



The Cotati Independent

P.O. Box 7841, Cotati, CA 94931

www.thecotatiindependent.com

email: editor@thecotatiindependent.com

707-795-4121

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Terminations at City Hall Continue

Longtime Assistant City Manager, City Attorney, City Finance Director & City Planner Now Gone

Story and opinion by George Barich

(Cotati, CA) The revolving door at Cotati City Hall is making citizens stand up and take notice. After former police chief Robert Stewart was locked out of his office in 2010 and told to never come back for simply standing

up to City Manager Dianne Thompson, it was just the start of some deep housecleaning at City Hall. Highly paid city staff members who have played key roles in the city's finances, controversial planning projects, and lawsuits against the city have recently been shown the door and were quickly replaced.

Marsha Sue Lustig, longtime city staff member and widely known as the most controversial figure at City Hall, was mysteriously terminated this last summer. In the last month,

longtime City Finance Director Jone Hayes left Cotati to take a job with the City of Healdsburg even though she lives just a few blocks from Cotati City Hall. Also last month, longtime City Attorney Rich Rudnansky announced his retirement and quickly stepped down. Yet many locals suspect Rudnansky was forced to resign as well. City Planner Misti Harris is also gone for good. The city refers to these exoduses from City Hall as retirements, or has no comment. But the City

Manager is known for not tolerating dissent within her ranks and continues to surround herself with people who will take her orders without question.

Eric Kirchmann of Cotati has offered an interesting concept he calls the "Cake Theory" regarding retirements and terminations at City Hall. When city employees leave on good terms, the city presents a special cake.

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The Grinches Who Stole Christmas

City Refuses to Refer to Christmas by Name and Bans Religious Music at Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony

Story and opinion by Greg Karraker

(Cotati CA) On Wednesday, December 5th, citizens of Cotati were treated to a lighting of the *Holiday Tree* in La Plaza Park, accompanied by a singing of *Holiday Carols*. Some of us may be old enough to remember when the words Christmas Tree and Christmas Carols were not words that would cause parents to wash their kids' mouths out with soap.

According to a local historian, the city purged the word Christmas from its Christmas festivities at least 20 years ago. Today, the phrase Happy Holidays is used so widely that we've become numb to its effect. But I remember simpler, more innocent days when Chanukah was Chanukah, Christmas was Christmas, and New Year's was New Year's. Holidays? That used to mean President's Day, The 4th of July, Labor Day, and all the other days when the banks, post offices, and schools were closed. So this is my rant about where we are today, and how we got here.

From a personal perspective, I'm a committed atheist, and have been for years. That puts me in the minority, and that's fine. What is not fine is that a handful of meddlers, acting on behalf of atheists like me, and for a small number of other non-Christians, have decided that a set of ceremonies that brought happiness to millions can now bring happiness to nobody.

The innocent phrase "Merry Christmas" has almost gone the way of the Dodo bird. But in Cotati, this systematic blacklisting of Christmas has been taken to new extremes. According to a credible anonymous source, besides using the words "Holiday Tree" and "Holiday Carols" on their website, the city instructed the carolers to sing no religious songs, and one city staffer was heard grum-



Cotati's Holiday Tree. Was it named in honor of legendary gunfighter Doc Holiday? Who knew the city council had such deep respect for skilled gunfighters?

bling that the colored lights on the tree looked "too Christmass-y." Don't be surprised if next year, the tree lights are all white. So what was the music? Rest assured that at this year's ceremony, young children's minds were not damaged by hearing "Silent Night", but they were uplifted by the more culturally appropriate "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer."

Just when I thought it couldn't get any worse, I read a cheery article in the Sonoma County Gazette that said there would also be a Chanukah celebration and a Solstice celebration in Cotati. Both are wonderful ideas, but why is Christmas so off-limits in this loony town?

There is a phrase that explains this madness perfectly: The tyranny of the minority. Ac-

ording to a recent Rasmussen poll, 76% of Americans think Christmas should be more about Jesus, 14% think it should be more about Santa, and 10% are undecided. Despite this, today's crop of public officials find it necessary to deprive the vast majority of Americans of a favorite tradition, just so they can placate the potential objections of a few. Being one of those few, it deeply offends me that these insults to the majority are done on my behalf.

So to the city manager, the city council, and every other Grinch who may read this, I have exactly two words to say: Merry Christmas.

84.6% of Cotati Registered Voters Voted in Last Election

Story and opinion by staff

(Cotati, CA) The final votes of the Cotati city council race have been counted by the County and here are the results (if you trust the County's handling of the ballots): Of the 4,004 registered voters in Cotati, 84.4% of the voters cast their ballots (3,390):

1,274 voters cast for George Barich
1,624 for Wendy Skillman
1,722 for Susan Harvey
1,931 for John Dell'Osso

The top three vote-getters won seats on the city council for the next four years. However, the totals reveal a town clearly divided. Barich clearly distanced himself from his three opponents. They ran as a slate of candidates who all endorsed each other and each solicited financial assistance and endorsements from outside Cotati to win. That fact aside, the people of Cotati should be commended for voting in such large numbers.

For those who voted and encouraged others to vote as well, we thank you for exercising one of this country's greatest rights, the right to voice your opinion and vote without being rounded up in the middle of the night and never seen again.

The large number of Cotati voters who voted for Barich clearly sent a message that they believe Cotati City Hall is on the wrong track. The town still appears to be polarized with no indication of that changing.

Councilwoman Janet Orchard Steps Down After 12 Years



Council meeting turned into public spectacle with calls for order in the room by Mayor Harvey

Story and Opinion by George Barich

(Cotati, CA) At the December 12th Cotati City Council meeting, the city actually placed an item on the agenda that shocked some in attendance. It was titled a "proclamation" for outgoing councilwoman Janet Orchard. The item was cause for some concern because it had nothing to do with official city business, and it was also placed at the beginning of the meeting, forcing people to sit through it who might otherwise would not have.

Such acts of political theater are normally frowned upon in many cities or placed at the end of the meeting agenda out of courtesy for those in attendance on official business. But this is Cotati, and with five Democrats on the council, they were determined to make everyone sit through a celebration of sorts whether they wanted to or not.

Before the council meeting began, some people in the room began discussing between themselves why any city staff time and city council meeting time would be appropriated to offering a proclamation that was never presented to other outgoing council members such as Patty Minnis, Pia Jensen, John Guardino, or George Barich, to name just four.

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Peet's Coffee in Cotati Falls Far Short of Expectations

Story and opinion by George Barich



(Cotati, CA) Confidential inside sources at Peet's Coffee in Cotati tell me their new store in Cotati is performing far short of expectations. Apparently, it is one of the most underperforming Peet's Coffee locations in California, and maybe the entire country.

Sources tell us that the Cotati location does not have a store manager simply because it can't afford to hire one. Assistant managers are being utilized, and everyone we talked to says they hope sales will improve.

The City of Cotati required the new Peet's to jump through many hoops to set up shop in Cotati, including being LEED certified. LEED is a third party certification program; the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. The problem here is it took a lot more green requirements than Peet's bargained for, and the sales numbers are proving to be problematic.

Peet's Coffee may have also grossly overestimated traffic at their location in Cotati, the average income of Cotati residents, and the fact that many Cotati commuters take West Sierra Avenue to get to and from the freeway, not Old Red.

The location is also very noisy, difficult to park, and not a calm or relaxing location to enjoy expensive foods and beverages. Peet's Coffee also prohibits certain types of motor vehicles from parking in at least one parking spot in its lot. This has made many in Cotati feel that unless they drive a car that is politically correct their business may not be entirely welcome.

If sales numbers don't improve, Peet's may be forced to rethink its long-term look at whether or not it can continue to wait for better times to come.

City Tries to Play Cheap Trick on Voters

Story and opinion by Greg Karraker

(Cotati, CA) In last month's edition, our top story read, "Roundabouts Outlawed; Will City Learn?" Now we know the answer is no. The city didn't care about your opinion when they came up with this plan. And at their December 12th city council meeting, they proved that they still have no respect for you.

On November 6, you voted overwhelmingly to kill the Village Main Street Plan. This plan was the work of a traffic engineering company called Omni-Means. If you go to their website at www.omni-means.com the first thing you'll see is a large picture of a roundabout. The second thing you'll see is Omni-Means congratulating themselves about their leading role in a traffic conference about... roundabouts.

So how does the city go about getting a new plan for Old Redwood Highway? It seems the main thing they're obsessed with is the possibility they could lose \$1.1 million of federal grant money, even though they'd have to spend another \$2.4 million to get their hands on it. So instead of giving the money back, they are scrambling for every possible way to build something, anything.

Given the city's history of failures in this area, they should show you some respect, and make their new plans crystal clear up front. But once again, they have done the exact opposite. How? During every city council meeting, there is a section of the agenda called Consent Calendar. This is a list

of things that have been lumped together, and get approved all at once, with no discussion, by either the council or the public. At the December 12th council meeting, they voted to change their contract with Omni-Means, and tried to bury it as the last item on the consent calendar. Fortunately, the staff of this paper saw the sneaky trick they were up to, and demanded a full public discussion of this item on your behalf.

Not surprisingly, the council refused our request to pull this item from the consent calendar and have an honest discussion on the subject. The result? Your city council - the people you elected - **voted unanimously to pay Omni-Means another \$69,000.** Did they discuss awarding the design to other companies? No. Did they discuss what Omni-Means is expected to do for this fee? No. Did they rule out eliminating three of the five lanes on Old Redwood Highway? No. They just voted to give this same company another \$69,000 of your money, and couldn't be bothered to tell you why.

If you're one of the 1,852 people who voted for Measure U, is this how you expect your government to respond? Or is this just one more slap in the face from a city council who will keep slapping you in the face till you vote them out of office? As we've had to say all too often about this callous cabal of fools, stay tuned.

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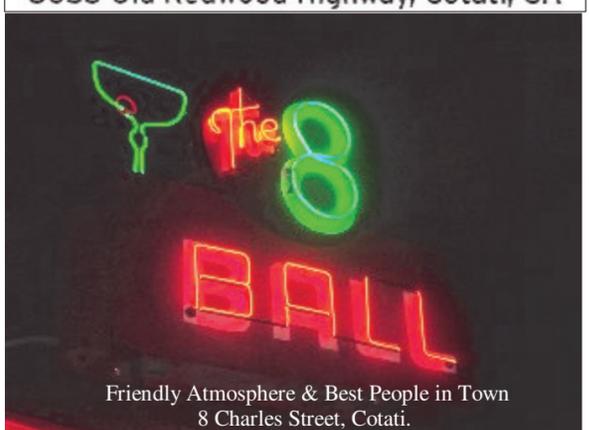
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Flexibility Works Both Ways

There's a couple different ways to rise up in town politics. One way is you can kiss up to people, tell people what they want to hear, talk out of both sides of your mouth, make promises you may not be able to keep, and have your hands out for money to be repaid in favors down the road. This has worked well for many politicians, especially many politicians in Cotati.

The other way to rise up in town politics is to attend the city council meetings and workshops religiously, become a "council watcher", do your homework, put on your thinking cap, and actually participate. It also helps to let people know who you are, what you stand for by writing letters to the newspapers, risk pissing some people off, challenge the status quo, and run for public office with your own hard-earned money. Complaining about our local government from home or from one of the local bars, hair salons, or coffee houses will prove far less effective. But I know, armchair quarterbacking and keeping a low profile is so much safer and cheaper. Participating at City Hall meetings means standing up, being counted, giving praise and even blowing the whistle if you see something wrong during these meetings to truly make a difference.

Whether or not you are interested in local politics, the key to responsible leadership in any position of power is to try to be flexible and negotiate with some integrity at all times. But negotiating may, at times, be simply out of the question if negotiating completely violates a core principle you hold dear. Compromising is often a noble goal, but even seasoned politicians will tell you, negotiating is often hoped for but is not always realistically possible.

One thing is for sure, vicious attacks on people, not their ideas, is never a good strategy in politics in the long run. In time, citizens will wise up to your dirty political campaigns, see you for who and what you are: a bully who will stop at nothing to win. And only bullies like to run with other bullies.

Susan Barnes was a local political consultant who resided in Cotati for many years. She helped Forest Galt with his bid for a Cotati council seat in 2002. She approached me as a candidate in 2000 and offered her services to me. She said, "George, if you want to win, you have to play to win and only to win. You're gonna need a lot of money and a lot help to get elected as a moderate in Cotati..." I disagreed with Susan, financed my campaigns myself, and the rest is history. I was elected in 2008 bucking the Old Girl Network in Cotati, and later I was recalled by deep-pocket leftists who organized and spent thousands more than I did. Maybe Susan Barnes and I can agree and call it a "push"?

But nothing can get accomplished in politics without some compromise, unless you use raw power and simply bully citizens and your colleagues into submission. Being willing and able to be flexible is the key to good leadership in business and government. In order to reach a point in the middle of a divisive issue, the first thing to remember is not to offer how far you are willing to be flexible right at the outset. This would leave you no room to compromise. This was something that I found lacking with all my other colleagues when I was on the city council in 2009. They often started negotiations with their bottom line offer right at the outset and were unwilling to compromise and took a take it or leave it attitude. Whether it was laziness, or stupidity, I really can't say. This lack of savvy lent itself to a very hostile negotiating environment leaving people no room to move. I don't know how or why my colleagues never learned the Art of Compromise, but it led to an environment that was not conducive for dialogue, nor in the spirit of negotiating in good faith.

All compromises have to be a win/win for both parties at the end of the day. Without a win/win, all you have is bullying where you have a winner and a loser. When you are trying to reach a compromise, it is imperative to approach the other party and be ready to offer something in return for what you want. It seems simple, doesn't it? But as unbelievable as it may seem, many city leaders don't really know how compromises work and how important it really is to get things done right the first time, and on budget.

A lose/lose scenario is not a compromise. Yet, Cotati has insisted on resisting the art and science of compromise for many years, costing the city millions of dollars in waste and do-overs. The lack of healthy compromise and good negotiating skills has also cost the community dearly, by polarizing the community on key issues. This has alarmed many conservatives and liberals alike who see no diversity on the city council. A city council that does not reflect the diversity of the community is a city council in trouble and at risk of one of the biggest leadership diseases known to mankind, "Group Think".

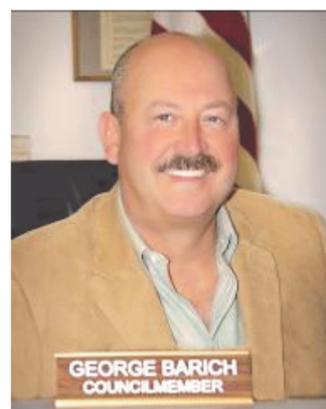
It is the art of compromise that citizens expect from their local leaders to show the community that City Hall has some sort of checks and balances in place to ensure things don't get out of hand, so they don't get so caught up in their own egos; that their sense of invincibility doesn't get the best of them. Traffic roundabouts and Measure U was a perfect example how negotiations broke down, costing millions of dollars that could have been spent elsewhere. The City thought they could pull a fast one on the community, jam it down our throats, only to have it completely backfire in their face. To make matters worse, they are not sending the grant money back to the Feds which they said they would be forced to do if Measure U passed.

A win/lose situation (where one party gets nothing for their efforts or for their constituency), never makes the parties involved feel satisfied. Only in win/win situations are compromises ever really achieved. Any town can benefit from bipartisan compromises, and if they are not engaging in bipartisan compromises regularly, they could have a mutiny on their hands. By attempting to compromise right at the outset of any dissent, everyone in town can feel that their concerns are being addressed and a half-way point may be reached to keep the peace.

According to attorney Gary L Kaplan, "Research over the past 25 years sheds light on what works in negotiating, and leveraging such research, here are some of the most important tips to becoming a better negotiator:

1. Be Prepared

If the three rules of real estate are 'location, location, location,' the three rules of negotiation are 'preparation, preparation, preparation.' Before starting a negotiation, you need to know what you want out of the deal and your



Former Cotati City Councilman
George Barich

"Just My Two Cents"

bottom line. You also need to try to figure out the other side's bottom line and objectives. As you prepare, you should write it all down. Negotiators who start with written goals do better.

2. Set the Table and Start with Appetizers

A successful deal may depend on having the right setting, the right people at the table, and the right order of items on the menu. In most cases, it is better to start with easy issues, because you want to get the other side comfortable saying yes.

3. Leave Room

The worst feeling in the world is to have your first proposal accepted (and you won't be doing the other side a favor accepting his or her first proposal either).

4. Be Generous (with free stuff)

We are all hard-wired to reciprocate. The fastest way to get concessions is to give them. Look for things of value to the other side that don't cost you much, if anything. The instinct to reciprocate should not be underestimated. Besides, people are more likely to be persuaded by someone they like, than someone they don't.

5. Be Creative

Effective negotiation is not only about getting the biggest piece of the pie, it is also about looking for ways to make the pie bigger for both sides.

6. Be a Good Listener

Ask questions, and spend more time listening than talking. You might find that stuff you want is not important to the other side and vice versa.

7. Make it Easy for Your Opponent

No one likes to lose. Making your opponent feel bad or look bad is unlikely to win you much, but may poison your business relationship or even kill a good deal.

8. Be Sincere

Nothing will work if you don't mean it. In addition to being unethical, if you start to lie, you will need additional lies to cover the first one and so on. Eventually, your brain will overload and turn you in. (Brain imaging studies show that your brain needs to work much harder to lie and than to tell the truth).

9. Be Patient

Effective negotiations take time. If you try to short-cut the process, you are likely only to give up more (or get less) than you would with some patience.

10. Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help

Our emotions often blind us to facts and reasonable options. It always helps to have a sounding board. Negotiation can be stressful, but they don't need to be. Many attorneys and experienced negotiators (myself included) will gladly take the time to talk with you about a negotiation that may be important to your business simply to build good will. Sometimes it just takes a quick phone call to talk about strategy or get a reality check."

(Source: <http://www.startupnation.com/business-articles/9579/1/how-to-negotiate-10-ways.htm>)

I have seen Cotati city officials and city staff break all these rules and more, costing the town millions of dollars over many years. I have seen the city give their bottom line offer at the outset of negotiations with Cotati's employee unions. I have seen bids for city projects be approved without council discussion or any oversight. I have seen emergency city meetings scheduled because people did not do their homework and created a crisis. I have seen city officials discuss budgets they didn't understand and vote on budgets that were unbalanced to be fixed later a later time. I have sat in my office at night looking out the window knowing my colleagues needed my vote, and nobody offered to walk in or give me a call even to begin pre-negotiations to see what I wanted for my constituents in return. I have seen city officials chastise me for my final vote, and fail to realize it was a Win / Lose proposition for me. So, they left me no choice. How could I have voted differently? I didn't run for office just to rubberstamp and attend their social parties. I have seen city leaders and city staff lie and try to cover their tracks. Lying just kills any chance of real negotiations. When you lose trust, all is lost. I have seen items put on the meeting agenda at the last minute just so someone could pull a fast one and get something past us all, thwarting and corrupting the process. I have seen attempts at quick fixes to complicated and potentially costly problems which ended up in needless litigation, in my view. I have seen city leaders step down in disgrace, or in my case be recalled, frankly as a result of city leaders failing to be flexible and throwing the art of negotiation out the window.

City leaders from neighboring cities have told me Cotati is one of the wackiest cities in the State. Hopefully, in my lifetime, Cotati will become a place that will plan well, budget honestly, play fairly, and negotiate effectively. Playing winners and losers is, and always will be, a losing proposition.



Slimmy, Horrific Things are Just Politics in Cotati

By Eric Kirchmann
Cotati

Folks, it is hard not to talk about elections and such, as they leave us with leaders for four more years, and some elected officials eventually move on. I was watching a prize fight at the MGM Grand last week. I wasn't actually there, I was in a social setting with a number of people viewing the fight. The Romneys were there, Mitt and Ann, in the second row. A fellow in the room where I was watching said "Oh there's... uh what's his name?" I couldn't help but add, "Mitt Romney, he ran for President a little more than a month ago..." It was a contentious race, accusations of wrongdoing rather than candidates saying what they stood for or would do if elected.

It was the same around our communities. There were nasty robo-calls, and hit piece mailings, and tens of thousands of dollars spent for school board and city council races. There were consultants and endorsements, and little said about what people stood for or what they would do. In the local school board race there was over ten thousand dollars spent for the first place taker of votes, and more than half that spent for the second place seat. The race was shadowed by nasty calls saying why a community member should not be re-elected. These were nasty calls that simply did not add up. They blamed a person who has served and given back to the community for far more than the twelve years she served on our local school board. She made hard votes during hard times, and did what she thought best for students in our communities. She did not vote according to party lines or others' agendas or even what was popular. She did her best during a tough time and she was not alone in the four votes cited in the calls. Two other board members had to vote the same way for the item to pass or fail, yet those votes were not considered in the calls.

Smear campaigning is not what we should stand for. In an October 24, 2012 Press Democrat article, a candidate and returning school board member stated, "I was horrified" and "It's extremely slimy." What is noteworthy is the fact that this same board member and elected official publicly stated who was behind the phone calls naming them on the record and seemingly had full knowledge of the extremely slimy affair. Using one's position as an elected official, giving endorsements, and making statements before and after elections is perhaps damage control or escaping blame for horrifying slimy actions and tactics. Of course, you can discount this by simply saying "That's politics" or "That's how the game is played." So, an elected official knows who is paying nearly a thousand dollars to smear a close friend and ally, an associate, a fellow elected official, and states that it is slimy but is so horrified that he remains mute until after the damage is done; then publicly attacks a member of the public at a meeting and "that's the way the game is played"?

The problem folks, is that few of us ever attend a city council or school board meeting, or even get to see them on our home screens. In the school board meetings there are three cameras, a sound system, a mixing board and a technician who gets paid to set up, monitor, and tear down

the equipment. The sad reality is at the last meeting they did not bother to record the tributes to the outgoing board member or the swearing in of the new board members. That isn't part of the public meeting or part of the people's right to know? A great many people came to the meeting which is hidden behind closed gates and is not in any way easy to find. They braved the elements and brought flowers and gifts to give tribute to someone who has given years of her life to do what is right and best for all, for our future, for our community's children. Others spent thousands of dollars, got endorsements in a non-partisan race and their taking office was not recorded. At least one of those taking office publicly acknowledged prior knowledge of the perpetrator of a slimy deed that was horrifying, and he "outed" a member of the public who gave no reply. Silence is consent.

The following night was even more partisan and full of awards and hugs. An outgoing member of our Cotati City Council was awarded every possible token by members outside of Cotati: A county supervisor, district attorney, former mayors from Petaluma, Sonoma, state assembly member, and assistants to our House representatives and Senators all had to say their tribute and praise for a council woman who was departing by choice, who had not run for re-election.

She was given a great sendoff from people outside our small town community who have done what for Cotati? Upon her departure, no one stated what had been accomplished in the past twelve years. This council woman during her term served well, and I have no issue with her performance. She backed the traffic roundabouts and the Downtown Specific Plan approving them both. She signed Cotati into a twenty eight million dollar debt for a new police station and remodeled Community Room and spent nearly four million dollars for a park across from City Hall which once had sheep grazing on the bucolic site. Now there are no sheep, no bathrooms, and uhh... no park. She did many things and was not alone in the votes. She funded other candidates into office, and funded her own campaigns which were the highest for elections in our city's history. She deserved to win, she was elected, at what cost? She and others sponsor and endorse candidates. She was praised by many partisan entities, some who smear during campaigns, some who do slimy horrific things. That's the game, that's politics. She was a councilwoman who changed Cotati and should not be evaluated except by her own actions. That is her legacy.

It is strange that some spectators called the city council meeting a "Celebration". People celebrate the end of an era where councils rubber stamped items, attacked citizens showing an interest in their local government, and where taxes were raised, and business development was shunned? We do not celebrate new or returning council members - we swear them in by city staff members who reside outside of town, and give a party for those leaving, not for those coming on board. Endorsements and bought and paid-for elections and governance seems to be the small town character we accept in Cotati.

In recent city council meetings, it appears that Cotati City Hall is under siege with doors unlocked just a few minutes before the meetings begin, and police playing the role of security guards to keep citizens from whispering or breaking protocol; but at the celebration all bets were off. Cameras clicked away with flashes, talking was accepted, and loud boo's, intentional coughing, hissing, and stirring was tolerated if the speaker was not one of the insider celebrants and offering a different view, a different assessment of the situation. It is most telling that Consent Agendas are accepted as action and governance; and the Student Honorary Mayors have the most insight and ob-

servation skills.

The bulk of what passes for governance at both school board and city council meetings is discussion of future agenda items and proclamations. The consent agenda, which is where routine matters are accepted in lockstep, is now almost the entire agenda. Items are accepted and tens of thousands of dollars are approved for payment without any discussion, citizen input, or even a staff report. Where every item use to involve discussion and informed decision and deliberation before any official action was taken, now our governing leaders accept items in one easy motion without discussion or information being shared openly. No questions, no answers. Just acceptance, with a nod, 5 to 0 votes accepting one easy list of matters and costs with silent acceptance.

In contrast, the honorary mayors, (school kids) have asked for safety interventions on Madrone Avenue and Highway 116 where people have tragically perished in horrific accidents. These young adults have asked for park bathrooms to be open, stocked, and cleaned. These kids have asked for the obvious and have seen problems other citizens have complained about yet ignored by the city. The Council praises them and says "We are aware of this, and are working on it." City staff is spending money they claimed would be lost if Measure U passed. They did this placing political literature in your water bills, arguing their position on the recent ballot, and through out of town political action committees. They tell you one thing before the election and they tell you a revised version after the election. Governance now is a lot of back slapping and praise, with the actual decisions and governance taking less than a minute, and the posturing taking hours.

I suggest you go to these meetings and see for yourself. Sadly, they are not televised and are selectively recorded on audio. Our governance teams do not burden staff with giving reports or sharing information before decisions are made in 5 to 0 fashion without question or debate. If an elected official questions an item or opposes the order there is a problem, and recalls and robo-calls often follow.

We celebrate outgoing leaders more than accepting newcomers with fresh ideas, and we are left with acceptance of things as they are. A returning councilman observed that the county roads are in need of repair and asked staff to contact the county. Perhaps he should look around Cotati and see what our roads look like, and perhaps he could speak to his contemporaries himself. Public posturing is just that. Telling kids that "we are aware of matters and are working on it", is weak; pointing fingers at others and doing nothing is playing the game. We all lose in that, but we deserve to as we accept and vote for three candidates on a slate, backed by what machine?

We accept hate and horrific calls targeting one, and accept one who publicly states he knew who did it all along. We accept a world where citizens are restricted, but others can talk all they want as they give awards to people leaving office, and we accept those in office voting on all matters at once discussing none. We accept things as they are and now and again we vote for change and have none. Get involved and challenge the machine, or accept it as it is. What do we have to celebrate, and what do we ask of our representatives in local governance? Should we vote by party line and accept endorsements and funding of our leaders? Should we wait for safe streets and open restrooms in our parks? Should we ask where our tax monies are being spent and how? Should our leaders ask and answer such questions, or is it just about: Having coffee and a piece of cake at these meetings? Folks, I really hope to see you at the next city council meeting. It is time to get involved and see things for yourself.

The Uncivil Society You All Want



By Mike Cerremello

Before focusing in on Cotati, I would like to say a few words on the Left's expected attack on the Second Amendment. I will speak at length on this subject in next month's edition of The Cotati Independent.

The solution has and never will be to confiscate all guns and expect the world to behave. You only have to look at Cambodia, Uganda, Guatemala, Russia, Hitler's Germany, and China. All the gun control legislation passed in those countries was followed by mass murder of their own citizens. Be careful what you wish for.

There is a saying in America which really says it all: "When guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns." Did it work at Fort Hood, where after carrying weapons was forbidden to the military, one of their own gunned them down?

Do you really think that allowing only the police to have guns will solve the problem of occasional gun massacres by the mentally ill? In fact, "bobbies" in England didn't have handguns to carry out their duty and we all know how well that has worked out. Now, with the incursion of Muslims intent on destroying Western culture, they had better change their tune or disappear.

Finally, the solution is relatively simple. Do what the nation of Israel does. Have you seen the picture of the Israeli female teacher with a rifle hanging off her back? There is a reason mass murders don't go far in a country

constantly under siege.

We need to train and arm teachers, doctors, legislators, judges, and frankly all citizens in the proper use of firearms, specifically handguns. Then we need to arm them. When the next Adam Lanza appears in one of their classrooms, the sheep will be the wolf and that Lanza will be the victim.

This will not stop nearly all such violence and mayhem. Idiocy and insanity is not solitary to the left; it exists throughout our medicated, obese, and low self esteem society. It may not even make the lunatic think twice. But he will at least think that the focus will be shifted from the assailant to the hero who guns him down ...

* * * * *

Speaking of incivility and the left, the Cotati City Council was again up to their cliquish, arrogant, and elitist ways at their last city council meeting on December 12th.

It would be wise of the unwise who hold these five council positions to understand that if you want celebrations, such as the one held for outgoing Councilwoman Janet Orchard, you don't hold them during city council meetings. It's completely inappropriate to be using city staff resources and wasting the public's time on such spectacles insisting citizens sit through it all, in this case, nearly an hour. The intolerant leftist supporters of the "strictly dressed" apparatchik promoter of State-ism or centralized government at the local level had a big problem with one honest citizen, George Barich being the only person in town who came forward during this love fest for Orchard after all the speeches from people who live far outside Cotati and told "the rest of the story". Barich, in his typical honest yet highly professional style, took a walk down Memory Lane of Janet Orchard's failures as a city leader over the twelve years he tried to work with her. Twenty seconds into his review of her record, he was interrupted and booed by Orchard's supporters in the room to the point the Mayor had to step in to silence the unruly crowd. And you thought the Left respected free speech and practiced tolerance.

I say hold your parties and love fests elsewhere or in private if you don't want to listen to opposing points of views. To allow a city hall and a city council meeting to be used to promote Orchard expected run for a county supervisor seat is probably a violation of some Fair Political Practices Commission rule. Hey, John Moore; where are you? Oh, the roar in the room heard down the street must have had you raising a glass to Orchard at one of the local drinking establishments in Cotati.

I have no problem with the Left endorsing one of their fellow repressives. It is up to your community as to whose values you would enhance as a reflection of your own. But this is still America, guided by the Constitution, a document you would weaken or destroy. But everybody, taxpayers and tax-takers alike, gets to have their say on the microphone without the bullying and blatant intimidation that Orchard lifted not one finger to stop.

It has been a long fight to save Cotati, and I am use to long fights, to "educate" the city council and the citizenry that the law states: "any item on a public agency's agenda may be addressed by a member of the public". As I said in an earlier column, I thank the current mayor for caving into the advice of the new Cotati city attorney, the person I really should be thanking, and allowing the public to make their thoughts known and bring their grievances forward during these meetings. I know it is painful having to listen to those with whom you might disagree with. If listening to people who have been to every city council meeting that Orchard has over the past twelve years is too distasteful for you, may I suggest you enter a different line of work or get a new avocation?

The final point is that "liberal" is the wrong term to be used among those who would constrain us all. Being liberal should mean listening and evaluating all points of view, then coming to a conclusion. While the far Right are no angels in this venue, the liberal minds are made up; the true Conservative is not so locked in other than to "founding principles". Even those principles may be argued, not emotionally but logically, we have a Constitutional Amendment process to address that situation.

Now that I have identified that portion of the political body I admire, it is time for a "spot" of tea ... if you get my drift ...



Disruptive Crowd Brings Shame to Janet Orchard's "Celebration"

(From Page One)

Let's face it, there are some city leaders who will simply never take responsibility for their actions, and Janet Orchard fits that bill. In the twelve years she was on the city council, she was completely disconnected with the realities of managing a small town. While other cities concentrated on achieving financial sustainability, which paid their own way and sent money to the state and federal government, Orchard became obsessed with how easily Cotati could receive more money from the state and federal government than being more business friendly.

Economic vitality and financial independence was as far off Orchard's radar screen as the planet Mars. She never saw a tax dollar she could resist spending. If Cotati didn't have the money, she insisted Cotati borrow the money, leaving the town in a dismal state, forcing the State of California to be responsible for a large portion of Cotati's indebtedness. Cotati's \$22 Million Cotati police station is just one example (\$4.9 Million plus interest over 30 years).

Orchard rarely, if ever, provided any rational explanation for her decision making, rarely made public appearances, rarely returned calls or emails from the public at large, would not hold office hours, and spent tens of thousands of dollars on her three political campaigns over the years.

Unlike other outgoing council members, On Dec. 12th, Orchard failed to make public what she felt were her accomplishments and failures over her twelve years on the council. Most city leaders take the opportunity to point out what they actually did on their watch, what slipped through their fingers, and make a final speech of where they go from here. Former Mayor Geoff Fox was the last outgoing council person to personally address what he felt were his strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and failures as a city official. But not Janet Orchard. To be that reflective and analytical to evaluate one's own performance on the city council would have required some sophistication, integrity, and honest soul searching before a room of her peers and future campaign contributors. Orchard just didn't have the right stuff to do it. That would have taken leadership skills.

It was argued by some in the room that maybe the community was spared the pain of hearing her talk in circles one last time. After many people spoke thanking Orchard for her service and failing to point out anything specific of any real worth, former councilman George Barich stepped up to speak and addressed the city council by taking a look back at Orchard's term on the council and her voting record. Barich made a bold attempt to do something no one else in the room dared do. He attempted to bring Orchard's term on the council into proper perspective, pointing out her failures and shortcomings, hoping to only bring some balance to the discussion. Barich was not going to sit back and allow much of the truth of her twelve years be swept under the rug. He began to do what he had been doing for 15 years, make a persuasive argument to force people to think outside the box and challenge others enamored with Janet to defend her failings. Barich began by stating he had been to every council meeting Orchard had attended over the past twelve years and in his opinion her record was abysmal. As Barich proceeded to explain her voting record, her wasteful spending allocations, her Brown Act violations, her tax increases, and the millions wasted on outside consultants, Orchard's supporters in the room began to cough, moan, hiss, boo, and stomp their feet loudly to try to drown out Barich's voice over the PA system. This went on for about twenty seconds before Mayor Harvey stepped in and finally asked the room to be silent to prevent a riot.

Being on the city council for Janet Orchard wasn't about the betterment of Cotati. It was all about Janet. Cotati was just a political stepping stone for Orchard, who couldn't be bothered with meeting with citizens or holding town hall meetings just to talk and get to know her constituents.

The city council chambers were filled with people from out of town who came to pay homage to Janet, some who possibly want something from her as she readies for a run for County Supervisor. Political consultants got up and praised her, hoping to get a piece of her future campaign finances, too. Surprisingly, Pru Draper, a longtime supporter and contributor to Orchard's campaigns over the years, had nothing to say about all the people in attendance who did not live or work in Cotati. Usually, Draper rails against anyone who meddles in Cotati's business and does not reside within city limits. But on this night, these Democrat party hacks from elsewhere got a nod of acceptance from Draper. Funny how this works in Cotati.

Janet was given multiple chances to do the right thing over the years in Cotati. She was constantly called out by citizens who challenged her positions, her silence, and poor leadership skills. Orchard's transgressions were many, everything from interrupting citizens who had the floor to speaking out of turn. She called for investigations of ethics violations that came up empty handed. She disregarded Robert's Rules of Order and conducted the meetings as mayor haphazardly with no sense of order. She literally presided over the meetings by the seat of her pants, often making it up as she went along.

Orchard was cold and calculating, seldom showing any emotion and was by far one of the biggest spenders the city had ever had on the council. The debt she encumbered the city with will be felt for decades to come. Like many city officials, Orchard did much of her shopping outside of Cotati and was rarely seen at local establishments. She didn't tolerate other points of view, often interrupting the speakers by turning to city staff asking, "Do we really have to listen to this?..." She didn't like walking door to door on the campaign trail, spent thousands on her political mailings, and had an ruthless appetite for political power. Orchard made no bones that she played to win because nothing less mattered.

Orchard was never known to write any letters to the editors of any newspapers, never gave speeches or interviews, didn't like to debate the issues, never held any coffees to talk to the citizens in an informal setting, and refused to televise or cablecast the city meetings. She was definitely of the school that believed the less people know about what is going at City Hall, the better. She never put together a website of her own to share her concerns with the community, and she shied away from any social media that would help her keep in touch with her constituency. Janet was always vague when it came to her politics, preferred small talk, and used charm keeping her deep beliefs to herself. She kept a

low profile between elections. Many claim she was not happy on the council and wanted something bigger that paid more money.

Janet came from a school of politics that the less people know about you, the better. Putting form over substance became a winning strategy for her. Janet knew that citizens really didn't care about the issues and would vote primarily if they liked you or not. So, she spent most of her time trying to be liked and stayed clear of controversial issues as much as humanly possible. One of her real weak points was her unwillingness to compromise or negotiate. She wasn't naturally the warm and fuzzy type who liked to roll up her sleeves and find common ground with the opposition. She didn't like conflict, often delegating the dirty jobs to city staff members who were getting paid handsomely to deal with sticky matters.

Janet knew dirty politics works and never came out to condemn its use by others in town when it was complained about during public forums. Janet played the race card as well as anybody, and insisted city leaders uphold standards she herself refused to define. One thing Janet was most proficient at was having her hands out to anyone who was willing to give her money for her political campaigns. And in return for their generosity, she intended to return the favor down the road if that chip was called in.

Janet felt it was the state and federal government's obligations to subsidize Cotati and its overspending habits. She showed little or no concern for the long term effects of cities demanding more and more from the state and federal government, pushing them to the brink of insolvency. No one exemplified the horrors of buying now and paying more later than Janet Orchard. With credit, Cotati could do anything.



Then the bottom dropped out of the housing market and the city went into emergency budget sessions in 2009. Local sales tax increases were proposed and shot down by councilman Barich. So, Janet supported ballot Measure A to raise taxes that was hastily put up to special election which promised more money for more police. When Measure A passed, Janet and the council decided to use the new revenue on anything but the police department, infuriating voters and the local police officers. Janet has been the Democratic Party's poster child on higher taxes, more spending, the implementation of Agenda 21, and so much more... For Janet, government was all about living for the moment, throwing caution to the wind, and damning the consequences.

But what Janet will be known best for is her efforts to limit the public's right to speak to the minimum set by law, 3 minutes. No matter how few people were in the council chambers to speak, she kept track of the time and cut people off if they went over the time limit. The 3 minute time limit was strictly enforced despite the fact that few cities had no such time limits. When Janet was asked if she had ever attended other city council meetings to see how they properly and fairly conduct business, Janet always declined to comment.

Janet stepping down from the city council leaves a legacy of failure, numerous abuses of power, indebtedness, and cronyism that will be a hard act to follow. Empty store fronts, local businesses that have moved out to relocate in other cities, vacant lots in Cotati, a police department that is short-staffed, and a crumbling infrastructure in Cotati are all reminders that she leaves the town worse off than when she took office. Even citizen participation at city meetings is at an all-time low. Many of Cotati's former city council members and department heads could not bring themselves to attend Janet's last meeting on the council to say a few words in her defense.

Barich said he wished he could have had the chance to get to know Janet Orchard better over the years, but she refused to answer any of his emails or phone calls. Maybe she couldn't be bothered. Maybe being available outside city meetings cramped her style. Maybe she couldn't be bothered with regular folks. Maybe she felt threatened or uncomfortable around people who work hard and believe in personal responsibility, The Constitution, and supply side economics. Only those who made contributions to her campaigns over the years seemed to ever get her undivided attention. Reaching out to the community is what Cotati should be all about, but apparently Janet didn't see it that way.

She made it clear she only represented a segment of the community that had her back 100% of the time. If you ever crossed Janet, or criticized her politics or leadership, you were on her diss-list. Barich said he never gave up on Janet and pushed her to be the best she could be. But no matter what input he provided, no matter how constructive the criticism, Janet could not bring herself to open the door to dialogue. Barich chalks Janet Orchard up to wasted talent who never reached her true potential as a city leader because she could not bring herself down to the level of normal everyday people. If she could have only reached out with some love and understanding, which should be what Cotati is all about, she could have been worthy of praise and admiration. But it simply wasn't part of her DNA, or she simply never studied or learned what politicians should really aspire to be, more human.

Her commitment to Agenda 21, connecting and narrowing city streets that few people wanted (Dan Burton style), traffic roundabouts, carbon credits, land trusts, and proclamations to impeach President Bush are just some of what Janet would say she is most proud of supporting during her term on the council.

Janet lives on a large parcel of land on Cypress Avenue in Cotati that would never fit into Cotati's General Plan today. But Janet has hers; the new zoning ordinance calls for much higher density on property like Janet's.

Janet was responsible for hiring Cotati's new Director of Finance who came from the bankrupt City of Stockton, CA. We're not making this stuff up. It's true. Why any city in

financial trouble would hire a finance director who helped to bankrupt another city, without any public say about the matter speaks volumes.

Janet is also responsible for engaging in one of the City's biggest cover-ups, the estimated one million dollars in overcharges in the city's transfer tax over twenty years. The Press Democrat broke the story in 2011. Citizens demanded answers and a realistic plan to pay the victims back the money owed them. But Janet refused to comment and condoned the city keeping the illegal windfall and showed no remorse whatsoever.

When the State of California eliminated Redevelopment Agencies across the state, it marked a new era for Cotati to have to finally spend within its means, become self sufficient without outside help, and many feel this was just too much for Janet to deal with, and became a major factor in her decision to opt out of the 2012 council race. Many say she never quite came to terms with the loss of RDA money that was never Cotati's to begin with.

Not once did Janet ever welcome citizens to a city council meeting or expound on the virtues of citizen participation in the city meetings, making it quite clear citizen input was simply in the way. She knew where she wanted to take the town and showed little or no concern for citizen input.

The late Mayor Bob Coleman took issue with Janet while they both served on the council. Bob pulled no punches in stating publicly he felt Janet was intellectually dishonest and never recanted that remark. But that comment was like the pot calling the kettle black, and most onlookers found the exchange of words entertaining, to say the least.

In August 2008, just three months before the General Election and five months before President George W. Bush was to leave office in 2009 ending his eight year term, Janet helped bring forward a city proclamation asking that the U.S. Congress start impeachment hearings on President Bush immediately. In a circus-like atmosphere with a room full of people who lived outside of Cotati, some arguing for and against the proclamation. The proclamation passed the city council by unanimous vote. The incident even raised the eyebrows of The Press Democrat as a most questionable use of time, effort, and expensive staff time as well as just silly timing. The sheer insanity of such a formal proclamation simply exemplifies the backward thinking Janet brought to Cotati during her term, further confirmation that Cotati has earned its title as the laughing stock of Sonoma County. This hate-based proclamation celebrated by the far-left in Cotati was long overdue. Each speaker on this impeachment item was allowed their time to speak without interruption. Four years later, no such respect would be afforded to anyone criticizing Janet's years on the council. The double standard is quite clear.

Janet agreed to sit on the subcommittee on Economic Development with Mayor John Guardino, but it yielded nothing. These two never claimed to have held a committee meeting, and never generated a single report, according to Barich. Barich claims he spoke with hundreds of citizens during the 2012 city council race who told him they were simply outraged at the lack of leadership, lack of common sense, and pure recklessness of Janet Orchard and her cohorts on the council. Even former Cotati council members who asked not to be identified refused to support any of the Democrats in the council race, and refused to put their campaign signs on their front yards. Many felt too much damage had been done, and electing anyone, even George Barich, would be a huge improvement. Many felt Janet was tired and not qualified to run a city suffering under a weak economy with declining revenues. The entire concept of finally being forced to run the city like a business, paying as you go, and actually saving money for a rainy day turned Janet's world upside down. Many said they were quite relieved Janet was not running for a fourth term on the council because it would bring more insult to injury.

Even when the dozen or so neo-socialists in Cotati formed the infamous Coalition to Protect Cotati's Future in 2002 as a driving force for change who eventually fought the development of the Lowes department store and proposed big box development in Cotati, Janet refused to engage the group or meet with any of its members in private.

Last, it should also be noted here that this newspaper has received absolutely no letters of support for Janet Orchard and her twelve-year term on the council. Had we received any letters, we surely would have printed them.

With Orchard out of the way now, it is still no guarantee Cotati is out of the woods, not by a long shot. Her departure may appear a breath of fresh air to many, but there are no indications that her replacement is any better. Time will only tell. What is clearly apparent, Janet leaves Cotati far worse off than when she took office. The city's reserves have been depleted or just used year to year as a delayed spending fund; its unfunded liabilities still haunt the viability of the town; we need more police on patrol; we have a crumbling infrastructure that is only getting worse; the Recreation Department has been shut down, we have a tiny museum inside city hall that shows no signs of finding another location as they promised they would; we have empty storefronts, vacant lots, a sales tax rate that is too high, affordable housing projects on the drawing board that will probably never see light of day, and White Trash Parties downtown being condoned by our Chamber of Commerce. Cotati has electric vehicle charging stations nobody uses, and a Downtown Specific Plan and General Plan Update that costs well over two million dollars, and may now have to be done over because both plans include outlawed traffic roundabouts. Where Cotati will get the \$73 million dollars it says it needs to build out the Cotati Downtown Specific Plan, nobody knows, and it appears Janet doesn't care now. She's moving on.

Clearly, Janet did not want the citizens to vote on traffic roundabouts, new police stations, sales tax increases, and so much more. She wanted all these matters determined by the elite on the council while we citizens got stuck with the bill. Power was to be consolidated at City Hall as much as possible because they know what's best for us.

Where do we begin to address how we citizens take back our town is anyone's guess. But Orchard made sure that none of us will be able to watch and listen to the city council meetings from the comfort of our living rooms. She may take great pride in having kept live cameras out of City Hall, but I don't know how she can ever justify it since we had the money earmarked for the project all along.

Our faith in government was shaken to the core with Janet on the city council. She kept cronyism alive and well just like her financial supporters insisted. Janet can best be described as putting government on steroids. Out of control government and reckless borrowing and irresponsible spending is a lot like a car crash. It's not the speed that kills you, it's the sudden stop.

Go West Young Man, To The "New Normal" Dream Job: California State Workers Earning \$822,000

There was a time when working on Wall Street, either on the sell or buy side, was the dream of every able-bodied worker who could do simple addition in their head and wasn't afraid to cut the occasional corner in exchange for a bottle of Bollinger and a sizable year end bonus. That, however, was so 2006 and with the long overdue conversion of the banking sector into a utility the stratospheric compensation payments from the peak of the credit bubble are long gone. So what is the New Normal dream job? Become a California state worker, preferably one who deals with neurotic and/or crazy people (i.e., a psychiatrist), and rake it in. The following chart

tired last year from the Napa state mental hospital after a 30-year career. Agcaoili said in a telephone interview that it was her right to take the payment. Can California afford to pay those wages? Of course not: Across the U.S., such compensation policies have contributed to state budget shortfalls of \$500 billion in the past four years and prompted some governors, including Republican Scott Walker of Wisconsin, to strip most government employees of collective-bargaining rights and take other steps to limit payroll spending. In California, Governor Jerry Brown hasn't curbed overtime expenses that lead the 12 largest states or limited payments for accumulated vacation time that allowed one employee to collect \$609,000 at retirement in 2011. The 74-year-old Democrat has continued requiring workers to take an unpaid day off each month, which could burden the state with new costs in the future. Last year, Brown waived a cap on accrued leave for prison guards while granting them additional paid days off. California's liability for the unused leave of its state workers has more than doubled in eight years, to \$3.9 billion in 2011, from \$1.4 bil-

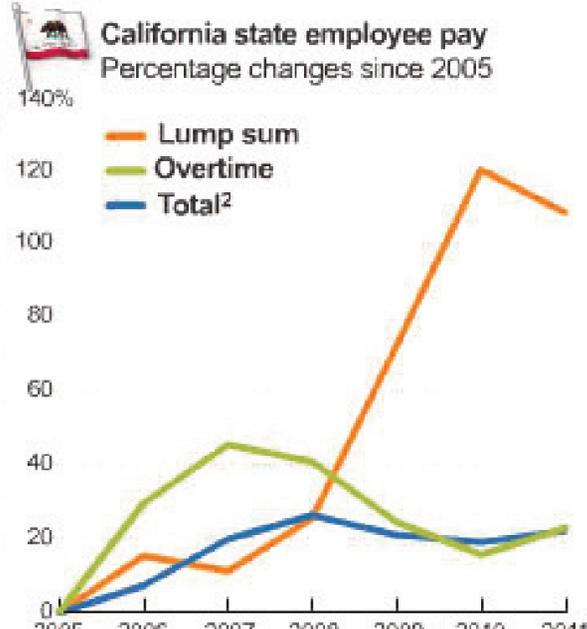
Bloomberg

California State Workers Earn More

California State Workers Earn More Than Counterparts

California public employees earned the most of the 12 most populous U.S. states in 2011 for almost every type of compensation, including wages, overtime, extra duty and one-time lump sum payments.

State data in 2011	Number of state employees ¹	Average pay per state employee	Pay, in millions	
			Overtime	Lump sum
California	245,593		\$963.9	\$274.5
New York	187,894		415.1	65.7
New Jersey	94,973		189.2	19.4
Illinois	76,236		N.A.	N.A.
Michigan	58,434		128.3	34.9
Ohio	66,510		108.4	61.3
North Carolina	81,315		44.4	24.1
Pennsylvania	106,634		216.5	90.8
Virginia	77,716		64.1	17.8
Texas	186,891		128.7	34.5
Florida	145,614		51.6	61.3
Georgia	71,111		12.3	23.3



1 - Non-university employees as provided by the states 2 - Includes regular, overtime, lump sum and other pay
 Source: 2011 payroll data provided by the states and compiled by Bloomberg News
 Graphic: Rachel J. Yu BGOVgraphics@bloomberg.com



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from Bloomberg shows just how generous the otherwise insolvent state of California is when it comes to paying its public servants, and the 100%+ increase in California employee state pay since 2005. Needless to say, this is a rate of increase in compensation that 99% of workers in the private sector would die for.

Some other stunning observations from Bloomberg on the best job taxpayer money can buy. The best paid job: psychiatrist. At this pace, they will have lots and lots of patients.

Psychiatrists were among the highest-paid employees in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan and New Jersey, with total compensation \$270,000 to \$327,000 for top earners. State police officers in Pennsylvania collected checks as big as \$190,000 for unused vacation and personal leave as they retired young enough to start second careers, while Virginia paid active officers as much as \$109,000 in overtime alone, the data show.

The numbers are even larger in California, where a state psychiatrist was paid \$822,000, a highway patrol officer collected \$484,000 in pay and pension benefits and 17 employees got checks of more than \$200,000 for unused vacation and leave. The best-paid staff in other states earned far less for the same work, according to the data.

... Mohammad Safi, graduate of a medical school in Afghanistan, collected \$822,302 last year, up from \$90,682 when he started in 2006, the data show. Safi was placed on administrative leave in July and is under investigation by the Department of State Hospitals, formerly the Department of Mental Health.

Another perk of public workers in Cali? \$200,000 in accrued vacation pay: The disparity with other states is also evident in payments for accumulated vacation time when employees leave public service. No other state covered by the data compiled by Bloomberg paid a worker more than \$200,000 for accrued leave last year, while 17 people got such payments in California. There were 240 employees who received at least \$100,000 in California, compared with 42 in the other 11 states, the data show. New Jersey Governor Chris Christie calls such payments "boat checks" because they can be large enough to buy a yacht. Topping the list was \$608,821 paid to psychiatrist Gertrudis Agcaoili, 79, who re-

lion in 2003, according to the state's annual financial reports. Some are furious. What is shocking is that nobody else is: "It's outrageous what public employees in California receive in compensation and benefits," said Lanny Ebenstein, who heads the California Center for Public Policy, a Santa Barbara-based research institution critical of public payrolls. "Until public employee compensation and benefits are brought in line, there will be no answer to the fiscal shortfalls that California governments at every level face," he said.

Among the largest states, almost every category of worker has participated in the pay bonanza. Britt Harris, chief investment officer at the Teacher Retirement System of Texas, last year collected \$1 million -- including his \$480,000 salary and two years of bonuses -- more than four times what Republican Governor Rick Perry received. Pension managers in Ohio and Virginia made up to \$678,000 and \$660,000, respectively, according to the data, which Bloomberg obtained using public-record requests. In an interview, Harris said public pension pay must be competitive with the private sector to attract top investment talent.

It seems magic money trees don't grow even in Cali, because more money paid out here, means less money available there. There being investing in the all important future via education

The result isn't only a heavier burden on California taxpayers. As higher expenses competed for fewer dollars, per-pupil funding of the state's public schools dropped to 35th nationally in 2009-2010 from 22nd in 2001-2002. Californians have endured recurring budget deficits throughout the past decade and now face the country's highest debt and Standard & Poor's lowest credit rating for a U.S. state. And so on.

Is this ridiculous compensation arrangement sustainable? Of course not. But just like everything else in the New Normal economy, by the time it crushes, it will be someone else's problem. And it is not like anyone expects that the 120% debt/GDP which the US will so proudly be boasting in 2016 will ever be repaid: one can at best hope it will continue to be rolled, until one day, it can't when future generations, saddled with the benefits of current and prior greed, realize they have had enough.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-12-11/-822-000-worker-shows-california-leads-u-s-pay-giveaway.html>



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Special Report

Liberalism: Psychosis, evil or ignorance? (Reprinted from Pravda)

By Xavier Lerma

Are liberals mentally ill, spiritually deprived or just ignorant good-hearted people trying to improve society? Liberalism defined by Merriam-Webster: "a political philosophy based on belief in progress, the essential goodness of the human race". It sounds nice but history has already proven that political liberalism is not beneficial. Unfortunately, many still adhere to its philosophy which has led many psychiatrists to examine this behavior.

One such psychiatrist, Dr. Lyle Rossiter wrote the book:

"The Liberal Mind: The Psychological Causes of Political Madness."

"Psychopathology of the Liberal Mind: The adult drive toward omnipotent control of others, in any arena whatever, is rooted in fears of separation, abandonment loss or abuse--the residual effects of early attachment gone wrong. The need to dominate others arises from the tyrant's need for absolute assurance that the catastrophic loss of dependency or the pain of abuse so devastating to him in his earliest years will not be repeated."

"Like spoiled, angry children, they rebel against the normal responsibilities of adulthood and demand that a parental government meet their needs from cradle to grave."

Dr. Lyle Rossiter has 37 years experience with more than 1,500 patients as a board certified clinical psychiatrist. He is also a board certified forensic psychiatrist who has examined more than 2,700 civil and criminal cases. He was educated at the University of Chicago.

No wonder he had a lot of patients! Obama and his crew came from Chicago. Dr. Rossiter was also a psychiatrist in the army for two years.

[Also read: Jean Marie Le Pen: 'I've always been hostile to communism'](#)

He also writes, "America's founding fathers intended, as the Preamble tells us, to establish justice, insure peace, provide for the nation's defense, promote its general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty. But the entire twentieth century, and the dawn of the twenty-first, have witnessed modern liberalism's relentless attacks on all of these goals and on all of the principles on which individual liberty and rational social order rest."

Many times on the Michael Savage Show he says, "Liberalism is a mental disorder". He actually wrote a book on it. I always laugh when he says it. Recently I reflected what is the common denominator among the liberals that I have met in my life and came up with a list. Maybe yours is the same or different.

Liberals have all or most of these qualities: -prefer to insult others rather than use logic and reasoning -have an arrogant behavior -use anti-depressants or illegal drugs -favor Marxists, Socialists or Communists -against all or part of the 10 Commandments-favor killing babies (abortion) -dislike Christians-liars -like Lucifer they hate obedience or responsibility

Then I made a list of qualities of people I have met that are conservative. They have most of these characteristics: -try to follow the 10 commandments-have a spiritual life either as a Muslim, Jew, Buddhist, Christian, etc. -have a genuine love for their Creator and people around them -selfless

Selfless? It almost sounds like Anakin Skywalker when he was talking to Senator Palpatine about the Jedi's virtues in "Revenge of the Sith". "The Jedi use their power for good. The Jedi are selfless. They only care about others." Senator Palpatine (aka Darth Sidious) was trying to seduce Anakin to the dark side by rationalizing his need of it.

When we rationalize anything seems acceptable. Determining good ethics can be easy just as those who planned the "final solution". That is one extreme. Another is how Obama allows chaos and death on the US / Mexican border in order to promote Soros' agenda of open borders and keep the Hispanic vote.

In the next video O'Reilly and Savage both speak about liberalism in America. O'Reilly calls them "secularists". Savage sees the radical left attacking the church. Michael Savage compares Communist Russia and modern America in this video.

Fox News' O'Reilly argues with Michael Savage about Liberalism. Dr. Michael Savage (Michael Weiner) has been a successful national talk show host since 1994. His Jewish grandfather escaped Russia's Bolshevik revolution and came to the U.S.. Savage was a liberal like David Horowitz who also later became a conservative. He is not your average talk show host.

He is highly educated with two Masters degrees. One in medical botany and the other in medical anthropology. Savage has a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, in nutritional ethnomedicine. He has written five New York Times best-selling books including "Trickle Up Poverty: Stopping Obama's Attack on Our Borders, Economy, and Security".

"Liberalism is a Mental Disorder" by Rap artist "The Infidel"

If you are in the public eye and speak the truth you will be attacked. When people speak the truth against the king, his royal subjects try to silence them. Michael Savage was banned from Britain for saying too much that the Obama administration did not like.

Dr. Manning defends Savage for being banned from Britain and tells how other conservatives like Fox News' O'Reilly will not defend him.

Leaders of liberalism have learned from Marx and Engel who promised prosperity, justice and freedom but only brought chaos and death to their people. History has proven the terrible effect it has on the world.

Liberals who led Communism, Socialism and Marxism all were doomed and failed miserably. Russia, China, Korea, Vietnam, Europe, countries in Latin America and others have benefited not one iota. Perhaps their leaders managed to revel in their riches but certainly not the people.

Lenin and Trotsky did not bring prosperity to Russia. The destruction of Christ Our Savior Cathedral by the Communists unleashed the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse and innocent millions were murdered. The Red terror created slave labor camps called "gulags". The Ukraine was one giant concentration camp, "Holodomor".

China's Mao Zedong brought millions to their death as well. Tens of millions of Chinese were murdered during the "Great Leap Forward". Fortunately, China is more capitalist now much to Fidel Castro's chagrin. Nevertheless, the people in China as in Cuba are mostly poor in comparison to even today's citizens of the U.S..

National Socialist German Workers' Party was not Communist. It can be argued they were socialists as defined by Ludwig Von Mises. The government controlled everything just like the Soviets did. Some say Hitler had purposely made the Nazi flag red in order to attract Communists. His advances in operation Barbarossa were noticeably rejected by Stalin. Hitler was looked upon as a hero who eventually led his people to ruin.

Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh's name was equivalent to death. He sent 850,000 Vietnamese to their graves in "education camps" which does not include the war. The Democrats forced out President Nixon with Watergate. When the Democratic Congress refused to honor President Nixon's promise to defend South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese overran the south and later Laos and Cambodia.

The U.S. was the only country that never lost a major battle in



Vietnam but allowed Communism to spread thanks to the Communist sympathizers known as the Democrats. Without America to defend them, millions more died under Communism in Laos and especially Cambodia. The blood of millions more were on the Democrats hands.

Socialism has made Europe economically and morally ill with some saying it started in America. Would it be better to say that the crash in 2008 was organized? Odd, George Soros actually made millions when everyone lost money. When will America investigate that old buzzard??? Fortunately, America said, "Hell no!", to Socialism in November 2010.

Remember Velma Hart? She was the one who told off Socialist Obama in front of America last September: "...and quite frankly, I'm exhausted. I'm exhausted of defending you, defending your administration, defending the mantle of change that I voted for ...and deeply disappointed with where we are right now." Did Obama help her?

Are you kidding? She got laid off and lost her job just like others did the week before Thanksgiving. It was not Velma Hart who punched Obama in the mouth on Friday November 26th. Although, in my previous article, "Velma Hart, Voice of America" I joked, "Who is Velma Hart? She is the one who punched Obama in the face on American TV and got away with it.". Well, maybe she did do it. Way to go Velma!

Liberals may have some good ideas and policies but they always want the government to take more of your money (not their money) and use it. Who can better take care of your money? You or the government? This is a must see video that raises good financial questions. One example, Planned Parenthood versus Pro Life Groups are compared in the next video. Which is more cost-effective?

DEBATE: "Conservatism versus Liberalism"

Famous comedian and talk show host, Dennis Miller said on the "Tonight Show" that he was a social liberal but a fiscal conservative. His honesty is on his sleeve. Contrast that to a liberal Democrat who like a Communist, lies when promising equality and a better life for all in order to put themselves in power.

Keep in mind that not all Democrats are liberal and not all Republicans are conservative. However, overall, Republicans lower taxes and are pro-life while most Democrats are liberal and prefer to raise taxes (take more of your money) and always promote abortion (killing babies) and Planned Parenthood. It has been that way after Kennedy was assassinated and LBJ took over in 1963.

For example, liberal Republican McCain always backed Planned Parenthood and abortions until he ran for president where he magically became a pro-life candidate. Fortunately, most Republicans are always pro-life and want less money from the people.

When Americans first complained about the Communist subversive activities in the country they were ridiculed. Most Communists then began calling themselves Socialists. When Americans exposed the Socialists as Marxists they were ridi-

culed again. Now Democrats use the term "progressive". What name will they use next? Will they call themselves "Saviors"?

The progressive claims he desires bigger government control of human life and generally has no consciousness of God. Those in political office promise equality and a better life for everyone as they rise to power. Sounds like Communism to me.

Below are the "Ten Reasons to Reject Socialism" by The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property.

"Why we must protect the family, private property and America from the dangers of Socialism."

1. Socialism and communism are the same ideology

Communism is but an extreme form of socialism. From the ideological standpoint, there is no substantial difference between the two.

2. Socialism violates personal freedom

Socialism seeks to eliminate "injustice" by transferring rights and responsibilities from individuals and families to the State. In the process, socialism actually creates injustice. It destroys true liberty: the freedom to decide all matters that lie within our own competence and to follow the course shown by our reason, within the laws of morality, including the dictates of justice and charity.

3. Socialism violates human nature

Socialism is anti-natural. It destroys personal initiative - a fruit of our intellect and free will - and replaces it with State control. It tends to totalitarianism, with its government and police repression, wherever it is implemented.

4. Socialism violates private property

Socialism calls for "redistributing the wealth" by taking from the "rich" to give to the poor. It imposes taxes that punish those who have been able to take greater advantage of their productive talents, capacity to work or thrift. It uses taxation to promote economic and social egalitarianism, a goal that will be fully achieved, according to The Communist Manifesto, with the "abolition of private property."

5. Socialism opposes traditional marriage

Socialism sees no moral reason for people to restrict sex to marriage, that is, to an indissoluble union between a man and a woman. Furthermore, socialism undermines private property, which Friedrich Engels, founder of modern socialism and communism along with Karl Marx, saw as the foundation of traditional marriage.

6. Socialism opposes parental rights in education

Socialism has the State, and not parents, control the education of children. Almost from birth, children are to be handed over to public institutions, where they will be taught what the State wants, regardless of parental views. Evolution must be taught. School prayer must be forbidden.

7. Socialism promotes radical equality

A supposed absolute equality among men is the fundamental assumption of socialism. Therefore, it sees any inequality as unjust in itself. Private employers are quickly portrayed as "exploiters" whose profits really belong to their employees. As a consequence, they rule out the system of wage earning.

8. Socialism promotes atheism

Belief in God, who unlike us is infinite, omnipotent and omniscient, clashes head-on with the principle of absolute equality. Socialism therefore rejects the spiritual, claiming that only matter exists. God, the soul, and the next life are illusions according to socialism.

9. Socialism promotes relativism

For socialism there are no absolute truths or revealed morals that establish standards of conduct that apply to everyone, everywhere, and always. Everything evolves, including right and wrong, good and evil. There is no place for the Ten Commandments, neither in the private mind nor in the public square.

10. Socialism mocks religion

According to Karl Marx, religion is "the opium of the people." Lenin, founder of the Soviet Union, agreed: "Religion is opium for the people. Religion is a sort of spiritual booze in which the slaves of capital drown their human image, their demand for a life more or less worthy of man."

"May God protect America from Socialism"

If you think that list was too short or unbelievable then I have just the thing for you. That is, if you want the truth. "The Communist Takeover Of America - 45 Declared Goals" from the U.S. Congressional Record, Vol. 109 88th, Appendix, pp. A34 -A35 , January 10, 1963. The list will make you ask, "Are they insane?".

The answer to that is yes, the Communists and other liberals are insane. If you are over 50 you can see that almost everything that was written has already occurred in America. If you are young, you should first read "1963- The Year That Changed America" found on the middle of the page. A must read if you are an American.

-Continued on Page 7

The Letter, Four Years Later

In January 2009, The Cotati City Council voted to sign onto letters to President Obama and Congress asking for a large quantity of bailout money. The letters were authored by Sonoma County Supervisor Mike Kerns who asked Cotati's mayor to sign onto them along with other mayors in the County. Cotati City Councilman George Barich voted against Kerns' letters claiming such federal spending is not sustainable, and the letters are a shameful reminder that Cotati refused to stand on its own two feet. Barich advised the council that he would personally write President Obama and offer our President another alternative. The city council offered no further comment. The letter below has been hailed around the country by many as bold, fresh, and intellectually honest.

City of Cotati

Sonoma County, California



January 28, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500
Fax: 202-456-2461

Dear President Obama,

The best way to stop digging our nation deeper into a hole is to stop digging!

As a local leader in my community, I speak for many who believe that a federal bailout to local cities and counties at this time is not the answer to our financial problems. Not only would a federal bailout send the wrong message to millions of Americans who save and spend responsibly, it would encourage more reckless financial practices by cities and counties who continue to mismanage public resources irresponsibly.

Big government got us into this economic catastrophe from a lack of regulatory oversight over financial institutions and increasing deficit spending at all levels of government. Although local governments face challenging times, reducing spending at the local level is long overdue. I am now discovering on closer inspection that we have city jobs and services we simply can do without, or should be turned over to the private sector once and for all which will create huge cost savings for our town. Runaway government spending at the local level has simply gotten out of control. Over the years, we have turned a blind eye to local waste and fraud in city spending primarily because there was no incentive to oversee our operations to the extent we are doing now in light of the recent reductions in city revenues.

Furthermore, trillion dollar federal stimulus packages each and every year, as you suggest, will ultimately collapse our national economy in due time. The federal government will have to raise taxes, print money (which will devalue the dollar further), borrow from our trading partners plus interest, place the debt squarely on the back of our kids, or all of the above. Any federal stimulus package that places the true cost onto future generations of Americans is not only unconscionable, but will be counterproductive to a strong and long lasting recovery. Many are quickly losing faith in a federal government that has no regard for the long-term effects of such irresponsible monetary policies as is being proposed by your administration. I feel the need to speak up at this time for our local citizens who are being strapped with an ever increasing federal debt crisis to the tune of over \$35,000.00 per man, woman and child before your stimulus package even goes into effect.

Until the federal government can explain where the first half of the T.A.R.P. money went to, I urge you to stop and consider an alternative. I am simply asking you to make good on your campaign promise to give 95% of Americans a tax cut right now, let it work through the

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economy, and stop the pork barrel earmarks now being proposed by your proposed stimulus package.

Despite all the shameless pleas from cities and counties for a large slice of your federal stimulus (bailout) program, our municipal financial problems actually stem from runaway local spending and our inability to save sufficient funds in years past to meet our present and future needs. Any federal stimulus package earmarked to local municipalities and county governments would only reward past mismanagement, irresponsible financial planning, and makes matters worse by not allowing us to learn from our own mistakes.

Cities and counties must begin to learn to spend within their means and stop looking to the federal government for more "funny money". You can really help us by doing what you promised to do all throughout your campaign for president, and that's gives us change we can believe in. Don't enable us further with handouts resulting from federal deficit spending that is beyond human comprehension.

Increasing the national debt by nearly a trillion dollars per year has national security consequences as well. Borrowing and printing money out of thin air, which you now propose at this time, may have some short term effects, but will weaken our nation's defenses in the long run as well as reduce our nation's international credit rating further.

Creating new government jobs is also a bad idea and a step in the wrong direction. Government is the most inefficient institution ever devised by mankind. Therefore, an immediate tax cut that will stimulate local businesses now is the only hope Americans have for a quick and sound economic recovery.

Social Security and Medicare are bankrupt and expected to run out of funds in a few short years, as you well know. If you insist on spending more money and want to offer us any hope whatsoever, fix these problems first which will restore confidence in this country and put us quickly back on a road to economic recovery. If you really want to stimulate the economy further, secure our borders and provide additional tax cuts to small businesses that will hire people immediately and get that multiplier affect working at lightening speed.

All your currently proposed stimulus package will do is stimulate irresponsibility. Don't attempt to stem the country's "bleeding" with a "chainsaw". This nation needs a President to lead by example, a strong President that will give us a hand, not a handout. Stimulating our economy responsibly and restoring our faith and pride in government is change we can believe in.

Sincerely,

George Barich,
Cotati City Council Member