

The Cotati Independent

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Cotati Layoffs a Mystery

City Forces Veteran Police Officer with 40 Years Experience to Resign

Story and opinion by George Barich

(Cotati, CA) As Cotati deals with an appeal from former Cotati police officer Jason Yarnell, who wants his job back after being terminated last year for multiple allegations of wrongdoing, we now learn that Cotati police officer Dan Murphy, with almost 40 years of experience was recently constructively terminated by Cotati Police Chief Parish in dramatic style.

This comes at a time when Cotati only has one police officer patrolling the streets of Cotati at any given time of the day to serve and protect a community of over 7500 citizens. Often there is a police supervisor at the police station to back up any officer on patrol who needs assistance, but this is not always the case. Cotati's police chief can also assist in the field if he is able to do so, but that is a rare occurrence, according to our sources.

For years, there were actually times of the early morning when Cotati had **no officer on duty** at all. Hard to believe, but true. This fact was kept as quiet as possible for obvious reasons, but former Police Chief Robert Stewart revealed this shocking fact about the staffing problem within his department when he asked the city council for more money during a public workshop on the city budget. This reporter heard it with his own ears.

The details surrounding the firing of Officer Dan Murphy are normally confidential information as far as the city is concerned. But Murphy, a longtime Sonoma County resident who retired from The San Francisco

Police Department was hired by Cotati Police Chief Jones to bring experience and competence to the department at a huge cost savings in their time of need. In a tell-all article on Page 8, Murphy tells his side of the story of devotion and betrayal.

Many other cities such as Sebastopol rely heavily on the use of reserve police officers like Murphy who have retired from other agencies and now work part-time for cities at significantly less than the cost of hiring full time police officers with full benefit packages.

The City of Cotati currently now has no reserve officers employed and is running a skeleton crew barely able to cover the public safety needs of our city. Chief Parish has declined all invitations for an interview and refuses to provide a monthly message to the community as to the state of our police department for this publication and its readers.

It costs the City of Cotati approximately \$40,000 to hire a new police officer in training during the initial three month supervision period as a new recruit. As the city continues to run a budget deficit, employee turnover and the legal and training costs associated with replacing city staff continue to plague the city budget, which currently runs in the red and has for many years now.

-Continued on Page 8

Longtime City Staffer Who Wasted Years on Cotati's Downtown Specific Plan Finally Gets Walking Papers

Story and opinion by Greg Karraker



(Cotati, CA) According to those who have been here long enough to remember, Marsha Sue Lustig came to Cotati from the east coast over two decades ago in a VW Bug to start a new life. Her progressive values and anti-business philosophy quickly won her favor with the town's political establishment, and she played a key role in

transforming Cotati's Planning Department into The Department of No, as anyone who tried to open a business in Cotati would discover.

But now, with absolutely no announcement from the city, Marsha Sue Lustig is gone.

Continued on Page 9

City Councilman Mark Landman ignores pleas from the audience to quit blocking the American Flag

By George Barich



(Cotati, CA) For decades, city council members who sat on the far left of the dais directly in front of the America Flag would have the decency and courtesy to step aside during the Pledge of Allegiance. That way, all in the room could see the flag during the saying of The Pledge of Allegiance, which begins the start of each and every Cotati city council meeting.

From former Cotati Mayor Harold Berke-meier, to former councilwoman Patti Mnnis, to me, former city councilman George Barich, each elected official who occupied that particular seat in the photo above had the decency to step down and to the side of the flag during The Pledge.

Unfortunately, a new era of disrespect has begun with current city councilman Mark Landman, who continues to refuse to heed numerous complaints and requests from the audience that he simply take two steps to the side so that others in the room, including children who attend the meetings from time to time, can actually see the flag during this important ceremony of respect for our nation.

Citizens have been complaining that they are tired of looking at the back of Landman's head during The Pledge for over two years now. But Landman is defiant and will not budge an inch. Landman has not commented on these complaints, has given no reason for his actions, and only smirks at the audience during these requests. No one seems to know why Landman is silent on

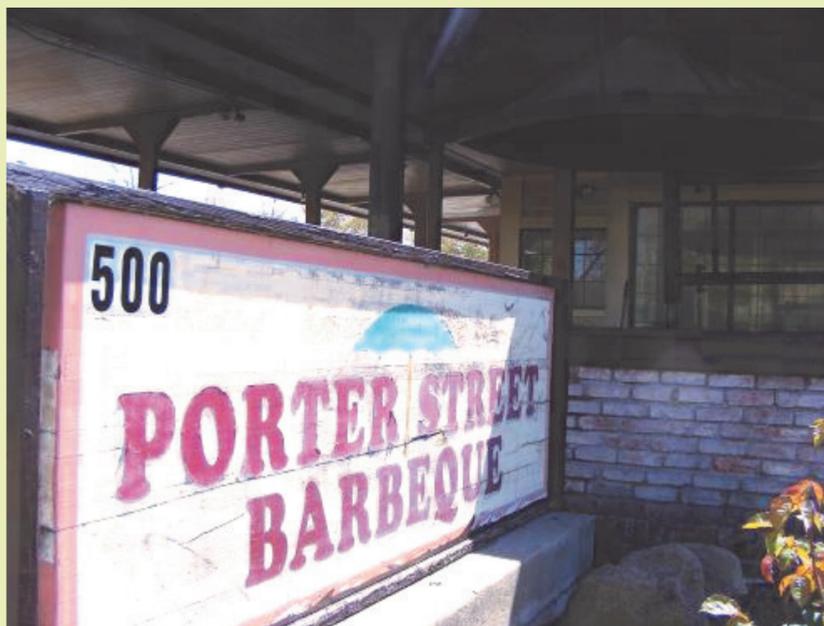
this issue and keeps thumbing his nose at the citizens in the room who simply would like a clear view of the flag.

In recent weeks, complaints have become more frequent and more abrasive regarding Landman's intent on insulting the audience who prefer to see the flag without it being blocked by Landman's torso. In an attempt to defuse the situation, City Councilwoman Pat Gilardi said during the April 11th regular council meeting it has never been a tradition to move aside and allow everyone seated inside the City Council Chamber to view the flag without obstruction, which was a complete fabrication. Why she would say such a thing knowing it to be false raises new questions as to what is really at play here. Even the simplest solutions cannot be fathomed by this city council that appears to be sticking together like glue and believe they can do no wrong, with an ultra disdain for constructive criticism of any kind.

What will happen next? Will the glare of publicity shame Landman into finally showing the flag, our country's veterans, the city government, and the citizens the respect they deserve?

Perhaps by next month, we'll know. Watch this space.

Commercial building now vacant and filthy, another victim of tough economic times



Story by George Barich

(Cotati, CA) After many years in business, Porter Street Barbeque has closed its doors. The particulars are unknown. This vacant building on East Cotati Avenue stands as a testament to poor city planning as well. The building appears heavily damaged from smoke from years of outdoor barbequing without proper ventilation.

As anyone who frequented this business will tell you, at times the smoke in your face was very irritating and constantly at ground level as you entered the establishment. The poorly designed hood above the large outside barbeque area was not properly vented, which caused the smoke to circle around at ground level and damaged the exterior of the building as well. Add this location to

the many available for rent in Cotati.

The Cotati of Chamber of Commerce and the city's economic development program now have another empty building to remind them how much work they have left to do. What Cotati citizens want to know is when is all the money that Cotati has spent on economic development going to do any good?

More talk and money has been thrown at the idea of promoting economic development in Cotati with nothing to show for it than more empty buildings and more broken dreams of local business owners. The city council decided two years ago to put a subcommittee of two council members together to take over the role of economic development after the failure of the Chamber of Commerce

to come up with a workable plan. Internal bickering within the CCC has crippled the organization with many members pulling out, and others packing up and leaving Cotati altogether. Many CCC members have been more concerned with protecting their own turf from competitors than bringing in new business which has hurt both the city and the Chamber.

The city council subcommittee has failed to meet, failed to produce any reports, and the status of the economic development program appears to be on the city's to do list that gets dusted off every year during city council goal setting sessions. In February, the city council gave themselves high marks for their work on economic development.

California Declares War on Suburbia

By Wendell Cox

Reprinted from the Wall Street Journal, April 7, 2012

"Planners want to herd millions into densely packed urban corridors. It won't save the planet but will make traffic even worse."

Sound familiar? Cotati is on the fast track to doing exactly this.

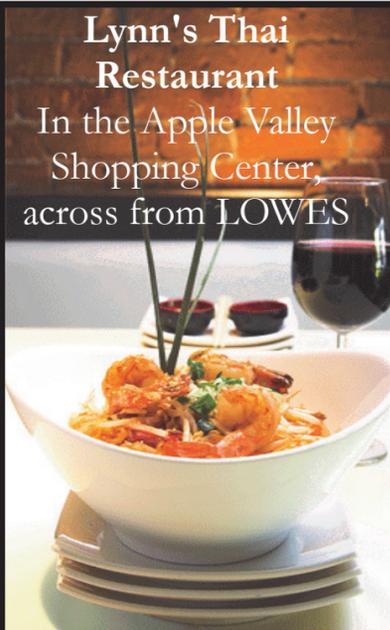
-Full story on Page 4



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Where's the Love, Anybody?

Spring is in the air, but where's the love, especially at Cotati City Hall? Springtime is often a time for "out with the old, and in with the new". City Hall has been doing some housecleaning of its own in the city employee department. Marsha Sue Lustig has been let go to the delight of many who have complained about her as a cold and ruthless city planner who disapproved permit applications of all shapes and sizes and went back on her word so often it was crazy.

Think outside of the box, inside of the box, or dance on the box, it pays to look at all perspectives and do a little deep analysis about how this town will be able to manage itself without more taxes, more borrowing in the form of another local bond measure, or getting on its hands and knees begging the state or the Feds for more financial assistance. Can Cotati City Hall be saved from itself?

The city council meeting on April 11th ran a total of 28 minutes, two minutes shorter than the meeting two weeks earlier. With one vote, the only two items on the Consent Calendar were passed unanimously. Yet, the mayor insisted public comment was to be held to a maximum of three minutes per person, a policy started by the late Mayor Bob Coleman in an attempt to muzzle the taxpayers and get himself home to grade his college students' papers by 11PM. Coleman tried his best to justify reducing the time of each speaker on any item, but it turned out to be a public relations disaster of major proportions that plagued him during his entire term on the council. From constant complaints from the citizens that the time limit was unreasonable and pushed the state's open meeting laws to the limit, the city has been relentless in limiting public comment.

Current Mayor Susan Harvey, who continues to be a puppet of the two councilwomen who sit on each side of her advising her what to do and how to do it, demanded that I fill out a speaker card to speak before the city council after I began to speak, as was my legal right. Everyone in the room knew exactly who I was and knew full well demanding anyone to use a speaker card, or forcing them to give their name or address for that matter, is clearly against the law. These people are either really stupid or such control freaks with their lust for power and total control. Really Mayor Harvey, I need to fill out a speaker card with only two people in the room wishing to speak? I guess there was no money set aside in the city budget for logic and common sense, so the council continues to go without.

When my public comment before the city council ran over three minutes, you could see the mayor and her girlfriends become visibly upset with their fiddling, fussing, and sour faces. I assured them when I was finished not to worry. They would all be home by 8PM (just in time to watch the next episode of The Biggest Loser). The fact that I was nearly the only person to show up and speak politely and professionally as usual, as is my right, was just too much for this group of city council members. Not one member of the city council had the decency to say, "I yield my time to Mr. Barich because I am not so much pressured for time tonight to listen to a real taxpayer address me once every two weeks since the city pays me to be here. (Yawn.) We have transferred a great amount of power to these city council people. Only John Dell'Osso has the decency to greet members of the public when he passes them by. The others only save their breath for their friends in town unless you physically bump into them walking in and out a door.

It should make no difference to real city leaders whether or not they personally like me for doing what they were never capable of doing themselves or for politely having a different point of view. Just because they could never bring themselves to participate in city meetings as private citizens without pulling a city paycheck does not mean that they have to insist on allowing the minimum consideration to folks who which only to speak honestly and from the heart. We all have a right to bring our grievances to our elected officials. They should be thrilled we citizens show up and wish to see the room filled with concerned citizens, you would think.

Mayor Harvey and her comrades should really be listening and thinking deeply about the decisions that they have made along the way, the direction in which they led, or are attempting to lead the city, what was actually accomplished over time, and at what cost. Where is the true and bold leadership within this city? Where's the love? Is cutting citizens off at three minutes, love? I ask the Mayor, what is the hurry? The city council should get down on their hands and knees and thank each and every citizen who takes the time to show up at these meetings. We shouldn't just sit there and be indoctrinated and asked to applaud. It's our job to constructively criticize local government and give thanks only when thanks are due. This council wants thanks when they fail, when they're late, when they forget, when they break promises, when they break the law. It's unbelievable.

I know how state law and the Constitution can get in the way of a socialist agenda. I do. I studied this topic for years. But the citizens still play an important role in being a vital part of the governing process. If we don't use it, we may lose it in time. We citizens should not be looked upon as just potential campaign donors, partners, or political allies. We citizens own the city and all the property that the City claims rights to. When the city council thinks that a 28 minute city council meeting is long enough and citizens must be limited to only three minutes to speak or face an arrest for disorderly conduct in public, we have reached a very sad state of affairs in Cotati, indeed.

Mayor Susan Harvey and her ilk are all about free speech as long it is speech they agree with. Evidently, they never got the memo that's not how the system was designed to work at all. Rather than go the extra mile to accommodate free speech even if it means adjourning the meeting to another night in the future to hear all public comments to the fullest extent possible, the late Mayor Bob Coleman, during his term as mayor, just refused to grasp this simple concept. Call it laziness, call it streamlining the process, call it a cost savings measure, call it hate speech just because someone disagrees with you, call it anything you want, but it's not love, and it's not Cotati, Mayor Harvey. But I wouldn't expect anything less from a city council that refuses to hold regular office hours each week to meet and greet taxpaying citizens, and hides from the public until the next council meeting or re-election time.

In speaking with other people in the newspaper biz, some don't want to write about the things we write about, don't want to bite the hand that feeds them, don't want to make waves, don't want to get too negative, don't want the community to really know what is going on, don't want to anger potential advertisers, etc. Some newspaper publishers only want to print good news to make people feel good. People who feel good spend money and may even like you for writing positive things. They may even come up to you and tell you they love the newspaper and in turn love you and give you a big sweaty hug. I'm not interested in hugs (which is quite obvious by now). When was running a real newspaper



Former Cotati City Councilman
George Barich

"Just My Two Cents"

about reporting good news all the time?

I was listening to talk radio one day driving down the freeway and heard an interview with Bob Ravasio, the current mayor of Corte Madera in Marin County where I went to high school. Ravasio and his city council decided to opt out of ABAG, (Association of Bay Area Governments) that collect thousands of dollars in dues from cities like Cotati. ABAG has a serious political agenda to put us all in high rise housing with narrower city streets, bigger sidewalks and more bike lanes, and get us all onto public transportation to make us all feel warm and fuzzy about how environmentally friendly we are.... Ravasio's complaints were many, but mainly focused around the incongruity of an agency which must represent large, densely populated counties as well as Marin, which Ravasio believes is more like Mendocino than Santa Clara County. He is proposing to start his own coalition of governments in Marin which will more adequately represent the needs of his county.

I would like to applaud Ravasio for real leadership and not going along to get along. But you have to stop and think about what Ravasio and his city council are really saying: We don't like all-encompassing government where we are the little fish, but if we can just change the size of the pond it will be all right. I did see glimmers of hope in some of his statements such as when he questioned the state's right to force housing allocations down the throats of municipalities without consideration of what the final product will be.

I think the most important message we can take from Corte Madera's action is that there are still some of us who will fight back against what we know is blatantly wrong. It doesn't happen often but it does happen. However, you have to have a majority when making decisions by committee for anything to come of this type of demonstration. Otherwise, you are simply completing an exercise in education and often get bloodied in the process. I know this only too well after attempting to deprogram members of the Cotati City Council for well over a decade now.

Of course, the repercussions for Corte Madera have already started. There is the threat of lawsuits for not going along with state programs the citizens never got a chance to vote on, by the way. Ravasio refuted that possibility by saying that although they don't agree with the "unfunded state mandates", their housing element is certified and their allocations are met. Then there is ABAG itself which wants to come and tell Bay Area city councils how wonderful they are. The carrot of grants will be shown first, followed by the stick of punishment if they don't fall into line.

Interesting that ABAG gave Corte Madera, a town of 8,000, only one grant in 10 years of \$60,000 for a bike path. The cost of consultants to put it in was much more than that, according to Ravasio. So much for the free lunch. I wouldn't care if ABAG gave every citizen of Cotati \$60,000. I don't sell my right to make my own choices on what our town looks like at all, let alone so cheaply. It's so funny to hear our city council complain about the prostitutes working the massage parlors in Cotati when they themselves could write the book on how to sell our town's body and soul for a whole lot less.

There comes a time when you have to make some hard choices about the future of your town, your public schools and how the state has mismanaged itself to the point of absurdity. You will be doing just that this November. You have to ask yourselves who on this council should be re-elected over and over again, since they have given you city budgets that in reality don't balance, and a mandate to build roundabouts throughout the downtown area of Cotati. You will have to decide whether or not you want diversity on the city council, some healthy debate among the council, and more transparency in government, or if you want more of the same, more potholes, higher water and sewer rates, and a demoralized police department that struggles to protect you and your family. As publisher of this newspaper and former city council member, I don't have all the answers. But I have given you a newspaper to help you be more informed and a way to have your voice heard in our community.

Before you ask yourself why I publish this newspaper and do things the way I do, just ask yourself: Do you like to be ignored? Do you like being able to reach me on the telephone almost 24 hours a day? Do you appreciate your emails answered politely and replied to in great length by me? Should local government be a place where the leadership agrees 99% of the time when the community is split, where political correctness is an unwritten policy, where politicians tell you what you want to hear, and kick as many problems down the road in order to assure re-election and then the process begins all over again? One drive or walk around Cotati will give you all you need to know, according to longtime resident of Cotati, Eric Kirchmann.

Maybe you believe that paying more for services is better than bringing accountability and realistic planning to government. You will have that choice yet again this November as three seats on the city council are up for election.

Cotati's legacy is one of spending money in inappropriate areas while ignoring thirty-year old problems. The can't be kicked down the road any longer, and the signs of real pain are everywhere and are becoming more apparent every day.

So I ask you: Where is the love?



“Taxmageddon”?

No, just a reprise of giving in to hostage-takers

By Craig Gurian

Apr. 18, 2012 — In terms of a climactic moment on taxation, [screamed the front page of the latest Sunday Review in The New York Times](#), “The end of 2012 will be unlike any other time in memory for the government.” According to David Leonhardt’s “Coming: ‘Taxmageddon,’” taxes on the average middle class family could go up by “about \$1,750.” Taxes on poor families would “rise somewhat, too.” Oh, and total federal taxes on “top-earning families” would rise by “tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.” Hold the scary music for a moment, and hold the framing, too. Despite a lede that features the potential impact on the middle class — look, we’re all in this together — it is entirely clear that no one is looking to raise taxes on the middle class. What is at issue, just as it was in 2010, is whether the era of enormous tax cuts for the wealthy — initiated by President Bush and extended by President Obama contrary to his campaign pledges — will continue.

[What is at issue, just as it was in 2010, is whether the era of enormous tax cuts for the wealthy — initiated by President Bush and extended by President Obama contrary to his campaign pledges — will continue.](#)

You can refer to the prospect of the wealthiest families having to pay tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars more per year as a crisis of biblical proportions — and, indeed, many of those high-wealth households and their supporters will fight change as though it were the battle of the end times — or you can reflect on what a what a windfall each such household has reaped for more than 10 years at everyone else’s expense.

In any event, the story is not new, and, sadly, is

unlikely to have a different ending than it did in 2010. Then, the Bush tax cuts on the wealthy would have expired without any action by Congress — no filibuster needed to be overcome. But Republicans said they would refuse to agree to an extension of unemployment benefits and would likewise not agree to a reduction in the payroll unless the Bush tax cuts on the wealthy were kept in place.

The result of that hostage taking? President Obama gave in, and thus became the co-author of the tax cuts for the wealthy that have continued. “Taxmageddon” cites the President and his advisors as saying that, this time, the President will “not extend all the Bush tax cuts.” I’m not reassured.

“Taxmageddon,” a very helpful guide to Beltway conventional wisdom, tells us it is not the GOP who will have to decide whether preserving huge tax breaks for the wealthy is worth having everyone else’s taxes go up. That’s taken as an unremarkable and unbendable principle of the physical universe. It is, Leonhardt advises, “Mr. Obama [who] will have to choose between standing down (once again) and allowing taxes to rise on every household when the economy is still likely to be weakened.”

[The fact that the wealthy are currently able to game the system through tax breaks that give them a lower effective rate is not a reason to endorse that legalized cheating, it is a reason to restrict deductions and exclusions at the same time that rates are being raised.](#)

Reporters, of course, did not come up with that asymmetrical way of viewing the politics of the situation entirely on their own. The President’s predicament of being widely seen as the one with a choice to make stems in part from the fact that, in truth, the President is always a hairsbreadth away from giving in. And the GOP has good reason to believe that the President’s heart is still not truly in a fight to raise tax rates on the wealthy from their current historic lows. There is a very loud chorus that wants not only to accept low marginal rates on the income of the wealthiest Americans, but lower those rates still further. The characteristic rhetoric, which almost always pairs calls for deficit reduction with plans for extensive tax “reform,” is rendered pitch-perfect by Leonhardt.

The “kind of deficit solution that many experts prefer,” Leonhardt writes, “involves sweeping tax reform that would close loopholes, reduce marginal rates, simplify the tax code and perhaps even lift long-term economic growth.” On the deficit side, they sell the idea that it is essential that we scale back Social Security and Medi-

care from their current, purportedly “unrealistically” generous, levels; on the tax side, their Holy Grail is the principle of “reduce the rates and broaden the base.”

It turns out that, even though he has promoted the so-called Buffett Plan to require the wealthiest Americans to pay an effective tax rate of at least 30 percent (a plan [the Senate GOP defeated yesterday on a procedural maneuver to prevent debate](#)), the President is firmly in the camp of the reduce the rates crowd. A [report supporting the Buffett Rule that the White House released last week](#), in fact, reaffirmed the President’s State of the Union call for “comprehensive tax reform that *cuts rates*, cuts inefficient tax loopholes, cuts the deficit, [and] increases job creation and growth” (emphasis added).

[It turns out that, even though he has promoted the so-called Buffett Plan, the President is firmly in the camp of the reduce the rates crowd.](#)

Leaving aside the fact that *every* proposal that would reduce tax rates on the wealthy comes with the promise that doing so will yield economic growth, we’ve already reported on the [fiscal imprudence of lower-the-rates-and-broaden-the-base in the corporate context](#). The premise is equally flawed on the personal income tax side. If there is an unfair feature of the rate system — in this case, remarkably low rates on the wealthy — fix it. The fact that the wealthy are currently able to game the system through tax breaks that give them a lower effective rate is not a reason to endorse that legalized cheating, it is a reason to restrict deductions and exclusions at the same time that rates are being raised.

The fact that a solution to the under-taxation of the wealthy does not solve all problems of the tax system is neither a reason to shy away from solving the under-taxation problem, nor an excuse to treat all tax advantages as being equivalently lacking in social utility (Leonhardt leaves such an impression when, without discussing the social and fiscal costs of an alternative, he points out that popular tax breaks like the cost of health insurance provided by employers are extremely costly to the government).

Allowing marginal tax rates on the wealthy to return to their Clinton-era levels requires no Congressional action. What it does require is for President Obama and Senate Democrats to articulate and stick to a very different vision for the country than that being peddled by the GOP. Such a fight would not be an Armageddon to be feared; it would represent precisely the expression of clashing values between which voters should have the opportunity to choose in November.



Never enough money to do it right the first time...

By Eric Kirchmann
Cotati

I’ve noticed it is raining more lately, which is no doubt why the roof at City Hall is being repaired. There is never time to do it right, but there is always time to do it over. It is hard to see the obvious and not point it out. City Hall has needed roof repairs for years, and the building is not Field Act ready, which means it is not earthquake retrofitted. I should no doubt be ecstatic that something is happening at City Hall and I am glad to see the roof repaired, but is this really the best time and do the pieces fit together?

It appears that another staff person failed to bow to the Princess and was handed her head on a platter. Marsha Sue Lustig is no longer coming to work on West Sierra and nobody in the know is talking. Marsha Sue served a lot of carrot cake to the audience for people who retired from City Hall over a few decades. Apparently, she got hers in a To-Go box.

Many local contractors are getting irate calls from their customers, as it appears that city staffers are starting to do their job and are reviewing plans for the past ten years. It would appear that many permits were taken out through a process that is long and arduous and substantially more tedious than in any neighboring city. What is alarming is that it would appear that for the past ten years nobody at City Hall signed off on any completed building job. This little oversight has every building done in the past ten years being scrutinized and citizens dealing with calls demanding final inspection sign-offs. It would appear that the city has no records of any work being completed this decade. Contractors are being contacted by their clients asking why they did not take care of permits properly when they in fact have done so. Luckily these same contractors appear to keep better records than the Building Department. Contractors are taking their time to reconcile the city’s errant book keeping. It would appear that people are overtaxed for housing sales that they and their contracted builders have to go through a maze to take out permits, and in the end no one at City Hall bothered to record the final inspections. It

begs the question: just who is the responsible party at City Hall? Millions of dollars are spent in planning and then those plans are shelved and new and improved plans are created and then shelved.

Oliver’s Market, one of our largest employers, planned on spending 18 million dollars to make improvements along Old Redwood Highway and build a much needed retail center. They were well underway when City Hall decided to scrap the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) and downsize one of our major traffic arteries. Oliver’s spent their own funds to have a traffic plan created. The City’s plan did not match Oliver’s, and now we are left with less retail



City Hall Re-roofing project during the rainy season raises eyebrows. But this is Cotati. The existing roof was too heavy with over seven layers of previous materials and illegal. The study alone was over \$18,000 and was done over seven years ago by an outside engineering firm that brought the core sample before the city council and the public as part of their presentation.

development, which means less sales tax revenue, and less resources. Luckily, the City has a new Economic Development Manager, but wouldn’t it be great if her salary was linked to Economic Development? Perhaps all of this can be blamed on the missing Marsha Sue, but eventually some of the blame is going to fall on the last one standing at City Hall.

The other day I was in Ashland, Oregon talking with a former Sonoma county resident who said “Cotati was once a city with bones”. What he meant was that it once had substance, that it had staying power, that it had a soul, and character. The trouble is that even now there is talk about preserving that “small town character”; but folks, it is slipping away. The city is run by out of town journeymen who are here because they are not able to stay anywhere else. It appears that our city now looks like it has been through a disaster as more and more windows are boarded up with plywood. Red’s Recovery Room stands out as a blighted failed business that was thriving when Ms. Thompson first appeared in City Hall. Is she responsible? Who decided behind closed doors that we didn’t need a bar there? Who

failed to approve its ongoing use? Is City Hall pro-business? I am sure they can list many examples.

Sadly all businesses along Redwood Highway have their opinions: Oliver’s Market, Harmony Garage, Cotati Physical Therapy. The long closed Shell Station, Back Door Records, Windmill Nursery, so many opportunities lost. Oliver’s will not be building a new retail center. The old centers are posting more for lease signs. At City Hall they are retracing unfinished business from the last ten years; never time to do it right, but always time to do it over.

There is no funding for traffic roundabouts and now no plans for Oliver’s to develop in the Northern Gateway, and who is responsible? Perhaps we should look forward to more changes in City Hall; perhaps a few more should be clearing out. Perhaps we should expect to see city staff out and about doing something. There should be more of a police presence to be sure. But there should be a city presence as well in our community. This should be ongoing. City staff should feel they are a part of our community and they should be responsible to the community as well.

We should be asking ourselves are things getting better here; are things the way we want them? If not, why not? Who is the responsible party in City Hall after all? Are things better, are you? We could have had new business start ups here, but now we have more plywood and for lease signs. Things are changing but are they changing for the better? Do we deserve more? Are we speaking our minds? Who is really listening when we do? Does Cotati have bones or are we headed to the bone yard?



California Declares War on Suburbia

(From Page One)

It's no secret that California's regulatory and tax climate is driving business investment to other states. California's high cost of living also is driving people away. Since 2000 more than 1.6 million people have fled, and my own research as well as that of others points to high housing prices as the principal factor.

The exodus is likely to accelerate. California has declared war on the most popular housing choice, the single family, detached home—all in the name of saving the planet.

Metropolitan area governments are adopting plans that would require most new housing to be built at 20 or more to the acre, which is at least five times the traditional quarter acre per house. State and regional planners also seek to radically restructure urban areas, forcing much of the new hyperdensity development into narrowly confined corridors.

In San Francisco and San Jose, for example, the Association of Bay Area Governments has proposed that only 3% of new housing built by 2035 would be allowed on or beyond the "urban fringe"—where current housing ends and the countryside begins. Over two-thirds of the housing for the projected two million new residents in these metro areas would be multifamily—that is, apartments and condo complexes—and concentrated along major thoroughfares such as Telegraph Avenue in the East Bay and El Camino Real on the Peninsula.

For its part, the Southern California Association of Governments wants to require more than one-half of the new housing in Los Angeles County and five other Southern

California counties to be concentrated in dense, so-called transit villages, with much of it at an even higher 30 or more units per acre.

To understand how dramatic a change this would be, consider that if the planners have their way, 68% of new housing in Southern California by 2035 would be condos and apartment complexes. This contrasts with Census Bureau data showing that single-family, detached homes represented more than 80% of the increase in the region's housing stock between 2000 and 2010.

The campaign against suburbia is the result of laws passed in 2006 (the Global Warming Solutions Act) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and in 2008 (the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act) on urban planning. The latter law, as the Los Angeles Times aptly characterized it, was intended to "control suburban sprawl, build homes closer to downtown and reduce commuter driving, thus decreasing climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions." In short, to discourage automobile use.

If the planners have their way, the state's famously unaffordable housing could become even more unaffordable.

Over the past 40 years, median house prices have doubled relative to household incomes in the Golden State. Why? In 1998, Dartmouth economist William Fischel found that California's housing had been nearly as affordable as the rest of the nation until the more restrictive regulations, such as development moratoria, urban growth boundaries, and overly expensive impact fees came into effect starting in the 1970s. Other economic studies, such as by Stephen Malpezzi at the University of Wisconsin, also have documented the strong relationship between more intense land-use regulations and

exorbitant house prices.

The love affair urban planners have for a future ruled by mass transit will be obscenely expensive and would not reduce traffic congestion. In San Diego, for example, an expanded bus and rail transit system is planned to receive more than half of the \$48.4 billion in total highway and transit spending through 2050. Yet transit would increase its share of travel to a measly 4% from its current tiny 2%, according to data in the San Diego Association of Governments regional transportation plan. This slight increase in mass transit ridership would be swamped by higher traffic volumes.

Higher population densities in the future means greater traffic congestion, because additional households in the future will continue to use their cars for most trips. In the San Diego metropolitan area, where the average one-way work trip travel time is 28 minutes, only 14% of work and higher education locations could be reached within 30 minutes by transit in 2050. But 70% or more of such locations will continue to be accessible in 30 minutes by car.

Rather than protest the extravagance, California Attorney General Kamala D. Harris instead has sued San Diego because she thinks transit was not favored enough in the plan and thereby violates the legislative planning requirements enacted in 2006 and 2008. Her predecessor (Jerry Brown, who is now the governor) similarly sued San Bernardino County in 2007.

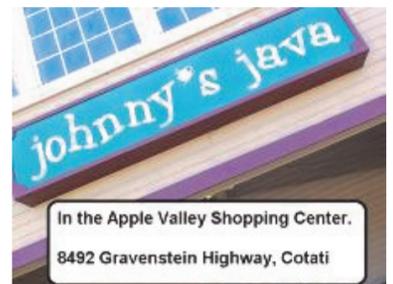
California's war on suburbia is unnecessary, even considering the state's lofty climate-change goals. For example, a 2007 report by McKinsey, co-sponsored by the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council, concluded that substantial greenhouse gas emissions reductions could be achieved while "traveling the same mileage" and

without denser urban housing. The report recommended cost-effective strategies such as improved vehicle economy, improving the carbon efficiency of residential and commercial buildings, upgrading coal-fired electricity plants, and converting more electricity production to natural gas.

Ali Modarres of the Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute of Public Affairs at California State University, Los Angeles has shown that a disproportionate share of migrating households are young. This is at least in part because it is better to raise children with backyards than on condominium balconies. A less affordable California, with less attractive housing, could disadvantage the state as much as its already destructive policies toward business.

Mr. Cox, a transportation consultant, served three terms on the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission under the late Mayor Tom Bradley.

A version of this article appeared April 7, 2012, on page A13 in some U.S. editions of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: California Declares War on Suburbia.



The Buckley Rule

by Richard Geerston

This November, America and Americans will be at a political crossroad the likes of which this nation has not encountered since our declaration of independence from England. The Obama administration and a congress of Democrats have pushed this nation to the brink of insolvency and accelerated socialism. To be fair, not all of our current crisis can be laid at the feet of today's Democratic socialist party... The previous president spent money like it grew on trees and it was the first TARP bailout by George W. Bush that served as a catalyst for the TEA Party movement. President Bush's Veto pen was MIA until late in his second term when he vetoed the S-CHIP program (supplemental health insurance for children); BAD political theater, at best by the Bush administration, since they had already passed another budget-busting boondoggle of "free" prescription drugs for seniors. President Bush was NO fiscal conservative, adding \$4 trillion in additional debt during his 8 years as president.

IF President Obama had exercised even a modicum of fiscal restraint and responsibility, a second term would be fait accompli as he and the Democrats could reasonably continue to hammer away at the fiscal madness of their political predecessor. However, the levels of irresponsible spending by this administration make even the reckless years of Bush appear restrained.

In less than 4 years, the Obama Administration has increased our debt by \$5 trillion; more deficit spending than all

43 of his predecessors combined! He did not act alone; his Democrat party and some Republicans were part of this spending binge. Many of those Congress-persons were targeted and successfully ousted in November 2010 by TEA Party activists who are now the only grass-roots political movement with a demonstrable interest in Constitutionally-limited government and protection of our liberties.

For the Republican Party, choosing a viable 2012 presidential candidate is only part of the solution. While I remain convinced that Newt Gingrich is the best man for the job, the primary vetting process has become a continuous downward spiral for the former Speaker. There are several reasons for this and it is not my intent to delve into those now... Former Senator Santorum is cutting a wide swath, but as I predicted in a previous article, the media will successfully tar and feather him with 'women's health issues,' making him appear a misogynistic Neanderthal. Indeed, the media focus on a Santorum presidential run would be a barrage of red-herrings and non-sequiturs. The man would be in continuous "explanation mode" owing to meaningless minutiae, rather than effectively branding the current administration with its high crimes and misdemeanors!

While not the "ideal conservative candidate," Mitt Romney continues to improve with each contest. The primary vetting process has served him well by testing his political mettle; something the billion-dollar Obama smear machine

is gearing up for as I write. Recent endorsements by McCain, Dole and (Jeb) Bush may appear as 'guilt by association' and sully Romney's "conservative credentials," but this assumption would be wrong. Romney is more solidly conservative than either McCain or Dole plus Romney possesses business acumen that exceeds that of the current crop of candidates combined. Euphemistically speaking, Governor Romney has 'forgotten' more than President Obama will ever know about running a successful enterprise; there is simply no comparison.

Under the Obama administration more Americans are receiving food stamps than at any time in U.S. history; elevated unemployment and economic stagnation have broken previous records and gasoline prices are at an all-time high. This is the first president in U.S. history to preside over a downgrade of U.S. credit; he has spent more borrowed money than all previous presidents combined and has attempted to take over 1/7 of the U.S. economy via 'ObamaCare.' The President has proposed no solutions, only Trillion-dollar annual deficits for the next decade with no possibility of ever balancing the budget. Running on these colossal failures, president Obama should be easily defeated; common sense and logic should prevail, and a President "Anybody But Obama" would be swept into office. Unfortunately, the Republican candidate must face battle on two fronts: the **lies coming out of Obama's campaign (delete ->smear machine)** and a hostile mainstream media.

Yet the biggest obstacle may prove to be a growing American dependency class of political imbeciles. The sad reality is that America could go down in flames due mainly to the ignorance of its citizens. It is a fact that legal immigrants know far more about this country, its Constitution, its form of government and cornerstones of liberty than millions of citizen voters.

Too many ignorant Americans believe we can tax our way back to sol-

lidity, but as always, their tax sights are set only on "the rich." With 47% of American wage earners paying no federal income tax while absorbing greater quantities of social welfare spending, why would they choose any candidate who promises to curb their budget-busting dependency? The leftist media has successfully convinced half of America that our deficit is the fault of the wealthy, but this is a grotesque lie reminiscent of the Bolshevik Revolution. It is a fact that America's tax system has NEVER been more progressive than it is now with the 'wealthy' paying the largest portion of the federal budget than at any time. None the less, with an increasingly dumb and dependent electorate serving as a progressive political Petri-dish, the soft Marxism of today's Democrat Party flourishes!

November 2012 MUST be a turning point if this republic is to survive. The Republican vetting process is good and should be allowed to run its course. Even the hopeless candidacy of Dr. Ron Paul makes the party and our process stronger by bringing the debate back to serious subjects: the deficit, foreign policy, limited government and preservation of liberty. In the end, however, we must coalesce behind **one candidate**. To quote the late William F. Buckley, "*The wisest choice would be the one who would win. No sense running Mona Lisa in a beauty contest. I'd be for the most right, viable candidate who could win.*" With each primary and caucus, that candidate is looking more and more like Mitt Romney. While he may not be my ideal, it is a mistake to compare him to RINO John McCain or the tepid and inept Bob Dole.

With a 2012 Republican majority, President Romney could begin to reverse the damage done by Obama and his cabinet of unelected Marxists and Czars.



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Cotati Follies.

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

Save those plastic bags we get from the retail stores. Councilman John Dell'Osso thinks that banning them in Cotati is long overdue. Apparently,



John doesn't seem to mind printing lengthy announcements on the city council meeting agenda handouts, which wastes reams of paper when one copy of the announcements on a wall should suffice for everyone. It's one thing to make a public announcements one time; it's quite another thing to indoctrinate citizens constantly on matters that are repeated over and over again ad nauseum. Hey, John, the Cotati Museum is a private organization that gets free rent for a huge room from the city. Ain't that enough?

Andre Morrow appears to have abandoned Cotati for good. The man who brought racism and other ethnic bull crap into the City Hall chambers that



embarrassed so many can't be found. We tried finding Andre to speak with him, but were unsuccessful. Andre promised to work so hard on economic development for the Cotati Chambers of Commerce, but apparently he couldn't handle the duty.

Former Cotati Police Officer Jason Yarnell has appealed his official ter-



mination from the City of Cotati, but the city is not talking about it. Best of luck, Jason. If you speak your mind working for the City of Cotati, your chances of being employed very long appear to be low at best. It will be a long time before City Hall becomes a Free Speech Zone for city employees. Cross the City Manager and pay the price.

Michelle Berman is still singing the blues after being convicted of money laundering by the FPPC. Berman was once a familiar face and blowhard at



city council meetings with her call for more government, and her silly stories of living the good life in Cotati on \$6.00 burritos purchased at Oliver's. But since her conviction, Berman appears to have gone into hiding. Michelle once had high political aspirations. But could someone who was dependent on the nanny state really get elected in Cotati? One of Berman's last demands before the city council was that Cotati clearly reject CalTrans' offer to build sound walls along the freeway in Cotati. Berman argued that any ugly sound walls would block the view of Cotati from the motorists traveling up and down the freeway. I'm not kidding. Hey, Michelle, it's free money, remember? How could you, out of all people, be against free anything?

Rancho Adobe Fire Chief Frank Treanor hosted a nice meeting of concerned citizens to get our feeling on raising local fire taxes to help fund the



fire district. They're short of money, again. The citizens gave Treanor an earful that such a move right now is not advisable for a variety of reasons. We were hoping for an RAFD update and chief's report for this publication,

but no such luck. Only in Cotati will you find some who will refuse free publicity and free advertising. Hey, Chief, it's okay to get your message out to so many for free... It doesn't hurt at all.



Lilly Gomez, the woman who admitted to tearing up stacks of Cotati Independent newspapers in news racks around town, and was proud of it, has been recommended for diversion by the District Attorney. Looks like those calls from City Hall to the DA's office to go light on Gomez worked.

Okay, the challenge. Find the manliest bottle of tequila in Cotati and WIN a \$25 Gift Certificate.



On a recent visit to one of Cotati's excellent Mexican restaurants, we spotted this rather eyebrow-raising bottle of tequila. Since we always like to promote local businesses, we offer the following: Visit every restaurant in Cotati till you find this bottle. Tell us what restaurant you found it in, and what the name of this tequila is. The first right answer e-mailed to this newspaper wins a \$25 Gift Certificate to the restaurant in question. Email: editor@thecotatiindependent.com

No purchase necessary. Employees of the restaurant involved not eligible.

Cooking with Megan Cromwell



Asian "Beef" and Jasmine Rice

Portobello mushroom caps make a great replacement for meat in many recipes because they hold up to cooking better than any other mushroom I've seen, and have a meaty texture to them. They're also pretty easy to flavor.



Ingredients:

Portobello mushroom caps (1 for every 2 people if large, 1 per person if smaller)
Better Than Bouillon No-Beef Vegan base (available at Oliver's market)
Olive oil
Jasmine rice (frozen is easiest)
2-4 scallions sliced on the bias for garnish

Sauce:

½ cup of prepared vegan "beef" broth
2 tsp. toasted sesame seeds, plus 1 tsp. for garnish
¼ cup toasted sesame oil
1-2 Tbs. local wildflower honey (to taste)
¼ cup mirin (rice wine, not rice wine *vinegar*)
1 tsp. corn starch

1) Using a serrated bread knife, carefully slice the mushroom caps into thin rounds (basically in half)

2) Mix 2 Tbs. olive oil with 1-2 tsp. of the bouillon base to make a smooth and thin "dressing". Using a spoon, spread a thin layer onto each side of each mushroom. A little goes a LONG way.

3) Sear the mushrooms in a pan over medium-high heat (watch them so they don't burn) and set aside to rest.

4) Mix the broth, the sesame seeds, the sesame oil, mirin, and honey in a pan and heat through. Wisk in the corn starch and cook until you have a viscous glaze that you can drizzle over the rice.

5) To Plate: put down ½ cup of prepared rice and drizzle some of the sauce over it. Slice the mushroom caps into strips and layer on top of the rice. Then drizzle a little more sauce over the mushrooms. Finally, garnish with the sliced scallions and a little more of the sesame seeds.

Megan Cromwell is a 20-something paralegal and artist living in Rohnert Park. During a battle for her life due to MRSA and an open heart surgery in 2011 culminating in 6 months of physical rehab so she could learn to walk again, she became a vegetarian, gaining an appreciation for the bounty of vegetables, fruits, and grains.

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



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Letters to the Editor

Email: editor@thecotatiindependent.com

Dear Editor,

No roundabouts ever in Cotati. How many ways and times do the people on the city council have to be told that the citizens do not want these things?

Roundabouts will kill Cotati. I live behind Walgreen's. Between 3pm to 6pm I come off 101 at 116 from Santa Rosa. I have to sit thru up to three rounds of red lights to cross Old Redwood Highway. I can't imagine what it would be like if going south into Cotati with one lane in each direction. Turning left into any business will be impossible. Smog will increase and tempers will get short.

Thank you,
Denise B.
Cotati, CA

Dear Editor,

Thank you so much for your effort to inform Cotati about this out of control city council. You have been like a breath of fresh air. I used to listen and read only the far left agenda, and I have been lied to for many years. Thank you, and please let me know what I can do to help.

Thanks, Joanne Dichiera, Cotati, CA

Editor,

Politically speaking, I am an independent voter (neither Republican or Democrat) who leans toward social liberalism and fiscal conservatism. In the realm of city government, where social and environmental issues are few and far between compared to state, county and federal levels, I am probably even more conservative. Consequently, I read your publication with great interest since it often exposes abuses of public funding in the city of Cotati.

Before you think this is a love fest, however, I want to make it clear that your paper has a long way to go before I would consider it to be journalistically objective (or independent per its title).

First, lose the sarcasm, sensationalism and scare tactics in your stories and those of your guest writers. Here are two examples from this week's issue:
1) last paragraph of Michelle Obama story on p1: "Cotati is the only place

where \$3 bills are accepted currency, and I think they're part of the city's budget surplus ... "

2) paragraph 14 of the Back to Basics story on p3: "I hope you have your riot gear ready and are into starvation diets." Second, don't publish sophomoric items like the phony Craig's List personal ad from a former Marine. Per snopes.com, that hoax has been floating around cyberspace since 2009. Third — and this is a biggie — don't publish anything below the belt. Case in point: the mention of Lisa Moore's family issues in the "Cotati Follies" section is one of the most unethical pieces of trash I have ever read anywhere at any time. The emotional and mental state of candidates' family members is not open to public ridicule. Local government is important to me, so I will continue to monitor your paper for the modicum of factual information that it sometimes presents.

Want to get the "thinking man" to read your paper? ... then stop trying to be like FOX News.

Joe Gargiulo
Cotati

(Editor's Note: 1. We currently have a DO NOT THROW list containing 19 addresses in a town of 7500 residents. Donations to this newspaper continue to flow in. 2. There is no objectivity in any newspaper on Planet Earth. 3. Would you have condemned sarcasm had it been about FOX NEWS? 4. If you don't think this town is a crisis in the making, you need a reality check and that's what we strive to achieve. 5. John and Lisa Moore continue to threaten people in public that somehow, someway, they have the power to run honest, hardworking people out of town. They tell people to shut up and move out to their face. We will continue to report these stories as 100% factual. 6. Your self-proclaimed leaning to the left appears an understatement to me, Sir. 7. Thank you for your frank opinion. We welcome it.)

Reprinted from The Press Democrat, January 11, 2011, on "The Outgoing Police Chief Lashes out at Cotati City Manager"

"This is how Cotati runs this city....foolishly! What do you expect from the leaders? They have been getting away with unprofessional behavior for years and they are not held ac-

countable for any of their dictatorship behavior!.....

This is normal behavior of Cotati's employees....they are beholden to no one but their-selves and their Socialist agendas! If you wanna see Government run a muck locally....head to the next council meeting in Cotati!

Joyce Rodrigues Garcia,
Cotati



20 Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me When I Was 18



Chase your dreams while you are able – Life is tricky, and if you aren't careful, you can find yourself with a family and a mortgage before you know it. Take some time now to think about what you are passionate about. Find out what your dream is and chase it while you are young and still have the time, enthusiasm and energy to do it.

You will regret the opportunities you didn't take much more than the ones that didn't pan out – Of all the things I regret in my life, most of them are things I didn't do rather than mistakes I made. Many times in my early adulthood, I would find out about an opportunity and then talk myself out of going for it. The self doubt and worrying about all of the what-ifs can be crippling.

Be prepared to make lots and lots of mistakes – When you make mistakes, you know that you are growing. And, as long as you are growing, you know that you are alive. If you never made a mistake, you wouldn't be challenged. What fun is that?

Try on new ideas – When you hear of an idea or opportunity that sounds interesting, try it out. Don't let the fear of looking silly or being embarrassed prevent you from exploring new things. No one is really watching you as hard as you think, and there is no shame in being brave.

Always be honest, with yourself and with others – Lying is just a waste of time. Be honest in your relationship, but most of all, be honest with yourself. Don't let other people tell you how you should feel or who you should be, and don't try to be the person you think you should be or beat yourself up for not feeling the way you think you should. If you make honesty a priority, you can just be the person you are.

You don't have to go to college right away – If you don't know what your passion is, how on earth can you chase it? There is this assumption that after high school, you have to go to college. If you don't feel like you are ready to succeed in that environment, take a year off and figure out what it is that you love. There is absolutely nothing wrong with starting college a year late or even going to a trade school rather than opting to pursue a degree.

Trust your instincts – In almost any situation, trust your gut. When you tune in to your intuition and your instincts, you are almost always right. If you feel like something is really important to do, do it. Don't try to second guess yourself over and over and don't do things that you feel aren't right just because you want to be "nice".

If you are stuck worrying about something so much that you can't sleep, get up and write it out – When you are in a vicious cycle of doubt and worry, the best way to get it off your chest is to write it down. Once you have it out on paper, it doesn't have to be stuck in your head keeping you from getting a good night's sleep.

It's more important to know where to find the answer – If you know how to research and find out the answer, then you don't need to try to remember every single fact. It is impossible to know everything, instead, just learn how to research.

Live within your means – You don't have to have a lot of money to do the things you want and to have a great time. You can

never win the game of who has the best, most expensive stuff. So, don't even bother. Lunch in the park can be just as much fun as a day at the mall, it just depends on your outlook.

Play everyday – As we grow up, we stop being willing to just play. There is always room to be creative and silly.

If you don't know what to say, don't say anything – Sticking your foot in your mouth is always worse than being shy. If someone says something you don't like, or you just don't know how to respond, just don't say anything at all. Let them break the silence.

Be who you are – Being yourself always seems so overused to me, but it is still true. When you work hard at growing and being the person you were born to be, rather than the person you think you ought to be, you will have a very happy life. Not everyone was born to be in a cubicle. Just be careful to leave yourself room to grow.

Use the resources you have, instead of waiting until you have more – It is easy to think that if only you had something, (a college degree, a better car, a different partner, a pile of cash) you could reach your goal. Instead of focusing on the things you don't have, look at the resources you have and put them to use furthering your cause. Never stop asking questions – We could all learn a lesson from 3 year olds. They want to know why and how come about everything. When you get into the habit of asking questions, you will come to realize that sometimes the search is more important than the answer.

Try your best to never burn bridges – You may not think that it is worth the effort to treat everyone in your life with respect and integrity, but you never know what the future may hold. Sometimes a chance encounter can lead to something new and exciting.

Most people can't read minds, so tell them what you are thinking – If you want something, tell everyone you can. You can't get upset with someone for not doing what you wanted them to do if you never asked them to do it.

Just do it – Even if you don't have all the resources you think you need, or you aren't sure if it's the right time, just do it. Let the rest work itself out. If you think that an opportunity is right for you, don't second guess yourself. If later you find that you made a mistake, you can always fix it or move on. Either way, you'll be better off than if you never took a risk.

Spend some time everyday being quiet with yourself – The most important relationship you will ever have is with yourself. Don't be afraid of being alone or just sitting quietly with yourself. Sometimes your greatest truths will come out in a whisper when you are being quiet. Assume love – We always seem to be so quick to assume that people are looking at us, that they are judging us, that they secretly don't like us. Why are we so quick to think the worst of ourselves? When you don't know the situation, assume that people are looking at us with love, that they are admiring our courage and that they think we are great until there is proof that proves otherwise.

(Author Unknown)

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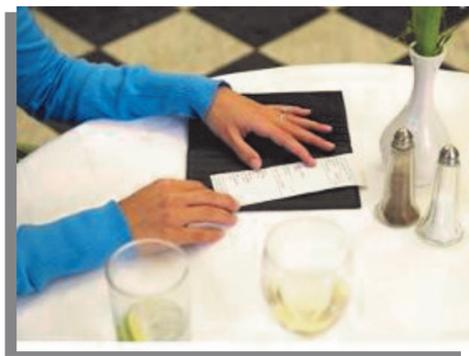


The Good, the Bad, and the Inedible



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by Kathryn Wickstrom - Cotati
Foodie, gardener, wine lover, and consumer of all things edible..



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Tyler Florence's newest eatery is fast becoming a local watering hole, with eight craft beers on tap from California and beyond; with one coming from as far away as Germany and eight of the usual suspects of bottled and canned, this tavern is off to a good start in the beer drinking category!

The menu is stylish for a tavern, with offerings of Organic Burrata, Tomales Bay Mussels and a Salmon BLT. But we came for the **Fish and Chips** (\$13****) ale-battered California cod, Kennebec potato wedges, lemon and tartar sauce and **Fresh Baked Pretzels** (\$3****) crusted with caraway salt and house-made mustard; oh, and a brew, of course! Something green is always a good way to start a meal. Here, I spotted a **Chilled Beet Salad** (\$7****) with pistachio, goat cheese, grapefruit and watercress

But before our orders were placed, the waiter brought out a small, complimentary bowl of house-made potato chips. Nice. Unfortunately, they were a bit stale. But when our food came to the table, the Fish & Chips actually had both potato chips and the potato wedges! This time, the chips were very fresh and tasty. Warning: with only three finger-length pieces of fish, this dish is small, so the addition of a pretzel is recommended!

And what great pretzels they are. Dusted with caraway seeds, warm and soft; especially good dipped into the house-made mustard.

The Chilled Beet Salad was superb and may be the best I have tasted with the added attraction of toasted pistachios and grapefruit slices giving an extra crunch along with a citrus note to the red, yellow and orange beets.

Friendly service if, a bit slow. Good place to drop into for a beer or glass of wine and a small nosh.

Aqus Cafe – Modern American
189 H Street / Petaluma / 707-778-6060
Hours: **B – L – D** daily
Mon – Tues 7am – 8pm
Wed 7am – 9:30pm
Thu – Fri 7am – 10pm
Sat 7:30am – 10pm
Sun 8am – 6pm
Happy Hour Every day! 4:30pm – 6:30pm
Beer & Wine
Indoor/Outdoor seating / Kid & Dog Friendly / Live Music
*** 3/2/12 \$-\$\$

Located in the Foundry Wharf area of Petaluma, a live/work environment that screams “green” all around with its walkable paths meandering between warehouses, office spaces, small condo/townhomes and the Petaluma River, this cafe is a cute space on the corner and down the street from both a whisky and a port distillery. Kind of a “three-in-one” tasting package if you are so inclined!

We stopped for lunch on a beautifully crisp, clear



day and sat out in the front patio area after placing our orders inside. They bring you the food; you need to order and pay for it first inside.

The vibe here is Momma Cass and the feel is very laid back. Service can be a bit slow and you need to haul your own water from the dispenser inside, but I had heard the food was pretty good, so we were anxious to see what Aquas Cafe had to offer.

The menu is interesting. Starters ranged from Greek (Mediterranean Plate) to Mexican (Chicken Avocado Quesadilla) to American (Brie Plate).

Artisan Flatbread Pizzas looked intriguing. With seven to choose from, this was going to be hard! My eyes finally landed on the one with smoked duck breast, fig relish, caramelized onion, brie and gorgonzola crumbles! **The Aquas** (\$6.95****) sounded like my kinda flatbread. And since it had been recommended to me, a **Traditional Nicoise Salad** (\$9.95**) white Albacore tuna, hard cooked



egg, green beans, potatoes, olives, capers with house-made French vinaigrette was ordered, too. Hubby went for the **Spicy Chipotle Tri Tip Panini** (\$9.95****) with caramelized onions, tomatoes and aged Pacific Blue cheese.

The flatbread was delicious! All the flavors complemented one another and the crust was crisp and tasty.

The Nicoise was good but very different from any salad Nicoise I have had, probably because the tuna used was Albacore and not Ahi and the dressing was a little on the sweet side for my taste. Hubby's Panini was a big hit. The meat was tender and the Blue cheese and caramelized onions with tomatoes brought a lot of flavor to the sandwich.

This is definitely a spot to return to. Lots more menu items to check out and if your tastes are vegetarian or vegan, plenty of selection for you, too. I want to go back and try the Salmon Club. (It's got bacon on it with lemon aioli!)

Mack's Bar & Grill – American
10056 Main Street / Penngrove / 707-793-9480
Daily: 10am – 2am **L – D**
Breakfast: Sat & Sun only
Specialty: New Orleans Style Gumbo
Seasonal Patio Dining
Live Music – Fri & Sat evenings
Full Bar
***1/2 4/1 & 4/4/12 \$\$

Just like the popular TV sitcom, Cheers - “Where everybody knows your name and they're always glad you came”, Mack's already feels like home in the small town of Penngrove after replacing The Black Cat Bar & Grill in December, 2010. Gary Mack is the proprietor, and his business partner is Rick Gorell, who is also co-owner with John Graham of the famous 8 Ball in Cotati, winner of Best Bloody Mary in the County at a recent competition. These boys know how to make you feel welcome and keep you coming back.

Having lived through three incarnations of this bar/restaurant over the past 13+ years, starting with Kelly's, then The Black Cat, and now Mack's, I decided to wait for the dust to settle to write a review. Mainly because the former owner of The Black Cat went through more cooks than an episode of “Who's the Next Food Network Star?” and the food was never consistent. Or I should say it was consistently bad. Turns out, Gary Mack is the brains behind the stove; having taken cooking classes in school and worked for Cattlemens for a time.

So. What's on the menu? Pub standard fare: hamburgers, sandwiches and salads, but the specials board caught my eye on our lunch visit. **Chicken and Sausage Gumbo** (\$11.50*****) served with a large dollop of steamed white rice on top. OMG! Best I have eaten outside of New Orleans. Rich in color and flavor, Gary knows how to make a proper roux, the secret to all sauces in the Big Easy.



Gary's gumbo is a meal in a bowl, accompanied by slices of toasted sourdough French bread; heavenly. Hubby tried another special, the **Black and Blue Burger** (\$8.95**) aged blue cheese perfectly melted on a thick hamburger patty with all the usual suspects on the bun: lettuce, tomato and a thick onion slice. Pickles on the side. Your choice of house-made potato salad, fries or green salad. Yummy.

My second lunch visit, I brought two friends with me. The specials board did not show the gumbo I had been tempting my friends with, so we opted for one **Grilled Chicken & Pesto Sandwich** (\$8.95**) and two **Crispy Chicken Salads** (\$8.95**) a chopped salad with lots of bacon crumbles, black olives, tomatoes, red onion and crispy fried chicken chunks. Choice of dressing. Really excellent salad and a meal-size portion. The sandwich I was told, was very good too. I guess so. Nothing was left on that plate!



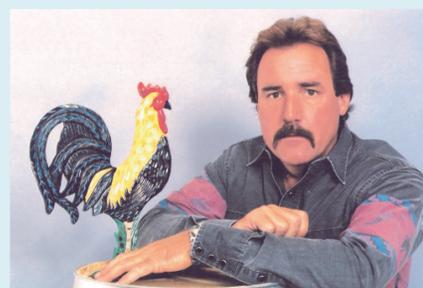
If having a full meal is not what you're after, Mack's offers an array of bar snacks like wings, meatballs, fried calamari, garlic fries and nachos. I can recommend the **Fried Calamari** (\$8.95 ****) rings and tentacles battered lightly and fried up crisp, served with tartar sauce and fresh lemon wedge. A simple enough dish that can be ruined if the fish is overcooked or the oil is old. At Mack's it's done right. The calamari is light in color, which indicates the fry oil is fresh and the texture is soft, not chewy. Next time you are passing through Penngrove, and maybe looking for a little cheer, stop by Mack's Bar & Grill and try some of Gary's food. Great for breakfast too.

Future Note: Gary has promised to make **Crawfish Etouffee** soon! Oh, and I've since learned to ask for the Gumbo even if it's not on the specials board.... it's now a staple on the menu!

Until next time, bon appétit!

40 Year Veteran Police Officer Dan Murphy, aka "The Rooster", Speaks Out in an Amazing Interview of Being Forced to Retire from Cotati

By George Barich



On September 19, 2008, Dan C. Murphy retired from the SFPD after almost 40 years in law enforcement with an impressive record of service. Dan was nicknamed "Rooster" long ago by a supervising police sergeant when Dan patrolled the streets of Mill Valley back in the 1970s. Murphy was known by many as a tough, up front, get-in-your-face kind of guy when it came to protecting and serving the community. He was feared by the criminal element that knew him, but loved by many local residents and business folks in all the cities and counties that Dan had worked in over the years.

Murphy got his start with the San Rafael Police Department in 1972. From there he moved to the San Anselmo Police Department. After that he joined the Mill Valley Police Department, where he spent almost ten years patrolling in the shadow of the Sleeping Princess, Mount Tamalpais.

In 1982, The Rooster resigned from the MVPD. He gave up his Sergeant's position to continue his career in San Francisco where he spent the next twenty-eight years serving the big city with distinction.

On September 19, 2008, Murphy retired from law enforcement with a good retirement package and started living the good life on his small cattle and horse ranch in Petaluma with his lovely wife. But the problem for Dan was that he still had a little "cop" left in him that he felt was missing, and he knew his skills could still be utilized by a nearby community that could benefit from someone with his experience.

Sometime in October, 2010, Cotati police officer Andrew Lyssand, Dan's ex-son in law, called him to explain that the Cotati Police Department was in real trouble. They were significantly understaffed, and the rumors were that there was a high likelihood the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office might be taking over the law enforcement responsibilities for the city because of the high cost of running the small police department in Cotati.

Interim Cotati Police Chief Susan Jones was the top cop at the time, and Lieutenant Dennis O'Leary from the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department was second in command in Cotati. O'Leary had two of his deputies assigned to the City of Cotati on a full time basis, which the city did not publicize. The police budget was rising at unacceptable levels and the city needed solutions. The question many were asking was would the city really contract with the Sheriff's Department, and how would the Cotati police officers fit into any such new arrangement?

Officer Lyssand had what seemed like a wild idea at the time and talked Dan into applying for a position in the Cotati Police Department as an at-will employee, which could save the city thousands of dollars since Dan already had his retirement and medical insurance paid for. In November 2010, Chief Susan Jones hired Dan with the understanding that Dan did not want to work the night shift any more, and that became part of the deal. For Jones, this was a workable solution that would save the city thousands of dollars compared to hiring a new recruit with full benefits and months of training with a Cotati supervisor. At \$29 an

hour (with no benefits) compared to almost \$70 an hour that Cotati pays for a comparable police officer with full benefits, this made a whole lot of sense to Chief Jones, just as it does in other cities like Sebastopol that use many reserve police officers to hold down costs. Murphy soon replaced the high-priced deputies and started working the day shift, often all by himself without a supervisor, which was not widely talked about around town. After working long hours and doing loads of paperwork, Murphy settled



in, became a vital part of the Cotati community, and became well liked. According to my sources, The Rooster was often seen walking the downtown business district during the day interacting with the people and businesses in Cotati.

Then in 2011, the current Chief of Police, Michael Parish, came on board and began rebuilding the police department. Parish was aware of Murphy's conditions of employment, which were agreed to by former Chief Jones. Murphy could also only work 960 hours for the City of Cotati and still maintain his retirement pension. Murphy also had agreed to only work the day shifts. Murphy came to Cotati to help out, not to make a name for himself, or rise through the ranks. Murphy was no rookie, and only came out of retirement because he loved Cotati and Sonoma County and had something left to contribute. To Murphy, it was going to be a little part-time police work that he found rewarding in a small town he loved.

The trouble for The Rooster started when the city hired their new Lieutenant, Bill French. Murphy recalls the day French came out to Murphy's ranch to qualify with his pistol. French didn't like the fact that Murphy would not work nights, which complicated things for French and his job to make out the weekly schedule. French made it clear to Murphy he was not going to honor Murphy's oral agreement with Susan Jones that Chief Parish was well aware of.

Murphy continued working his two regular days each week. Then one day Cotati Police Sergeant Chris Parker called Murphy on the carpet. In a bold move, Lieutenant French wanted Murphy evaluated. Murphy's arrests and traffic citations were lower than some of the other officers which made sense because the day shifts in Cotati were pretty quiet. Murphy could feel that trouble was brewing, and French was making his move in a power play to get Murphy to work nights.

Murphy then contacted French and they had a talk and Murphy again explained that the department should keep their word, honor their agreement, and appreciate the fact Murphy came to work not for the money, but to help a small department that

was in crisis. French was unsympathetic, unappreciative, and instructed Murphy to suck it up and told him that things were changing. According to Murphy, French said, "You're gonna start working nights, so get your flashlight out."

In December 2011, the January 2012 work schedule was posted. Murphy's Thursday and Friday day shift had been replaced by Sergeant Steve Bourns. Murphy felt let down and went straight to French to complain. French said, "You've got Thursday nights, and weekends now. Take 'em or leave 'em Murphy..."

Thinking Chief Parish would honor the agreement he inherited from Chief Susan Jones, Murphy decided to go over French's head and asked Chief Parish to intervene and do the right thing. To Murphy's surprise, Parish directed him back to French and tried to wash his hands of the situation. Parish did reassure Murphy of his 960 work hours for the fiscal year. Murphy was told that he would be the go-to-guy when other officers called in sick, took other leave, were testifying in court, or were in training. Parish admitted that using Murphy at a total cost of \$29 per hour as a reserve officer would really help keep the department overtime budget in the black.

Murphy took Parish at his word. Murphy worked New Years Day per the posted work schedule, but as it turned out it was to be Murphy's last day in a Cotati Police uniform. Over the next couple of months, as other Cotati officers called in sick and took other leaves of absence, Murphy never got a call to come in and cover the shifts. Other officers began to call Murphy and asked him what's going on. Each time Murphy contacted Lieutenant French, Murphy got the same answer and the runaround. French said, "I make the schedule, and you work the shifts that I assign you. End of discussion." French gave him Thursday nights, the busiest night in town with the Cotati Crawl and typical downtown rowdiness. Murphy contacted Chief Parish again, but Parish's office door was a revolving door and the Chief told Murphy to go back and talk to the lieutenant, completely ignoring the terms Murphy was promised in good faith.

This ended up costing the City of Cotati thousands of dollars more because French replaced Murphy with a police sergeant at full salary and benefits. When Murphy questioned Parish's motives, French appeared irritated said, "You work when I say. And right now, I'd rather pay a regular officer three times your salary than let you tell me when you will and will not work here."

It became clear. Bill French seemed hell bent on getting the old Rooster who had done nothing wrong, had been a credit to the department, to back down and eat crow. It was French's way or the highway. Murphy knew that if he did not capitulate, his days on the Cotati PD were numbered. One might think that wouldn't be too bad. Murphy could just continue on as a non-paid regular reserve police officer and take the shifts as the calls came in, if he wanted. Nope. That wasn't going to be an option to French and Parish. Murphy was being screwed right out of a part-time job the taxpayers were really benefiting from.

On Monday April 9, 2012, Murphy pulled into the Cotati Police Station. He got out of his truck and headed for the locker room. He dressed into his uniform, strapped on his gun belt and prepared for a felony jury trial that he had been subpoenaed for as part of his duty and job. He passed Sergeant Bourns as he stopped at the equipment room. Murphy then holstered a taser, grabbed a police radio, a set of squad car keys, and walked down the hallway to head off to court. Lieutenant French looked out from his office with a totally surprised look of what are you doing here, and stood up. But when Murphy passed by the Chief's door the real action started. "What in the hell are you doing?", said Parish. The Chief then called Murphy into his office. Murphy said "Going to court, why?" Parish said, "You are



through here. We have no more hours on the books for you." Murphy responded, "You're firing me, Mike? Why? What did I do?" Parish said, "Nothing. Look, you were just a band-aid Dan!" Murphy said, "Really, just a band-aid, Chief? Wow!"

Murphy, deeply hurt and stunned, turned and headed towards the exit door. He stopped just outside the Chief's door, turned around and thought to himself, "Now that just ain't right treatin' the old Rooster like that. No sir." Murphy could not help himself. He walked back into the Parish's office and right up to his desk. Parish said, "Don't try to talk me out of it, my decision has been made." Murphy looked at Parish in the eye and softly said, "Mike, I thought you were a good old boy from Merced." Parish replied, "I am." Murphy said, "No you're not, Mike." and walked out in disgust. Murphy later turned in his letter of resignation in what was essentially a constructive termination that forced Dan's hand to be humiliated further.

Chief Parish and City Manager Dianne Thompson, well aware of Murphy's terms of employment are worthless, according to Murphy. "A handshake at City Hall doesn't mean squat. There is no honor at Cotati City Hall anymore", says Murphy, who feels taking his case to the city council at this point would be just a waste of time. Other officers have gone to the top to air their grievances without success.

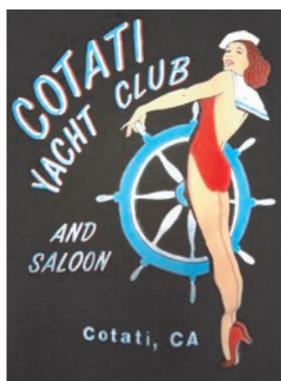
In speaking to the Rooster about this story, we are both in agreement that The Cotati Police Department, like so many other police departments, is a very dysfunctional place full of drama, backstabbing, jealousy, power grabs, etc. Even self-proclaimed good cops sometimes go back on their word. Inside the world of the Cotati Police Department the pressures and demands can be many. We hope that by telling these types of stories of police officers like Murphy has done, coming forward in the spirit of transparency, the community will benefit somehow, someday.

Nick Collins of A Downtown Automotive in Cotati had this to say about The Rooster: "Dan is a straight shooter and good man. The loss of a 40-year veteran police officer of this caliber is huge for Cotati." Neville Hormuz of Loud and Clear Music in Cotati said, "Dan was professional, friendly, experienced, and good cop from all indications. His presence in Cotati will be missed." Jim Cassero of Amazing Records in Cotati was saddened by the news Dan was pushed out of his job and said, "Dan was old school San Francisco cop of real character. Dan valued the notion of keeping his word to everyone no matter what. Dan is a good person and Cotati lost a good cop. Dan was proud to represent Cotati. It wasn't just a part-time job to Dan."

The Rooster's website is frooster.com. Please visit the site for Rooster's bio, published novel, screenplay, music and more.

Note: This story contains many quotes from members of the Cotati Police Department as conveyed to this newspaper by Dan Murphy. The quotes in this story may not be 100% factually correct and again we give the opportunity to rebut this story. The names here have not been changed to protect guilty.

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Two Open Letters to the Cotati Police Department

There have been a series of events that have occurred in Cotati, and not pleasant. We have endured vandalism and burglaries to start. Last year, my vehicle was vandalized. Truth be told, they were trying to pry inside my car but were unable to do so for whatever reason. Unfortunately, parts of my car were torn off. When I asked the Cotati police for extra patrol in our area, I was told they would be coming at night. I guess I was hoping that things would be different, but they weren't. The lieutenant I spoke with lied to me as I sat in his office telling me my area would be getting extra patrol. No, they never showed up.

As a taxpayer, what are they doing every day and night? We know they spend much of their time watching the local bars. Perhaps the rest of us who live in Cotati do not matter. That is how it feels to many of us who have made attempts over the years to get basic service. It would be very helpful for us taxpayers to know how they spend their time. It feels as though officers feel it is their job to put us at ease and reassure us, although they do nothing to really help the situation. We know better. We see the gangs, people on the streets who do not belong there. Often it feels like our police are good talkers selling us a bunch of lies. Has anyone else encountered this problem?

I don't mean to complain about police, but it has been an accumulation over many years. I am tired of feeling helpless in my community and seeing others become despondent after trying so hard. We recently found out that there has been a rash of burglaries where they have come inside our homes. This has never happened until now. It took several weeks before residents were informed of this and it did not come from the police. We do our best, but we cannot expect to know all. I thought part of the police's job was to inform us so we can be aware of the problem to take necessary precautions.

The police are putting us all at risk for not doing their jobs. If residents are being confronted by burglars, what are our rights? Do we have the right to sue the police department for not protecting us? There has been talk in my neighborhood of hiring security guards at our expense, but the homeowner's association can't afford it. I ask myself, what are we paying our taxes for?

WE NEED HELP!

S.S.
Cotati Resident

Please print my letter.

I am a senior citizen, and I am tired of the daily watching of my neighborhood. I love Cotati and its people, however the police have dropped the ball when it comes to the protection of our citizens. I have been retaliated against for doing my job in the past by having my windows smashed. Never once have I received a thank you for doing the work that Cotati police should have been doing.

I do my best to watch out for those undesirables who do not belong here. Thirteen years is a long time and I wish I could say I could pass the torch to the police. Unfortunately, that won't happen. I would like others to help with the responsibility. When can I no longer have to put a chair up against my door every night? Simply put, I do not feel safe.

With that said, what are the guidelines for homeowners and protection? We recently have had three burglaries entering our home. At what point can we protect ourselves, and with what? If someone enters our home and we use pepper spray or any other weapon, will we be put in jail? Furthermore, if homeowners are prosecuted, don't we have a legal right to sue the police department for failing in their job?

There are many other senior citizens and single women who are concerned and scared about the amount of robberies and vandalizing. What would you tell these women to do? We do not want to be victims but many of us feel like sitting ducks. The reality is we live on a day to day basis and the picture the police paint for us are far apart. Their numbers do not match the number of incidents here on Lincoln Avenue. Why is that? Many of us believe they are covering up the facts.

It is amazing to me that in my time of need, when I was jumped by two aggressive dogs, that the police officers did not even want to file a police report. I had bruises and cuts, yet the police didn't want to report it, until my daughter stepped in and made them act. Is that the thanks I get? There is something very wrong with our police system. When those who are paid to protect us intentionally disregard a huge segment of people in Cotati year after year, it becomes obvious that we are not important. I would say that I would contact the Cotati Board members, but there has been so many stories of corruption as of late, I do not trust them. They are yet another group of people who have become mini dictators, telling us how we will live in Cotati. They haven't stopped either. Now, they are trying to fulfill their twelve step plan which will cost millions more. How about deal with the pressing problem of our police force?

If our police officers cannot find the time to patrol our area, then perhaps we should eliminate their positions and find ones who will. I am tired of the mismanagement of money and the laziness of our police. If I am wrong, please let me know. The course of thirteen years has proven me right.

A.C.
Resident of Cotati

(Editor's note. We have been unsuccessful in getting the Cotati Police Chief to provide a monthly message in this newspaper on the state of public safety in Cotati and how citizens can protect themselves or become more proactive in the spirit of cooperation with the police)

Assistant to City Manager Destined to Become Scapegoat?

(From Page One)

We were baffled as to how or why a public figure so well-known could disappear from City Hall without a trace. When asked at a recent council meeting, council members and staff refused to comment. So we filed a Public Records Request that legally obligated the city to respond. Here is their reply:

Re: Assistant City Manager recruitment:
1. The position of Assistant City Manager is a vacant position for which the City is currently recruiting. The Assistant to the City Manager position was eliminated as part of a recent restructuring of the organization.
2. The position of Assistant to the City Manager has been eliminated. As a result, Marsha Sue Lustig has been laid off.

What this official response from the city did not say was that on March 28, the city hired Redwood Lock and Key to change all the locks in the City Manager's office. If this was simply a routine layoff, why lock her out permanently?

So what's the real story? This paper is aware of the laws that create a deliberate fog around employee termination, so we will state the facts we know, and let you draw your conclusion as to whether Ms. Lustig was laid off, quit in a huff, was fired, or some combination of all three. **Fact 1:** The city states that Ms. Lustig has been laid off. **Fact 2:** The city states that her position has been eliminated, but that a nearly identical sounding position has been created. **Fact 3:** In the last two city council meetings, the city manager's report contained the usual trivial news about Cotati Creek Critters and the Cotati Historical Society, but not one peep about Ms. Lustig's departure, who has worked for the city for over 20 years. **Fact 4:** The city's accounts payable report for March lists a check of \$308,02, payable to Redwood Lock and Key, to rekey City Manager Diane Thompson's office on March 28, about the same time Ms. Lustig's career with the city ended. Coincidence? I suspect not.

A little background:

Over a year ago, a group was formed to make suggestions about how to make this little town more friendly for business: The Cotati Independent Business Advisory Group (CIBAG). As a fact-finding exercise, the group sent several applicants to Marsha Sue's Planning Department to see how the city treats sincere business people who are trying to improve their businesses. They were shocked at the department's inflexibility and lack of professionalism, and suggested a number of reasonable improvements. After beating their heads against this wall for several months, CIBAG gave up in disgust, and have never met again.

Other than an attitude that made confident, successful people terrified of earning her disapproval, Ms. Lustig's legacy is a million-dollar-plus failure called the Downtown Specific Plan. First launched in 2005, and finally adopted in 2009, it describes in painful detail, exactly how Ms. Lustig, her staff, and her retinue of overpaid, undertalented consultants think your city should look.

It's easy to describe in three words: **Wine Country Disney.**

This \$73 million fantasy effectively froze all development in the city's blighted Northern Gateway. If a new project didn't conform to this clichéd vision of the future, it was doomed from the start. The only new building in years is the new Peet's Coffee, which took over three years from first permit application to opening day.

This paper has attempted to contact Ms. Lustig for her side of the story, but has not received a response to date. So what led to her unexpected departure? Could it have been the ill-fated Village Main Street Plan, which is more commonly referred to as "those damn roundabouts?"

As you probably know, voter sentiment against the roundabout plan is high, and this year, three council seats are up for election. Former council member and anti-roundabout activist Patty Minnis has already collected more than enough signatures to bring the issue to a vote, putting an end to this wasteful, traffic-choking mess once and for all. So any city staffer or council member associated with the Downtown Plan is not in for an easy time.

When the plan was adopted in 2009, it had the enthusiastic support of City Manager Dianne Thompson, as well as Mayor John Guiardino, Vice Mayor Robert Coleman-Senghor, and council members Pat Gilardi and Janet Orchard. Only one council member, George Barich, voted against the Downtown Specific Plan, calling it unaffordable, and unrealistic with no sustainable funding sources. Like all politicians who turn on each other when things go wrong, is this "layoff" a weak effort to convince voters that the culprit who wasted all their time and money, and effectively doomed the Northern Gateway to remain a blighted mess, is now gone, and that things will be wonderful from here on? It certainly looks that way.

One down, more to go.

To this reporter, this is just the beginning of a long overdue housecleaning. Should Marsha Sue Lustig be held accountable for the failure of the DSP? Certainly. But does she deserve 100% of the blame? Absolutely not.

The blame should be fairly distributed among City Manager Dianne Thompson, and every council member, past and present, who voted for the DSP then, and support it now.

As things stand, it looks like there will be a special election about the roundabouts in the near future, and an election in November where Mayor Harvey and council member Dell'Osso and Orchard will ask for your trust.

I think you should give them the same treatment they gave Ms. Lustig.

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



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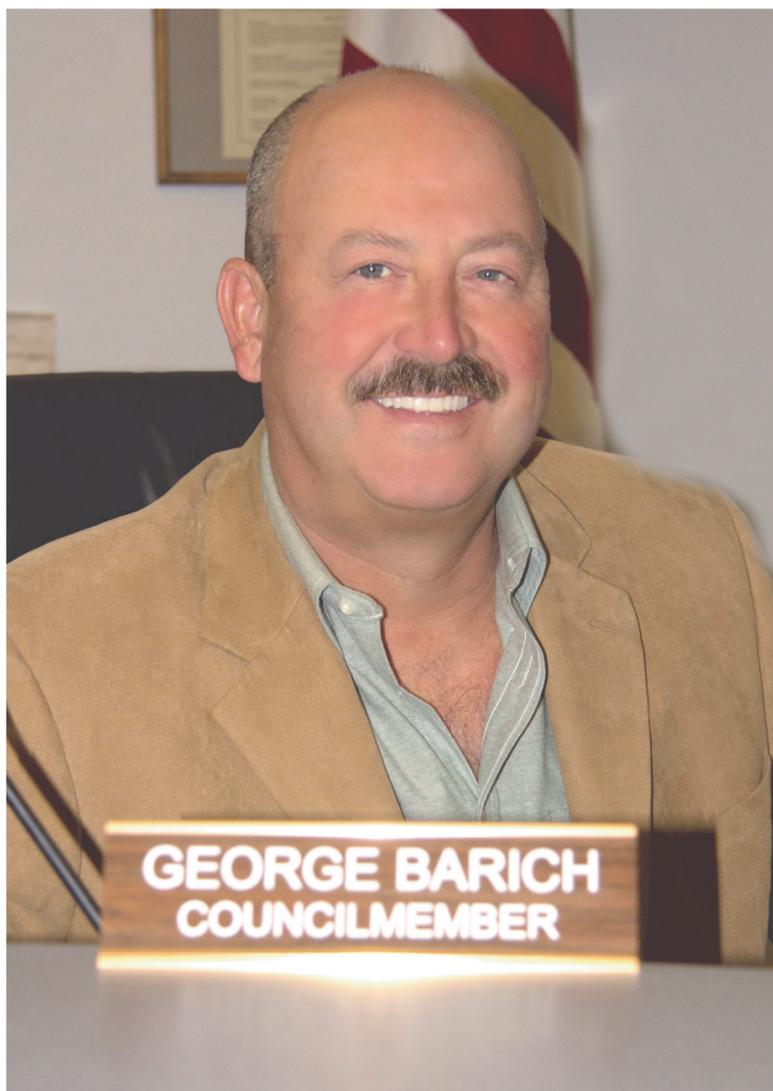
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Professional Handyman Services By Mark Hjelden

Accomplished, Professional, Detailed Results



Carpentry, electrical, plumbing, fencing, tile, windows, doors, moving, painting and more.

I have a track record of working well within budgets and exceeding expectations. I am result-oriented with the ability to coordinate multiple projects successfully.

707-328-1107

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