophic consequences for our town's future, as we are seeing with other cities facing bankruptcy.

It's usually when it is too late to do anything about a city budget shortfall that city officials come to the citizens crying for more money and claiming they had nothing to do with the situation; they were merely victims of a bad economy or incompetent city staff members who gave them poor advice. Then, like the political animals that they are, they ask for the community's understanding, and refuse to take any of the blame.

But the fact remains, city leaders should have been planning for tough economic times all along by saving more and spending less. They should have followed the advice of some in town who called for spending restraint and to stop pandering to the city employee unions which would come back to haunt them down the road.

Sadly, this crop of city leaders simply could not resist the temptation to spend all the money they could get their hands on, engaging in frivolous activities and city beautification projects that would help them get reelected but served no other real purpose.

It's an election year again, and no one on the city council seeking re-election will ever admit the city budget is nothing less than a cruel hoax on the community that relies on fuzzy math and accounting tricks to give the appearance the budget is "balanced" when in fact it is an embarrassment.

The council has been severely criticized by both citizens and local business owners over the years that the city budget is severely flawed for the reasons discussed, but the city has used other newspapers to do their bidding for them by hand feeding them the city's propaganda that the city is doing just fine when just the opposite is true. The city has refused to keep adequate reserves on hand for a rainy day, and is even in the process of hiring an assistant city manager at a time when city council meetings don't last an hour.

"Unfortunately, the city is again playing the 'kick the can down the street' game knowing full well that these repeatedly dishonest Cotati city budgets are a recipe for disaster", says city councilman Michael Ceremello of Dixon, CA. Ceremello has been following Cotati's politics for four years now, and argues that the reality of Cotati's dishonest city budget makes it a likely candidate that Cotati will follow the City of

Stockton on a path of municipal insolvency and Chapter 9 bankruptcy if it continues to ignore the obvious error of their ways. He adds that a city cannot indefinitely hide the true costs of running a city which includes both repairing what needs to be fixed and saving for what it needs in the years to come by simply ignoring all reasonably foreseeable costs of running a small municipality and everything associated with it.

Leasing police cars in Cotati is the result of a city that has not planned for what it needs and says all one needs to know about irresponsible financial planning. "If you have to borrow money to lease police cars, your town is in trouble", says Ceremello.

Developers who want nothing to do with Cotati's red tape and anti-business attitude have cost the city dearly in future revenues by simply pulling up stakes and leaving Cotati. Cotati has lost hundreds of thousands in sales tax dollars and has been sending shoppers down the road by raising taxes instead of lowering them. Even President Obama has reminded us you cannot raise taxes during a recession. Raising taxes has actually done the opposite of what it was intended to do in Cotati. Instead of giving Cotati a competitive advantage to bring in more taxes and attract more business by lowering tax rates, it did just the opposite. "The city cannot continue these kinds of destructive policies and win", says Ceremello.

One of the biggest problems with the \$4.86 million dollar city budget is the inflated projection of future sales taxes as a result of the passage of Measure A, the half cent sales tax increase passed in 2011. This tax increase has cost the city greatly. Businesses continue to call it quits in Cotati, and many new businesses refuse to relocate to Cotati because the downtown corridor is so very blighted.

Because the economy continues to be stagnant, sales tax revenue will continue to decline in Cotati and the city's revenue projections are a far cry from being conservative or realistic. Ceremello has his degree in finance from UC Davis. He went on to say if Cotati's sales tax rate had been lowered two years ago to give Cotati a competitive advantage over other neighboring towns, city revenues would have increased and would have acted like a lightning rod to spur more business in Cotati, given local merchants some hope, and also



attracted more retail businesses to relocate to Cotati and fill many of the vacant buildings in town.

For many years, Cotati used state Redevelopment funds to supplement city salaries and pay for repairs and upgrades to the city's infrastructure by stretching the meaning and letter of the law to the limit. This state funding mechanism has nearly bankrupted the State of California which has outlawed RDAs going forward. Money that had been earmarked for the public schools and the county was redirected into city RDAs and often much of this money was simply wasted and is now long gone. What state money was left in these city coffers went back to the state in 2012 and is long overdue.

Cotati city officials banked on borrowed money (backed by the state RDA funds) to build its police station, community rooms and silly planning charettes it had not saved for. The State of California is still on the hook for millions of Cotati's old debt. Democrats on the city council claimed Cotati deserved the state and federal money they were getting when in fact Co-

tati city leaders knew all along the state and federal governments were spending far beyond their means and none of this was sustainable. Cotati gave a lot of lip service to sustainability when in fact they were undermining their own future all along and they knew it.

City staffers continue to suck the life blood out of the city budget with outrageous salaries and benefit packages all authorized by the current crop of city officials who rely on the support of city staff to help them get elected every four years. Without term limits in place for city officials, some are entering into their second decade as city council members which has only exacerbated the problem.

The problem for Cotati has clearly been a problem experienced in many other cities where they have played a dangerous game of kicking the can down the road for political expediency, while failing to practice sound financial principles of saving for future needs. Instead, they opted to become dependent on state and federal grant funding to supplement their city budgets and the day of reckoning is quickly approaching.

The 2012-13 budget, which is intellectually dishonest on its face, is merely an attempt to get the current crop of city leaders re-elected in November where at that time they can reassess the situation going forward as to whether or not bankruptcy is a viable option. By that time, they feel they will be secure in their council seats, and no matter what happens they will retain their power and control over the community.

The city council has been going into closed sessions for months now regarding the financial condition of the city while failing to state the nature or topic of the closed session items to the public which is a violation of law. The city is absolutely under an obligation to at the very least convey the topic of closed session items, but often refuse to do so. It is a dangerous game for a city council to play to hoodwink the public into thinking the financial condition is sound when it is not.

When we press the city for more information, we are turned down for an interview. City staff have clearly circled the wagon train and are hiding the real state of the city's finances. Unless the federal government institutes a massive bailout of cities like Cotati around the country to shore up their financial situations and address their crumbling infrastructures, the handwriting is on the wall for Cotati. Cotati can either limp along and continue to bow down to city employees and head the town off a cliff, or they can begin to consolidate city services with other cities, merge with Rohnert Park, file for Chapter 9 bankruptcy protection, or dissolve the municipality altogether and revert the entire area of Cotati proper back to the County of Sonoma and allow the county to begin cleaning up the mess and take over all essential services in Cotati.

Some argue that Cotati going bankrupt may actually do more good than harm. It would be a restructuring of the city's obligations and bring city bargaining units back to the table to lower city costs and balance the city budget honestly without accounting trickery. The stigma of bankruptcy can be real though. That's why Cotati has to get its act together and stop hiding the truth about the city budget and get to work fixing the problem before it is too late. Councilwoman Pat Gilardi once said in private that she would not let Cotati go bankrupt as long as Prue Draper (self-described local historian) is alive. Councilwoman Janet Orchard nodded in agreement. At that moment, it became glaringly apparent to me who really runs our town and where loyalties lie. Small town politics may be the biggest problem our town really faces. Until candidates run without outside money and influence, Cotati remains on a dangerous course that has plagued many other cities facing bankruptcy protection across America.

It's our town to lose. Phony city budgets have real consequences. So-called local newspapers that regurgitate the city's propaganda share some of the responsibility as well. We should all demand better and do it quickly.



Cotati Is What It Is

By Eric Kirchmann
Cotati

This morning, it was a perfect California day in La Jolla, CA. The weather was great, the Pacific Ocean was stroking the shore; and I was a passenger in a car on a scenic drive. I was busy doing some personal research. I was checking on the work that outside consultants serve up to our Cotati City Council.

I figure you need to get past attending council meetings and reading their reports, or even going on the internet to see if what city staff and their hired hands are telling our representatives has any merit. I went to actually see the show in real time. I went to see the traffic roundabouts that outside consultants and city staff brought before our fellow citizens and our city council that sold them on roundabouts.

Councilwoman Janet Orchard didn't care for roundabouts when they were first mentioned years ago, and later when a roundabout was considered for Old Redwood Highway and East Cotati Ave., she voted "NO". Now, she and all on the council are screaming "YES, YES, YES", no matter what the cost. We have had a Downtown Specific Plan paid for, authorized, and accepted by our Council; at a cost of over a million dollars, which fails to mention anything about reducing traffic lanes or adding traffic roundabouts. A simple thing to overlook except the Downtown Specific Plan did not overlook this, they recommended that our present configuration of two lanes carrying traffic in both directions on Old Redwood Highway is the BEST system. A half million dollars of salesmanship later, our city council voted to put aside the Downtown Specific Plan and go with the "Roundabout Plan".

Oliver's Market paid for independent traffic studies and tried to work with Cotati city staff to no avail. Property owners along Old Redwood Highway attempted to work with city staff, too. Close to twenty million dollars was planned to be spent to open the largest commercial development along Old Redwood Highway to open the "Northern Gateway" by private investors, but the roundabout plan was more important to city officials. I thought I'd see for myself what the consultants had shown our city council and see it in real time and space in southern California.

Driving into La Jolla, California one notices many things. Among them are signs saying "Scenic Drive", and other signs stating "Village" with arrows showing various ways to find and get to the "Village". In the Village of La Jolla there are signs that read 7-Eleven, CVS, Vons, and other stores that are franchises and part of chains. In the Village of La Jolla there are places without billboard signs that sell vintage Rolls Royces, Bentleys, Jaguars, BMWs, and the top Italian sports cars all housed in a one block stretch. There are specialty shops that sell just sunglasses, sandals, and other items that respectable people call "smalls". I noticed this as I was driven into the scenic drive and village that is now La Jolla which has not one, not two, not three, but five roundabouts in a five block stretch of road through an area of light retail and residential.

Five roundabouts between five blocks, and the largest store I saw was a CVS drug store. Cars were parked on both sides of the street, and there were no available parking spots at noon. What traffic there was moved smoothly. I saw no emergency vehicles racing by. I also saw no bicycles or much foot traffic at noon on a Sunday. I asked that we drop down a block to "Vista Del Mar" a road that went the same five block run with no stop signs through a residential section of the Village. There was considerably more foot traffic, and yes, it was hard for two pick up trucks to pass one another, due to the fact that one of the two trucks hogged the road and took the center rather than sharing the road; but this arrogance allowed for forced traffic calming with no added cost or redevelopment.

We drove down another block and we were able to find parking and walked down to the beach on Neptune Street. There was a great deal of foot traffic, and yes, I saw bicycles and there was more traffic than up the hill through all the roundabouts. The street with all the foot traffic and bicycles was exactly as it had been when I was walking on it in the 1970s. I went up to the roundabouts and went up and down the street seven times, going through every roundabout back and forth. Things went smoothly. No emergency vehicles though, two bicycles, a few people walking to their cars. There are no traffic signals on either end of the street that contain the five roundabouts. There is no highway running alongside these roundabouts. There is an ocean and beaches, and well folks, the Village of La Jolla is not the small town of Cotati and the small town of Cotati will never be the Village of La Jolla even with several single-lane roundabouts.

There are some similarities, many shops are posted with For Lease signs as well as going out of business signs in La Jolla. And in Cotati, with its over-planned and studied to death vacant lots filled with weeds sprouting For Sale signs; but that is where comparisons fade. I suggest that everyone who can should go to La Jolla go and see their traffic roundabouts and see how our city staff and their highly paid outside consultants could go through almost a half a million dollars recently to convince our representatives that roundabouts are the answer to our dreams.

Folks, I am NOT anti-roundabout, but there is a need to see things in real time and space when making decisions we can't undo. Cotati is not La Jolla, CA, and our city staff with their paid consultants and our elected representatives better not already know this but should start stating what Cotati is and what can make it truly vibrant. A city is more than buildings and streets; it is people and culture. If our city staff lived here in town and shopped here in town, they might get a better idea of what Cotati is and should be...

The answer to our future is right here, not in somewhere far, far away in a different time and place...

Drivable Cotati



A LOOK AT THE PEOPLE AND THINGS THAT MAKE THE DRIVING EXPERIENCE IN COTATI MORE ENJOYABLE AS WE CELEBRATE COTATI'S LONG LOVE AFFAIR WITH THE AUTOMOBILE, TRUCK AND MOTORCYCLE. WE BELIEVE WALKING CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH. SO, LIKE ANYTHING ELSE, WALKING SHOULD ONLY BE DONE IN MODERATION. DRIVING PROVIDES COMFORT AND SAFETY THAT WALKING SIMPLY CAN'T.



"We're not interested in where they go. We're only interested in the amount they travel," Rentschler told radio station KCBS. But for some folks, that's a distinction without a difference. Anytime you talk about getting information from people, whenever that conversation comes up, it's another hurdle you have to overcome."

It's nice to know that Director Rentschler sees your personal automobile, motorcycle, your money, and your freedom as hurdles he and the government needs to overcome. Personally, I think the feet of voting citizens on every MTC member's neck would be a more appropriate hurdle they need to overcome.

What The Future of Driving in the Bay Area Will Not Look Like



Your unelected Bay Area government has seen the future, and your car is not in it.

(OAKLAND, CA) — In a meeting held on July 19, 2012, the unelected officials of the Bay Area Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) voted to take the first step towards implementing a new tax so wrong-minded and spiteful that it could wreck the economy of this area for decades.

According to an article in the Press Democrat, they are seriously considering charging every motorist a tax on every

mile we drive in the nine-county region. Why? So they can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and as a side effect, collect \$15 million every day for "roads and public transit." That is not a typo. They are genuinely interested in stealing \$15 million every day from Bay Area residents who are already being nibbled to death by taxes every hour of every day.

How do they plan to assess your tax liability? Their proposal, which is still in its early stages, would be to require all drivers to install GPS-like odometers in their vehicles and pay from less than a penny to as much as a dime for every mile driven.

The good news? It could take a decade or more to be launched. The bad news? Like most insults to our freedom, it starts with a study. So on July 19, they voted to approve a long-range study on the merits of imposing a Vehicle Miles Traveled Tax.

Who do you complain to about this invasion of your wallet and your privacy? According to his LinkedIn Profile, Commission spokesman Randy Rentschler is Director of this 19-member commission. Their address is 101 8th Street, Oakland, CA 94607. Phone is (510) 817-5700. In my opinion, if ever there were a reason to flood a switchboard with outraged phone calls, and stuff their mailroom with outraged letters, this is it.

Because this means even more than the additional \$300 a month it could cost a

driver who logs 100 miles a day, as many of us frequently do. It means these 19 bureaucrats, who were appointed by mayors and county supervisors from nine Bay Area counties, are literally reshaping the way you live and work. And their vision of an ideal future is to get us out of our cars and into tiny mixed-use urban apartments and condos connected by public transit.



The MTC examines the future, and decides cars bad, bicycles good.

If that is a lifestyle that appeals to you, fine, then enjoy living in Frogson-like units. But is it a lifestyle that should be imposed on you by making private ownership of cars nearly impossible? Absolutely not.

And what about the idea of a government device in your car that tracks your mileage? Rentschler admits that even Bay Area residents, who are numb to loony liberal ideas, might wake up and resist this one.



Cotati's car and truck culture is legendary. For many years, Cotati was known as a trucking town. To some extent it still is, with a few trucking firms and truck repair shops on the west side of town.

The assault on traditional automobiles and motorcycles from Cotati City Hall has been underway for many years now. We will begin to take a closer look at this issue and celebrate Cotati's colorful love affair with the internal combustion engine in all its forms and in all its glory.

That's it for this month.
Good Motoring,
Greg Karraker



A Thousand Miles of Bad Road

Road Maintenance Budget Triples But Sonoma County Remains In a Deep Pot Hole

By Craig S. Harrison

www.SOSroads.org

On the first of May, a member of Save Our Sonoma Roads struck a pot hole that deployed an air bag and caused \$3,000 in damages to her vehicle. She was driving 25 mph, well below the speed limit. The board of supervisors hearing on June 19th that discussed the comprehensive 31-page road report by the Ad Hoc Committee provides little reason to believe that that close encounters with pot holes will cease any time soon.

The good news is that the county maintenance budget, which was merely \$5.3 million this year, will almost triple to \$15.5 million in the fiscal year beginning July 1st. This returns the county's contribution for road maintenance from its general fund, adjusted for inflation, to the levels it spent in the late 1980s. The decisions by supervisors for over 20 years to divert road maintenance funds to projects that seemed more interesting to them have reduced Sonoma County roads to their current abysmal condition. Had road maintenance funding been maintained at an equivalent of \$15 million per year during that period, the additional \$120 million would surely have resulted in most county roads being in much better condition today.

SOSroads suggested at its first Road Summit in March that returning funding to \$15 million would demonstrate that the board of supervisors is serious about making roads a priority. They delivered, and we congratulate Supervisors Zane and Rabbitt for their leadership in what could not have been an easy lift in this economy.

The additional \$2.2 million from Solid Waste Franchise Fees, approved in February, allows the county to expand its Priority Road Network (now renamed the Primary Road Network) to 198 miles. The additional \$8 million, approved June 19th, comes from a special reserve used to cover delinquent property taxes and will not be available in subsequent years.

Most of the one-time funds (\$6.5 million) will be used to rehabilitate 7.6 miles of rural roads that serve tourist destinations -- West Dry Creek Road (wineries), Westshore Road (Bodega Harbor), Adobe Canyon Road (Sugarloaf Ridge State Park) 12 and [Cannon Lane \(Tolay Regional Park\)](#).

Many members of the public who spoke at the hearing welcomed the additional funds but wondered whether these 7.6 miles of road are the highest priority, especially because they appear to be in comparatively good shape and not necessarily deserving of \$855,000 per mile. What might be achieved by rehabilitating smaller sections (e.g., one-quarter mile or less) of the worst stretches of roads throughout the county? There are many roads with a bad reputation because of a few very deteriorated 100 yard segments.

The remaining \$1.5 million of the one-time funds will be used to match citizen efforts to improve roads. This is a creative idea, and SOSroads volunteered to help implement the program in a practical way that would inspire public confidence.

It is frustrating that an \$8 million major step forward will merely improve 7.6 miles of roads together with what can be accomplished from partnerships with the community.

There is no specific long term plan to address the repair of the majority of the county's failing roads. The county has 1,382 miles of roads and most of the 1,184 that are not in the Primary Road System receive no attention except to address immediate safety problems.

What will happen to the 726 miles of county roads (53%) that are now classified as poor or failed? The report estimates it will take \$92.6 million each year to repair them. Ken Churchill of New Sonoma (<http://www.newsonoma.org/>), a prominent pension reform advocate, stressed the connection between county pensions and the road crisis. The amount needed to repair the roads is almost equal to the amount the county is obligated to pay out of the general fund to pay for pensions each year.

The report identifies four local tax increases that might increase road funding. In the unlikely event that all were approved by voters, the annual sum raised (\$10 million) would barely scratch the surface of the \$92.6 million problem. These include a local 0.25 cent sales tax increase (\$3.5 million), a hotel tax increase (\$2.5 million), extending Measure M (\$0.6 million) and a utility users tax (\$3.4 million). Special property tax assessments where some residents agree to assess themselves to pay extra to improve nearby roads remains an option.

Additional funding could come from statewide vehicle fee and/or gas tax increases, both of which require statewide voter approval or legislation. It would be helpful if the gas tax allocation formula that disadvantages Sonoma County could be revised. The politics of this would be a long shot because the current formula provides plenty of funds to other counties that are unlikely to be eager to redirect funding to Sonoma County from their own coffers.

SOSroads urges those concerned about the condition of our rural roads to get involved in this issue. While the supervisors emphatically state that there is no formal policy to convert 86% of county roads to gravel or dirt, the county is continuing in that direction without substantial additional funding.

Please join SOSroads or sign up for our free newsletter (<http://sosroads.org/>) so that we can update you on developments.

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Cotati Follies

I don't make jokes; I just watch the government and report the facts. - Will Rogers



Unidentified Object Still Unfound; Was Hiding in Plain Sight

For two months, we ran this photograph of an item that is in plain view in a well known Cotati business, and nobody found it. The answer? It's a nice piece of jewelry on a black velvet display in the window of More Unlimited at 8282 Old Redwood Highway. You should visit, browse around, and meet Bob, the owner. He's a good guy.



New Contest; New Mystery Object

This month, we're making things a bit easier. Tell us where this object is, and win a \$25 Gift Certificate to the Redwood Café. Same rules: email entries to editor@thecotatiindependent.com. First right answer wins. Employees or relatives of employees of the business where the mystery object is located are not eligible. Deadline: August 31, 2012.

Longtime Cotati blowhard Bruce Voorhes is advertising to housesit or be a caretaker for the right person. What happen, Bruce; get evicted? How about doing Cotati a big favor and buying yourself a one way bus ticket to San Francisco where you will fit right in? How about a real job where you actually pay taxes?

Will Lisa Moore, John Moore, or both run for city council? We'd love to see it. We need more Occupy Cotati wannabes on the city council like we need a hole in the head. If complaining to the city council about their family woes was not enough entertainment, maybe the Moores, if elected, will contract with the NAACP to come back to Cotati and teach the community how to pack a city hall meeting with racists from out of town. John Moore makes for good

theater but he's not much upstairs. John Moore is best known for his antics of embarrassing Cotati by condemning a council member's Halloween costume



as insuring all costumes past, present and future be politically correct. The Moores called for a recall election in 2009 which cost the city thousands of dollars and helped to launch this newspaper. I guess they got their wish. With the Moores on the city council, Happy Hour before council meetings could be in our future.



We requested the Cotati Police Department provide the address of Lilly Gomez, the woman who was arrested and charged in Cotati in 2011 for destroying Cotati Independent newspapers in town so we could file a Small Claims Court action against her and her employer for monetary damages. The Cotati PD would not release her address claiming she has rights to her privacy. So, since we don't have any idea how to serve this sorry excuse for a woman with a subpoena, if anyone knows how to find Lilly Gomez to have her legally served please let us know. Thanks, Chief Parish for the lack of cooperation to finally bring this woman to justice in a civil court by asking she pay damages for her alleged wrongdoing. Protecting those who have been charged for a crime and case dismissed for completing a diversion program is wrong. Her total confession speaks for itself, Chief.

Phunky Phunn & Positive Thoughts



How do these people survive?

Recently, I went to McDonald's and I saw on the menu that you could have an order of 6, 9 or 12 Chicken McNuggets. I asked for a half dozen nuggets. 'We don't have half dozen nuggets,' said the teenager at the counter. 'You don't?' I replied. 'We only have six, nine, or twelve,' was the reply. 'So I can't order half dozen nuggets, but I can order six?' 'That's right.' So I shook my head and ordered six McNuggets (Unbelievable but sadly true...)

I was at the checkout at the local Wal-Mart with just a few items and the lady behind me put her things on the belt close to mine. I picked up one of those 'dividers' that they keep by the cash register and placed it between our things so they wouldn't get mixed. After the girl had scanned all of my items, she picked up the 'divider', looking it all over for the bar code so she could scan it. Not finding the bar code, she said to me, 'Do you know how much this is?' I said to her 'I've changed my mind; I don't think I'll buy that today.' She said 'OK,' and I paid her for the things and left. She had no clue to what had just happened.

A woman at work was seen putting a credit card into her floppy drive and pulling it out very quickly. When I inquired as to what she was doing, she said she was shopping on the Internet and they kept asking for a credit card number, so she was using the ATM 'thingy.'

Some helpful tips.

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and parents will. Stay in touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing

than crying alone.

8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.

9. Save for retirement, starting with your first paycheck.

10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.

11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.

12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.

13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.

14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.

15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry; God never blinks.

16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.

17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.

18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.

19. It's never too late to have a happy childhood... But the second one is up to you and no one else.

20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.

21. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.

22. Over-prepare, then go with the flow.

23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.

24. The most important sex organ is the brain.

25. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.

26. Frame every so-called disaster with these words 'In five years, will this matter?'

27. Always choose life.

28. Forgive everyone everything.

29. What other people think of you is none of your business.

30. Time heals almost everything. Give time time.

31. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.

32. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.

33. Believe in miracles.

34. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.

35. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.

36. Growing old beats the alternative -- dying young.

37. Your children get only one childhood.

38. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.

39. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.

40. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.

41. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.

42. The best is yet to come.

43. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.

44. Yield.

45. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.



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Letters to the Editor

Email: editor@thecotatiindependent.com

Dear Editor,

Upon my wife dropping off my voter forms, and the volunteers discovering I was Republican, my voter packet was rejected. It's funny how liberals who are so high and mighty, continually do things I wouldn't even consider.

Communists !

Thank you,
Ryan Woltering
Cotati

Dear Editor,

George Barich has a great chance winning his seat back on the city council in November after what the city council has done in his absence. But if he doesn't win, at the very least he will make these morons on the council work for their seats. It was great to see Mark Landman and Pat Gilardi walking (or waddling) up and down the streets two years ago to retain their seats on the city council. I would hate to see these hard core politicians who have their hands out to anybody for campaign money to run unopposed.

Cotati is a politically diverse community. It's hard to fathom that the current city council doesn't reflect that diversity. Barich has the brains and the guts that he voted against the silly and unrealistic Downtown Specific Plan. He voted against higher taxes, voted to reject federal stimulus money, requested the council impose term limits on city council members including himself, wanted the city to build back up its reserves, and spoke out against single lane roundabouts on busy streets.

I have spoken to George at length over the years. I tried to talk him out of running this year to save his sanity, but he reminded me why he is running again. He said a town without hope has one foot in the grave. He's right, I guess. He's not blinded by passion, but sees Cotati as many of us do, as a work in progress, as damaged goods, as something worth fixing, as a place where people deserve to get their money's worth like anyplace else, as a town with an understanding that there is no dignity in spending beyond your means and ignoring the obvious signs all around us.

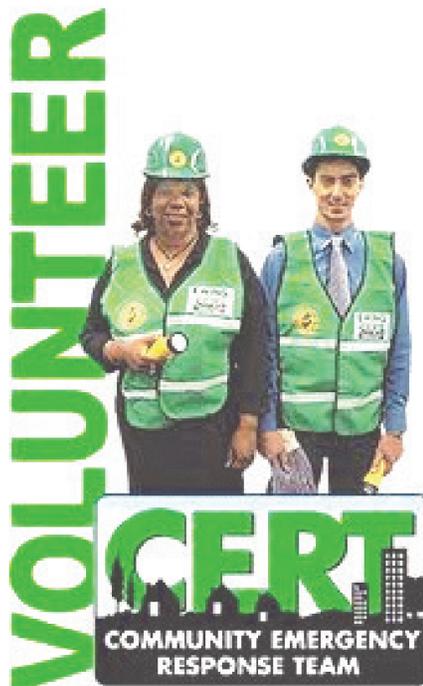
If the other candidates won't pass term limits for city council members, let's do it ourselves: Support George Barich for city council and let's put common sense back on our town council.

Sally Ramsey,
Cotati

Dear Editor,

Our country now has over 15 trillion dollars of debt. Obama plans to add another 10 trillion in the next five years. President Obama, I like your dance moves, but you promised to focus on our economy with a laser beam in 2009. What have you done in three years besides played over 100 rounds of golf? Save your breath, Sir. You're FIRED.

J. Lewis
Cotati



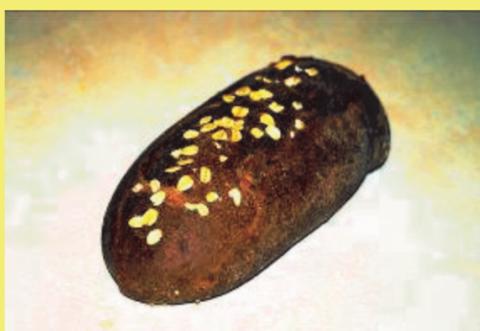
Submit your letters to the editor online at editor@thecotatiindependent.com

Cooking with Megan Cromwell



Copy Cat Recipe: Outback Bushman's Bread

One of the best parts of going out to Outback Steakhouse is the Bushman bread (you know, that lovely dark brown loaf with sweet butter) which is served complimentary to your party. But, if you're a vegetarian, a STEAKHOUSE isn't going to offer a lot of options that are satisfactory. And, if you have a large family or are on a tight budget, going out isn't really an option. Therefore, making this bread at home and serving it with your meals is a great option. While you may spend a little bit to get the ingredients together initially, you can then make a large number of loaves of bread with the ingredients you now have on hand.



This recipe is designed to make the dough in a bread machine, then finish it off in a conventional oven.

- 1 packet active dry yeast
- 1 cup warm water [110-120° F]
- 2 Tbs. butter or vegan margarine (softened)
- 1/3 cup honey or agave syrup
- 1/2 Tbs. sugar [brown or white]
- 1 1/2 cups wheat PASTRY flour
- 1 1/2 cups high-gluten bread flour [I substitute 1/4 cup of wheat gluten for AP flour]
- 1 1/2 tsp instant coffee (1 packet Starbucks Via coffee - Breakfast Blend is great)
- 1 Tbs. mild molasses
- 3 tbsp cornmeal

- 1 Tbs Milk or soy-milk
- handful rolled oats

Directions:

In a separate bowl, mix together the bread flour, wheat flour, cocoa, sugar, coffee, & salt.

It's very important you place the ingredients into you bread machine in the following order: Water, butter, honey, sugar, & molasses, then dry mix & yeast. This will keep the yeast from activating with the warm water until after it's begun mixing.

Run your bread machine on the "dough" setting until complete.

Place the dough in a glass bowl covered with a towel and let rise in a warm dry area for about an hour. A warmed oven, turned off works well.

Separate the dough into two equal parts and roll out into oval loaves.

Place on a parchment paper covered baking sheet dusted with cornmeal. Brush the tops of your loaves with a little whole milk or half-and-half, and sprinkle with rolled oats.

Bake at 350 for 20-25 minutes or until the crust makes hollow sound when tapped.

Serve warm with softened butter. YUM!

Blog: <http://megarasmunchies.blogspot.com/>

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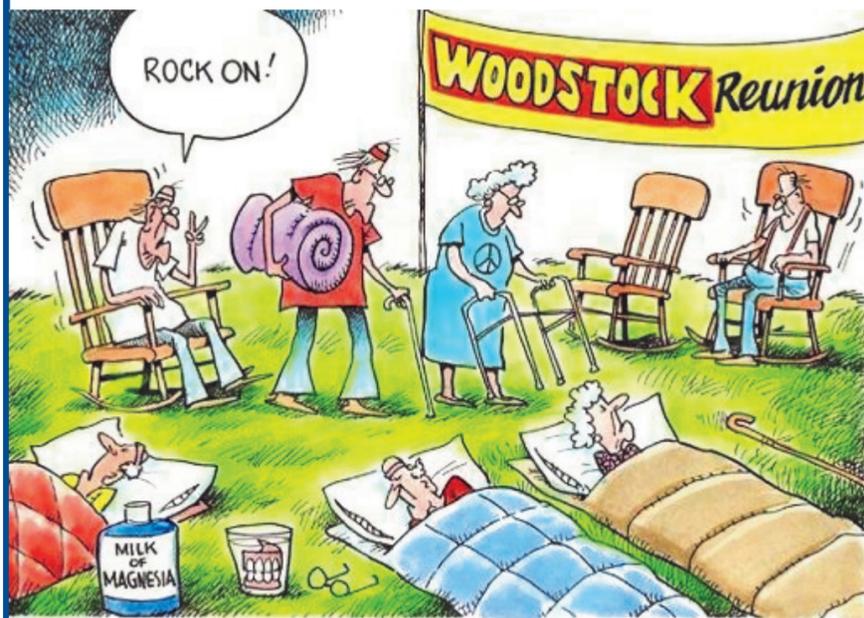
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Great new little restaurant right off the main drag of Petaluma Blvd., on a corner with a few parking spaces in a lot right next to the restaurant. Decor is simple but pleasant, as was the service.



Came for lunch with a cousin. We both had read the Jeff Cox review in the Press Democrat, and were anxious to check out the menu and dig into some authentic Nepalese and Indian food. Personally, I love Northern Indian food. However, my favorite dish actually comes from Goa on the Southern coast of India, inspired by the Portuguese who settled there. Specifically, Vindaloo. The word comes from a combination of "Vin" meaning vinegar and "Aloo", meaning garlic in Portuguese. It is a classic Goanese dish that can be ordered as spicy as you like (mild, medium or blow your socks off hot!) with a mixture of meat or fish (without for vegetarians), potatoes, and vegetables in a wonderful sauce seasoned with garlic, ginger, and all those colorful Indian spices.

We ordered a starter to share: **Lamb Cholia**; cubes of barbecued lamb, marinated in olive oil, mixed with garlic and ginger. This dish looked fine, but the meat was not as tender as it could have been, and the sauce was a bit lacking. Hoping to strike the gold standard on the mains we planned to share, I ordered **Shrimp Vindaloo** on the specials board and my cuz chose **Chicken Tikka Masala**; boneless chicken from a clay tandoori oven cooked in light cream, cashew nuts, fresh tomato-onion sauce, garlic, ginger and spices. Lunch and dinner a la carte entrees come with house made **Naan** bread and brown or white rice. The Shrimp Vindaloo (medium spicy) was excellent. The Chicken Tikka Masala was less impressive with a sauce that was dense and heavy.

We both agreed, the Vindaloo dish was the clear winner with a sauce fit to dip your Naan into. Also noteworthy was the hot **Spiced Chai Tea** with milk, and the brown rice was delightfully nutty.

With nine vegetarian curries to choose from this place should do well with the veggie crowd too! Worth checking this place out.

Cafe Citti - Italian Trattoria

9049 Sonoma Highway / Kenwood / 707-833-5837
Category: Italian Trattoria



Daily: 11am — 3:30pm **L**
 5pm — 8:30pm **D**
 Sun-Thu & 5pm — 9pm Fri-Sat
 Limited parking — Kid friendly
 Patio & Indoor seating
 Beer & Wine.
 *** \$-\$\$

Family owned and operated for over 10 years by a couple from Lucca, Italy, this small but efficient cafe feeds hungry winery tourists and locals alike. Located on Highway 12, it is very convenient for passersby to stop. Set up inside like a deli with large glass cases displaying hot and cold items, and a large menu board overhead, orders are taken and delivered to your table



or packed to go.

The menu? Italian **Panini Style Sandwiches** served with housemade Mozzarella, gourmet salads and soups, pick your own pasta noodles, housemade ravioli and gnocchi topped with your choice of 8 different sauces, and grilled chicken. Deserts are plentiful with **Tiramisu**, **Cannoli** and **Biscotti** a specialty.

We have had several great meals at Cafe Citti since moving to Sonoma County over 10 years ago. This past visit, I am sorry to say, was not one of them! Perhaps it was because we came on a Sunday and I noticed the owner was not there. Perhaps things have changed, or it was just an off day. However, we ran into some of my relatives who were just finishing their meal, and I asked them to tell me about it. "Not great," came the reply. Too bad, as my family loves this place and dines here often.

Ah well. A bad meal happens now and then. Let me tell you about ours. Hubby ordered the **Lasagna with Bolognese Sauce**, and I opted for **Polenta with Marinara**. We shared one favorite dish, **Blue Lake Green Beans**. The Lasagna came to the table swimming in the sauce. So much in fact, the lasagna looked like a lump beneath it! I tasted the noodles and they were overcooked and the filing was not discernable. My Polenta was fine and the sauce okay. But the Blue Lake Green Bean Salad was the most disappointing. Over-garlicky, with way too much lemon juice squeezed over them, almost inedible. Our past experience at this restaurant weighed heavily on my decision to rate them as "Good". In fairness, the saving grace for this meal was the housemade Cannoli. Simply sinful...

We will return soon to make sure this visit does not indicate a trend to mediocrity.

Cafe Rouge - Mediterranean & American Bistro

782 Fourth Street / Berkeley / 510-525-1440
Category: Rustic Mediterranean & American
 Daily: Mon - Sat 11:30am - 3pm **L**
 Tue - Sat 3pm - 5:30pm Interim Menu
 5:30pm - 9:30pm **D**
 Sun 11am - 2:30pm Brunch / 2:30pm - 4pm Interim
 Menu / 5pm - 9pm **D**
Specialty: Fresh meats, dry-aged on premises, house-made charcuterie.
 Kid friendly / Public parking lot / Outdoor dining available
 Full Bar / Oyster Bar / Meat Market
 ***1/2 \$\$-\$\$\$

If you ever get the urge to visit Berkeley's famous Gourmet Ghetto, this is an excellent place to start. Known for its organic beef, pork, lamb and poultry. All meats are raised hormone free and purchased from the growers. All produce is also organically grown. Menu changes every two weeks.

We came for Sunday brunch and cocktails! Classic cocktails, to be specific. Glad to see more bars and restaurants serving the old classics, like the **Sazerac**. Created around 1850, this is a New Orleans variation of an old-fashioned cognac or whiskey cocktail, named for the "Sazerac de Forge et Fils" brand of cognac that was its original prime ingredient, along with Peychaud's Bitters, made by a local druggist, Antoine Amedie Peychaud. The drink is some combination of cognac or rye whiskey, absinthe or Herbsaint and Peychaud's Bitters and is distinguished by its preparation method and sometimes referred to as the oldest known American cocktail, with origins in pre-Civil War New Orleans. I'm sure this claim to fame could be disputed but, hey it's the Big Easy!

Cafe Rouge's version is made with Michter's US1 Rye whiskey, Peychauds bitters, Angostura bitters, and St. George Absinthe, (***) \$10).



Oysters on the Half-Shell, Kusschi, Kumamoto, Buckley Bay, St. Simon, Marin Miyagi and Fanny Bay (***) \$2.50 ea). What can I say? You either like raw oysters, or you don't. I've been a fan for over 30 years, and rarely pass up the opportunity to sample what's available whenever I can. Besides oysters, here are some of their brunch specialties:

Crostini Trio, smoked trout and pickled beets; ham and house-made mustard; onion jam and Carmody cheese with soft boiled egg (***) \$11). Excellent combination of flavors. Served with toasted rounds of French bread.

Ricotta Pancakes served with blueberries and cherries! (***) \$11). Melt in your mouth goodness with French cream and warm maple syrup. **Berkshire Bacon** (***) \$4) is the best bacon I've ever eaten!

Eggs Benedict, house cured Canadian bacon, poached eggs, Hollandaise on brioche toast (***) \$12). Well executed version and I liked the brioche instead of the English muffin.

Sausage Sandwich, with assorted pickles and potato chips (**1/2 \$13). Housemade, from sausage to chips. Nicely done.

I want to return for a lunch or dinner. This place is a meat lover's dream come true and for non-meat eaters there are plenty of tasty salads and fish dishes to choose from.

Until next time, bon appétit!

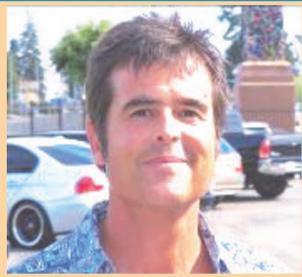
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A Pivotal Time

By James Bennett

For many like myself, we recognize the gravity of the pivotal time we are living in. Independence Day was very special this year for me. I didn't just take it for granted. I didn't just ASS-ume that our freedoms came easy or were somehow ordained, or that as Americans we enjoyed some kind of immunity from oppression. We ARE special, largely because of our ideals and what we hold dear. Our founders' vision provided a postulate that paid homage to the individual.

They laid the fertile groundwork that worked like no other. The Constitution protected your freedoms so you could enjoy liberty and pursuit of happiness. It said that if the fruits of your labor, your service, your product was good enough, sweet enough, admired enough, it could provide abundance and the realization of your American dream to get ahead and obtain wealth. Now, wealth is bad?

Now, more and more have come to realize that as Americans we really don't enjoy a kind of immunity, that the "dream" is being called into question; that something is different. The honeymoon is over. We still embrace the dream, honor what we have (or once had?) but our dream country doesn't seem to inspire us anymore. Why is that? Most of us don't really want something for nothing. We just want a level playing field which makes us all equal in opportunity. We want our property rights and the right to do business, to be protected, un-hindered by the very public servants that we pay for.

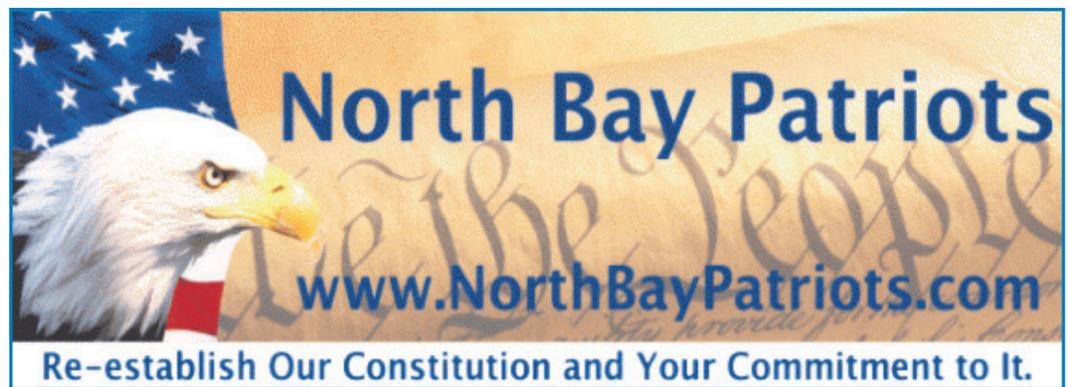
OK, I'll say it; get off our backs; leave us the hell alone, Uncle Sam. If there's anything good about getting older, maybe it's that we get more intuitive with age. We don't only think about the difference between right and wrong, what is the truth, we start to really feel it in our bones. Intuitively, more and more of us feel and just know that something just isn't right. That a genuine effort isn't being set forth to look after our well being as individuals and our individual freedoms anymore but as a collective.

No amount of rhetoric, environmental excuses or reasons for this move towards more socialism can change what we know in our heart that it is fundamentally wrong. No amount of guilt or propaganda can sway us. Especially if we are old enough to have the benefit of a clear overview of what has been happening. Seeing the before and after pictures of our country, the slow and deliberate erosion of our liberties and our way of life, we remember how things used to be and yearn for those days again.

Many Americans have figured out what's behind the sabotage America is under. Although some other countries are realizing they've been duped at the detriment of their nation's people, it seems the United Nations employs the same evil carrot and stick brand of extortion with other countries that they have done with ours. Often utilizing trade, the promise of "security", and spreading "democracy", they manipulate currencies (largely through the IMF), trade and 'loans'. Here's the M.O. of these globalists in the wake of having orchestrated their own financial crashes, the UN through it's many mechanisms will be there to offer money. Through bailouts or locally through grant money, the basic premise works on a citizen, a city, or a country like this. If you are destitute, you will accept options you never would otherwise if life was abundant. Look at Greece, Spain, Portugal, etc. Now Greece is between a rock and a hard place, having

fallen victim to this very deliberate dynamic. They, like your local city hall, were basically told if you do things our way we'll give you free money or special favors. So, in this respect, Petaluma is like a smaller Portugal. However, part of the ICLEI model is to portray a picture of financial crisis even if there isn't one.

In an ICLEI Charter municipality, if you're not buried in debt now, wait a while, you will be. That was the motivation behind the concerted effort to recall Patriot George Barich from Cotati's City Council because he refused to drink the Kool-Aid. He didn't see the need or desire to indebt your town in a way not organic, not sustainable, not realistic and counterproductive to the city's well being. When in control of your finances, you're in the driver's seat. When in debt up to your ears, you are a passenger going along for the ride. You forfeit your independence in favor of a dependence to your creditor. Borrowing money costs money, money we don't have. It further enslaves us and reduces our future choices and options. In our current situation, these traitors who pawn themselves off as city leaders have infiltrated our local governments through installed and empowered unelected boards and commissions to 'plan' and appropriate OUR MONEY to our own detriment.



There are so many strings attached to cities who are going along with the One Bay Area Plan imposed by the MTC that make it impossible for individual cities to have their own voice going forward. That's what regionalism is really about, disenfranchising the people from their communities with the promise of 'affordable housing' and jobs for all. These plans like One Bay Area are pure lies. If government can create this sort of polarization and resentment among the 'haves' and 'have nots', then this is surely the groundwork for more socialism, more centralized planning, more social engineering, more taking of private property rights and less freedom.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in conjunction with Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), both powerful unelected bodies, have set forth this 'Plan' largely without public knowledge. In our form of governance, that is an oxymoron.

We are supposed to empower unelected boards and commissions to make laws because that circumvents the voice of the people. This, along with "regionalism", represents a Soviet model of governance. This insidious government within a government has basically bribed our local officials, largely without our knowledge or consent. Almost THREE

BILLION DOLLARS has been misappropriated to extort all the cities in the Bay Area to "play ball" with these agencies. What's the game plan? One-BayArea, a regional approach. That's the End-game. Reducing the entire Bay Area to a "region". If you feel a disconnect with your local government now, your town will feel like Mayberry compared to what's comin' down the bike path. The One Bay Area Plan seeks to eliminate the individual sovereignty of our communities, instead putting them all under a huge bureaucratic UN model of Agenda 21 Sustainable Development oppression, which means a complete forfeiture of choice in terms of where and how we all live our lives, raise our children, use our energy, what we buy, and our transportation options! It represents a decimation of property rights and what's left of the American dream for almost 8 million citizens who live and work in the Bay Area!

The kind of manipulation, coercion, deception, the zoning and code enforcement shenanigans you've witnessed in Cotati would pale in comparison. The One Bay Area Plan is like Cotati on steroids. Stack 'n pack Smart Growth gulags next to the Smart Train tracks and depots. No back yards for you and your family to enjoy. No privacy. No more single family homes. They will eventually be gulped up in the years to come to make room for more high density housing, etc. In fact, ultimately no private property ownership at all. That's the plan. You like your suburban or rural lifestyles? You like your small business or home based business? You like to play your music a little loud? You like to barbeque outdoors? This big Bay Area plan wouldn't be another stomach punch, and this is surely a knockout punch for our economy and traditional way of life, by design. Why? Because they don't like our lifestyles and our freedoms. They don't like our cars, or even our guns when it comes right down to it.

Now, picture yourself as a member of your local government, perhaps a council member, a sworn representative who is there to represent you and protect your rights. Try to imagine having knowledge of this tyrannical 'Plan', which they most assuredly do. Now imagine thinking it is somehow appropriate to keep it a secret from you. They are supposed to be in YOUR corner protecting you from too much government and more oppression! A well meaning city hall would be holding the most well known town hall meeting in the town's history about this PLAN! Think about the statement they are making keeping this all on the hush about their allegiance to YOU. This is death by a thousand bee stings.

Even though UN Agenda 21 Sustainable Development is an enormous international effort, the Achilles heel is their ability to implement locally. If cities, counties and states recognize their sovereignty (while they still have it) and remember what the concept of community really means like former city councilman George Barich does, we have a shot, we have a chance.

Several states have passed, or have pending legislation that would ban Agenda 21, ICLEI, Sustainable Development and all of it's warm 'n fuzzy aliases from their states. Currently, to my knowledge, they include: New Hampshire, Alabama and Louisiana are still under consideration while Mississippi, Kansas, Tennessee are waiting for governor signatures. Many of these are largely rural states, rural and agricultural areas have really felt the wrath of this Agenda. Almost 60 communities in America have successfully kicked ICLEI out. I know many other cities have efforts in the works. Again, this is the thing.

There is a push to implement these policies before the vast majority of people wake up and object. By keeping the Plan's implementation in check another year, at the rate people are waking up, we could realize the tipping point and push back successfully. Which is exactly what we need right now, a full frontal assault to end this madness before it is too late. Cotati has an engaged group of citizens in the North Bay Patriots. I would connect with them if you haven't already. Generate a resolution to reject OneBayArea. Any public officials unwilling to go along and stand against it should be the subject to a recall.

There is dignity in preserving our freedoms, and no dignity is being duped, deceived and fooled like we have been. Maybe this chapter represents our ultimate culmination of same. If we get it right, maybe we'll even find a little grace. Meet some good people that share a kind of humility. Maybe everything does happen for a reason. Maybe this chapter is about renewing our resolve for what we want to stand for. Many of us are becoming people we never thought we'd be, modern day patriots. Evidently now is The Time, and we are The Ones.

Besides if this was Mayberry, USA, Andy would never let this happen on his watch.

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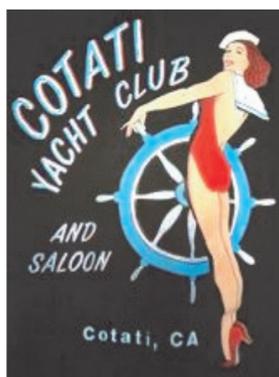
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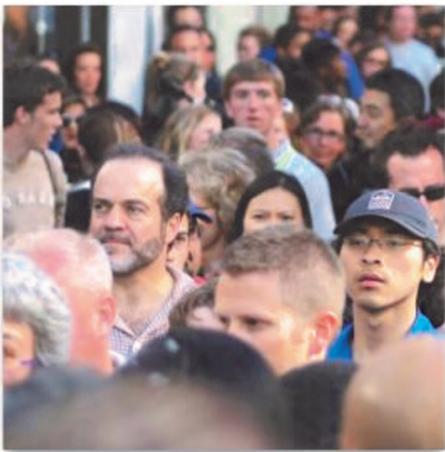
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Forget global warming; now it's species extinction



The UN Conference on Sustainable Development has wrapped up in Rio de Janeiro and the overwhelming consensus among participants is that the human population, left unchecked, is set to force a mass extinction of species. The reason? Human's are consuming the world's resources at an alarming rate and are throwing the earth out of balance, say the eco-activists. Unless drastic protocols are emplaced, this terrestrial ball will experience a complete species meltdown, much like the cataclysmic event that killed off the dinosaurs millions of years ago, they contend. The gathering of representatives from virtually every nation (and environmental organization) on the planet, was held to further the goals presented at the original UN Rio "Earth Summit" in 1992, via a detailed plan known as Agenda 21—the global political agenda for the 21st Century. The 1992 conference was unique in that it made global warming a household term, introduced the planet to Al Gore, and presented the details of a term conjured up by UN masterminds nearly 10 years earlier: "sustainable development."



The New Eco-Score: Extinction

Posted by [Brian Sussman](#) [Nationally Published Columnson](#)
Jun 25th, 2012 |

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In short, sustainable development insists the human species is no more significant than any other species on the planet, and in fact should be discriminated against because, left unabated, the human population will do great harm to, or even destroy, all other species. Sustainable development is described by its architect, Maurice Strong, founder of the UN Environmental Program, as akin to "putting our planet, Earth Incorporated, if you will, on a sound business basis."

That "business plan" sees liberty-loving humans as carriers of a plague. Its prescribed cure is liberty-sapping, heavy-handed regulations and laws designed to control human behavior and reproduction.

As for Agenda 21 (as I thoroughly explain in *Eco-Tyranny*), it's sustainable development's highly detailed action plan and it's designed to move the nations toward a brave new world. The Agenda begins with a preamble that speaks to "the fulfillment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future. No nation can achieve this on its own; but together we can—in a global partnership for sustainable development."

With such a dreamy, left-tilting, pronouncement it should

be no surprise that Agenda 21 deems universal health care a "right." It also redefines wealth, insisting on "the need for new concepts of wealth and prosperity." The Agenda also encourages government-sponsored social brainwashing, stating, "Achieving the goals of environmental quality and sustainable development will require...changes in consumption patterns." Indeed, "Governments themselves [can] also play a role in [determining] consumption... and can have a considerable influence on both corporate decisions and public perceptions."

Of course, Agenda 21 also heralds the abolition of private property rights; something Maurice Strong began pushing via the UN in 1976, at the Conference on Human Settlements, aka "Habitat I." At that event Strong proclaimed,

- "Private land ownership is a principal instrument of accumulating wealth and therefore contributes to social injustice. Public control of land use is therefore indispensable."
- "Public ownership of land is justified in favor of the common good, rather than to protect the interest of the already privileged."
- "Zoning and land-use planning [are to be used] as a basic instrument of land policy in general and of control of land-use changes in particular."
- "Fiscal controls [are to be employed], e.g. property taxes, tax penalties and tax incentives [in order to eradicate private lands]. As the Agenda states, governments shall "formulate appropriate land-use policies and introduce planning regulations specially aimed at the protection of eco-sensitive zones against physical disruption by construction and construction-related activities."

This plank from Rio has provided the tyrannical inspiration to institute laws, regulations, and policies to mitigate physical private property rights here in the United States.

Coinciding with its plan to usher us into global socialist paradigm, Agenda 21 is responsible for promoting "green jobs," as well as high speed rail and other mass transit projects which "promote the use of labor-intensive construction and maintenance technologies which generate employment in the construction sector for the underemployed labor force found in most large cities."

And we can't forget the hidden crown jewel of the sustainable development scheme: population control. Agenda 21 braashly reveals that the preferred tool for population repression is abortion. Cloaking their message with terms such as "curative health facilities," (a deceptive alias for abortion clinics), the Agenda declares, "Governments should take active steps to implement programs to establish and strengthen preventive and curative health facilities that include women-centered, women-managed, safe and effective reproductive health care and affordable, accessible services, as appropriate, for the responsible planning of family size."

But wait, there's more.

Along with the UN doubling down on their sustainable development scheme in Rio last week, they now also insist that the "greatest threat" facing the planet is the extinction of species—due to the presence of too many people sucking up too many of the earth's resources.

Trouble is, just like with global warming, extinction of species is *not* a problem.

The massive species losses cited at Rio are based on sloppy extrapolations, wild guesses and unfounded presumptions—all force-fed into biased, non-validated, virtual reality computer models that assume increased carbon dioxide levels will raise global temperatures so high that plants, birds, reptiles and animals will be exterminated.

Like their ridiculous global cooling, global warming, climate change scenarios, there is *no* evidence to support any of these bizarre extinction scenarios.

As I've stated on radio, TV, in my books, and my blogs: the environmental movement is not about clean air and clean water: it's about killing capitalism, destroying free markets, and assaulting mankind.

City continues to refuse to pay out refunds.

(From Page One)

I won't bore you with all the attorney-yak, but here's a choice sample: "Where the public interest in non-disclosure of pre-decisional material clearly outweighs the public interest in disclosure, as the City asserts, disclosure is exempt under Government Code section 6255."

Let me translate: The public interest (YOURS) is better served if the City clams up (NONDISCLOSURE) than the public interest (YOURS) would be served by a simple straight answer (DISCLOSURE).

Why would you be better off not knowing the truth? Because more citizens who have had their money taken illegally would then be encouraged to step forward and ask for a refund. Where would this refund come from? That is one question the city actually answered honestly. It would come from the General Fund.

As Yogi Berra often said, "It ain't over till it's over." So I will file a formal complaint with Sonoma County District Attorney Jill Ravitch. Hopefully, the District Attorney's opinion on this matter will be considerably less grubby than the shady evasions practiced by the city council you elected, and the City Manager and City Attorney they continue to hide behind.

Round and Round We Go, Where It Stops, Nobody Knows

(From Page One)

Amazingly, the City Manager recommended a third option: After spending over \$1.5 million on two useless studies that have resulted in dozens of NO ROUNDABOUTS signs popping up all over town, *city staff wants to do another study.* At the city council meeting on June 27, the council unanimously agreed with city staff's recommendation to have still another study, so they could try to shove their one-lane plan down our throats one more time. They say this study will only cost "up to \$10,000 in legal costs."

Do you think this new study will report even one objectionable thing about the Village Main Street Plan? Of course not. The only purpose of this new study is to give the city some spin they can turn into flyers they stick in your water bill and hope you'll be gullible enough to believe.

The reasons they gave for another study were as outrageous as they are laughable. According to a story in The Press Democrat, They want to "examine how such an ordinance would affect public safety and the city's economy, its consistency with the general plan and its financial impact."

Two obvious facts:

First, the economy. Because the city has bungled the plans for the Northern Gateway so completely, Oliver's will not build a new \$18 million store, retail, and housing complex on the empty site at 116 and Old Redwood Highway. *That's a loss of millions in construction jobs, who knows how many more permanent jobs, and all the tax revenues that would have come from this project.*

Second, public safety: Rancho Adobe Fire Chief Frank Treanor is attempting to be a good guy and work with the city so they will make the one-lane plan wide enough to let emergency vehicles through. But in his professional opinion, *two lanes in each direction is still a safer plan.*

You can be sure of this: Once the city is done with their "study" you'll see their version of its results in their official statements and campaign speeches. But there are two places where you can find out what's really going on. One is this paper. The other is a website that is up now, and that will be updated regularly:

www.noroundabouts.com





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Forcing *Roundabouts* on a community that doesn't want them, and can't afford them



John Dell 'Osso



Susan Harvey

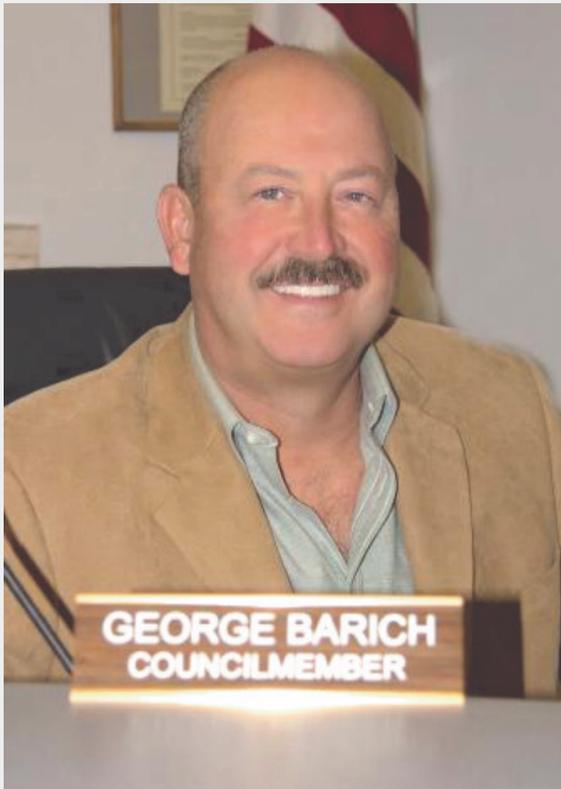


Janet Orchard

These People are Out of Money, Out of Realistic Ideas, and Out of Their Minds!

“Remember Who Voted Against Roundabouts and the Silly \$73 Million Cotati Downtown Specific Plan”

Councilman, George Barich



Cotati has not one dime budgeted for roundabouts. Yet, city officials claim they will find the money somewhere and are defiant. Do they think we are fools?

It will take another twenty years to pay off our 22 million dollar Cotati police station because they borrowed, rather than saved. Who are they kidding ?

This city council refuses to televise the city council meetings. Yet the money given to the city by the cable company to do it has been sitting in the budget for nine years doing nothing despite my complaints they put the system in for the sake of the citizens. They don't want to be televised and want to keep Cotati citizens like you in the dark as much as possible. Their track record proves it.



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