



The Cotati Independent

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Oliver's May Not Build New \$17 Million Store in Cotati

Unpopular new city street plan may force Oliver's to scrap plan for new store in downtown area

Story and photos by Greg Karraker (Cotati, CA) - After spending over two years planning and paying consultants and planners well over a million dollars to redesign and develop the City's Downtown Specific Plan (DSP), it appears that city planners now want to make drastic new changes.

These proposed street changes are causing Oliver's Market to rethink whether or not they will go ahead with

plans to build a brand new store next to the freeway in Cotati.

The original DSP, which many felt to be impractical, called for building an 18-foot wide, tree-lined median strip down the middle of Old Red'. This might have looked good in theory, but it would eliminate a center turning lane, and make it impossible for drivers to turn into businesses on the opposite side of the street.

The latest versions of the DSP are even worse. One will turn the section of Old Red between La Plaza and 116 into a two-lane street, and clog traffic

with two roundabouts.

This will make downtown difficult for motorists, dangerous for pedestrians, and even more hostile to local businesses. According to Tom Scott, manager of Oliver's Market, the company had planned to build a 39,000 square foot new store and 33,000 square feet of mixed use development on a 6.2 acre lot in the 8200 block of Old Redwood Highway.

Oliver's Market estimates the cost of the project to be somewhere between 15-17 million dollars. This would bring much-needed construction jobs to the

area, and would have earned the City hundreds of thousands of dollars in permit fees, property taxes and increased sale taxes.

But because of the city's obsession to change the street plan still one more time, Oliver's may decide not to build this new store and mixed use development in Cotati at all. Despite the controversy surrounding the DSP's redesign of Old Redwood Highway, Scott said Oliver's relied on the capacity of the plan, which included a four-lane road between La Plaza Park and Highway 116.

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Local Golf Tournament Brings in Thousands of Dollars for Charity

by staff reporter



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Will Cotati gain a valuable development here, or will this always be a vacant lot?



8200 block of Old Redwood Highway, across the street from Walgreens

The three-speed, planet-friendly bicycle you will not see City Manager Thompson riding around town.



Councilmember George Barich suggested that the city spend several thousand dollars refurbishing the city-owned 2001 Ford Taurus, which Ms. Thompson already has use of. This would cost thousands less, and be a greener alternative given the oil consumption, energy use, and massive amounts of nickel mining it takes just to produce the batteries for one Prius.

I suggested that with her salary, Ms. Thompson is certainly paid enough to buy her own car, and that when city business is involved, she should submit an expense report for the widely accepted rate of 50 cents per mile. This was also dismissed.

Then, I brought up the greenest proposal of all: Cotati prides itself on being bicycle-friendly. In fact, they spent over \$1 million on their Downtown Specific Plan. On Page 1:1 of the DSP, they list six goals for the future of your town. Goal 3 says: "Improve

the walking and bicycling system through downtown Cotati, as well as the interconnections between Cotati and the region."

Since the council wants to spend your tax money making Cotati bicycle-friendly, I made an offer: if the council would agree not to buy City Manager Thompson a \$27,000 Prius, I would buy her a bicycle the next morning.

As you can see from the photograph, it's a very nice bicycle, and the owners of The Hub assured it me it would easily fit my budget of \$500 or less. It would even include a basket for all Ms. Thompson's important documents and responsibilities.

Not surprisingly, the council said no. But I was surprised by the bluntness of Mayor Orchard's reply. In a city that enjoys good weather nearly eight months a year, and is barely two square miles, Mayor Orchard responded to my offer by saying that asking the City Manager to ride a bicycle is "completely impractical."

Actually, bicycles can be very practical. On nice days, my wife and I ride our bicycles into town, and enjoy lunch at one of Cotati's restaurants. We see other bicyclists doing the same. But in more than ten years here, we have never once seen Ms. Thompson frequenting any local business. If you happen to see her in town, wave to her as she passes by in the new Prius you just bought her. People say they're really green.

Greg Karraker is frequently amused by the misdeeds of city councils across America. Many of their more colorful stunts can be found at www.thelittlepicture.net

Newspaper Rack Vandal Caught Red-Handed Outside Post Office

by staff reporters

The Cotati Police have arrested Lillie Sikes, 56, from Rohnert Park, CA and charged her with vandalizing stacks of Cotati Independent newspapers legally located in news racks at both The Cotati Post Office and Oliver's Market.



For the past three months, George Barich, publisher and editor of The Cotati Independent monthly newspaper, claims he has been forced to replace hundreds of his newspapers that have been viciously torn to pieces in the news racks in front of Star Restaurant, Cotati Post Office, and Oliver's Market every day, and often times twice a day.

The torn-up newspapers have raised more than a few eyebrows with shoppers and concerned residents who have followed the story and have voiced their outrage and utter disgust to the all-volunteer newspaper staff.

Signs had been posted in front of the news rack stating, "Not free - please pay 25 cents inside store". But this apparently did not deter Sikes who continued to vandalize the newspapers and the signs while leaving all the other free publications like The Community Voice and The Bohemian completely intact and unmolested.

Barich claims, "I caught this woman red-handed Tuesday, October 14, at 4:00 AM tearing up the newspapers in front of the Post Office from a short distance away. All my hard work over the past three months staking out the areas has finally paid off."

Barich, who is also the Neighborhood Watch Captain in his neighborhood on the west side of Cotati, had been conducting stakeouts of the newspaper racks in town a few hours a day, at different times, over several months.

From a parked car a short distance away and in plain view of the news racks, Barich and his little dog Piper spent long hours staking out the three crime scenes with no luck at all. "At times, I felt like giving up. It was affecting my job, my household responsibilities, as well as my sleep. My friends were sympathetic, but could not put in the hours to assist me with the stakeouts themselves, and I understood," said Barich.

"Getting to the bottom of this was not about me at all, or the cost of all the newspapers torn to shreds every day, but about the crime being committed on our community, and the ugly stain on the reputation of our town as one that was allowing people to destroy free speech like this and get away with it that kept me vigilant", said Barich.

"My friends checked in on me from time to time when I was staked out in the car, and my buddy Brett from the 8-Ball jump started my car one time when I ran the car battery down listening to the radio", said Barich.

Barich claims that on 10-14-11 at 4:00 AM he eye witnessed the vandalism in action by the brightly lit Post Office onto the news racks, then immediately gave chase as the perpetrator drove around the corner toward Oliver's Market to continue on her daily search and destroy mission.

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Mayor Janet Orchard Calls Bicycles "Completely Impractical"

Story and opinion by Greg Karraker

There are many people who believe that Cotati City Manager Diane Thompson is overpaid. In these hard times, she receives a salary/benefit package totaling \$183,702 to manage a total of 27 employees, 14 of whom are police officers who are largely managed by Police Chief Michael Parrish. It's not as if Ms. Thompson has to manage the remaining 13 people on her own; she only has six direct reports.

Additionally, because of the city's budget crunch, city hall is closed every Friday, making her \$183K a year package look even more attractive. But what does any of this have to do with bicycles?

At the September 28, City Council meeting, the council voted to lease a 2012 Toyota Prius for Ms. Thompson, at a cost of \$9,092 per year for the next three years. This figure does not include insurance, gas, or other auto-related expenses.

There were several citizens who thought this is an excessive perk, and offered alternatives, which were not adopted. Former

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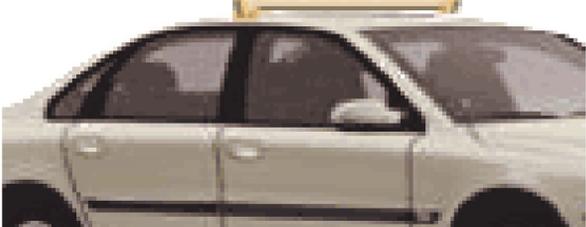
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Cotati's Culture of Silence

Writing a column for a local newspaper is not easy if you can't get a short interview with city officials and city employees from time to time. Jud Snyder, columnist with The Community Voice newspaper voiced his concerns to me one day over coffee about his frustrations with trying to get Cotati City Hall to cooperate with him over the years. Jud railed against City Manager Dianne Thompson and her closed door policy when it came to his requests for a few minutes of her precious time.

The blackballing of this new publication is to be expected because we simply refuse to publish the ongoing propaganda coming out of Cotati City Hall. But this won't last forever. The enlightened segment of this community won't stand for it, frankly. City Hall is banking that the "sheeple" in Cotati don't care what they do.

The culture of silence at City Hall exists for a very logical, yet sinister reason: to consolidate power and control over the community by keeping people in the dark as much as humanly possible. Lip service about transparency in government is simply laughable to anyone who has tried to get a straight answer out of these folks without pulling teeth or filing a lawsuit.

In preparation for an upcoming story on the city's emergency preparedness, or lack thereof, Police Chief Michael Parrish (photo right) has refused to return our calls or emails requesting five minutes of his time. For months now, citizens have simply asked permission to view the emergency supplies on hand at City Hall (because we know there are none), and have been systematically and repeatedly refused access, refused a list of any emergency supplies on hand, and refused photos of any kind of supplies.



Rancho Adobe Fire Chief Frank Treanor had the decency to write a short article on the emergency preparedness of the RAFD, and sent us a photo of their small, but noble, emergency cache stored at one of the three fire stations in the district.



Cotati City Hall, under the mismanagement of Dianne Thompson, continues to dodge this issue and has ignored all of our requests for a five minute tour of the city's emergency supplies. I guess she doesn't want to reveal the top drawer of her desk where the breath mints are stashed.

In preparation for our upcoming story on the Cotati Neighborhood Watch Program, police sergeant Chris Parker has refused to return numerous emails I've sent him to discuss the long-lost volunteer program which appears to be in decline, or in a holding pattern of some kind. With only one lone cop out on the beat on any hour of any given day in Cotati, you would think they might need a little help from us citizens to be the eyes and ears out there for them, but apparently not.

We've tried to contact Councilman Mark "Landmine" about the "funny numbers" in the current city budget, his recent violations of The Brown Act, and his failure to comment on the tearing up our newspapers in the news racks in town, but Landmine has refused to speak with us.



Landmine actually holds his head down in contempt during city council meetings and refuses to look me in the eye like a man when I professionally and politely address him and the rest of the council. Embarrassing himself and the others, Landmine appears to be guilt ridden and won't return our emails either. Simply shameful.

Then you have Mayor Janet Orchard who must have spent more money on her political campaigns than on her entire college education, and who has not returned one of my emails or phone calls to her in more than a decade. Orchard must feel my tax dollars don't merit her doing her duty by responding to me or anyone else who is not a registered Democrat or fellow party hack. Right out of Saul Alinsky's play book, Janet. Well played, I must say!



Orchard's commitment to open, transparent, and responsible government is on par with her commitment to The Brown Act, Robert's Rules of Order, and other city procedures and laws that get in the way of her far left political agenda. It will be a cold day in Hell before Orchard ever spends any time holding office hours at City Hall for walk-ins. She's couldn't handle the stress of a one-on-one with a taxpayer for fear she might go out on job related stress like another councilwoman did. The taxpayers don't want or need any more of that nonsense.

There is a culture of silence within City Hall with the "regressives" it seems, which ultimately leads to a culture of corruption as well for all who play "Monkey See, Monkey Do". I have no less than eight phone calls into Cotati City Engineer Damien O'Bid regarding a missing street sign in my neighborhood that was stolen years ago by someone in plain clothes during broad daylight. O'Bid refuses to return my calls too, probably because he takes his marching orders from Thompson.

City manager Dianne Thompson is habitually unavailable for comment, "disses" the press unless it serves her purpose, and spends most of her time locked up in her office thinking up new and clever ways to get state and federal money to make up Cotati's looming budget deficit, which is a crisis that gets worse by the day.

At the center of this issue, as it is with many cities that have been controlled and run into the ground by liberals and RINOs alike, is the fact that cities have been grossly mismanaged over the years and are now on borrowed time. It's really that simple. These cities have spent far beyond their means, never saved for a rainy day without eventually spending millions of dollars that had been saved up on needless office assistants and overpriced consultants, rising salaries, and increases in their Cadillac benefit packages year after year. All this while running businesses out of town with unrealistic and punishing city regulations.



Former Cotati City Councilman George Barich



"Just My Two Cents"

Cotati city employees got yet another pay increase for 2011. The Cotati City Council's budget almost doubled this year from \$44,000 to \$82,000, and we can't get any of the city council members to justify the increase.

Often times the city's silly and overreaching business requirements and nightmarish red tape have backfired. They also refuse to admit that they simply did not plan properly for ongoing maintenance of city properties, city buildings, and have no plans on the books to properly replace city buildings on any kind of logical schedule whatsoever. They make it up as they go along, and really don't want to deal with the city's crumbling infrastructure and how to pay for rebuilding it.

City Hall seems to delight in "Crisis Management", as if a crisis is something that should never go to waste. My college professors used to complain about the phenomenon of crisis management when talking about government agencies and their knee-jerk reaction to let things go until they reach the breaking point of becoming a real crisis. Then, and only then, do they deal with the problem, which always leads to socking it to the taxpayers and business owners through higher fees.

I guess counting carbon credits, flying the U.N flag in town, and spending thousands on consultants to teach us all new and improved healthy eating habits is much more fun and rewarding to these folks than returning emails and being interviewed by the folks who pay the tab of local government. There is saying in Cotati, "If it is broke, maybe we'll fix it, maybe we won't." Fundamental and basic financial planning principles used by real businesses seems so "yesterday" to these bureaucrats. It's better to instruct our staff to look to see if we can find "free money, wherever it might be hiding..." to quote the late Mayor Bob Coleman. Or, sweep it under the rug and hope nobody finds out because we can't let city meetings go past 10PM, according to Bob Coleman who had to get home to grade papers before his bedtime.

Former city councilwoman Patti Minnis once told me flat out, "...Stop using email, George,...because it can, and will, come back to haunt you. Never put things in writing unless you absolutely have to."

The late mayor Bob Coleman stopped returning my emails after I asked him nicely if we could sit down and meet regarding his habitual use of ethnic and racial slurs within City Hall around our city employees. Coleman ignored my repeated requests because he couldn't face the fact that someone finally called him on this.

Former mayor Lisa Moore never returned my emails or my phone calls over the years either. Her husband John Moore, whose RECALL Committee has repaid the city \$213 of the \$20,000 they promised to repay the city could never understand why I criticized his wife for playing politics as usual, and neglecting her mayoral duties to be accessible to the citizens once in a blue moon. Plus, Lisa was well known for her emotional tears at times during council meetings so the audience could see how sensitive she was to the needs of "the children" and their future. Funny that Lisa was nowhere to be found when the city terminated the Recreation Department staff in 2009, over my objection, basically dismantling the Cotati Rec. Dept. These people are such great showmen.

Changing the way Cotati works, and doesn't work, won't be easy.

City Hall is a tightly knit group of friends and political allies who go back decades. Getting along and going along is like religion to these folks. Even if they don't need your vote, (because surely they never needed mine), the pressure to go along in complete harmony with the "group" or "the program", without objection, without making waves, without healthy and constructive criticism is enforced with a very big hammer.

These regressive liberals don't work well in diverse group settings. They often work together like a wolf pack destroying any and all opposition in town to silence dissent of any kind. If you watch and listen to Councilman Mark "Landmine", it's crystal clear he simply can't ever take constructive criticism, and always feels he must have the last word.

No community can flourish and grow in this kind of environment, and this is why Cotati continues to be criticized and made fun of by so many other civic leaders, business interests, and developers around the county. A gangster government that practices a code of silence is a government Hell bent on self preservation and tyranny at any cost. That's what Cotati citizens must continue to ask themselves; how can we afford much more of these shenanigans? Is this what we expect from our city leaders? Personally, I expect more. No wonder Judy Snyder said that maybe he will just stop doing stories on Cotati until they all grow up.





Titan's

Guest Editorial by Michael Ceremello

This last week was one for contemplation. A man who touched many of our lives, Steve Jobs, died after battling cancer for many years. On Saturday, from a completely different career venue, the Raider Nation lost its leader and football lost a true leader when Al Davis died at the age of 82. Where many would dismiss the significance of one or the other, it should give us all a reason for reflection on heroes, idols, or contemporary greatness.

Many of us have heroes or those we adulate. Others would say that respect for other's accomplishments is enough. I view it quite differently. No man is worth bowing down to no matter how much perceived worth is attached to his or her accomplishments or station in life. Likewise, no person should be demeaned because of a position held or the choices made.

I remember when Bruce Lee died. This was another monster of innovation who entered a field of endeavor and changed it with his own ideas. There is something more than respect which should be given. Love may be too strong a term but his fans truly did love him. Lee was far more than an actor or performer.

Lee, as well as Jobs and Davis, changed his industry when that system was rigid and unbending. This was a man who didn't believe in racism or restrictions. Lee even had to fight for the right to teach non-Asians Chinese martial arts. With the advent of the "Ip Man" movies, you can understand from where the ideas he adopted and expanded on came.

Ip Man was Lee's teacher and another man who had to endure the atrocities visited upon him by his own as well as the Japanese. As seems to be a continuing theme in my life, it is easy to observe the rigidity of the status quo, the bad old boy system, even within lifestyles far from what I have experienced. The common thread is society, as well as those in power, attempt to control those coming up rather than encouraging experimentation and growth. This is sickening and should be to anyone not wondering where his

next beer is.

With Steve Jobs, I listened to the media likening this man to Henry Ford and other giants of industry. They say that no one else out there today produced as much or devised as many new products. I guess they forgot about Bill Gates. The interesting aspect rarely given any consideration is that neither of these two finished college. Yet when considering a person for a bureaucratic role such as a city manager even in the smallest of cities, the accepted logic is that the person must have a degree as if that connotes some special expertise. That is almost as stupid as saying the person must earn more than those he supervises even if he has none of their skills.

I thought about Jobs and the fact that I have never owned or used one of his products. I have used similar products much as I own a car but not a Ford. Was Jobs a genius who should be revered or was he simply a man who was in the right place at the right time to take an opportunity and run with it? Did he actually do the coding or did he turn that over to the experts in the field after giving them the concept he wanted to turn into reality?

I listened to his commencement speech at Stanford as they replayed it a number of times. Here was a man who knew his days were numbered and was attempting to cajole others not to waste their lives being hemmed in by others or their ideas. It shouldn't take us being on death's doorstep to come to this realization.

Al Davis of the Oakland Raiders had a storied career which I followed after his arrival in Oakland from the San Diego Chargers' franchise in 1964. He took the position of coach with a team that hadn't won a game in 1963 and was 0 and 4 in 1964 and immediately transformed them into a winner. You could see something very special in this man who was also given a share of the ownership in the team to take his position.

I was sixteen at the time and followed the Raiders ever since. I never had the opportunity to meet Davis personally. What surprised me was the way Davis stood up for his own rights, his personal property rights, in conflict with the commissioner of the NFL as well as the city of Oakland. When I heard that the former mayor of San Leandro, Jack Maltester, was involved in the dispute over the team leaving for Los Angeles, it was obvious who would win this battle. Big fish from little ponds with no skill or intelligence are chum for the big one.

Davis did so well that not only did he remove himself from the coach's position, but he became the commissioner of the old American Football league. It is my belief that his innovations, such as using the passing game in new ways such as the "West Coast offense", and the stodginess of the National Football League typified by even the greats such as Vince Lombardi, led to the necessity of combining the two leagues as the NFL's significance and superiority waned. Rather than using his position of power to crush the opposition as some would in a shortsighted application of free market competition, Davis not only followed the principle of "live and let live" but knew that all would profit in a much larger way by coexistence.

Now you would think as many do that Davis was somehow inferior to Jobs simply because sports is not science or business. How blind are people? Sports is business as well as having an impact on medical science. Vince McMahon of the many faceted wrestling sport is another innovative giant who has proven that point. Did you hear anyone in the mainstream media even talking about Davis?

I had to love the fact that more rules were changed in the game because of Davis teams than any other. The motto "just win, baby" was taken to heart and is as much a part of the Raider mystique as being a bully in silver and black. The other unmentioned aspect of Davis was his quiet demeanor and rationality in handling tumultuous events and repercussions from his actions. The Raiders being the most penalized team in pro football was no accident considering his run ins with then commissioner Pete Rozelle.

What resonates with me, and is consistent with all of these conspicuous personalities, is the reticence to give up freedom for tradition, innovation for the "way it has always been done", or greatness on any level for the mediocrity of the past. Society it seems loves to hold back progress as if it is something to be feared. I only "Fear the Beard" and, yes, that is a joke.

I use to think that losing these types of people was death dealing a blow to my childhood memories or life. I now think what bothers me the most is that we are losing their experience, information, and expertise. The same way that I miss John Grahl here in Dixon, for his ability to teach through his life encounters, is part of it. The fact that further innovations are now left to others while being bothersome creates opportunity. Nevertheless, I miss them all...



Open Mics - Open Hearts - Open Art

By Amana Rendall, Cotati, CA

Hello again from your friend in the art biz! I hope you have been able to get out and wade around in the wonderful and diverse cultural flow of Sonoma County over the past couple of months. If you have - wonderful! Keep up the good work of supporting the arts.

If you haven't - well, why not? Is there some reason? Hmm. Can we talk about this? Look, I understand. I know it can be very difficult to consider even a bargain matinee at times. At the end of the day or the work week all we feel like doing is collapsing.

To get a little culture, we have to eat dinner, spruce up and head out again-- and for what? And how can we justify spending our hard earned downtime and dollars on a two hour span of time - a play, a dance performance -- that we have no clue about?

Yes, it is more and more difficult to justify a need for culture in our everyday lives. But here's one reason we should, real culture - things like art events, performances, readings, concerts and even open mics can enhance your life in ways that you cannot know or imagine.

Culture can be beautiful, magic medicine. It is made of sweat, dreams, desire, focus, discipline, and tons of passion and love. All that energy mixed together can create something extremely powerful, truthful and memorable. You might not 'get it' or totally understand or comprehend everything about the art or your experience of it immediately. Maybe not even the next day. But with the passing of a few days and weeks-- insights, revelations, new awarenesses, things that you did not know about the world and yourself will emerge.

Even if you don't really like what you experienced, it can still affect you in positive ways. You may find your view of yourself and your world shifting, perhaps slightly, but noticeably. Good art can do this. But you do have to show up to get it. If you are really smart, you will go from finding free and cheap art to producing art yourself.

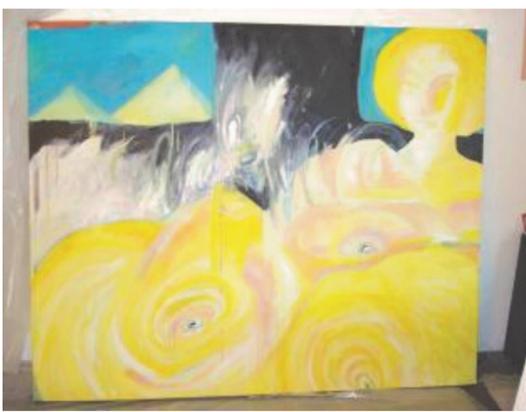


So, are we talking about witnessing, and creating, life changing experiences down at the local poetry slam, jazz jam, or open studio? Well, you'd better believe it! Everyday art is that powerful, and our own involvement in it changes us everyday.

One really great local open mic takes place every

Monday evening from 6 to 10 at Coffee Catz cafe in Sebastopol. The cafe is part of the re-purposed Gravenstein railroad depot, and the decor and homey atmosphere is that of an old fashioned parlor, with a baby grand piano, couches, and chandeliers. Much of the food served is simple and made in their kitchen daily. It is like stopping over at a good friend's house for a nice visit. I feel very nurtured after a good meal here, which is usually a bowl of homemade chili or soup and some of their special chai. Then I am ready for the open mic.

The philosophy of the open mic is simple: allowance and appreciation. You don't have to stay for the whole evening, but why leave if the the entertainment will continue? The folks who perform are all very talented and professional; some are currently performing in venues around Sonoma County. Most perform their own pieces, songs, po-



etry, and stories.

I have attended twice, and both times I stayed all the way to the end because everyone was so incredibly good and the performances so compelling. The majority of the music tends to be folksy rock, with political and romantic undertones. There is also much humor, wit and candor.

I already feel a warm familiarity with the performers because they have revealed themselves and their hearts so openly in their music and writing. I feel privileged when I am able to share these very moving moments with such committed, compassionate and creative people. It is truly inspiring to me.

On the first Saturday of the month, the best folks from the weekly open mic are invited to play in B.O.O.M - the Best of Open Mic. I am sure this is a good night of performances as well, and I plan to attend soon. Amazingly, there aren't many folks in the audience on Mondays. It is really worth coming out for, even on a rainy night.

I have not had a chance to get out to see much art around the county because I have been really busy with my own artistic pursuits. But there is a show I really do want to see and will definitely make an effort to review it for you.

Hey! I just got an idea! Maybe *you* could go and see it too, and then email me your review and I will include the best ones with my review in my next column. You don't have to like what you see. You can be negative (politely) or neutral. You can also

ask me any questions you might have about the show and I will try to answer them, or I will find out where you can get more info. I think it could be really interesting and fun, so please feel free to do this. The show I want to see and I think you might like is called 'Pop'd From the Panel', and it is currently on view at the Charles M. Schulz Museum in Santa Rosa. I am interested in seeing it because I like comic art, cartoons, and Pop Art, and the confluence of all these is sure to be a colorful, wacky, wild place.

I think exploring this place is a good topic for a show, which runs through December 11, 2011. I have not been to the Schulz Museum yet, so my first visit will be a great opportunity to look around and view the other permanent and changing exhibits as well.

Winterblast 2011 will take place on South A Street in Santa Rosa on November 12th! This is our SOFA neighborhood's biggest event of the year and you are invited! It is our seventh year and if you have never attended, you really should. It is a family-friendly event from 5PM to 8PM on a Saturday evening. We will have food vendors and wine tasting, a kid's art zone, the annual sofa parade, lots of art and more and admission is free. Come in a wintery, magical costume and join in the fun.

Well, that's all for now. I hope you enjoyed my little song.; gotta be getting on down the road now. So, take care, and until next month, please get out and see some homemade Sonoma county culture soon. If you see 'Pop'd From the Panel' at the Schulz Museum, please send me your review by November 15th. Take the kids! They can send in reviews too.

My email address is artgirl707@att.net.

See: <http://www.coffeecatz.com/>

<http://www.schulzmuseum.org/>

<http://sofasantarosa.com/> Winterblast 2011 info coming soon!



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North Bay Patriots – Our Mission



By Carol Tomlinson

North Bay Patriots – Our Mission

What is a patriot? According to Webster's Dictionary a patriot is someone who "loves



and loyally or zealously supports one's own country". Does that mean he or she has to agree without question with all the policies of our government? Absolutely not.

At North Bay Patriots we believe that the United States is the greatest nation ever created, but that many current federal, state, and local government policies are promoting the decline of this country. Even more dangerous to our continued greatness is the denigration of our Constitution, both literally and in spirit.

Our mission statement is as follows: "To promote, protect, and defend our sacred Constitutional liberties, principles, and values through vigilance, education, and sacrifice with strength and guidance from our Creator". We believe that the Constitution, as written, is the guiding document to which we must adhere.

We are dedicated to protecting our civil liberties and individual rights as specified in our Constitution.

There are many ways in which our government has infringed upon our liberties. Government control has become intrusive through the massive number of regulations imposed upon us by its many bureaucracies.

In the last few years our federal and state governments have racked up unsustainable debt, and they continue to spend. Taxation has become repressive and threatens to become even more so as the government sees increased taxation as the solution to its debt woes. And where does all our federal and state tax money go? In many cases it is spent on unnecessary projects or given to those who have financially supported our elected officials. In short, much of our tax money goes for waste and corruption.

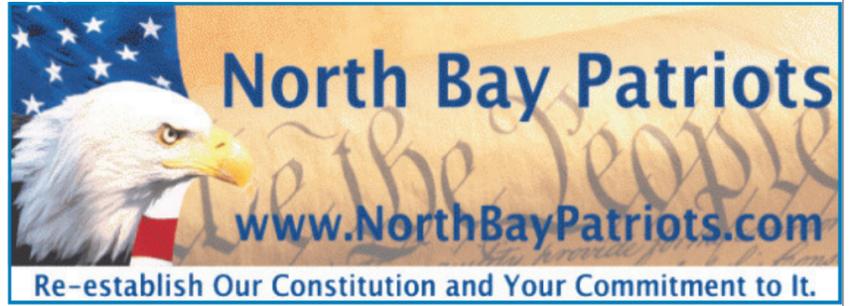
2012 is a crucial election year for this country. Many of those same federal, state, and local legislators who have voted for bills that increase our debt, curb our liberties, and threaten our Constitution are up for election. North Bay Patriots will support

those officials who share our values and concerns, but will actively work to replace those who do not, regardless of party affiliation.

We invite you to attend our meetings to learn more about us and join in our efforts to change the current destructive path our government has chosen to follow. We meet at the Veterans Memorial Hall, 8505 Park Avenue, Cotati, 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Scheduled meetings for the rest of 2011 are as follows:

Wednesday, November 16th: Sally Zelikovsky, Founder, Bay Area Patriots

Wednesday, December 7th: Stephen Frank, California Political News and Views



Oliver's May Not Build New Cotati Store Next to Freeway After All

(from Page One)

This allowed Oliver's to move forward with their application to develop the project, which included approximately \$400,000 worth of environmental and engineering studies, along with detailed architectural drawings.

But evidently, an 18-foot median strip in the middle of a busy street isn't enough for City Manager Dianne Thompson and Assistant City Manager Marsha Sue Lustig. It seems Thompson and Lustig have been infatuated with the latest buzzword being used by trendy, automobile-hating city planners in some parts of the country: "Traffic Diet".

They are currently rethinking the original Downtown Specific Plan that has been approved through countless city meetings and public workshops, and now propose to choke traffic even further by pinching this stretch of Old Red' down to one lane in each direction, complete with traffic calming roundabouts that few people think are a sound idea.

According to Tom Scott, "The plan for the roundabout would require a complete redesign of our project that we estimated would cost us tens of thousands of dollars more. In addition, with this new two-lane plan, (one lane in each direction) the capacity of Old Redwood Highway would be substantially constrained. We just can't invest this much money and then have to take a chance that cars won't be able to easily get in and out of our project."

In fact, last year Santa Rosa spent thousands of dollars to rip out four temporary roundabouts they built as a centerpiece of their Humboldt Street Bike Boulevard.

At the moment, neither side seems willing to budge. The city claims they have traffic studies that show cutting the number of lanes in half and lowering the speed limit won't lower the number of vehicles passing by Oliver's future location. Scott says Oliver's traffic consultant believes that the roundabouts may handle the road's current capacity, but will not handle the future volume of traffic anticipated by City and Regional long-term plans. Furthermore, he said, "We just don't believe they'll work!"

Northern Gateway already hit hard by abandoned plans.

The Downtown Specific Plan says the Northern Gateway presents a large opportunity because of its "Relatively large vacant and underutilized land..." This is a bit like calling the Sahara Desert "an opportunity for rainmaking technology." In the planners' vision of your future, they hope to "Transform underutilized land into a mixed-use district... Reconfigure Old Redwood Highway into a vibrant, mixed, use, multi-modal, and beautiful urban street."

Unfortunately, Orrin Theissen recently stuck a large broom in this plan's spokes. Theissen is the developer responsible for the Windsor Town Green in Windsor, CA, a "mixed-use, vibrant downtown" that now has a large vacancy rate.

Theissen had planned to build a baby

downtown Windsor in the Northern Gateway of Cotati, but he went bankrupt. Perhaps lukewarm interest in mixed-use vibrant downtowns is part of the reason.

So about the best hope, other than Peet's Coffee, for seeing anything but overgrown weeds in the Northern Gateway is to see Oliver's build a new store and commercial development. And the only way that can possibly happen is if the city realizes that people travel to supermarkets in these wonderful inventions called automobiles, whether they run on gasoline, natural gas, electricity, or something in between.

Thousands of cars go up and down Highway 101 each day and through Cotati. For decades to come, many of those drivers with money to spend would have exited the freeway right in front of a new Oliver's store.

So will the City of Cotati decide that a healthy high-end grocery business on a four-lane street is better than no business on a two-lane street? It's much too soon to tell, but the way this story develops will have a lot to do with the way this city develops, or fails to.

As of this writing, City Manager Dianne Thompson, Asst. City Manager Marsha Sue Lustig, as well Cotati city council members, were asked by email, and again in a city council meeting, if they would persist in this new plan even if it meant the loss of Oliver's new market and mixed use buildings, and the possible loss of their elected positions. As of the date this newspaper went to print, they all declined to comment.

Other Cotati merchants strongly oppose shrinking Old Red to one lane each way.

As word of this planned "traffic diet" spread, other local merchants are speaking out in greater number. According to Patty Minnis, a former Cotati council member and the owner of Cotati Jewelers, "We've fought these (roundabouts) before, and they keep coming back. At one point, we were going to have a ballot initiative that said Cotati will never have traffic roundabouts. But the city officials assured us there would never be any."

Minnis went onto say, "Roundabouts are back again? Nobody wants them: citizens, property owners, business owners... They would close traffic for three to six months, and once you put them in, they're impossible to get out".

Clearly angry, Minnis also said, "Council members Susan Harvey and Mark Landman have been visiting Cotati merchants one on one, trying to sell the roundabout plan.

They tell each individual merchant that the others approve of the new plan. That's an out and out lie", stated Minnis. "They think we don't talk to each other?"

At Arch's Glass, owner Rick Stewart was equally angry. "I've been dealing with this since 2001, when it (roundabouts) first came up" said Stewart. "This will be a deterrent to our business. My customers and my

vendors won't be able to load and unload in front of my business. I won't even be able to load my own trucks."

Around the corner from Arch's Glass at the Miller Driving School, owner Roileen Miller expressed the same opposition. "This is not the time and this is not the place. One lane going north and one lane going south will limit anybody coming into Cotati, and it will make people learn to parallel park. Believe me, I know how few people know how to do that until they take my lessons."

At the conclusion of my interview with Miller, she and two of her employees had a five-minute discussion about the proper way to dispose of a mercury-filled CFL light bulb. They found it ironic that government makes everything nearly impossible these days, from doing business to throwing away a light bulb.



The Cotati Independent

PO Box 7841, Cotati, CA 94931

Phone: (707) 795-4121 Email: editor@thecotatiindependent.com

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Local Golf Tournament Huge Success Thousands of Dollars Donated to Charity

by staff reporter



The 8 Ball Tavern held its annual charity golf tournament on September 10, 2011. Now in its tenth year, the 8 Ball continues their tradition of providing a great day of golf while helping out local charities and the local police department.

This year, ninety-six players participated in the golf event at Foxtail Golf Course in Rohnert Park. After a great day on the greens, the group returned to the 8 Ball for a barbecue lunch, and of course, refreshments! Our thanks go to the participating golfers and to the many volunteers who gave their time to help support the event.



Every year the 8 Ball holds both a raffle and silent auction at the bar following the golf tournament where everyone is invited to participate in the fundraising efforts. This year was no exception and very successful. We had a wonderful selection of raffle prizes and silent auction items all of which were donated, many by local Cotati, Rohnert Park and Petaluma businesses. In addition, we had the support of many Sonoma county businesses who contributed to the event either through donations or sponsoring a golf hole in the event.

The 8 Ball raised a whopping \$4,880. The proceeds were split among four fine, deserving groups – Penngrove School, The Cotati Police K9 Unit, Rohnert Park Animal Shelter, and 579 Engineers Battalion Health & Welfare Fund.

We hope to make our 2012 event just as successful as this years. We hold our tournament as close to September 11 each year as possible so

we can give something back to the community on a day which will be remembered as one that was taken from us a decade ago. We invite everyone to join us next year and help us exceed our goal which goes to very good local causes.

Please visit us at 8 Charles Street, Cotati. We appreciate your support and your patronage. Together, we can make a difference. Thank you, again. Without the support and hard work of so many, this project would not be possible.

(Ph: 707.795.9859) or find us on Facebook at The 8 Ball, Cotati



Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Being a citizen of Cotati; it's good to read your paper. I have been listening to the liberal voices of the City, and they make big promises but little gets done. George Barich is right on in questioning the wisdom of the City Council in purchasing the garage downtown for a new park. Where are we going to get this money and how are we going to finance the maintenance of it?

I live in the Quail Hollow Subdivision, and every year the city taxes every property owner over \$50 dollars to maintain the landscaping along Myrtle drive. These monies are not getting used at all. Half of the landscaping has either died or been removed; since 1992.

Also about the high weeds ordinance not being enforced, this is a disgrace. All the city has to do is mail off letters to the property owners, and I bet most of them would cut the weeds.

And to Barbara Daugherty, the paper can be delivered to my driveway anytime, and thanks Richard Geerston for standing up to liberals like Tony Adler. Good letter; keep them coming.

Dan Gallagher, Cotati

Dear Editor,

First of all I want to thank you for the newspaper. I really like it. (only some articles are a little bit long and people might not read them.)

Of course, I am upset that they are tearing up a lot of the newspapers. The smirky smile of Mayor Orchard is so typical. They are a bunch of fanatics who are playing dirty and could care less about the constitution or real democracy. An intellectual discussion with them is useless. They will never change their minds.

Gertraude Kinet
Cotati

Puppies for Sale



These wonderful Bedlington terrier pups were whelped June 17th, 2011.

They have all of their shots and they are paper trained. They are AKC Pedigreed and have all of their papers.

We have 1 male and 2 females available

Please call us at 415-716-5542 or 415-686-1145 to arrange a time to visit us and see why these dogs are called "a lamb with a bark."



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Kevin and Louise Comora
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The Good, the Bad, and the Inedible

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

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

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- Legend:** ***** Perfection
 **** Great
 *** Good
 ** Needs Improvement
 * Not Worth Going
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Schellville Grill

22900 Broadway Sonoma, CA
 707-996-5151
 Category: Northern Italian, Am. Midwest, California Grill
 Open: 7 days
B = Mon-Wed 8am - noonish, Thu-Sun 6am-noonish
L = Mon-Wed 11ish-2ish and Thu-Sun 11am-2:30ish
D = Thu-Sun 5:30pm-9pm
 Live Music Sat 7pm-9pm
 Sun 10:30am-1:30pm
 Beer & Wine



***** 10/8 \$\$-\$\$\$

This place reminds me of the 1996 movie "Big Night" where two brothers from Italy open a small restaurant in a small town on the New Jersey Shore in the 1950's and try to educate Americans about real Italian cooking. Like the movie, food here is very interesting. So much in fact, that Guy Fieri of Food Network fame taped an episode of Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives there earlier this year.

This place can in no way be put into the dive category! It's really more of a countryside cafe with indoor and outdoor seating under a covered patio (dog friendly). I noticed people at an adjacent table, obvious devotees of DDD, who told the owner they had come to check this place out based on the show. I am not a Fieri fan, but I have to give him credit for recognizing this out-of-the-way restaurant and helping to put it on the map.

Opened in 2002, the owner/chef (Matteo -- Italian for Matthew) has taken Northern Italian, American Midwest and California Grill food, infused each with exceptional flavors and careful preparation to produce some of the best comfort food I've eaten. On previous lunch visits we have sampled the **St. Louis Style BBQ Ribs** in fresh fruit and red wine BBQ sauce (trust me, it's great), **French Fries with 3 Dipping Sauces** (Yum...horsey-horseradish, smokey chipotle and ranch or blue cheese), and **Grilled Tuscan Chicken Gorgonzola** (mixed greens in a fantastic vinaigrette, tossed with walnuts, gorgonzola, apples, artichokes and fire-roasted red peppers with a grilled Tuscan chicken breast). All exceptionally good.

On our recent dinner visit and since I am half-Italian, I had to order the **Sauteed Brown Buttered Chicken**, described on the menu as "famous in Florence" (who knew?) The dish was served over a rustic mash of potatoes and sauteed veg. The chicken was fork tender and extremely moist, with the brown butter sauce lightly dressing the chicken and mash. Clean and crisp flavors that true Italian cooking produces. The second dish ordered was the **Roman Style Lasagna**. This dish arrived in a large ramekin. Not the usual, square-cut, out of a casserole presentation I am used to, but the aroma was wonderful. Wow! Tasted as good as it smelled, and the hand-rolled organic pasta floated on top and below the creamy tomato and red onion béchamel sauce and house-made ragout of pork and beef. I especially liked the vegetables in this dish; mushrooms, yellow squash zucchini and eggplant, as they

were discernible and not pureed into the sauce. Definitely a different slant on an old favorite.

Before I forget, try the Caesar salad. Not the typical, over-dressed, garlic-abused mess on your plate. True restraint has been used, with just a hint of anchovy. Refreshing. Finally, yummy house-made desserts by Emily (Matteo's sister), round out the experience with cheesecakes of various flavors, fresh fruit crisps served warm with ice cream and layer cakes. Get Thee to the Schellville Grill for comfort food at its best.



Hang Ah Dim Sum

2130 Armor Drive Santa Rosa
 707-576-7873
 Category: Chinese Open: 7 days
 11am - 9pm
 Specialty - Dim Sum
 Soft drinks and tea only.

**** 2011 +6, last 10/15 \$\$-\$\$

As many times as I've been to this small, nondescript restaurant off the 101 (it was a former A & W drive-in with indoor seating), I have to admit I've never ordered from their standard menu of traditional dishes. I'm sure it's good, but that's not why I come here. It's the Dim Sum, Stupid!

Although they do not serve these "small plates" of food in the traditional fashion, from hand-carts rolled through the restaurant by servers who count the number and type of bowls or plates served to you to calculate your bill; nonetheless, this place is almost on a par for Dim Sum with Yank Sing in the City. Served mainly in round, bamboo steamers of various sizes, it arrives at your table hot and ever so fresh.



A few of my favorites: **Steamed Shanghai Dumplings (4), Green Onion Pan Cake (1 large to share), Shiu Mai with Diced Mushroom, Pork & Shrimp (4), Steamed BBQ Pork Bun (2), Shrimp Dumplings (Har Gow) (4), Crispy Shrimp Ball (4) and either Steamed Egg Custard Bun (3) or Crispy Egg Custard Tart (3)** for desert. Delightful and very inexpensive for the amount of food you get. Take someone and share!

Friar Tucks

8201 Old Redwood Highway, Cotati
 707-792-9847
 Category: Irish Pub
 Open: 7 days 11:30am - 2am

Full Bar — Entertainment — Pool Tables

** 8/23, 9/13 \$\$-\$\$

Formerly in the Oliver's Shopping Center strip mall and now residing in the only true landmark building (*in my opinion*) in Cotati, the former Inn of the Beginning, it's not like this Irish pub needed to live up to any former standard for food quality, but I do expect a signature Irish dish like Corned Beef and Cabbage, served at a traditional Irish pub like Friar Tucks to reach the table hot, and the frozen veggies to be warmed through. Unfortunately, that is not what I got.

Other disappointments were the fried onion rings and fried Calamari. The rings were dark, dark, dark brown, which means the fry oil is not being changed regularly, and the frozen Calamari strips were tough, probably because they were either over-fried, an inferior brand, or both.

On another visit, this time for lunch on the advice of a friend and bartender at the Tradewinds, I ordered their signature hamburger and french fries.

They offer six different burgers. This one advertised a "special sauce" with grilled onions. It showed up without the onions and no sauce in sight!

Look, the place was empty. There was nobody in the restaurant but a couple noontime

(from Page One)

Newspaper destroyer is finally caught, arrested and charged by Cotati Police

Barich parked his minivan a few yards away and walked up to the woman and started taking photos of her in action and of her truck's license plates. Barich said he was shocked to see that the woman was delivering the daily edition of The Press Democrat, and then began tearing up all the copies of The Cotati Independent she could get her hands on.

The woman immediately began yelling at Barich as to what he was doing and what he wanted. When he replied he was taking photos of her for tearing up the newspapers outside the Post Office moments before, she said "The papers are free. What are you going to do about it? Take my picture. What's wrong? I have to make a living out here? F_ you and your f_ing paper... What are you going to do now?" Barich said, "I'm going to the police". The woman said, "I am going to charge you with accosting me with that camera".

Minutes later at the police station, police officer Andrew Lyssand took Barich's statement as to what happened, and reviewed all Barich's photos taken at the scene. Barich then signed the complaint form provided by Officer Lyssand, who thanked Barich for his assistance for taking a bite out of crime, and promised to launch an official investigation as soon as possible.



Weeks earlier, at the city council meeting, Greg Kar-raker of Cotati requested that the city council condemn the despicable act of destroying free speech and basic civil rights. But all sitting city council members refused to comment in any way, and refused to offer any assistance whatsoever, not even suggesting someone file a police report. Some citizens have come to believe that the city council's silence on this issue equates to condoning the vandalism of a newspaper that has been highly critical of City Hall and the city council's poor job performance.

Officer Lyssand said the department is looking into other state and federal charges because there is reason to believe this type of crime in the way it was conducted over a period of months could constitute a hate crime, since no other newspapers at these locations were targeted for destruction by the alleged suspect, Sikes.



Barich said, "She was tearing up the newspapers on a daily basis to send me a clear message. My free speech and the speech of my contributing columnists will not be tolerated if she has anything to do with it. This is not just a case of petty theft, and I think it does rise to a hate crime. Her actions were as un-American as anything I can imagine and an affront to liberals, independents, and conservatives alike. She has shamed the town with her daily destruction of my newspaper. She and The Press Democrat, with whom she was under contract, must be held accountable and answer for her actions."

"It also goes to prove that the Neighborhood Watch Program can be very effective in helping to keep law enforcement costs down by keeping our eyes and ears open. The police simply do not have the resources for this type of lengthy investigation and the hours involved. I understood this going in...", says Barich.

At this time, it is not known if anyone else is involved in this plot to destroy C.I newspapers, or if anyone might have put this woman up to it. Investigators will be questioning city officials, city staff, as well as members of the Cotati Chamber of Commerce, who have taken aim at Barich in recent years, as well as the management at The Press Democrat for any help they can offer in determining a possible motive of one of their delivery people.

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ID #11-305 - A man wearing glasses and a baseball cap recently robbed a Westamerica Bank in Santa Rosa police said. The man calmly entered the bank at 424 Farmers Lane and presented a teller with a note demanding money. He received an undisclosed amount of cash then left the bank and walked away, according to police. He was wearing a baseball cap, a hooded sweatshirt and dark jeans. He was also wearing what appeared to be prescription glasses, police said.

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