



The Cotati Independent

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City's Arrogance Forces Election on Roundabouts

Story and opinion by Greg Karraker

(Cotati, CA) - In a five-hour meeting on Wednesday night, December 14, the Cotati City Council clearly demonstrated that they take their marching orders from City Manager Diane Thompson, who insists on imposing an expensive, unrealistic, business-killing plan on everyone who is unfortunate enough to live on, work in, or drive through Old Redwood Highway.

This traffic-choking plan cuts Old Redwood Highway in half, from four lanes to two, then further complicates traffic with two football-shaped roundabouts. It is called the Village Main Street Plan, and it has been met with serious opposition from all corners.

In a recent telephone survey conducted by former councilmember Patty Minnis, 68% opposed this plan. The overwhelming majority of merchants on this street are strongly

opposed. Tom Scott of Oliver's said this plan will cost them a "six-figure redesign" and has not decided whether or not to proceed with their proposed \$18 million development at this site. And Rancho Adobe Fire District Chief Frank Treanor's concerns about lane width have still received only lip service.

How did the city react to this opposition? First, they continue to marginalize Chief Treanor. At the meeting, in full dress uniform, he was forced to fill out a speaker card,

just like any other citizen, and was only given three minutes to voice his opinion. By 10:45, when his turn to speak came up, he had already left in disgust.

Then, even though they snubbed the fire chief, they spent considerable time listening to the paid opinion of Jess Meston, a retired fire chief from Novato, who was hired as a "consultant" for this project. (Councilmember Mark Landman is also a retired fireman from Novato).

To create the illusion of public enthusiasm, they packed the meeting with representatives of the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, the Association for Sustainable Development, and many other enviro-fringe groups.

Finally, after five endless hours of "thoroughly examining this issue" the council voted 5-0 for the two-lane plan, surprising nobody in the room.

"This vote gives us no choice but to begin collecting signatures, so we can put this decision in the hands of the voters," said Patty Minnis. Signature collecting will begin some time after December 20, the City's deadline to respond to the notice they were served with on December 4.

It will only take 392 signatures to put the No Roundabout Referendum on the ballot for the November, 2012 election, and 588 signatures, or 15% of the city's registered voters, to force a special election.

It is estimated that a special election in the next few months will cost approximately \$24,000, but that is just a fraction of the money that will be wasted if this wildly unpopular plan moves ahead.

-Continued on page 9

Occupy Cotati Movement Stands at Two Women

Story and opinion by George Barich

(Cotati, CA) - During the early morning of December 6th, two women decided to start what appeared to be the "Occupy Cotati" movement on the corner of La Plaza Park. These gals were all smiles and hands waving to motorists until the press showed up with camera and notepad in hand. I approached the two women and introduced myself as a reporter for this newspaper and asked to take their photograph. But the women refused to have their faces photographed, and proceeded to cover their faces with their signs to avoid possible notoriety. I immediately recognized the woman on the right as none other than Former Cotati Mayor Lisa Moore. So, since they were seeking publicity, I asked if they would answer a few questions. They replied, "No Comment," and refused to answer any questions as to their intent and completely clammed up. -Continued on page 9



Councilman Mark Landman's Greatest Hits

Story and photo by George Barich



(Cotati, CA) December 14, 2011 Referring to a potential ballot measure coming to stop the roundabout project in its tracks by citizens and local business people, Landman said this on the record: "We need Oliver's to support Cotati now... I'm asking you [Oliver's Market] to stand with the City and say you don't support that." This is typical of the shake-down tactics Landman used to pressure merchants to support the 2010 ballot measure to raise sales taxes in Cotati, by using the power of his position to intimidate and bully.

Dec. 5, 2011: Mark Landman said, "Every credible traffic engineer has said we will have no problem . . . with this plan," Rancho Adobe Fire Chief Frank Treanor has said unequivocally that the single lane plan as proposed still leaves large questions unanswered.

Dec. 5, 2011: "There's a very clear issue, Harold Griffith, (Longtime board member of the Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District which serves Cotati) should recuse himself from the fire district's deliberations on the street redesign..."

LOWES in Cotati Dodges a Bullet

Story by George Barich



(Cotati, CA) There had been talk around town that LOWE'S Home Improvement Store may pull the plug on its Cotati store and build in Santa Rosa and Petaluma instead. But since news broke in October that LOWE'S has decided not to build a new store in Petaluma, it looks like Cotati is safe for now from more competition and another possible store closure in Cotati.

LOWE'S, Cotati's only big box store, had estimated a million dollars a year in sales tax revenue that Cotati could count on in 2005, but it has only been delivering a third of that amount in recent years. Many Cotati citizens warned the city that LOWE'S sales tax promises could not be taken to the bank. But the city plugged the million dollars of anticipated revenues into the budget nonetheless to justify pay raises for city staff.

The North Carolina-based retailer announced it would close 20 underperforming stores around the country and scale back the number of new stores over the next year due to lowered sales. Cotati City Hall and many others had been holding their breath that LOWE'S may indeed decide to pull out of Cotati. [Lowe's stock price](#) has dropped over the past 6 months from a high of \$27.5 per share in March to \$17.50 in August.

For now, Petaluma's loss is Cotati's gain. Had LOWE'S pulled out of Cotati, Cotati's city budget would have been devastated and sent the city back into yet more budget crisis strategy meetings. It may have probably sealed the fate for city council members seeking re-election.

The Petaluma project could have broken ground in spring 2010. Every year, Petaluma loses \$27 million of potential home improvement sales to neighboring communities, according to figures provided by Petaluma City Hall and their "Urban Decay Analysis". As the economy shows no signs of improving any time soon, and Cotati's Economic Development Director has no plans to do much about it, Cotati can embrace this as good news for now.



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Going inside "Occupy"

The TEA Party movement (Taxed Enough Already) that eventually went nationwide was started by conservatives who were mad as hell that Republicans and Democrats bailed out Wall Street, bailed out GM, and bailed out banks with money America did not have to spare. The federal government had to borrow and print money to make the bailouts possible, adding to the enormous national debt and prolonging our stagnant economy.

TEA Party rallies originally were filled with people spanning the entire political spectrum, people who railed against bigger government, higher taxes, irresponsible government spending, waste, fraud, mismanagement, open borders, and argued for a return to Constitutional principles long before anyone thought of occupying anything. These people were peaceful, picked up after themselves, paid city fees, were far from racists, and went home at night in respect for law and order.

Then the "Occupy" movement came along, and much too much has been written about it. To date, the Occupy movement continues to defy a single coherent goal or definable message. Arrests of Occupy protesters have been made all over the country every day for crimes big and small. This movement seems to baffle and confuse the experts, along with 99% of the public, including me.

I took it upon myself to attend Occupy Petaluma Executive Meetings in a city park on a few occasions after listening to their apparent leadership speak in front of the Petaluma City Council. Their spokesman told the city council, "We are your friends. We are your neighbors. We mean you no harm..." Whenever I hear this nonsense from someone I don't know, I hold my wallet and know what is coming next. A couple of the Petaluma city council members admitted to me afterwards that they never met any of them before in their lives. These Occupy members claimed to be inclusive of everyone in town, including me. But I found this not to be the case after attending their formal executive meetings, where I voiced my issues with the government that were handily rejected by the group online, and in person.

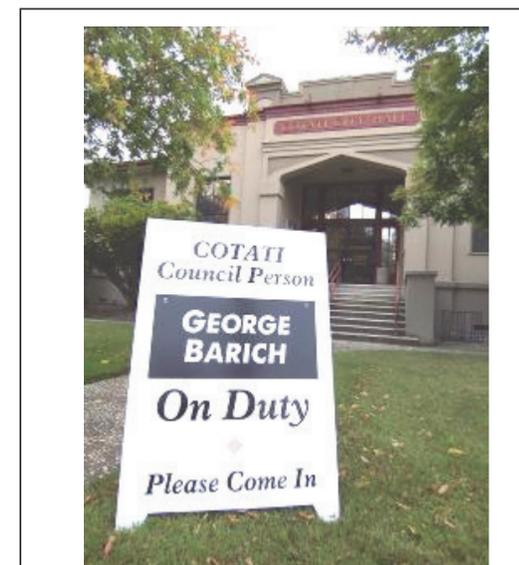
When I learned the group had planned to rent Penry Park in Petaluma after I suggested strongly they do just that because as a former city leader myself, I assured them that city parks, and everything associated with parks cost money. I explained that cities are looking for money anywhere and everywhere to cover the costs. Petaluma was not trying to profit off their occupation as some people in the group argued. I then asked if they planned on renting the park, they didn't have to worry about occupying it illegally. I suggested maybe they should change their name so as not to advertise falsely to others the nature of their activities as taking over or occupying anything.

This revelation that they were in fact going to cooperate with the authorities did not sit well with some protesters who felt it was not an occupy movement if they indeed paid the city fees and the large deposit. Others admitted that their movement was to start by being peaceful and law abiding, but once their numbers grew significantly, they would no longer pay rent and dictate to city leaders their demands or face a mob of protest. The fact was, the Occupy Petaluma movement was so weak, so small, so disorganized, so undisciplined, so diverse, so controversial, it was forcing them to conform to societal norms and set up rules, procedures of their own and work within the system out of sheer necessity. Those who refused to work within the system eventually decided to take their concerns underground and go completely "gorilla" out of sheer frustration.

Recently, the encampment was completely torn down and Occupy Petaluma is on a winter break. Quite possibly it may not be resurrecting anytime soon. It was fascinating to watch it fall apart bit by bit as volunteers ignored their responsibilities and financial resources all but dried up. The numbers were just not there to support the movement and their message was completely muddled in controversy and constant bickering on the smallest stuff.

In the course of raising my concerns online and in person as to safety and health concerns I had, as winter approached, along with my objection to a Christmas time foreclosure moratorium on local banks that taxpayers like me would probably end up paying for one way another through higher banking fees or higher taxes, I began to receive increasingly hostile emails from some of their members and supporters on Facebook and at least two "core organizers" and mouthpieces for the group. On a few occasions I was charged with being an "obstructionist", and at least twice I was accused of being a "government infiltrator". This practice, known as snitchjacketing, has long been a scourge to the Left, as it promotes an atmosphere of fear and is poisonous to effective organizing. At other times on the Occupy Petaluma website my comments were deleted and I was banned and had to keep returning as someone else to stay involved in the discussion. Censorship is alive and well in this movement to be sure. My posts on the community website were met with abusive and disrespectful responses from one of the other "core organizers" and told to go away because I failed to conform to the core values of a few. Unfortunately, this open hostility toward contrary opinions resulted in a ratcheting up of tensions when it was never my intention for this to happen. I just wanted to know more, why I might choose to be more active in the occupy movement, and if my grievances with the government would be respected by the group. My intention was to engage in necessary dialogue about the movement and there future plans, not to be drawn further into needless infighting. Other facebook members complained about receiving similar emails from the same parties. In time, several occupy members resigned out of frustration because either their feelings got hurt, or because everyone simply did not always agree with them.

I experiences nothing short of bullying as did many others. I explained such bullying would be a public relations disaster if it was not dealt with quickly. Bullying and strict adherence to leftist ideology had no place in the movement. You cannot bully fellow activists into submission in order to insure greater cohesion. I was thankful that a few "comrades" on the Executive Committee were wonderful and sympathetic by stating to me



Former Cotati City Councilman George Barich

"Just My Two Cents"

they'd noticed how disrespectfully I was treated given I was always polite, respectful and considerate.

Representative democracies take a whole lot of work, and I explained to them how long I have been working within the current political system for change. But for some, they didn't have the time, the energy, the will, or the patience to work within government for change, and instead decided to circumvent the rule of law and government and made no bones about it. To date, I have been blocked on their websites for asking intelligent questions and telling the truth how I feel. It was comforting at least to learn it's not the water in Cotati that's the problem. Intolerance and hatred is alive in Petaluma as well.



Occupy Wall Street, by Dr. Thomas Sowell

The current Occupy Wall Street movement is the best illustration to date of what President Barack Obama's America looks like. It is an America where the lawless, unaccomplished, ignorant and incompetent rule. It is an America where those who have sacrificed nothing pilage and destroy the lives of those who have sacrificed greatly.

It is an America where history is rewritten to honor dictators, murderers and thieves. It is an America where violence, racism, hatred, class warfare and murder are all promoted as acceptable means of overturning the American civil society.

It is an America where humans have been degraded to the level of animals: defecating in public, having sex in public, devoid of basic hygiene. It is an America where the basic tenets of a civil society, including faith, family, a free press and individual rights, have been rejected. It is an America where our founding documents have been shredded and, with them, every person's guaranteed liberties.

It is an America where, ultimately, great suffering will come to the American people, but the rulers like Obama, Michelle Obama, Harry Reid, Nancy Pelosi, Barney Frank, Chris Dodd, Joe Biden, Jesse Jackson, Louis Farrakhan, liberal college professors, union bosses and other loyal liberal/Communist Party members will live in opulent splendor.

It is the America that Obama and the Democratic Party have created with the willing assistance of the American media, Hollywood, unions, universities, the Communist Party of America, the Black Panthers and numerous anti-American foreign entities. Barack Obama has brought more destruction upon this country in four years than any other event in the history of our nation, but it is just the beginning of what he and his comrades are capable of.

The Occupy Wall Street movement is just another step in their plan for the annihilation of America. "Socialism, in general, has a record of failure so blatant that only an intellectual could ignore or evade it."

(Thomas Sowell (born June 30, 1930) is an American economist, social theorist, political philosopher, and author. A National Humanities Medal winner, he advocates laissez-faire economics and writes from a libertarian perspective. He is currently a Rose and Milton Friedman Senior Fellow on Public Policy at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Sowell was born in North Carolina, but grew up in Harlem, New York. He dropped out of high school, and served in the United States Marine Corps during the Korean War. He had received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1958 and earned his degree from Columbia University in 1959. In 1968, he earned his doctorate degree in economics from the University of Chicago. Dr. Sowell has served on the faculties of several universities, including Cornell and University of California, Los Angeles, and worked for "think tanks" such as the Urban Institute. Since 1980 he has worked at the Hoover Institution. He is the author of more than 30 books.)

A Tenacious Political Reformer is Just What Congress Needs.



**Mike Halliwell,
2nd CD Candidate**

For the first time in American history, the economic well being of most people has been declining for several decades, with only occasional spurts of improvement purchased by various short-term fixes such as stock market and home price bubbles (which have burst after handsome profits for insiders who sold out just in time to

leave ordinary investors holding the bag). We owe it to our children and grandchildren to stop the runaway deficits which will destroy the integrity of our currency along with vital programs (such as Social Security whose status as an earned entitlement is threatened by President Obama's latest ineffective stimulus plan, and Medicare which has been robbed of hundreds of billions to finance President Obama's federal takeover of health care).

Mike Halliwell has a life-long record of fighting against insider favoritism in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. In 1970 I was a Reform Coalition running mate of Marin County's State Senator Peter Behr, and in the 1970's and 1980's I fought in court (*Legislature v Reinecke* in 1974, *Assembly v Deukmejian* in 1982 and *Halliwell v Eu* in 1982-1987) against the gerrymandered districts which have robbed voters of any real choice. I strongly supported the initiatives in 2008 and 2010, which at long last have produced politically unbiased districts for our state legislative and congressional elections. Like Marin county's Bill Filante (who represented this area in the state legislature in 1978-1992) I strongly support Proposition 13's protection against tax increases and preserving choice in health care (against "one size fits all" approaches advocated by Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey).

I have strongly opposed the Indian gambling casino which Lynn Woolsey's back-door authorization threatens to bring to Rohnert Park. I played an active role in the 2005 defeat of the Sonoma County ban on genetically improved crops, which Lynn Woolsey favored. I oppose a double standard of justice whether by Democrats, the Clinton pardon of a large contributor (to his Presidential Library) and Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey's intervention in behalf of a rapist (the son of a member of her staff), or by a Republican (Governor Schwarzenegger's pardon of a murder committed by the son of a political ally). For decades I have strongly opposed arbitrary discrimination in housing (Prop 14 in 1964, continuing with my battle against dishonest judge Elaine Rushing in *Paxinos v Halliwell & Parker* in 2007-2011).

Mike Halliwell has worked effectively with Marin Public Health officials to improve breast cancer therapy for

have easily been put by the gas station and Chinese Restaurant on Old Redwood Highway and served both bus systems, had news stands, and lighting, and have been close to restaurants and convenience stores. But that would have involved planning, serious thought, and may not have cost taxpayers a quarter of a million dollars.

The city was given their present City Hall which was the old school, and could have had the property where the Police Station now stands for ONE dollar, but city staff demanded an assessment and the property was sold for that price \$750,000. The Police station was built for 28 million dollars (including interest on borrowed money over thirty years) and we are spending nearly a million dollars a year for the next twenty years in principal and interest payments. In the time I have lived in Cotati the city has twice remodeled City Hall, as it is blighted. They have twice remodeled the Cotati Room, for well over a million dollars now, and they spent over \$55,000 remodeling a kitchen inside City Hall that serves fifteen people. Two remodels, two "do-overs" and the roof still leaks and the floors are uneven and rotting. There is never time to do it right in Cotati, but always time and money to do it over.

Now the city wants to fast track spending \$3.5 million to put two traffic roundabouts six hundred feet apart and add a traditional intersection. Bernoulli's Law on pressure comes into play as you watch the most absurd videos and simulations that sell the idea. There is a need for a roundabout to serve Williams and George Streets? These two streets have less than a hundred houses combined on both streets, so we are talking about two hundred cars? The City has two roundabouts already known as "The Hub" and La Plaza, and eventually the city wants to take the center of town back through eminent domain to fulfill the Downtown Specific Plan. With Arthur Street closed off there is little reason for anyone but residents to even use these roads, but with the new plans more people will be zooming down these sleepy country lanes.

The City staff talks about "connectivity" of streets to reduce distances between daily car trips, more city sidewalks, and more bicycle use, but at present you cannot walk or push a stroller down old Redwood Highway or down the majority of the Hub's streets. So much for connectivity and walking or bicycling in Cotati. The four lanes we now have on Old Red' are not adequate to serve the cars that need to get to the new improved 101 Freeway with its added lanes right now.

Cotati city officials now want to reduce traffic lanes, claiming that the road will not be closed for construction and people will not be inconvenienced. When it is finished in a year or two, people will come walking and bicycling in great numbers and as they are slowed to 25 miles and hour or less they will also be stopping, shopping, and spending their money in Cotati. Why can't I see their logic? I grew up in Marin County and even with connected streets people do not stop and shop because of congestion, and sadly most people are driving, not walking or riding, and will continue to do so. Try it on East Blithedale if you think I am presenting a perspective as rich as the ones presented by the consultants serving Cotati city staff. Sausalito Fire EMT's greatest amount of emergency calls are bicycle related, just so you know.

I don't know about you, but I like choices and I avoid congestion of the type Cotati is now mandating we endure. I don't shop in Sebastopol on weekends during the flea market and Sunday market because it is too congested for me. I don't go to Healdsburg anymore for the same reason. Apparently not enough people go to the Windsor Green either for this reason. Cotati City Hall think people can't wait for the chance to stop and shop in the new and improved Cotati Northern Gateway. The largest Development in that area may not build due

his wife Betty and other North Bay women with especially dangerous tumors. Lynn Woolsey voted for HillaryCare whose denial of mammograms for women in their forties and slavish "one size fits all" approach would have cost hundreds of lives in this area. Mike Halliwell's 2009 Health Care Reform Proposal evens out subsidies across the income spectrum, and is an effective vehicle for repealing and replacing ObamaCare.

Congress badly needs a dedicated reformer like Mike Halliwell.

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How Much More Can Our Community Take?

By Eric Kirchmann
Cotati

It is amazing to watch how things work, or don't work, in Cotati and in Cotati's City Hall. Let me give you a bit of history, as much relies on history. I'll tell you a bit about myself, not to boast, but so you understand why I might have the perspective I do.

I came to Cotati in 1980 after attending Sonoma State University; so I knew what a small town it was. Way back then it was under 2,000 people, and folks did actually walk and ride their bikes and knew each other. I saw the town grow and grow as one housing project after another was built with no true plan, and little commercial development ever took place. After friends urged me to not sit on the sidelines but to actually get involved, I decided to run for the local school board. I was elected and served five terms. This makes me the longest holder of that position and the longest elected official in Cotati.

I also helped in many areas around Cotati, including producing the Accordion Festival for many years. I served on the Environmental Advisory Commission and the Gateway Committee for the City of Cotati. During those years, Cotati removed, remodeled, and renovated the downtown lighting and sidewalks three times. They took out trees, redid the playground at La Plaza Park, added traffic lanes to East Cotati Ave. and Old Redwood Highway, added bus stops, signals, and on and on. In Cotati, there is never time and money to do it right but always time and money to do it over.

There used to be a stop sign at Arthur Street and East Cotati Ave. that worked for years until a City Council member and neighbors dumped dirt and created a roadblock, later paid for by your tax dollars as the city put in a gate and a "pocket park" and then removed the stop sign which had been a great traffic calming device: effective, cheap, and easy. The city did not wish to replace the sign because it would be "confusing". I can only speak for myself but I have a good idea what is meant by the word STOP, but it is confusing to the ever growing City Hall tenants.

The city continued to grow and grow and eventually put sidewalks on both sides of East Cotati after being sued by victims of potholes and non-connected streets, half thought out design, and poor planning. The city has since chosen to narrow East Cotati Ave. to two lanes, paint stripes and call the space bike friendly and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on poorly designed "traffic calming" islands and flashing crossing lights for a bike trail to nowhere. The center islands have been run into weekly despite the city eventually placing reflective tape on the curbs - the traffic calming does not work as people go by at 40mph, and people have been hit in the crosswalks and have filed lawsuits against the city as a result.

The City is not capable of calming traffic and fixing problems that poor planning has left us with. How can I say such a thing? The city built two bus stops for over \$260,000 with seating for thirty people. These are not shelters as the wind and rain pours in, there are no news stands or phones, and the bus stops are rarely used at all. When I asked the then Mayor why the bus stops were put where they were, she replied "That's where the old ones were." So, we have four bus stops serving two different bus systems and there is no signage, schedules, or function. They could

to this failed plan.

I am just a citizen. But given the choice, I sleep on a King Size bed, and do not choose to sleep on a twin size mattress as a smarter alternative. Do you have to wonder why? Two lanes in either direction in a straight line is too confusing? In Cotati, a stop sign is not a good traffic calming device. It's better to spend thousands of dollars on center traffic islands that don't work because drivers get confused and hit them or pedestrians, or get used to them and speed through the area even with the addition of flashing yellow lights... Now the same folks want to spend millions of dollars they do not have to calm traffic flow between two signals and a major freeway.

I wonder how much it will cost to do this roadway over again if it becomes a traffic nightmare. I'll leave you with a bit of history that shows what integrity there is in City Hall with the idea of placing musical notes on the side of the new freeway overpasses and siding came from the gateway committee when Paul Marangela (the then City manager of Cotati) asked for input and it is contained in the report sent back to him. When present City Manager Dianne Thompson "thought of the idea" in her office; maybe she was reading an old report or maybe she is simply a genius. This is a person who gets a brand new city car to drive back and forth to her home outside of Cotati, instead of choosing to live here and ride a bike, or walk to work as she is selling to those of us who pay for her bright ideas.

When a citizen offered to give her a brand new bicycle of her choice, our Mayor Orchard said that that was not feasible. Now, we are paying \$3.5 million to remodel Old Redwood Highway and make it into a country lane so people will walk, bicycle, take public transportation, and shop at a new Oliver's Market that probably won't be built now.

"Build it and they will come" doesn't sit well with me because the city wanted to bring Nokia to town and allow them to build a huge office complex on the west side. Well, Nokia seeing how screwed up City Hall was, they left. Red's Recovery Room sits boarded up and vacant because our heavy handed city manager doesn't want bars in a building that housed a bar for decades. I guess it's better to have an empty building than business that pays taxes and produces real jobs.

Reliance Trailers, Backdoor Records and many others are long gone... How many opportunities there are at the end of the new and improved Old Redwood Highway? Where will people shop if there are no businesses left after construction? Unlike our city council, I do not drive to Petaluma to go on Corona Road to go through a small residential roundabout. I stop and shop in Penngrove because it is still the way Cotati once was, the kind of small town charm Cotati city leaders promised to protect. I see a lot of Cotatians in Penngrove, and no doubt, I'll be seeing more and more unless this roundabout plan is stopped and sanity returns to City Hall.



By Carol Tomlinson

North Bay Patriots – What’s In Your New Year Resolution?

Each year as a new year approaches we start to think about those things we would like to change in the upcoming year. Most of the time our thoughts revolve around how we spend our time or habits, or some personal goals we might want to reach. For most, this year will be no different...but it should be.

2012 is a pivotal year in our country. It is an election year, and most importantly it is a presidential election year. This election will determine if we continue on the same path as the last three years or we makes our voices heard that the last three years have taken us in a direction that has already changed our country in unimaginable and detrimental ways. While it appears on the surface that American life continues as usual, if you just look a little deeper you will find that we have lost our liberty in many small and not so small ways.

So this year, consider what resolutions

you can make to make a difference to our future. To make a resolution means to make a commitment. Here are some suggestions:

Be better informed. Don't get all your news from the *Press Democrat* or the mainstream media. Look deeper. Surf the web. Look at both sides, not just the side with which you agree.

Don't take everything you read or hear as the truth. Keep searching. There is usually something beneath the surface, perhaps an agenda that is not immediately obvious at first.

Try to be objective. We all have our opinions. Step back and evaluate what you read and hear with open eyes, an open mind, and an open heart.

Be active. This is the most important commitment. It is good to be informed but if you don't do anything with what you know, then it is just information. Find an issue about which you are pas-

sionate. Or a candidate. Find others who are involved with that issue or candidate and volunteer your services. Don't be an armchair patriot; be one who walks the walk and fights the fight. There is no other way to make change happen.

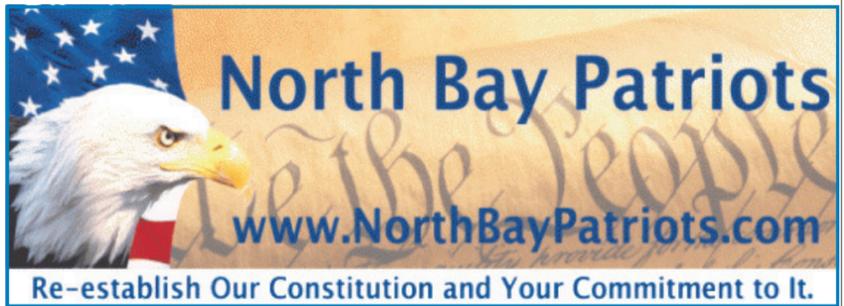
Be involved locally – your city councils, school boards, county government. Attend their meetings. Find out what is REALLY going on in your community – you will be surprised and often shocked.

Vote. Not just for president - all offices and issues are important. We live in a republic. Our representatives are there to

speak for us. If they don't, vote them out. If they do, support them. Your vote is your voice – make sure it is heard. And once you vote, hold your representatives accountable. They are there because of you.

In short, this is your future. You can leave it to others to decide or you can take an active part in what it will be. Make your New Year's resolutions really count in 2012.

Next North Bay Patriots meeting: Jan. 4th, 7-8:30 pm, Veterans Memorial Hall, Cotati.



Occupy Wall Street and the TEA Party

By Richard Geertson



It is traditional during this festive season to give thanks, smile, utter joyous phrases and open our hearts and pocketbooks just a bit more. Were a visiting alien to take a jaunt down most any main street during these days, he would receive a healthy dose of holiday jubilation and report back to his superiors that while earthlings may be stupid, at least they're happy (and the American ones are really fat). However, if Zorcon from the planet Crypto were to stumble upon a crowd of Occupy Wall Street protestors, he would no doubt return to the mother-ship with an entirely different view.

I am happy to be from planet earth; I've been loosely following the lunacy of OWS, and I haven't a clue what they are trying to achieve! Their message is as disheveled as their appearance and I can't determine whether they hate this nation or just themselves? After all, only a self-loathing loser would want to destroy the most successful, fair, and humane economic system ever devised by man. No doubt many of the OWS rabble are so moronic and confused they haven't given much thought to the desired outcome.

Claims that OWS is 'just like the TEA Party' are equally moronic and confused, although when the mainstream media (who knows better) utters such nonsense, there has to be an ulterior motive. Likewise, when Princess Nancy and other leftwing Democrats laud the OWS movement as "grassroots and spontaneous," they demonstrate a comparably clandestine malice of motivation. Although in fairness to Ms. Pelosi, I would be more inclined to believe she, like her constituency, is more moronic than disloyal.

In stark contrast to OWS, TEA Party rallies are orderly and peaceful, have no drugs, no graffiti, no sexual assaults, no filth, no defecating or urinating in public, no fights, no destruction of public property, no injured police, and no occupation. TEA Parties are conducted within the constraints of city ordinances. Permits are obtained, public facilities provided; and most areas and streets are

vacated in better condition than they were found! Further, the TEA Party message is one of love and admiration for the United States and its foundational precepts: the Constitution, the Declaration, the Bill of Rights, free markets, liberty, personal responsibility, and LIMITED government. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison would feel right at home at a TEA Party.

All I can glean from the Occupy Wall Street crybabies is that "our capitalist system is unfairly stacked in favor of the Haves over the Have-Nots." This, coming from throngs of people talking on iPhones, scribbling on iPads, taking shelter in products derived from 'Big Oil,' while gobbling fast-food courtesy of industrial farming. Their hypocrisy is thicker than an Egnog Milkshake (available for a limited time only at Jack in the Box).



Most can't understand why their expensive liberal arts degrees didn't open the doors of industry and they blame corporate America for the lack of opportunity while decrying those who prosper during challenging economic times. Complaints about college costs are legion and many believe America owes them a degree and a good living. Funny, we never hear any complaints from the left about country-club colleges paying tenured professors fat six-figure salaries.

While the sub-geniuses of OWS have managed to invade the homesteads of Rupert Murdoch and Dave Koch, neither of whom had anything to do with the Wall Street melt-down, they've conveniently avoided the nearby home of convicted insider-trader, George Soros... Perhaps this "grassroots effort" so admired by Nancy Pelosi is really nothing more than a National Socialist Democrat Workers pressure group.

Peter Morici, professor at the Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland and former chief economist at the U.S. International Trade Commission put it bluntly: *It is a tough world beyond the water's edge. Americans must learn to compete in the world as they find it or America will be no more.* Had their mommies, daddies and schoolmarms delivered this message, the brats of OWS might have picked useful graduate degrees, found

themselves employed and now giving back to society rather than fouling public parks.

So what about American jobs being out-sourced? I seem to recall it was we who now make up the TEA



Party who cried "foul" of NAFTA and GATT. These grossly unfair (and suicidal) "free-trade schemes" were passed under Bill Clinton and a Democrat-controlled Congress in 1993 and I have yet to see liberal Democrats make any changes despite controlling both Houses of Congress and the presidency! And while OWS pillories "the rich," Obama is building a billion dollar war chest from the very corporate fat-cats he promised to ban from Washington! Union lobbyists and Democrat cheerleaders have done nothing to protect American jobs, all the while collecting union dues and lying to union workers. Rather than work to stop illegal immigration and the resultant depressed wages, unions are now actively recruiting illegal alien members...gotta keep those union coffers well-stocked so the union bosses can afford those \$10,000/plate

Obama fund-raisers!

The TEA Party and Occupy Wall Street movements have about as much in common as Jennifer Lopez and Chaz Bono; both are female, but that is where the similarities end. By its very name, the TEA Party defines its purpose: Taxed Enough Already! The government is too large, too intrusive, and gobbles up too much of our GDP. Preserve individual liberty and STOP feeding the Beast!

And what defines Occupy Wall Street? Now that I look at it, the acronym clearly delineates their stated purpose: These unemployed misfits believe America "OWS" them a living. The Framers and we "99 percenters" owe them nothing, but a kick in the pants, a spritz of mace, and an order to disperse.

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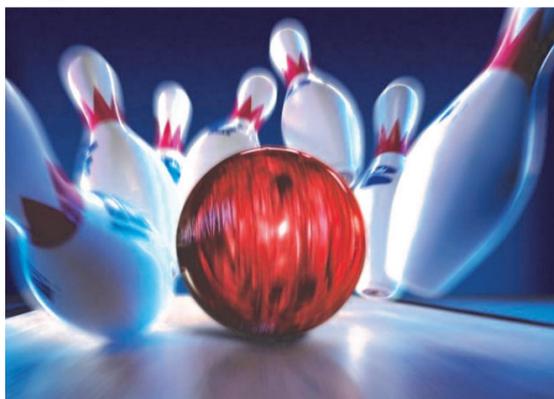
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Cooking with Cotati Chef Jeff Collier

Mango Crab Ravioli



Happy New Year to all in Cotati. With the Super Bowl just around the corner, and crab season at it's peak, I want to share with you my original hors d'erves, a 2011 Harvest Fair double gold winner and best use of seafood, Mango Crab Ravioli. This bite-sized delight explodes with flavor, and with its unique blend of dungeness crab, fresh fruit and herbs, you will be a big hit at your next Super Bowl party or get together.

Recipe: Mango Crab Ravioli
Serves 8-12

- 6 ounces dungeness crab meat
- 2 mangoes
- 1 red jalapeno or for a kick 1 habanero pepper finely diced
- 1/2 a lemon squeezed
- 1 tsp. chopped parsley
- 1 tsp. chopped cilantro
- 1 tsp. chopped chives
- 1/2 tsp. extra virgin olive oil

- topping (optional)
- avocado mousse
 - squirt of lemon juice
 - 1 avocado purred with 1/4 cup of heavy cream
 - Slice of red jalapeno
- (note: micro cilantro topping available at Sonoma Growers Exchange)

Preparation:

In medium sized bowl, add crab meat and herbs, all finely chopped. Add jalapeno pepper and toss all ingredients together. Squeeze the juice of 1/2 a lemon into mixture. Add 1/2 tsp of extra virgin olive oil and mix all ingredients together well. Cover with saran wrap and refrigerate mixture for 2 hours to allow all the flavors to come together.

Thinly slice mangos and cut into circles (about an inch and a half) This will be your ravioli

Place mango slice on fork, add small dollop of crab mixture. Top with another mango slice, and garnish with recommended topping. Either an avocado mousse garnished with micro cilantro, or slice of red jalapeno.

Serve raviolis on forks displayed on a platter.

Cooking tip of the month:

To avoid bacteria spread in your kitchen follow four simple steps 1) clean 2)chill 3)separate 4) cook.

Award winning Executive Chef Jeffrey Collier is a lifelong resident of Cotati. He attended Scottsdale Culinary Institute Le Courdon Bleu. He is the founder and Exec Chef of California Catering. 2011 Harvest Fair winner : Best use of Sonoma County Seafood, and two time double gold winner for his appetizers.
<http://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaCatering>





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Letters to the Editor

Email: editor@thecotatiindependent.com

Dear Editor,

Someone within the Obama administration purposely put 2000 AK-47 assault rifles into the hands of Mexican arms and drug dealers; ostensibly to follow the weapons to their ultimate destinations, then arrest the bad guys.

To date, 1400 of the deadly weapons are lost; hundreds of Mexicans have been shot dead; and renegade illegal aliens armed with these very assault weapons killed a U.S. border guard – Agent Brian Terry. Terry, a former Marine who served in Iraq, came upon the Mexican bandits in the Peck Canyon area of Arizona. When he and fellow agents fired bean bags and ordered the bandits to drop their weapons, they were ambushed. Terry was shot in the back and died en route to the hospital.

The Obama administration claims to know nothing about Fast and Furious: Attorney General Eric Holder, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano; the president himself; ALL feign ignorance. However, the Obama administration just ordered all court records related to the murder of Agent Terry, sealed! In addition, the judge's decision to seal the court case, was also sealed!

IF this were a Republican administration, the story would be wall to wall, 'round the clock and without mercy until people in high places were brought down - and rightly so!

BUT, this is an election year; the economy is ailing; unemployment remains high and U.S. debt is rising. The lame-stream media is, as usual, running cover for their guy in the White House. They show little interest as the Obama administration blocks all attempts to get at the truth. And all of this coming from "the most ethical and transparent administration in U.S. history..."

Perhaps the media should start by asking the Obama Justice Dept: "What don't you know and when didn't you know it?"

Richard Geerston

Dear Editor,

I found your newspaper at my driveway and instead of destroying it, like some people do, I started to read all 10 pages, I enjoyed it, because I recognize some names and businesses. I moved 1989 to Cotati from Cloverdale where I lived 12 years.

I don't like to label myself. In some ways I am conservative, in others quite liberal. I like Obama and I hope that he will be president again. I can't stand any of the Republican candidates, who are furious that McCain lost and who rather prolong the present bad economy than helping the Obama administration and consequently the country.

Sincerely,

Rudolf Stueck
129 Veronda
Cotati, CA 94931

Dear Editor,

I am a resident of Cotati for over 11 years and have been reading the Cotati Independent about the corruption in our city. I would like to ask George Barich if starting a petition to remove those on our Board of City Councils would be effective. I understand that I can attend meetings and send emails, but that it really will not do much good in the end.

I would appreciate it if you could let me know if starting a petition would be an effective tool in removing those on our Board who mock us daily as well as not listen to our concerns.

I would like to join others in participating in the recall for all of those on the Board of Cotati who passed unanimously the roundabout design in Cotati. It is a horrible decision. I do not see how it is going to be a more effective design. I see

it as being more of a hassle and not very friendly to trucks who need to drive down that way. I did a search on Google to see how I could get involved in the recall but the only thing that came up was your name and your recall. Whatever. I know you are really busy and I look forward to you telling me how I can get involved so that we can put it on a ballot for the citizens of Cotati to decide. Thank you!

Suzanne Sargent
Cotati

Dear Editor:

Cotati might legalize the "California stop". When visiting Papa Murphy's, please take a minute to watch the cars at the 4-way stop of William and George with Old Redwood Highway. The majority of us almost make a complete stop – easy revenue for observant police. What's this I hear, a modern roundabout? Just slowing down to breeze through that intersection - that would be nice.

But, I hate roundabouts... This "circle of anxiety and frustration" is a place where the unfamiliar have issues with yielding, and hesitation causes congestion. While proponents flaunt a 29% wider design, reduced injury and etc., they suppress that signaled intersections limit major conflicts to only the first cars entering an intersection; whereas, a modern roundabout creates a new "conflict" for most every vehicle using it.

In other cities, there is also significant community resistance. Sometimes the aftermath is documented with unexpected results. One group recorded rush-hour traffic through a 2 year-old roundabout just one block from a school: discovering smooth flow through the reconstructed intersection. Another city put one of these horrid things at the main entrance to a college, also resulting in less congestion and less injury.

Personally, I'm undecided because of local misinformation. The city plan improperly states capacity at 2,400 cars/hour; whereas the DOT states at 1,200 cars/hour a second lane is needed in the roundabout (to feed a four lane road). On the other hand, opponents have improperly depicted congested four-lane roads, with confusing 2-lane entrance signs; again, not reality.

Since doubling the lanes in the circle for proper capacity isn't in the proposal, and this road will be fed by signals at 116 and E. Cotati, maybe just repaving the road and adding synchronized signals is the answer. Can we have "none of the above" on the ballot?

John Roush
Cotati, CA

Dear Editor,

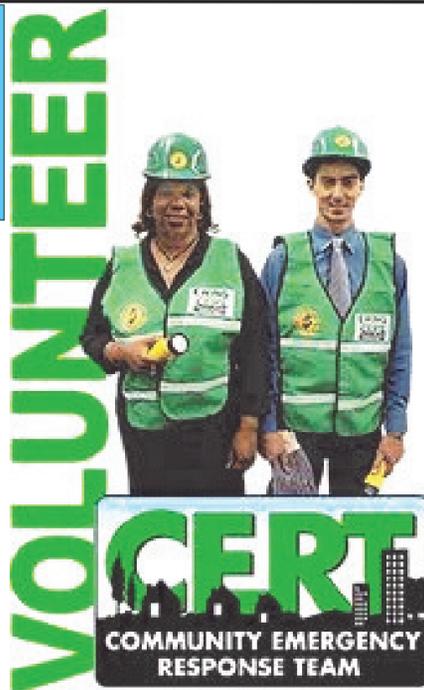
Thank you for your efforts to report the truth. It's so refreshing to find, especially in this "liberal" area!

Enclosed please find \$1. to pay for the newspapers I unwittingly took from Oliver's Market thinking they were free. I found them on the bottom shelf at Oliver's with the rest of the freebies...only noticing now the 25 cent news stand price. Best wishes.

Anna Arroyo,
Sebastopol, Ca

Submit your letters to the editor online at

editor@thecotatiindependent.com



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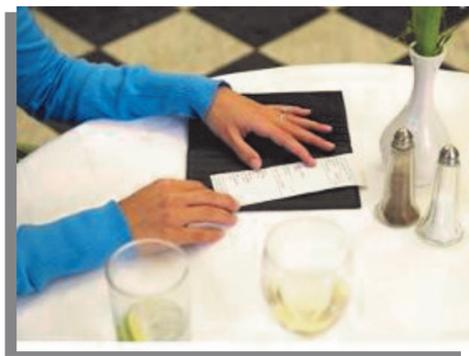
Thank you to all who have contributed generously.

The Good, the Bad, and the Inedible



Candid reviews of Wine Country restaurants, bars, cafes, food vendors, and farmers markets.

by Kathryn Wickstrom - Cotati
Foodie, gardener, wine lover, and consumer



Legend: ***** Perfection
**** Great
*** Good
** Needs Improvement
* Not Worth Going

Prices: \$\$\$\$ Expensive (over \$30 pp)
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\$\$ Average (\$8 - \$18 pp)
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Jack and Tony's Restaurant and Whisky Bar—Santa Rosa

15 Fourth Street / Railroad Square
707-526-4347
Category: Modern American
Daily: 11:30am - 5pm **L** / 5pm - 10pm **D**
Full Bar / Take-out / Groups
*** 11/9/11 **\$\$-\$\$\$**

Ballantine's Butterscotch Pudding Parfait with Snickerdoodle Cookie (One way or another, the owner wants to acquaint you with that devil Scotch!) and it was delicious. Definitely not your Mother's pudding!

We will return for dinner sometime, and I know a sampling of some of those bottles displayed behind the bar will definitely be in order. I hear they also host a very good happy hour, from 4pm-6pm every day with bar snacks half price!

Hole in the Wall – Sebastopol

97 Gravenstein Hwy S #100
707-861-3777
Category: California, Creole & Continental
Specialty: Breakfast and Brunch
Open: Daily 7am-2:30pm Mon & Tue **B-L**
7am-9pm Wed thru Sun **B-L-D**
BYOB only.
*** 11/12/11 **\$\$-\$\$**

dered, **German Dutch Baby** - a baked pancake with caramelized sugar and apples but, it took 20 minutes to prepare and we were hungry.

Overall, the food is good and so are the prices. Would I return? Probably not. Recommended with reservations, mine!

Boon Fly Cafe – Napa

4048 Sonoma Highway Napa
707-299-4870
Category: American Grill
Specialty - Weekend Brunch
Daily: 7am-11am **B** Mon - Fri
11am-3pm **L** / 5pm-9pm **D**
Sat & Sun am-3pm **Brunch**
Sat - Sun 3pm-5pm **Snacks**
Mon - Sun Reservations: **D** only.
Full bar. Seats 48 at tables ;
6 at bar.
**** 11/12/11 **\$\$-\$\$\$**



Free AC at Jack and Tony's!

With over 350 expressions of Scotch, Bourbon, Irish, American and Japanese whiskies and brandy on the shelves behind the bar, who needs an expensive trip to Ireland, Scotland or even Tennessee? Begin your taste testing right here and don't forget your designated driver!

This place occupies the former "Ristorante Capri", a wonderful old Italian restaurant we used to frequent when we moved to Sonoma County over 10 years ago. Sadly, the owner passed away suddenly, and the site was vacant for a few years. Now, re-opened 2+ years ago as "Jack and Tony's Restaurant and Whisky Bar", we were familiar with the old restaurant's interior and were somewhat surprised by the changes. Not in a bad way, just different. Absolutely no art on any walls. Kinda stark, really. And the bar area was flipped over to the other side of the wall. On to the food.

We were shown to a booth (always appreciated) and began a review of the menu. A couple of interesting starters: **Deviled Eggs (3)**; **House-cured Salmon Gravlax - Curried Egg Salad Crostini and Baked Brie with Toast and Roasted Nuts**, to name a few, and then the usual suspects like **Chilled Oysters on the Half-Shell**, **Garlic Parmesan Fries and Baby Spinach Salad**. All of these sounded okay but when the friendly waiter mentioned a chef's special, **Blackened Shrimp with Remoulade Sauce**, we opted for that. Good, not great as the shrimp were over-grilled, leaving them a wee bit tough.

Main courses ordered: **Steamed Mussels with Andouille and Lager** and an **Andouille Sausage Open-Faced Sandwich with Roasted Red Bell Peppers, Grilled Onion and Stone Ground Mustard**. The mussels were plentiful, and not swimming in chunks of tomato; the Andouille sausage was a great accent. In fact, for me, it added more to the dish than the usual red pepper flakes you can find in almost every version of steamed mussels. Unfortunately, the sandwich of Andouille sausage was less appealing.

However, the french fries served with the sandwich salvaged the meal. Hand-cut and deep-fried perfectly they were served with a house made catsup that had hints of apple cider, molasses and Tapatio hot sauce. YUMMY. Desert was a



Omelet at Hole In The Wall

Perfect name for this tiny restaurant in a smallish strip mall along the main drag into Sebastopol. In fact, they are next door neighbors to another interesting eatery, Woodruff's, which I will review another time.

We went for breakfast, as I had heard it was good and besides, since they have no liquor license, lunch or dinner just wouldn't be the same without vino! Caution: if you come for breakfast, get there when they open or you'll be waiting in line to dine; either inside or out (weather permitting) on their small, front patio area.

As mentioned, this is a very small space with an equally small kitchen. As the restaurant filled to capacity and more orders were being prepared, my eyes started to water from the smoke that was not being properly vented. Perhaps I am overly sensitive but there was also that smoky smell too. Very unpleasant. Added to this was a seemingly annoyed chef with his kitchen staff, complaining about their slowness. With an open kitchen, in a small restaurant, you can hear such discord and it is distracting.

Wait staff was pleasant enough, but our order was delivered incomplete and we were never advised of the two specials; **Eggs Benedict and Eggs Florentine** Ah well, at least we were served three-fourths of our food; **Challah French Toast with Candied Pecans** and for hubby, (the no egg man!) a side of country fried potatoes and grilled ham. I also ordered 2 farm eggs, over medium with a side of **Maple Smoked Bacon**. House made biscuits come with your breakfast and they are light and flaky. If you are a "biscuit and gravy" guy or gal, Hole in the Wall has you covered. I hear it's worthy. The missing item was Maple Smoked Bacon. The French toast was beautifully browned and tasted delicious, and the bacon was worth the delay when I got it, half-way through my breakfast. BTW, the fresh farm eggs did not even come from Sonoma County, which I thought strange as Petaluma was once the egg capital of the world (exaggerated boast) but why buy eggs from Oregon? That's what I was told by the chef when I asked.....

Another specialty of the house I would have or-



The Boon Fly Café and its legendary donuts

A great place to stop for a meal before or after a day of wine tasting and touring. Easy in, easy out. Right on the Carneros Highway where Highways 12 and 121 join between Napa and Sonoma. The restaurant is located directly below the luxury resort, Carneros Inn. Folks staying at the Inn have the added benefit of being able to order room service from Boon Fly Cafe. Fortunate are they!

We were out for a drive and stopped in for Brunch on a Saturday. With limited seating and a small bar, we had to wait standing. Not an inconvenience when you can sip on a "Hickory Smoked Bacon Bloody Mary" while you wait. Practically a meal in a glass. We were seated well under the 20-minute time given by the hostess.

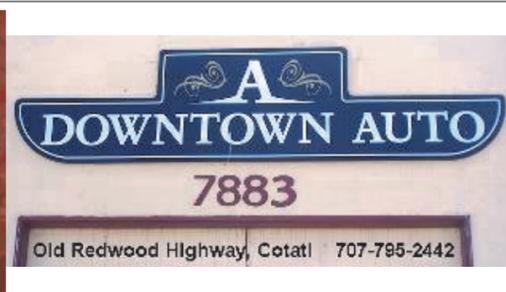
This place is small, but cleverly laid out. Architecturally, it is a cross between Industrial/Minimalist and Country Chic, with zinc topped wooden tables, silver-painted I-beams and open HVAC, combined with wainscoting on the walls and two-tone, hi-back leather benches running along 3 walls. Staff were pleasant and attentive. Old-fashioned glass water bottles with rubber stoppers are brought to each table so you can serve yourself. A plus if you drink a lot of water, no waiting for refills.

On the menu I spotted a starter that sounded too good to pass up. **"Famous Boon Fly Donuts"**. An order of 4 came with a cuppa Joe. Now we're talkin'. Served warm, these little jewels arrived in a tin container lined with parchment paper and dusted with powdered sugar. OMG good. Reminiscent of Beignets and Chicory coffee served at **Cafe Du Monde** in New Orleans. The Big Easy meets Wine Country.

Entrees ordered: **Ohlone Smoked Salmon Flatbread** with fromage blanc, red onions, parmesan and creme fraiche, and **BBQ Pulled Pork Sandwich** with coleslaw served on a house-made brioche poppy-seed bun with your choice of baby greens or fries. Both dishes came out together, no waiting. Points on service. Now the meal. I love flatbread. Boon Fly Cafe offers four different ways to enjoy this bread/pizza with or without meat, so vegetarians are welcome here. The Ohlone Smoked Salmon flatbread was absolutely delicious. Enough to share but why? Get your own.....LOL. Hubby's sando was very good....I am not a pulled pork kinda gal so I will have to take his word for this. And, if you follow our lunch adventures you will see a pattern. If pulled pork is on the menu, he's all over it. I defer to his expertise.

Overall, this is a restaurant I would return to and one I highly recommend. With their varied hours it's easy for passers-by to stop in and have a small bite and a glass of wine even when it's between lunch and dinner time hours. Enjoy.

Until next time — bon appétit!



A letter to the City Council



By Heidi Bailey

Dear Mayor Orchard and City Council members,

First, I am not a political person and I have never spoken to or written a letter of opinion to this council ever. I research at election time, place my vote, and don't give any more thought to politics until the next election. I am, however, an 18-year resident of Cotati, a taxpayer, and local patron of Cotati businesses.

This roundabout decision the Planning Dept. recently passed has me absolutely bewildered and convinced this is all about money and NOT about the concerns of Cotati residents or business owners. My mouth is still hanging open in awe of the lack of respect, basic common sense, and fraudulent claims of the planning committees' Power Point plan that boldly states "Community Selection" and "Community choice." When? How? Where?

There was no initiative on any ballot this November and as far I can tell, no upcoming special election for it, so this is a fraudulent statement in the mere fact it is NOT a community choice nor is it a community selection. It is the decision of a handful of people to change the entire face of town **without** consideration as to what the residents who live here and businesses who operate here really want. How **could** the Planning Comm. - or even you, our city council - truly know what anyone living here wants without allowing a vote to happen?

It was stated at a previous meeting that "1 in 3 people are accepting of roundabouts." I'm no mathematician, but it's not rocket science there are two factors in that equation not represented. What about the other 2 out of 3 people? Don't their voices count? If it was in an election and 1 of 3 voted yes - with 2 of 3 voting no, seems to me it's a no-brainer the roundabouts would not pass. But maybe my math is wrong and maybe I'm just being naive to think we live in a town where democracy is implemented and Cotati is not run by a dictatorship where residents are simply "told" how their town will be changed- as though we are children.

It's true, roundabouts have good statistics as far as increasing flow of traffic and being safer for pedestrians - and I have no problem with that. My problem is the fact many other facts have been **excluded** when representing the plan to residents. Such as - there will be no access to businesses along those sections during construction for several months -- but yet, business owners are still required to pay rent. How? They depend on patrons to supply them the income.

So are we supposed to believe these business will be able to stay in business during the full year the roundabouts are constructed? Don't business owners have a voice in this? OK...Let's have a beautiful town with nothing but empty shops and no city revenue from businesses coming in. But hey, it'll look nice as people drive thru it to patronize those businesses in RP.

My second problem is this is NOT a Community selective process by any means and should never had been stated as such. Many residents work, have kids, etc. and cannot attend all these meetings *at night* to be heard... a VOTING process would have been the right thing to do. Giving people an entire day to cast a vote seems to be the right and FAIR process.

And for anyone to state it's a "time factor" is ludicrous. This plan wasn't in the works overnight, last week, or even last month. It's been on the table for *well over a year*... plenty of time to get it on a ballot for voter approval. WHY wasn't it offered in an elective process? Is our town government just afraid it won't pass?? Must be. Otherwise, there's really no excuse for this apparent "oversight" of the democratic way.

The last slide/page of the Planning Commission's Power Point presentation clearly states, "Your community...YOUR voice." That is an untrue statement. I'll even call a duck a duck and say it's an outright lie. ("The emperor has no clothes," also comes to mind.) Why does the plan. comm. feel it needs to pee on our legs and tell us its raining? It probably would've been best to not even state it's a community choice at all. Because it's **not**.

Another concern that clearly not one person on the planning dept. gave **any** thought to is the statement in *their own* PowerPoint that says the roundabout plan is "Acceptable or preferred by 8 out of 9 Sonoma county fire districts" -- yet, completely omits the fact that the ONE fire district not accepting is **our own town's fire district!!** Seriously? Did they think we wouldn't notice that one?

We may be a country town, but we weren't all born in a barn. That right there should have scrapped the whole roundabout plan. The fact our own fire dept. has serious concerns regarding delays in response time and those concerns are ignored by the planning dept., shows extreme irresponsibility in our city government.

Any delay in response time could mean the difference in someone dying, becoming brain dead, or a house burning down that could've been saved. Apparently value of life and property is of no concern to the planning dept. Getting money from this grant is way more important.

Also - what clearly no one so far has considered is when there IS a delay in response and someone dies because of it, HOW will the city pay for the lawsuit? I know if it were my husband who needed immediate attention where every minute/second counts & a roundabout caused emergency vehicles to be a few minutes late, causing him to die, I'll be suing the city **immediately**. Does the city have enough money to face these types of law suits?? Because it will happen. And *there will be* more than just one.

For any department or person in our city's government to sit back and cross fingers in hopes this *doesn't* happen, is not only delusional, but again, extremely irresponsible. YOU are supposed to be our voice...the voice of the residents, the representatives of our town. Heck, I voted for most of you, much to my chagrin now.

I am utterly shocked at the lack of forethought and reprehensible God-complex the Planning Dept. has shown Cotati residents. One person on the Planning Commission at one point stated "We know what's best for this town." Really? And residents don't? Business owners don't? Or maybe we only do when we agree with them. When we protest, then we go unheard. (i.e. the Myrtle Street median or "island")



BUT - One of my **biggest** concerns is the fact traffic will be "diverted" during construction of the project. Problem is - the city's Power Point presentation doesn't mention how or where. So, it's **implied** traffic will be diverted through all the side streets. (...obviously - where else would it go?)

At 2,200 cars per hour (your Planning Dept. numbers - not mine), even if a **small, teeny-weensy fraction** of that goes down Charles street, or George, or Benson Street, or even Adrian - you're talking in excess of 100 cars (min.) **per hour** traveling through residential neighborhoods -- neighborhoods where kids play basketball and football in the street. I can't even imagine 100 cars - or even 50 cars - going down Olof Street each hour. What about Charles Street? Can 100, 50, or heck, 30 cars - even *FIT* on Charles St. as folks stop at that stop sign waiting for the flowing traffic in the roundabout to clear enough so they can enter East Cotati Ave??

Benson Street would be even worse. It's already a tight crunch for 2-way traffic there **AND there's no place to pull over for emergency vehicles to pass through anywhere on Benson**, not to mention - how are people living there supposed to pull out of driveways with 30+ cars lining the street, stopping at that stop sign??

My final question for you and your council is what is the plan for when an accident happens WITHIN one of the roundabouts?? Surely, there is no belief this will *never* happen - especially considering all the distracted drivers still texting, talking on a cell, changing a CD, lighting a cigarette, or even sipping from a water bottle. What happens when traffic stops suddenly due to just *one* person not knowing how to maneuver a roundabout and a distracted driver hits them?

Even a *minor* rear-ending **inside** a roundabout will block traffic FOUR directions. Where are they supposed to pull over? How long will it take to clear it? More importantly, HOW are emergency vehicles going to reach the roundabout itself with all directions blocked by other cars?? If it's a serious life-threatening accident **inside** a roundabout, there definitely will be a delay in emergency vehicle response time. To believe otherwise is a symptom of HUA syndrome, which seems to be spreading like wildfire amongst this town's government. This is the perfect storm for a city lawsuit and something you all should be thinking about.

As I sat for almost a full hour in traffic on Old Redwood Hwy. coming from Penngrove School heading to Myrtle Ave. (during the fuel tanker accident on 101 last month). I thought to myself, "Well this pretty much seals the deal for no roundabouts... How could *anyone in their right mind* approve it now that they know what a traffic nightmare it will create when an accident happens inside a roundabout & blocks traffic from four directions?" Obviously, Planning Commissioners were safe at home watching the traffic on TV & not sitting in it. Or maybe the dollar signs are just too much to resist for them & logic's escaped all of them. Maybe - *they never even thought about an accident inside a roundabout*.

Accidents **will** happen -- there is no question about that—and to believe people will just "figure out" how to drive a roundabout having all of you crossing-fingers hoping there will be zero accidents is a pipe-dream. People still haven't figured out they don't need to stop at the right turn from Gravenstein to Old Redwood Hwy. heading into Cotati. I've witnessed close-call rear-ending accidents there numerous times - and still see people stopping there daily. People still have yet to figure out texting and cell phone usage costs lives.

And many drivers still have yet to figure out the "stick" on their steering wheel is actually a turn signal. So to assume people will "figure out" a roundabout is just ridiculous and shows a virus-like ineptness has confiscated common sense amongst every city employee supporting this roundabout plan.

How many accidents and lawsuits can the city afford is the main question you all should be asking.

Another question: How is a blind person supposed to cross the pedestrian crosswalks at the roundabouts? There's no mention of it anywhere in the Planning Dept. PowerPoint presentation. Or are blind people supposed to just "figure that out" too? Does our Planning Commission just assume a seeing eye-dog knows about crossing when there's no cars coming? FYI - those dogs don't look for an "all clear." Seeing-eye dogs **depend** on lights & sound. Or maybe the planning dept. just figures blind people will just have to walk to the nearest stop light. Maybe their guide dog will know which one to go to.

Roundabouts are supposed to keep traffic flowing and negate the need for traffic lights. But the roundabout plan still leaves stop lights at either end. Doesn't that make the object of having a roundabout obsolete? During peak hours, when either light is red, what happens to cars in a roundabout? do they just stop? Yeah --- that's not going to cause any traffic or road rage incidents.

This whole thing smells like the same brain-child that was behind the median on Myrtle St. - *Reeks* of it. I'm talking about the median residents protested -- but went in anyway. The one where residents complained about it once it was in and the same one our tax money paid to ultimately, remove. Does the city have the money to remove these roundabouts once it's figured out they're not a good fit?

I heard a fire truck destroyed part of the Myrtle median trying to get to an emergency. If that's true, then shouldn't you, as our MAYOR, as our City Council, take the **same** fire dept.'s concerns about the roundabouts to heart and **at the very least**, consider putting this critical decision of changing an entire town's layout with roundabouts on a ballot so the voices of Cotati voters/taxpayers (who pay your salary) can decide for themselves if this is a right fit for our town?

I implore you to seriously consider the ramifications of the potential city nightmares this drastic change to our town will be. Nightmares *all of you* will face until election time. And I implore all of you to consider the consequences of businesses going out of business, accidents, and lawsuits, all of which will affect city revenue and funds. I didn't think our city had that kind of money.

Please consider NOT leaving this decision in the hands of such a small group of people. It **should** be a "community selection" - just like the Planning Dept.'s own Power Point show states.

Frankly, I can't understand what's wrong the way Old Red" is right now.

The money *should be* used for **repaving** the quilt-like patchwork all along Old Redwood Hwy. and replacing the PG&E and other pipes **now** -- instead of waiting until this project's done - only to dig it up again to replace those pipes that have to be replaced anyway in the next few years.

The money should be used to make **sidewalks** (what a concept!) on all the side streets off Old Redwood Hwy that currently have zero places to walk except on the street. (I.e. Olof, George, Charles, sections of Valparaiso, all of Benson -- just to name a few) That way we can actually BE a "Walkable Cotati" -- and not a myth & laughing stock and brunt of many jokes for outside cities and local radio station DJ's to poke fun at.

How 'bout adding trees and landscaping along Old Red'? It **still** beautifies the town - without causing so many nightmares, the town won't be able to pull itself out of the legal ramifications for decades.

If it "ain't broke", don't try to fix it... **just fix it up**. Why can't the money be used for any of the aforementioned? In closing, there seems to be a belief the general public has a short memory. And with the election/re-election of council members seemingly far off in the future, maybe your hope is a year from now, people will "forget" who supported this potential catastrophe.

I can pretty much state without any doubt that residents who can't back out of their driveway for 10 minutes due to 100 cars being "diverted" down their street every hour for the next year, and residents who sit in unbelievable amounts of traffic trying to get to work each day detouring all over town, along with business owners who lose their business because of street closures, well, they *most assuredly* will remember who supported this roundabout-fiasco - and adjust their vote accordingly come election/re-election time. I know I will for sure.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

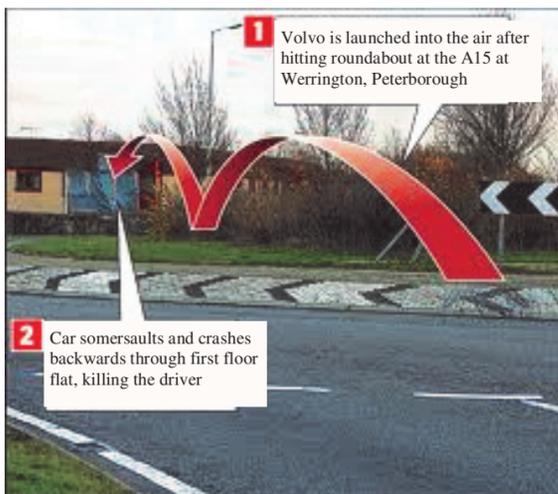
Heidi Bailey
Cotati resident, patron, and taxpayer.

(Editor's note. Since this letter to the city council in early December, the entire five member Cotati City Council voted to approve a plan to construct two single lane roundabouts and reduce Old Redwood Highway to single lanes in both directions, widening sidewalks and bike lanes. The city has no money for this project, never saved for such a massive project, and will rely on state and federal grants if awarded to Cotati, money the federal government is borrowing, with interest.)



(From Page One)

City Decision Forces Vote on Traffic-Choking Roundabouts



Pictures from the U.K., where "roundabouts work for everyone"

Current estimates are \$3.5 million dollars. The first \$1.5 million will be paid from a transportation grant, and the balance is to be paid from the city's Redevelopment Fund. Of course, in January, 2012, Governor Jerry Brown is scheduled to decide whether to reclaim part of or all of all redevelopment funds from California cities, so there is a good chance that the whole roundabout project could die from lack of funds.

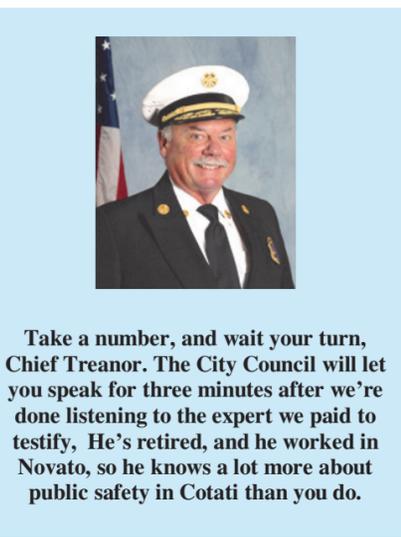
This makes people wonder the career small-town politicians who make up the city council would risk their seat by angering voters over a project that may never see the light of day.

Two council members should have recused themselves from voting

According to an authority on government ethics, two of the five council members — Susan Harvey and Mark Landman — should have recused themselves from voting on this issue. Why? In the weeks prior to formal council deliberations, they had visited a number of local businesses, and aggressively attempted to sell these businesses on the two-lane Village Main Street plan.

Why pay for an outside fire chief's opinion and ignore your own chief?

After weeks of being ignored by the city, RAFD Chief Frank Treanor had a meeting with the City Manager and City Engineer on December 5. In that meeting, he said the minimum lane width he sees as acceptable is a 16' lane, plus an 8' bike lane. He also pointed out there are no fire hydrants on the west side of ORH. The city promised to look into his requests, but will they follow through?



Take a number, and wait your turn, Chief Treanor. The City Council will let you speak for three minutes after we're done listening to the expert we paid to testify. He's retired, and he worked in Novato, so he knows a lot more about public safety in Cotati than you do.

At Wednesday's meeting, when the paid consultant was defending narrower lanes, Chief Treanor pointedly stood up, expecting at least one council member to ask his opinion. In full uniform, he is a hard man to overlook. But all five council members ignored him completely.

Later, the Chief told this reporter, "I feel for the safety of citizens who live north or west of the fire station. If my men can't get to an accident or fire in time because this street is too narrow, it would be tragic for everyone."

For the record, this paper will file a formal Freedom of Information request with the city on Jan. 4, demanding to know how much retired Fire Chief Meston was paid for his opinion, and why his services were retained.

City uses financial threat to intimidate merchants

The city is not shy about applying pressure to force citizens to see things their way. During the five-hour meeting,

one councilmember asked city staff to explain what it would cost each merchant on ORH to "upgrade" their property to this plan if the city did not pay for it with tax money taken from other citizens.

Community Development Director Vicki Parker, whose \$100,000+ salary is paid with funds obtained from the Measure A sales tax measure (which was intended to support the police) was obviously prepared to answer.

"\$1,100 per lineal foot," was her instant response. When asked how she arrived at this figure, she said the city took the total cost of the project, then divided it by the total number of feet involved in this four-block stretch. The clear implication to each merchant: Don't oppose us, or it will cost you a bundle.

Chicago-Style politics: Landman attempts pay-to-play cheap trick

The most surprising, and sleaziest statement of the meeting came from council member Mark Landman. Directly addressing Steve Maass and Tom Scott of Oliver's, he asked then to publicly oppose any ballot measure against the roundabout plan.

He bluntly reminded them of a \$500,000 loan the city made to Oliver's, which he said "...built your produce section, I believe." He also remarked that the city supported Oliver's in their battle with Lucky Market.

Then Landman attempted to cash a check he never wrote, claiming that "The City has stood with Oliver's, and now Oliver's needs to stand with the city." Thuggish, pay-to-play requests like this are commonplace in Chicago, but they feel out of place in Cotati, where we are

supposed to be a little more enlightened. Scott, however, would not be bullied. His response? "Oliver's will stand by the city by sitting on the sidelines."

Council directs city staff to get it right this time

Responding to repeated accusations that city staff was arrogant, incompetent, and even lied in their efforts to ram this plan through, Mayor Orchard and several council members vigorously defended the city manager and her staff, and said they were all doing a terrific job.

To be completely fair, the council did direct city staff to "look at this plan carefully as we move forward." They asked staff to consider the needs of the fire chief, of Oliver's, and of the merchants, while they are "fine-tuning" the design.

But will they get it right this time? Based on everything that has happened to date, it's highly doubtful.

Now what?

In the next few weeks, it's likely that you'll be asked to sign a petition that bans roundabouts permanently within the city limits, and proves that the needs of the voters in Cotati are more important than the fantasies of the City Manager. We encourage you to sign the petition immediately, and ask your friends and family to do the same, because every day it goes unsigned is another day the city can go on wasting taxpayers' money on this doomed science project.

Greg Karraker is amused and outraged by the actions of local governments. See his blog at www.thelittlepicture.net

Two Women and an attitude. (from Page One)

So, I asked the women if they plan to occupy La Plaza Park. They refused to comment.

I asked them both if they supported the Occupy Wall Street movement. They refused to comment.

I asked them both if they planned to bring their grievances to the Cotati City Council. They refused to answer.

I asked them both if they had any demands of local government for my story. They refused to comment and continued to cover their faces.

I asked them both if they planned peaceful protests in Cotati, or if they were planning to engage in civil disobedience if their demands were not met. They refused to answer.

I asked them both who made the two crude signs they were holding up on the street corner. They refused to answer.

I asked Moore if she was planning to occupy city government, a government she had a hand in bringing to the brink of bankruptcy. She refused to remove the sign from hiding her face and refused to answer any of my



questions. I gave Moore every opportunity to be more specific as to what her purpose was for her early morning public display of patriotism, to no avail. Whether she was embarrassed or simply threatened by my presence, I may never know. My interview being completely unsuccessful, I walked back to my car. As I prepared to leave, I witnessed the two women packing up their belongings and leaving the park in a car manufactured by a Japanese car manufacturer owned and managed by the 1%.

This isn't the first time Lisa Moore has ignored questions from the community or the press. The issue of transparency was something that completely escaped Moore's entire four years on the Cotati City Council. She avoided my questions and emails then and carried on the same sort of indignation for taxpayers that cost her re-

election to the city council in 2006. Many public projects, from the remodel of the Cotati Community Room to Cotati's Recreation Department, were often hijacked by Lisa Moore and her small group of friends who conducted public workshops behind closed doors without properly noticing the public as to when and where these public workshops were to be held. Moore took it upon herself to impose her will on the community by circumventing public input at every opportunity until it was too late to undo the damage.

When the Cotati Recreation Department was on the chopping block of the 2009-10 budget, Moore was silent. When Cotati suffered through its worst budget crisis in the town's history, partly because of the overspending that occurred on Moore's term on the city council, Moore was nowhere to be found, leaving the responsibility of finding solutions to others.

It's now amazing to see Lisa Moore take to the streets and claim to be a patriot by holding up a piece of cardboard on a busy city street and posing as someone who cares about the town.

Winter Special
Limited Time

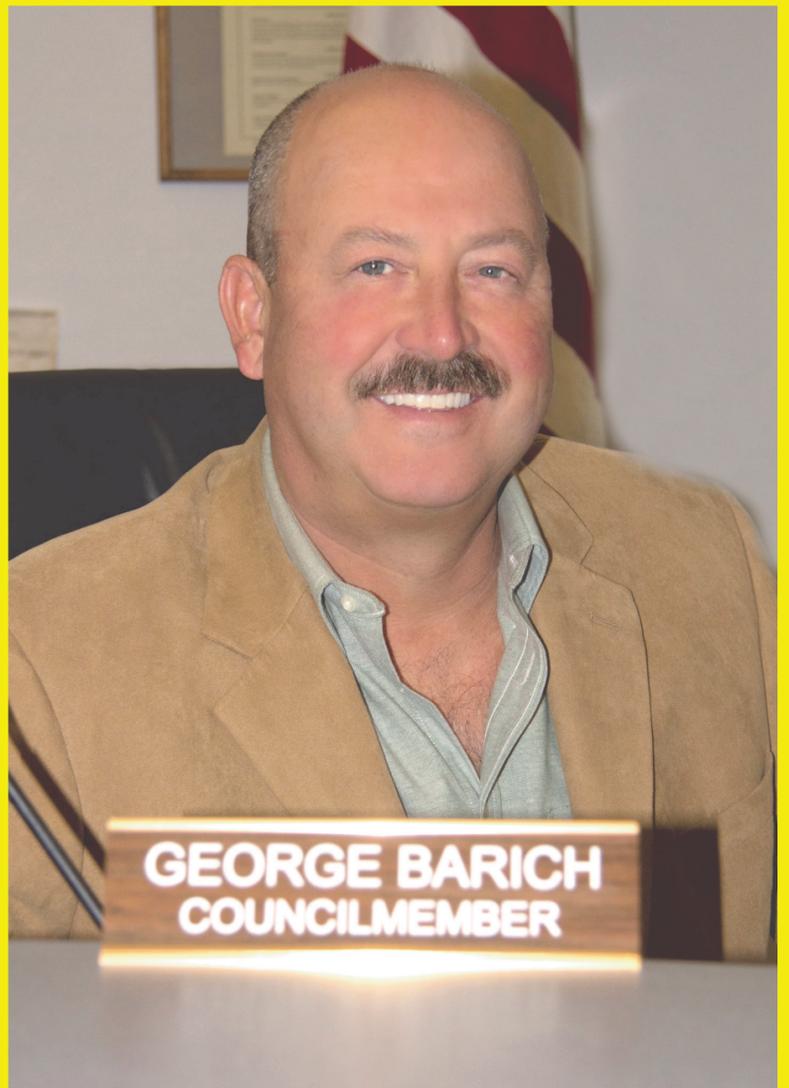
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No Roundabouts



“Single lane traffic and small roundabouts on the busiest thoroughfare in town will choke traffic, frustrate motorists, hinder public safety, drive business out of Cotati, and is simply absurd...”
Cotati needs new leadership now.

Principles Over
Politics

Reduce Taxes and Fees

Honesty and Integrity

Term Limits

A Balanced Budget

Transparency

Cablecast and Webcast All Public Hearings Now

I voted against the \$73,000,000 Downtown Specific Plan in 2009. primarily because Cotati was, and still is, BROKE. Cotati barely has enough money to stay afloat financially and has used up millions in reserves. Cotati is a city in decline and is trading water. I won't sugar-coat the severity of the situation. Cotati has failed to spend prudently over the years and failed to save for future city expenditures that are essential to the town's survival. There is no local money for any current plan to transform our small town into a thriving small metropolis, which would support the infrastructure needed for four-story buildings, narrower streets, and less parking the City hopes will be built with federal tax dollars. The fact is, it will never will be realized in our lifetime. Our city still owes almost \$20 million in principal and interest payments on our semi-new police station for the next twenty years. To make matters worse, city redevelopment money is being taken back by the State of California to keep the state from defaulting on its obligations. Cotati, like many cities, is in a real mess and is forced to consider consolidating services with other cities, merging with Rohnert Park, filing for bankruptcy to restructure its debts, or renegotiate contracts with its city employees that are simply unsustainable. Cotati's unfunded liabilities are not reflected in its budget in an attempt to ignore the obvious. This newspaper is dedicated to turning Cotati around before it is too late. As publisher, I want to thank you for your support and for all the financial contributions that make this newspaper possible.

Former Cotati City Councilman, George Barich