



The Cotati Independent

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City Hall Ignores High Weed Removal Law for 2011

Story and photos by George Barich (Cotati, CA) - In plain sight throughout the town, acres of tall, dry weeds stand ready to ignite with the strike of a match alarming local residents and business owners. With summer officially over, and the Indian Summer well under way, these fire dangers get worse by the day. People are asking why is our city allowing these fire dangers and urban eyesores to embarrass the town like this? Cotati's Muni Code Sec. 8.16 on weed

abatement requires that all high weeds that have become a clear nuisance must be removed by approximately July of each year to prevent the high risk of wild grass fires, and to remove the visual blight that damages the town's image. Yet, with all the money City Hall has brought in as a result of the increase in Cotati's sales taxes passed by the voters in 2010, fire safety and visual blight continue to drop to the bottom of the city's priority list, or are simply being ignored altogether to

save money.

According to Tami Taylor, Cotati City Clerk, "That responsibility (high weed enforcement and abatement) has been transferred to the Rancho Adobe Fire District. We no longer do that..." It appears that the RAFD doesn't want the job either, and never agreed to take over the responsibility of high weed enforcement/abatement, according to the fire district's administrative clerk, Jennifer Ober. In investigating this story, the fire

chief, local fire marshal, city council members, and even Cotati City Manager Dianne Thompson refused to comment or return calls on this story. Equally outrageous and disconcerting, no one informed the public that the city transferred the responsibility of code enforcement to the RAFD, there was no public hearing on this matter, and the city council never voted on a change in a policy of such importance which is required by law.

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Are We Prepared for a Disaster?

By Chief Frank Treanor of the Rancho Adobe Fire District.

September is National Preparedness Month. This caused me to reflect on the types of disasters that may affect our fire district and ability to serve our citizens. Terrorist attacks can happen anywhere. There are international terrorists like Al Qaeda and domestic terrorists, political unrest, divisiveness and fervent causes may contribute to domestic terrorism. The risk from terrorist attacks in Sonoma County is relatively low, but Sonoma County is an ideal staging area for terror cells to set up a base of operations. We should be curious about situations that look abnormal to us and report them to authorities if necessary. Sonoma County and specifically Rancho Adobe Fire District is much more susceptible to natural disasters like floods, landslides, earthquakes, wild-land fires, thunderstorms and massive power outages.

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Fire Dangers Alarms Residents and Business Owners. Tourism and Town Pride Hit Hard



every day, and sometimes twice a day, only to be torn in half every day by an unknown person or persons who seem to believe that diversity of opinion has no business in Cotati. Due to the critically low staffing levels at the police department, no complaint has been filed to date by the publisher.

gave this matter their full attention, as they should.

But afterwards, did the Mayor step up and state that destroying newspapers and stifling debate was unacceptable in Cotati? No. She did not have one word to say on the subject, displaying a lack of a moral center that shocked even me.

In fact, each and every city council member, (all Democrats), had the power and opportunity to speak up and condemn something so basically un-American, as destroying newspapers that are legally displayed on private property.

So, to the vandal (s) who think it's perfectly acceptable to prevent others from reading material you disagree with, here's a clear signal:

Keep it up. This is Cotati, where the Mayor 's silence says you're doing a great job.



Freedom of the press, Cotati style

I also read Mayor Orchard the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, underscoring the phrase about freedom of the press.

Then I asked her to make a public statement — to the council, city staff, the press, and the public — that this behavior is not acceptable in a city that values free speech.

At the close of Citizens' Business, the Mayor and staff had a thorough discussion about a problem voiced by another citizen, which concerned the overgrowth of weeds and bushes in Cotati Creek. The council

disagreed with Guardino, and was ostracized as a "nonbeliever". What did Cotati have to offer in the way of manufacturing facilities, technology, or an experienced manufacturing workforce? With all the time the city spends looking for the presence of Tiger Salamanders and the routine foot dragging of City Hall, the town would have reached the financial breaking point. Planning the town's economic future by counting on Green jobs coming to Cotati was plain asinine, but I bit my tongue.

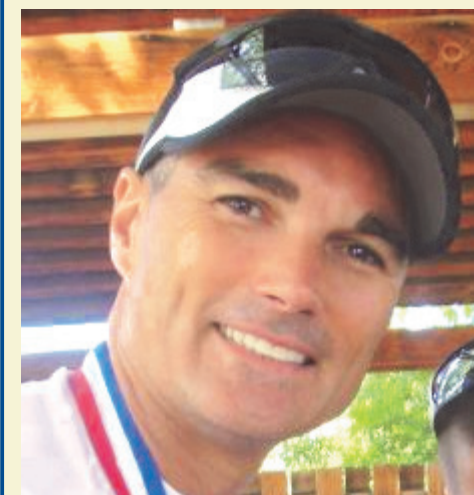
Cotati is a bedroom community for retirees, college students, commuters, illegal aliens, university professors, construction workers, retailers, government workers, etc. Cotati is a destination for what? Even if there were thousands of jobs magically created by the Obama Administration, why would any high-tech company in its right mind even consider setting up shop in a town where its city leaders publicly state on the record "We love our weeds", where the city engineer admits the city is falling apart at the seams, and that "...We can't afford to repair and replace the city's

crumbling infrastructure at the rate it's deteriorating..."? Because of the years of mismanagement and lost priorities at City Hall, Cotati is a city in decline. The city revenue and sales tax numbers confirm it. The last time a technology company to even took a look at Cotati was Nokia in 1999. Within weeks of citizens coming out of the woodwork condemning the development of an office campus on prime commercial property, Nokia was gone and Cotati's reputation as the most business unfriendly city in the county got even worse, if that was possible. Finally, Green manufacturing jobs create no sales taxes. Cities survive on sales taxes to a large extent and government grants. Cotati is a town that is not known for fast tracking anything other than hiring more city employees and raising their salaries and benefits as Job #1. This reputation doesn't go away by waving a magic wand. Furthermore, why would Green jobs come to California, of all places? California is one of the most hostile environments for business and manufacturing in the nation.

Police Sergeant Dave Houts Not Coming Back

by George Barich

Many of Cotati's newly hired police officers come through the front door of City Hall when they're hired, and go out the back when they're fired. That's really no different than many other towns. But in small towns like Cotati, news of cops going silently into the night, never to be seen again, can spread like wild fire sending shockwaves and rumors flying.



There is usually a lot of excitement and fanfare when Cotati hires a new police officer, and a lot of hope that Cotati gets a new cop that will keep his/her nose clean who will serve the community well for many years.

But the "revolving door" of the Cotati Police Department is legendary. Many come to Cotati fresh out of the police academy with low test scores because they can't get hired on in other cities. They would however often get hired on in Cotati, get experience under their belt after a year or two, then quit Cotati and move on down the road for more money or a more exciting position elsewhere.

Despite the long time careers of many Cotati police officers such as Dennis Wallach and Robert Stewart, to name just two, dozens have simply quit and moved on to greener pastures, or have simply been fired, eased out, laid off for budgetary reasons, and had very short careers in Cotati.

Rumor has been floating around for months now that Sergeant Dave Houts was placed on administrative leave for some unknown reason, and then recently got let go from the department for good. Rumors first surfaced that Houts had a job related injury and was taking a short leave of absence. Then rumor was he was being investigated internally by the department for allegations of wrongdoing of some kind.

Since facts surround the firing of a police officer are confidential information, the city cannot disclose these details surrounding the employment or disappearance of Sergeant Houts with the public. Rumor was that one of his wrists was in bad shape, according to witnesses of Dave working out at the local gym.

The absence of Dave's familiar face around town has been met with some mixed feelings. Many police officers will admit they make many friends and acquaintances during their careers, and make some enemies along the way as well, which goes with the territory of being a cop.

Dave had told me in his many years serving as a Cotati police officer, I was the first and only city councilman who took the city manager up on her strong recommendation to go on a police ride-along.

Dave Houts was friendly, open, informative, and felt strongly about the job of keeping our community safe. He prided himself on keeping gang activity in Cotati to a bare minimum. It was a pleasure knowing him on a professional level for many years and getting a small glimpse into the hard work and dedication of this police officer.

The volunteer staff here at C.I wish Dave Houts and his family good luck, and thank him for his years of service to our town and the neighboring communities.

Cotati Mayor Refuses to Support Freedom of the Press

Story and opinion by Greg Karraker

At the September 14th regular meeting of the Cotati City Council, Mayor Janet Orchard was given a simple opportunity to do the right thing and condemn an ongoing series of crimes in Cotati.

During Citizens' Business, in front of the entire city council, city staff, and a number of citizens, she was told that Tom Scott, the manager of Oliver's Market in Cotati has given the publisher of *The Cotati Independent* permission to place copies of this monthly newspaper in a vacant newspaper rack in front of the store to support the principle of free speech.

Mayor Orchard was also informed that fresh copies are placed in the news racks



Cotati's Hope for Green Jobs Shattered

Story and Editorial by George Barich

The Solyndra solar panel manufacturing company loan scandal continues to shock the country and has the FBI investigating the Obama Administration. Each and every Mayor in Cotati over the last ten years has touted that Cotati's economic future relied on the fact that billions of federal tax dollars would be trickling down to cities all across America in the form of grants, and Cotati was going to get its fair share.

According to Mayor John Guardino in 2009, Cotati's economic future looked bright, and we had nothing to worry about because Green jobs were coming our way. So, the city council continued to spend down the city's reserves because the Obama Administration, with all its "hope and change" stimulus money, was going to bring loads of Green jobs to Cotati. I



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Why we hate politicians

We take them at their word. We expect them to make good on their promises, and to do so in quick order. We want to trust them because we ourselves are basically trustworthy people, and we desperately want to believe they're trustworthy, too. We give them our hard-earned money to run their political campaigns. We affix their campaign bumper stickers to our cars and place their campaign signs on our front lawns. We vote them into public office because we want to believe they will somehow, someday, look out for our best interest. Sometimes we simply vote for the lesser of two evils, cross our fingers, and hope for the best.

We hold them to standards no human being could possibly live up to. We expect them to answer all their emails, take our phone calls, listen to our phone messages, and be accessible once in a while where we can actually come in and actually talk with them face to face. We take them at their word while they tell us what we want to hear. We expect not to be treated like fools. We expect them to play nice with others and be professional at all times, even on Halloween and on their personal web blogs. We can't ever have them cracking jokes that are politically incorrect. We don't really care what they are doing behind the scenes to make things happen because we're too busy, and we really can't be bothered with the details.

Politicians will often dodge straight questions because they don't want to give a definitive answer to a direct question for fear of alienating us with an answer we might not agree with. So, often they will either avoid the question altogether, completely change the question being asked, answer the question with a question, or change the subject entirely with a smile as wide as Texas. We hate that. In some cases, politicians will get nasty and demonize the person asking the question. And often politicians will set off on a mission to destroy other elected officials who dare to answer the question truthfully because, as we all know, nothing can hurt more than the truth. Nothing can sabotage a political career more quickly than always telling the truth come Hell or high water.

We do love to hate politicians, don't we? They come in all shapes, sizes and colors. We will blame them for anything and everything at the drop of a hat. It's a favorite American pastime. We enjoy watching politicians rise and fall from power, and we rarely see or understand what they really go through behind the scenes. Much has been written analyzing politicians, but one important point should be made clear. Politicians, by definition, are people elected to public office who accept campaign contributions from other people, and/or get paid handsomely to hold public office.

I knew by personally refusing to accept any and all campaign contributions over the years to run my small campaigns for city council that I could never fit the formal definition of being a politician, plain and simple. I was a candidate for office, but never a politician in the classical sense because I used my own money by working a second job at night to raise the necessary funds. But that never stopped people from hating me for what I stood for. Heavens no. I knew full well by walking door to door and getting elected that standing on fiscally conservative principles, not changing my colors, and not compromising on issues that were clearly wrong or destructive to our town, would rain down a firestorm of criticism from the far left in Cotati.

I don't think I was ever hated more as an elected official than when I refused to take my small monthly city paycheck as a councilman, and when I began holding office hours for walk-ins on Monday nights at City Hall that some warned would upstage my colleagues. The situation worsened when I refused to sit quietly and ignore the good citizens who came before the city council asking questions and demanded straight answers for a change.

At my very first city council meeting as a new city leader in 2008, some ten citizens waited their turn to speak during Citizens' Business to make statements and ask questions of the council. Just when the mayor was about to ignore the questions completely (as was usually the case) and move on, I asked to comment on the citizens who had just spoken. The mayor allowed me the time to address the public. I proceeded to acknowledge each and every citizen who came forward and attempted to answer each and every question they had one by one. Then I instructed the city manager to personally get back to some of those ten citizens in the following days with some definitive answers, and to please stop ignoring these people who claimed they had been ignored by the city in one way or another for too long.

Well, that was the first nail in my political coffin, and my days were numbered because I decided to do my job. I wasn't concerned about getting re-elected. I just wanted to do my job. Things were going just as I planned, frankly. I had begun bucking the "old girl" power structure in Cotati with Pru Draper at the helm. I had lifted my leg on the men on the council by standing up for the citizens in the room who deserved some straight answers for a change. I was so proud to help our city acknowledge every single person who spent their evening coming to speak before their elected representatives as concerned taxpayers who pay the bills at City Hall.

So, how are we ever going to reform the system that everyone says is broken if we don't speak out and criticize the system and hold elected officials accountable? As bad as politicians are (and we citizens are partly to blame), we have to keep up the pressure on our representatives and never let up. Politicians are like the worst type of spoiled children imaginable. You have to constantly watch them and correct them or they will walk all over you. Furthermore, every so often you have to give politicians a time out, or take them to the wood shed for some deprogramming and retraining.



Former Cotati City Councilman
George Barich

"Just My Two Cents"

Mayor Bob Coleman simply came unglued and lost his temper with me the first time I used such language in private that he, like many politicians, needed to be deprogrammed and re-educated to some extent, and that the good liberal professor himself needed to sharpen up his listening skills in the spirit of tolerance and diversity.

We shouldn't feel guilty hating politicians. I hope the politically correct police in Cotati don't file charges that this editorial constitutes a hate crime.

More bad news about your tax dollars asleep at the wheel in Cotati

In preparation for this month's edition of The Cotati Independent, we attempted to contact Cotati Councilman Mark Landman who continues to refuse to take our calls or return our emails despite getting paid to do so.

If you love to hate politicians, Landman is one really worth considering, not because he is pulling down over \$100,000 a year as a retired fireman while also currently taking a salary at Cotati City Hall, but because he is acting like a complete coward and embarrassment to firefighters everywhere. We asked Mr. Landman in an email to simply comment on the high weed fire dangers littering the landscape in Cotati, and what he was personally doing about the problem. Landman couldn't be bothered and refused to comment or return our emails.

Not to be outdone by Mark Landman, Councilwomen Susan Harvey, Pat Gilardi, and Janet Orchard all refused similar requests for comment, and refused to offer any explanation why, for the first time in years, the City of Cotati is refusing to address the complete lack of code enforcement of the fire dangers and the urban blight visible throughout the downtown area. We wanted to get their thoughts on how high/dry weeds and grasses can possibly help attract more business and tourism to our town.

The four stooges on the council are acting more than juvenile by not entertaining pertinent questions from the press, and they just continue to attract more gadflies at public meetings at City Hall than a fresh pile of cow manure. The silence of their voices is just deafening, and a public relations disaster in the first degree.

The public should be outraged. Maybe it will take someone getting seriously hurt or property destroyed as a result of a grass fire raging through town to get someone in government to do something about the problem.





Progressive Hypocrisy, Liberal Lies?

Guest Editorial by Michael Ceremello

I always find it interesting that you can call some people on their spoken words and they get all upset when asked to back them up. Actions, to use a well worn phrase, speak louder than words. In the city of Dixon, the mayor read a proclamation honoring the coming time period as "Constitution Week". What I find marvelously amusing is that he has the chutzpah to honor something he neither understands nor believes in.

Does Cotati have any of this country's founding documents prominently displayed for public viewing? Well neither does Dixon despite being asked more than once to do so. Full sized renditions of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights are available online for the bargain price of \$35. Framing can run a bit more but I would imagine the whole project could be done for well under \$1000. So, cost is not the sticking point.

I would have thought that book burning as well as other destructive means of showing the intolerant's displeasure with the existence of contrary opinions in Cotati's pseudo-intellectual environment was part of the distant past. Obviously it is not as evidenced by the photos of this newspaper being torn in half at its stand at Oliver's market. I would suggest you Wiccan practitioners be careful. Witch burning may be brought back next.

As I replied to Ms. Gray in last month's missive, exactly what part of the Constitution is it that you revere? Certainly by the regressive progressive "hate actions" as witnessed, your hypocrisy knows no bounds. Freedom of the press and freedom of speech is relegated to the waste heap of history by those who would restrict these rights when it interferes with the ignorant bliss of accepting the left's easily challenged logic.

It is also rather disturbing that *your* mayor, Janet OrChild, condones this type of action by her inaction on the dais. I wonder how much longer it will be before she starts a "jugend" movement to have children "rat out" their parents for professing conservative leanings even if that amounts to glancing at this text. Can the Cotati Brown Shirts be that far off?

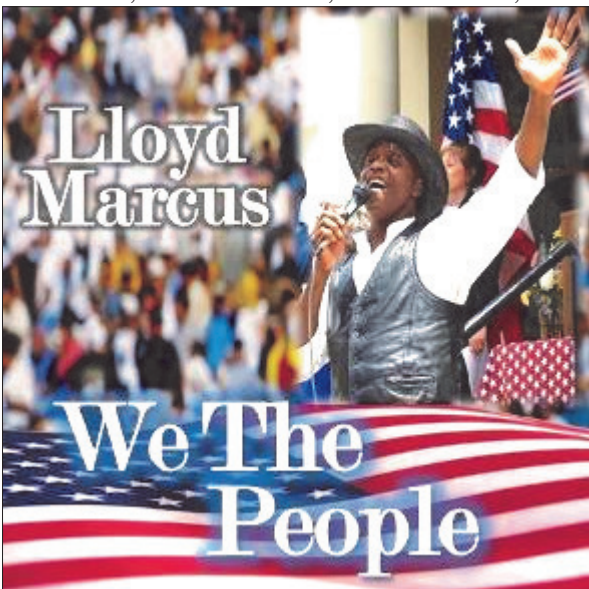
Frankly the cranky clowns responsible for this criminal behavior simply make our day ... or should I say month? At worst we have your attention. At best your fear radiates through your action. That fear is that others will read our thoughts and believe them. Why shouldn't they? The points are all based in irrefutable fact ...

Rather than continuing to beat on the mentally deficient and defenseless majority within your community, I want to take some time to address the lies surrounding the TEA Party movement which also has the regressive majority in your community quaking in their boots. For those ignorant of the fact, **TEA** stands for **T**axed **E**nough **A**lready. The obvious connection to the Boston Tea Party aside, the revolution being sought is not against any outside force but against those who have perverted our country away from rugged individualism and toward socialism known as Communism-lite.

As money is the life blood of politicians who would buy their votes by making us all pawns to "the System", this food stock must be taken away from those who mismanage, waste, and destroy its value. This was the genesis of the movement. The racist aspect has been touted by its detractors. Perhaps we should take a quick glance at its validity.

Given that 90% or more of the black population voted for Obama simply because he was half black demonstrates that racism is not one sided. I shouldn't leave out the "white guilt vote" as many regressives also voted simply for the color of his skin and to be part of history. These comments are more to demonstrate liberal hypocrisy over race than to be a reflection on the TEA Party.

Why would you expect the more than 50% of this country who are on the dole to be TEA Party Patriots? Their sustenance comes from "Obama's stash". Yet there are many Hispanic conservatives whom I have met. The black American patriots are becoming more outspoken. Lloyd Marcus is one of these, along with Herman Cain, Thomas Sowell, Walt Williams, and



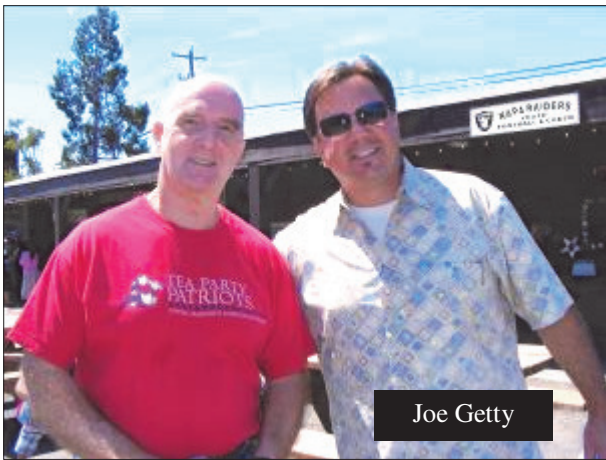
others. The question is why financial conservatism and Constitutional traditionalism is rejected by those separated by only a few generations from slavery and, in the case of the Hispanic, immediately from a corrupt Mexican government that practices economic slavery?

The radio team of Jack Armstrong and Joe Getty performed along with Lloyd Marcus at the kickoff of



the TEA Party Express cross country bus tour in Napa this last month. The question I posed to Joe Getty was simple. How do we reach out to young people and the minorities who are visibly absent for the most part? I say "most" because there actually were youth in attendance from those skilled in representing the conservatives' viewpoint to those exploring what the Party is all about.

The answer is simple. Education has always been the key. How do you get the word out when miscreants would tear up the printed word? You just keep right on printing. You speak every day on your radio show. You send emails to your friends. All of this has to be done with the facts.



The fact is that the TEA party welcomes all who believe in what this country was, economically and judicially. It is not about returning to Jim Crow laws. America was made by individuals, not by a centralized government dictating what type of toilet or light bulb you could buy. Henry Ford who visited Luther Burbank is a good example of the man who changed America for the better. Aside from the fact that Ford was duped by Adolph Hitler, his assembly line idea revolutionized industrial America, an America which is on the wane.

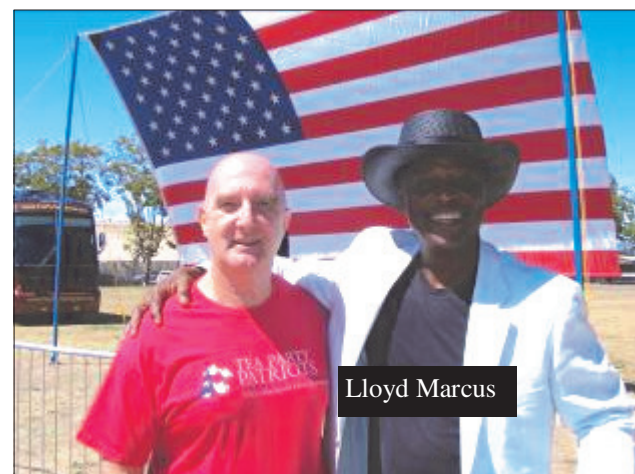
People in America need to realize they are making a choice. The choice is simple. Do you want to be told what to do, how much you will have, and when and how you can do and spend it? Put even simpler, is it better to be assured by the government of having a little or taking a chance on life to have abundance? What it comes down to is a choice between individualism and collectivism.

Collectivism is a system automatically doomed to failure. Even slaves eventually will not produce and at best will only produce at a less than optimal rate. Why would you work if someone else will just give you what they produce?

The United States of America made a wrong turn during the Franklin Delano Roosevelt presidency. The reason for the deviance away from Constitutional government was the great war. Whether the threat was the Japanese or Islamic jihadists, neither Roosevelt nor Bush should have been allowed to destroy our Constitutional guarantees. However, the Constitution would be rather worthless if it proved to be the instrument which destroyed us from within.

TEA Party Patriots believe in a stable and viable America. They don't believe in bringing our Nation down to the levels of third world countries but enabling those entities to raise their standards toward ours.

There is no guilt. There is only choice ...



Another Look at Planned City Park on Old Red'

By Eric Kirchmann, Citizen of Cotati



In regards to the banner headline story by George Barich front page and page 3 of the September 2011 Cotati Independent:

As a five-term elected official who served over twenty years representing Cotati, I understand the need for officials to support their staff, and seek positive outcomes. Mr. Barich points out that prime commercial property at, and along 7883 Old Redwood Highway, was purchased from Paul Oliva and Joel Rosenblum for \$1,475,000. This is higher than the "going rate" and the owners are probably happy to be done with negotiations. The property is part of a number of speculative parcels purchased with Orin Thiesen as part of the "Northern Gateway". Mr. Thiesen is not as expansive as he once was in creating developments such as the "Windsor Green" project. He and his partners had hoped to gentrify Cotati as had been done in Windsor, Graton, and elsewhere. It should be noted that Windsor gets the bulk of their tax revenue from the Wal-mart shopping area not the Windsor Green Development. Wal-Mart is the anchor store and project in Windsor, not Mr. Thiesen's project built around a "green" purchased by the Open Space District subsidized by voter approved sales tax revenues.

As stated, I have to believe that Mr. Oliva and Mr. Rosen are happy to be getting a fair price for their holdings, and to be free of negotiating with the Cotati City staff which is as pleasant and rewarding as interacting with a bed pan. The property owners worked in good faith with the city who holds the cards in development. Ms. Thompson negotiated in her usual warm and open fashion. Her style was made public when a former city official, then Cotati's Police Chief and now a Healdsburg City Council person, was at odds with Thompson for not following process or recommendations in using public funds.

Mr. Barich is concerned about a city park on a busy street. He is correct in his assumptions of costs and maintenance and even safety, as the City for some time shut down restrooms and services at their existing parks. Traffic flow should be a concern, as well as rumored underground tanks and haz-mat in the area. Old timers recall Union 76 shutting down a neighboring service station due to concerns about safe operations of their franchised station. The BP station on the other side of the freeway sat dormant for over a year as contaminated tanks were cleaned up. This is a reasonable concern but the big picture is not concerned with safety or retaining an auto shop which had moved and returned in the past few years. The property was sold to exchange funds for realigning the roadway to access Oliver's intended development of property on Saint Joseph's way. The "affordable housing" and park are required to qualify for that funding and to develop a roadway to assist the Oliver's project.

The Oliver's Market flagship original store is a tax generating business which the city supports. It has supported the enterprise in the past with a below market interest rate when Oliver's expanded into the TG&Y store and doubled its retail space. It now wishes to relocate and expand on property it has purchased options on. The city wants to help Oliver's out by sealing the deal with easy access, which requires a housing and park component. It is costly moving signals and roadways and Cotati has already done this foolishly through shortsighted planning on Redwood Drive. They now wish to secure some anchor stores for their dream of the Northern Gateway. This is commerce and makes sense as Cotati struggles to start using what is left of commercial space to generate some sales tax revenue. The housing and park may well be simply a "pocket park" and development, like the one behind Target in Rohnert Park. Many things are speculative, and it is easy to assume things, and ask questions. It would be nice if our elected officials and their staff could come forward and answer reasonable questions.

My concern and question is: What are the plans for filling the Oliver's spot in what was the Farmer's Market, behind the Crocker Bank? Many years ago we had banks and markets and growth. Now we have a bank, a supermarket, and little else that could be called economic development. Too many buildings are empty, and adding to this may not be prudent. Mr. Barich is correct that I fail to see how "Downtown Garage" will stay downtown, I further doubt it will be moving to the old Oliver's store site. The City has a plan and is trading a park and low cost housing to make for a low cost transition for Oliver's from their present location to their new location. This will, we hope, generate or retain sales tax dollars in Cotati. Workers may be able to use the affordable housing and park to advantage. I can only hope that the empty Oliver's building has a prospective long term lease to fill the anchor store in our largest shopping center.

For the future of Cotati we have to hope things "will work out". If we had had the opportunity to draw Nokia to the proposed office building development as offered by the developer of the stand-alone Lowes shopping mall, we'd have an empty building looming on that site as well. We have to look on the bright side and believe that economic recovery is "Right Around the Corner" as our City Council states at their meetings. Mr. Barich, you have to believe that our elected officials and their staff are doing what is best for us. Some sacrifice is needed. You can always get your car worked on where you buy your pants, watch a movie, or bowl.



By Carol Tomlinson

North Bay Patriots is a non-partisan, grassroots political movement focused on re-



North Bay Patriots – Who We Are

establishing dedication to our Constitution as the guiding document for federal, state, and local government policy.

North Bay Patriots was founded in March of 2009 by a group of 15-20 citizens who were greatly concerned about the direction of our country, particularly after the 2008 elections. Our organization was based on the nationwide 9/12 Project that was formed to capture the spirit and determination shown by Americans after the 9/11 attacks. We look to the 9 Founding Principles and 12 Core Values set out by the 9/12 Project for guidance in our actions and in those of our elected officials.

The first official event hosted by NBP was held on April 15th, 2009, a Tax Day Party at Old Courthouse Square in Santa Rosa followed by a July 4th Independence Day Celebration and Constitution Outreach Day attended by 500-600 people. We have hosted a

healthcare townhall meeting, a townhall meeting for senatorial and gubernatorial candidates, and other special events with FreedomWorks and Graham Beckel.

We hold regular meetings every two weeks at the Veterans Memorial Hall in Cotati at 8505 Park Avenue from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Our guest speakers cover a full range of issues of local, state, and federal importance – from SmartMeter, SMART Train, illegal immigration, sustainable development, high density housing, the economy, and healthcare, to name just a few. Before each meeting, at 6 pm, our

Constitution study group meets for discussion of our founding documents.

What binds us together is a concern for the future of the U.S. and a desire to fight for the preservation of those freedoms and rights that have made the United States a great country and us a blessed citizenry. We welcome people of all political persuasions and ideologies to join us.

Oct. 12th Dan de la Torre on "How to talk to liberals" & Spaghetti Feed

Oct. 25th Heather Gass, East Bay Tea Party, on Agenda 21
www.NorthBayPatriots.com



High Weeds and Grasses Pose Serious Threat of Fire and Urban Blight

(from Page One)

High weed fire dangers throughout the town are real and can't be denied. Yet, there seems to be no will by anyone in local government to do much of anything but ignore the problem and collect their paycheck. All it would take is one burning cigarette carelessly tossed out a car window and onto the ground of one of these parcels of land in blatant violation of the weed abatement ordinance to set the area ablaze.



Old Redwood Highway

When asked that question, Ober stated the official policy of the RAFD is that the fire district will only investigate these obvious fire hazards throughout the town upon receiving a formal citizen complaint. The fire district will then do a formal inspection and a report will follow days or weeks later depending on their workload and staffing level. After the report is reviewed by the chief, a letter is sent to the property owner demanding the weeds be removed within thirty days. If the weeds are not abated, a \$150 fine is imposed on the property owner, which is often just a fraction of the cost of cutting down these weeds on many of these large lots. So, where is the incentive for property owners to abate the tall grasses and weeds? According to resident Ken Coleman of Cotati, "This would be like a traffic cop observing a car speeding in town, running some stop signs, and not giving chase unless he/she first receives a complaint from a citizen. It's absurd".

Cotati's Weed ordinance 8.16 is clear that high weeds become a nuisance to the community at some point when they become so tall and/or so dry they will easily ignite at the mere touch of a flame. Such a situation triggers the ordinance and enforcement is manda-

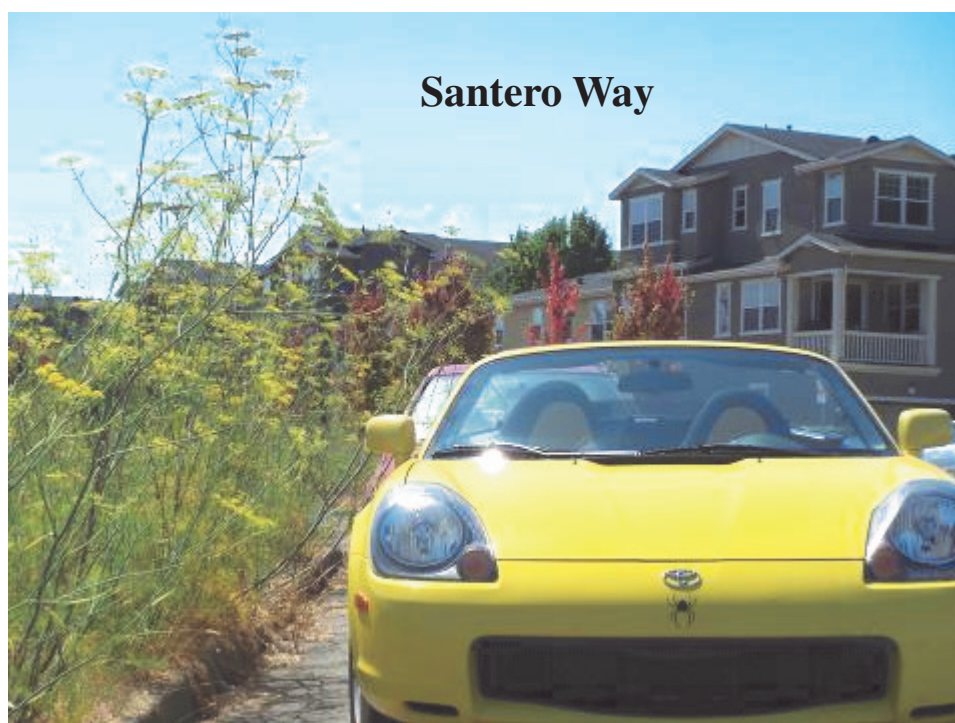


Old Redwood Highway

tory. But the city has embarked on selective enforcement by delegating the responsibility to the fire district that requires first a citizen complaint. But none of this seems to be concerning the highly paid city employees at City Hall, city leaders, or the brave men and women of the Rancho Adobe Fire District. Both government agencies that have the responsibility of keeping us all safe from wild fires and urban blight say they simply don't have the manpower or resources to enforce the long-standing Cotati weed abatement ordinance. In addition, by ignoring the law it's like a tax holiday for those property owners who are used to spending hundreds of dollars each year mowing down their tall weeds and grasses. It's clear both agencies have their priorities upside down.

But the fire dangers are real now. In prior years, by the time July rolls around the city has already sent out notices to all properties with tall dry weeds and grasses that have been deemed a fire hazard by the Cotati Public Works Department to abate their weed problem within 30 days or face a hefty fine. If the property owner did not comply, the city would outsource the job of weed removal and send the property owner a bill for the work. If the payment was not received reimbursing the city, the city placed a lien on the property.

The city is also losing thousands of dollars in fines that could have been collected at a time when they can't afford to let money slip through their fingers like this. Code enforcement costs money, and this is exactly what we expect government to be in the business of



Santero Way

doing, enforcing the law.

City Councilman Mark Landman, who retired from the Novato fire department, refused to be interviewed for this story. Chapter 8.16 of the Cotati Municipal Code clearly spells out the Cotati Weed Abatement Law and the procedures involved in abating these nuisances. Despite emails to city council members asking why the fire dangers continue to plague the city despite the law, all city council members refused comment. Cotati's got all these great laws on the books which have cost millions of dollars to enact over the years. But what good are all these laws if city leaders and city staff are too lazy to enforce them?



Old Redwood Highway

It's nothing less than selective enforcement for the local government agencies to turn a blind eye on these violations and act only upon a citizen's complaint. It is apparent that because of the city council's fiscal mismanagement and irresponsibility that we don't have adequate staffing to address the problem. Maybe someone will have to get hurt or a building will have to be burnt to the ground before these two government agencies begin doing their job rather than spending countless hours figuring out ways to raise their paychecks.



Santero Way, site of the future SMART depot



Letters to the Editor

Email: editor@thecotatiindependent.com

Dear Editor,

I just received the Sept. issue. First time I read it. Your paper made me feel at home; I'm from Chicago. I'd like to meet the city manager; she sounds as if she received her training by the Chicago Socialist Democratic party. (We like to call them that. It makes them crazy.) Thanks for a good paper.

Clyde



Dear Editor,

I am a Green Party voter who sometimes votes Democrat. I agree with your paper's dislike of a new park on Old Red'. I also agree park bathrooms should remain open. City council salaries and benefits should not be increased. But I disagree with your economic ideas. Look, people who have worked steady their entire lives cannot afford dental care and healthcare. We need more drug abuse prevention programs and child abuse prevention programs and job training programs. So, stop leaving your unwanted newspaper at my mailbox. It is illegal to dump on my private property and wastes precious trees, and the ink used pollutes our waterways.

Barbara Daugherty
Cotati, CA

[Editor's response: First, this newspaper uses no more trees and ink than other newspapers delivered throughout the county. Second, this newspaper is printed on 100% recycled paper. Third, Barbara, your return address is in rural Penngrove down a street I had never been before in my life. We delivered no newspaper to your home. Barbara, you are exactly why the silent majority in this country will no longer be silent and voted accordingly in the 2010 landslide election that made history. Let's all celebrate our diversity and tolerance for free speech.]



Are We Prepared?

From Page One

Each winter we see weather related disasters causing flooding, necessitating water rescues, trees down, electrical problems and downed wires. We observe that fire resources are stretched very thin and that without the dedication of our crews who respond off duty to the stations to up staff other apparatus, we would be hard pressed to provide a high level of service.

In a serious disaster, like an earthquake, the response of our off duty personnel will probably be slower, as they will make sure their own family is safe before responding to the stations.

In a large scale disaster, the District will be over-taxed and not able to respond to every call. The citizens will be part of the first response, taking care of those in need around them. They should learn First Aid, develop a disaster kit and have a disaster plan.

Our District is developing plans and resources to deal with these disasters. The District has met with Rohnert Park and Cotati and they are developing an Emergency Operations Center that will take care of all of our fire district. This center will coordinate emergency operations and ordering of resources to assist in our operations.

The District is in the process of installing a diesel fuel tank for our vehicles, and we have installed a container at our Station 1, in Cotati, and a container at Station 2, in Penngrove. The goal of these two containers is to provide limited food, first aid supplies and other necessary supplies for 500 for five days including our own firefighters. These containers contain about 550 gallons of drinking water, some first aid supplies and tools. Our firefighter's association has been using money from its fund raising efforts to stock these

containers with enough supplies to last at least five days. These funds are limited and District has not been able to provide revenue to support these containers as the economic downturn is causing us to use up reserve funds just to maintain services at safe levels over the last two years.

This goal is lofty but necessary and the District will appreciate any help or donations that they receive.

The disaster containers need the following: bags of beans and rice, a turkey deep fryer to cook the beans and rice, canned food, MRE (meals ready to eat), more first aid supplies, toilet paper, propane tanks and even pet food. We need enough supplies to hand out to the citizens in an emergency.

Anyone who wants to donate to these containers can bring donations to the firehouses in Cotati or Penngrove and they will be placed into the containers.

The answer to the question, "Are we prepared for a disaster" can be answered that we are working on being self sufficient, but there is more to do and we can use some help. The following items are some suggestions to our citizens:

1. Citizens should be prepared to be self sufficient for five days as well.
2. Develop a disaster plan
3. Make a disaster kit; visit the FEMA web site for more information
4. Take some classes, like CPR, First aid, and CERT, some of these classes are available at Rancho Adobe Fire
5. Drill with your family-neighbors and friends

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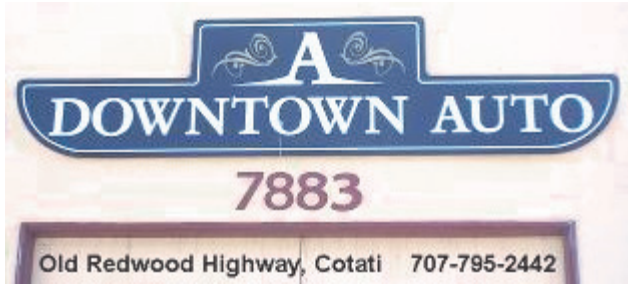
A puzzle by Greg Karraker

Fibs are really something. Sometimes they're little half-truths. Sometimes they're great big whoppers. Most five-year olds can spot them right away. Some people call fibs flat-out lies. Some people call them spin. But this is a fun puzzle; so we'll just call them fibs. How many fibs can you find on this copy of the SMART train home page, downloaded in September, 2011?

(Answers on page 8.)

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Frequent City Hall Critic Evidently Doesn't Know Where City Hall Is

By Greg Karraker

In the last two issues of this paper, I have urged readers who don't agree with city council policies to go a council meeting and speak up, during Citizens' Business.

Only one problem: Twice in a row, I gave you the address of the vacant lot across the street. Council meetings are still every 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 7 PM. But the real address is **201 W. Sierra Street, Cotati.**

Lloyd Marcus reporting from TEA Party Express



Tea Party Express V national bus tour begins this Saturday in Napa, CA. As I pack my bags and organize my performance music in preparation to embark on my fifth national Tea Party Express tour, I am a bit frustrated by those still clueless about the Tea Party movement; who we are and our propose.

Please excuse my frankness. Despite all the Tea Party has done to pull our country back from diving over the cliff to it's death into liberal socialistic hell, incredibly, there are still "Republicans" who think we are "fringe loonies". If God had not sent the Tea Party, America as we know it would be over!

Then, we have the racist Congressional Black Caucus. Rather than abandoning their racial bias to make an honest assessment of President Obama's job performance and his failed economic policies, they blame epidemic high black unemployment on the Tea Party. Their accusation is so despicable and absurd, it is unworthy of a response.

Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-FL), a member of the Congressional Black Caucus said, "Let us all remember who the real enemy is," she added. "The real enemy is the Tea Party. The Tea Party holds the Congress hostage. They have one goal in mind, and that's to make President Obama a one-term president."



Another member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), said, "The tea party can go to hell."

Rep. Wilson, you did get one point 100% correct. It is and should be the goal of every patriot who loves, freedom, liberty and America to "make President Obama a one-term president." I pray, "Dear Lord, pleeeeease make it so."

Another member of the tag team assaulting and slandering the tea party is the liberal media. I have attended over 200 tea parties nationwide including Alaska. On numerous occasions the media has asked, basically, "Why are you, a black man, hanging with these racist white folks?"

My response is always the same, "These folks are not opposing Obama's skin color. Several even voted for him. They are simply saying no to his socialistic agenda."

Unfortunately, I have witnessed liberal media completely ignoring the mood and tone of a tea party rally to fit their preconceived report of the event.

Case in point. On a beautiful sunny day at a tea party rally in Michigan, I sang "God Bless the USA" for the finale of my performance. The response of the thousand or more in the audience was tremendous; a celebration of love for America. Afterwards, I could hardly make my way through the crowd because of so many patriots wanting to shake my hand and take pictures.



Also, at that rally was a white woman in a wheelchair who was terminally ill. Her daughter told one of our staff, "My mom said all she wanted to do before dying is to meet Lloyd Marcus."

Wow, I can not begin to tell you how much that humbles me. Amidst the overwhelmingly loving, happy and upbeat atmosphere, a stoned faced reporter approached me. She asked me if I felt comfortable at this racist hate-filled tea party. I wanted to say, "Are you nuts?" Despite holding my tongue and trying to politely convince the stern reporter otherwise, she became visibly angry at me, abruptly turned and walked away.

Brother and sister patriots, I am so looking forward to seeing and fellowshipping with you; hanging with my true "homies"; folks who share my love for America.

My plan is to give you daily updates from the road; highlights of the rallies, the local food favorites I sample (my mouth still waters thinking about the awesome bar-b-que spare-ribs a woman greeted our bus with in Memphis; the best I've ever eaten. Sorry mom.) and the extraordinary patriots I meet on every tour.

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Cotati can learn a lesson from Novato

....A story that hits too close to home



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Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 787
Novato, CA 94948-0787

Novato is a fine city. It was incorporated in May 1960 and has developed a set of community values that any American city would envy. Years ago, San Francisco had a requirement that its public safety personnel must live within a half hour response time. Novato was at the out reaches of that requirement. That is why so many current and

retired San Francisco police and fire fighters live in Novato. They are the backbone of our community. Even before Novato's incorporation as a city, Novato was known as a working man's town. Residents from the other cities in Marin may have said that disparagingly, but in Novato, we have been proud of that distinction.

Our city council and all of our institutions went on as they had through the years. But then something began to change in Novato. Within the past decade or so, Novato became a desirable destination city for hundreds of illegal aliens. At first, this phenomenon did not seem to concern anyone. But conspicuously, about three years ago it became apparent that the community values of which the town had been so proud were being subverted. As a resident of Novato since 1971, I became accustomed to our home town just the way it was, and saw it changing for the worse. Like Chicken Little, I wrote letters to the newspaper warning the community that Novato was at the tipping point. The city council did not want to hear it, played stupid, and could not be bothered with enforcing the law. They played every game in the book to avoid the obvious problems associated with this influx of people who were undocumented. The entire Novato City Hall played "hear no evil, see no evil".

This is my town. I helped pay for it legally, and I wanted it to stay that way, a law abiding community. Selfish? Yes. But I moved here after a tour in the Army because I liked Novato and what it stood for. But now, things have changed here. The gang graffiti has become so thick that gangs are painting over each other's graffiti, and the crime keeps rising. But the city council and the police chief turned a cheek and denied that the town was changing for the worse. They tacitly enshrined Novato as a "sanctuary city" for illegal aliens right along side San Rafael. In addition, the city council embarked on a policy of more and more low-income housing at the expense of the California taxpayers. This was in essence tax exempt, high density, welfare recipient type apartment complexes. "Why tax exempt", I asked? "Because we said so", they replied. Who is "we", I exclaimed? "We" turned out to be the Sacramento social engineering legislators who wanted every city in California to be identical with this sort of schlock housing, money that could have gone to the public schools and much more. These liberal legislators had successes such as the City of Antioch, CA., a diverse city with affordable housing where every resident except the hard core criminals is afraid to leave his home or apartment after sundown. That was not going to happen to Novato if I had anything to do or say about it.

So, a small group of Novato and Marin citizens got together and looked to the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, The Bill of Rights, and the California Elections Code. We had a right to engineer our own cities. We drafted a Legal Employment and Contracting Initiative which required local businesses to insist they verify the legal status of a worker before hiring them through the E-Verify system. We thought to ourselves we too can "Think globally, act locally" and rolled up our sleeves.

Through this citizen initiative, we could force employers, local businesses, and city government to hire only legal citizens. We researched the Elections Code and the initiatives which had been successful in other Marin cities and drafted our initiative, collected the required number of signatures, and had the initiative approved for the ballot by the Marin County Elections Officer. Surprise to us, under the Elections Code, the city council could either adopt the initiative by a majority vote of the council and save the cost and expense of a special election, or certify the initiative back to the County Elections Officer for inclusion on the next general election.

However, being a city council that supported the idea of being a sanctuary city, Novato city leaders asked the city attorney to find a way to prevent our initiative from ever being placed on the local ballot. City attorney, Jeffrey Walters researched the request and found that the law of the land was a San Francisco federal case on E-Verify. That decision, *Los Chicanos v Napolitano*, an Arizona case, said that there was neither implicit nor explicit federal pre-emption that would prevent a state or city from enacting a mandatory E-Verify ordinance. The clever city attorney found a way around our initiative. He quoted the part of the decision which was the losing party's argument and incorporated it into a study that said that the city could refuse to do either, enact or refer to the ballot. So that is what the city did, they took no action on our initiative. After

the council refused to refer the initiative to the county elections officer, eleven out of the twelve members of the initiative committee, that I was a part of, tucked their tails between their legs and gave up. I, however, would not be so whipped. I began attending every city council meeting from that moment on, and demanded that the council obey the law and place the initiative on the ballot because we had gained the necessary signatures. After all, the citizens of Novato had a right to vote on it. The mayor, rather, declared on the record and on television, that if the initiative was placed on the ballot, "the voters might vote the wrong way" against Novato being a sanctuary city.. Have you ever heard of anything so arrogant? The mayor essentially said, we know what is good for you, and we are going to force you to live in a sanctuary city whether the people like or not even if we have to break the law and shove it down your throats.



Declaring a city a sanctuary city can be made by decree, or they can be slipped in while no one is looking. Making Novato a sanctuary city essentially invited the illegal alien gangs to "vive, trabaja y vende las drogas aqui"; live, work and sell drugs here in Novato. The FBI did a study that found where there is tolerance for illegal aliens, law enforcement authorities get overwhelmed and begin concentrating their efforts on bigger crimes and ignoring the lesser crimes and traffic enforcement. Novato Police Chief Kreins was asked about this fact in December 2010 and he replied that there were no illegal alien gangs to worry about because there were absolutely no illegal aliens in Novato. He knew this because he had instructed his patrol officers not to ask anyone they arrested whether they were illegal aliens or not, which by the way, violated federal law which requires such an inquiry.

The city council had their trump card, too. They had the power of their public offices to fall back on. They could intimidate at will any member of the public who stood up, objected, protested, and held city leaders accountable for their action and inactions. City leaders engineered a plan whereby they



instructed the police chief to go so far as to arrest me for "disturbing a public meeting", Penal Code section 403, for no good reason one night at a council meeting. They tried to embarrass me, and even threaten my professional licensing as an attorney for turning my back to the city council during my time to speak. The city ultimately charged me with a misdemeanor for speaking out in favor of civil rights, just like people did in marching in Montgomery, Alabama. The police chief wore his blue uniform with his four stars and had his captain put me in handcuffs and hauled me away from the city council meeting one evening for remaining silent during my three minutes to address the council. However, the city council, the city attorney, and the chief of police never bother to check the law. PC 403 was intended to prevent the audience from interfering with a speaker at a public meeting. In this case, I was the speaker who simply turned my back on the city council during my time at the podium. It's on YouTube and shocking. How could I interfere with my own presentation, I asked the council. I spoke for nine seconds during my allotted three minutes of Public Comment and used the rest of the time to remaining silent waiting for an answer to my question. For my obsolescence, I was accused of a criminal act by the city council. Later, the Marin County District Attorney, knowing that he would be made a fool of if he tried to prosecute the case, dropped all charges.

But the overreaching and irresponsible Novato city council would stop there. In fact, they decided they would stop at nothing to silence me. Next, they began surveying Novato for General Plan Update changes to allow more welfare-felon tax exempt housing in town regardless of the fact that Novato, with 30% of the county's population, already had 50% of the county's low income, high density, welfare-felon housing projects. And what successes those low income, high density, welfare-felon housing had been! The property management firms for these housing projects had allowed their properties to deteriorate into the police number one source of calls and complaints. These areas were not crime ridden areas to city leaders because the statistics that the chief of police kept showed that they were

less crime ridden than any other areas of Novato. This was an outright lie and there are statistics to prove it. Despite the fact that law abiding residents in these complexes were often afraid to leave their units, the city council said that they were successes in government assisted housing.

Then came Novato's New Year's attempted double gang murder at the Safeway store which proved the cat was out of the bag. Now, the police chief had to admit that there was an illegal gang presence in Novato. He also blamed the gang activities on a Caucasian motorcycle gang (to be political correct) and make like he wasn't being a racist. If they accused illegal alien gang members of attempted murderer or worse they felt they had to accuse other people who were white to avoid criticism from the left in town the council was picking on one single racial group. Fact is, no one has seen any motorcycle gangs in Novato since the 1980s when the town motorcycle Club closed down.

But since the autocracy of the city council and their seeming unassailability had been challenged, another issue came to the fore, "affordable housing". The Sacramento leftists wanted every California city to be identical, after all that is what equality is all about isn't it? No. The law of the land speaks to equal opportunity for all, not equal results for all. "Affordable housing" seeks to have Novato taxpayers investing their Novato tax dollars into welfare housing so that those who earn little or nothing can live as sumptuously as those who work their collective asses off. Novato already has 50% of Marin's welfare housing even though it is a community with only 30% of Marin's population. Why ABAG, Associated Bay Area Governments chose Novato for the majority of Marin's affordable housing goals, who knows? It may be because Novato is such a desirable place to live. It may be because the city council has always done what it was told to do and scared to stand up for itself.

But Novato citizens rose up against this social engineering gone wrong. Whereas Gail Meyers had scolded the council of its transgression to an audience of 10 or 15 people, now 200 to 300 Novato citizens attended council meetings, and spoke their minds and it got heated.

The "affordable housing" opponents stopped the council in its tracks. The city council had to engineer an appearance of acknowledging the public will. So, city leaders and staff had meetings, and meetings, and more meetings. In the end, these meetings did dissuade the council from the most egregious actions, but the council still got its way, more affordable housing. If the council had really listened to its citizens, it would have sued ABAG and challenged SB 375 as unconstitutional. That would have truly reflected the will of the people.

Currently, there are two lawsuits pending against the City of Novato and the city council. The lawsuit to compel the initiative to require E-Verify for city jobs to be placed on the next ballot was rejected by "activist" Judge Lynn Duryee. An "activist" judge is one who rules in accordance with political correctness, now the law. That lawsuit is on appeal to the Appeals Court in San Francisco. In light of the U.S. Supreme Court decision that there is no federal pre-emption, that appeal has a possibility of surviving even SF leftism. The other lawsuit against the council is for violating my civil rights, for suppressing my free speech rights, and for the false arrest during a council meeting. The outcome in that matter may be years down the road.



In the meantime, the current battle rages as we approach the November elections. Two incumbents are running for the Novato council as well as more pro-welfare candidates. Novato needs change, so I have declared myself a candidate as well..

Novato needs a new council and city manager that is responsive to the people. Novato also needs a new city attorney, one who does not have to lie as a matter of habit. Novato needs a new police chief, one who will enforce the laws equally, and not give preference to illegal aliens. November 8th, this year, is the Day of Challenges for the people of Novato. Will our community values be restored? Cotati can learn a lesson here. Don't let your city be taken over by the leftist policies that are ruining our country and our way of life. Hiring illegal aliens is wrong. More affordable housing subsidized by our tax dollars is wrong, especially when it is being built in the downtown commercial areas of our towns. It only invites trouble, reduced taxes to the community, and kills economic development. Beware of more low income housing in your downtown area. It's not a good mix and not sustainable for a self sufficient and viable community in the long run.



Can You Find THE FIBS IN THIS PICTURE?



A puzzle by Greg Karraker



FIB #1: Find a trolley, ferry, or shuttle this "network" will connect to in your lifetime..

FIB #2: How do you "easily" get to and from the train station without a car? Hope your skateboard is "easy" when it's raining.

FIB #3: It's not 70 miles any more. It's 37. Why don't they say so right here?

FIB #4: The bike path isn't 70 miles, either. Is it even 37? Or is there one at all?

FIB #5: When is this little train going to Cloverdale? You don't know, and they don't either.

FIB #6: Can't get there from here.

FIB #7: Can't get here, either.

FIBS #8 and 9: Guess where else you aren't going.

FIB #10: Here's the whopper: We voted for a zippy train that would take us to the Larkspur Ferry so there would be a better way to get to San Francisco instead of crawling along in our cars, or on the Golden Gate Transit.

But here's the new promise of SMART, from Farhad, their rich new Director: He says his job is "To make sure that by 2016, people do not get stuck for two hours between Santa Rosa and San Rafael."

FIB #11: They say they can't build the whole thing because of the economy, but never tell us they underestimated the cost by at least \$143 Million. That's OK. People always fib about money.

FIB #12: See that date, 2014? Now, SMART says the five of you who plan to commute from Cotati to San Rafael by train will have to wait till 2016.

This copy of the SMART train home page was downloaded in September, 2011 and it had a lot of fibs: Little half-truths, great big whoppers, and a lot of stuff they just didn't tell you at all. On this one page, it was easy to find a dozen. But you can probably do better. Just go to www.sonomamarintrain.org. Read their press releases, and you'll find a whole basket full of fibs. Or if you'd rather do something better with your time, visit www.repealsmart.org, and sign a petition to end this horrendous mess before it gets even worse.

A Fitting Ceremony, Followed by a Surprise Attack

By Greg Karraker

My wife and I usually see one Giants home game a year. Months ago, we decided the September 11 game against the Dodgers would be the most appropriate for many reasons, the pre-game ceremony being the largest.

Following the initial 9/11 attacks, I was frustrated by the NFL's decision not to play their regularly scheduled games that Sunday. Not because the games were important in and of themselves, but because interrupting our favorite rituals would show terrorists everywhere that our fighting spirit could be shaken. Despite this, in the months immediately following, I was encouraged by the way Americans of all political convictions were united by a jihadist attack on our core values. The prevalent national feeling was one of profound sorrow for the victims, justifiable suspicion of a newly discovered enemy, and highly appropriate rage.



September 11, 2001

Ten years later, we have slid into a pre-9/11 malaise, and some of our finest moments of unity have devolved into a swamp of endless partisan bickering. So I didn't know quite what to expect at a game in the heart of progressive country.

Fortunately, on Sunday, I was surprised on every level. Twenty-five minutes before the game, the sound of bagpipes and drums filled the park, a sad but comforting sound that has defined countless FD and PD funerals. The Stewart Tartan Pipes and Drums of San Francisco entered from right field, followed by San Francisco firefighters, police officers, members of the San Francisco Sheriff's Department, and representatives of the pilots' and flight attendants' associations.

The entire crowd stood respectfully, and in a very short time, most of the players lining the baselines realized it was appropriate to remove their caps. Everyone in the audience had been given a card with a flag on one side, and the name of a 9/11 victim on the other. Sadly, there were 2,977 different cards. As the pipes played, the crowd held their flags high. On the field, a large American flag was unfurled.



September 11, 2011 Photo: Kathryn Wickstrom

Sunday afternoon, nobody threw the ceremonial first pitch. Instead, Bruce Bochy placed a ball on the mound in honor of everyone who died in the attacks. A moment of silence was observed.

Most tellingly, the starting pitchers for both teams continued to throw warmup pitches during the entire ceremony. Nothing could have been more appropriate. No matter how much we grieve, or how much we want revenge, baseball goes on. Life goes on. And something fundamentally good about America, despite considerably long odds, goes on.

Are there jihadis out there who wish they had bombed civilians all across the country? Of course. Were they able to? No. In the first inning, I saw a cane come flying — not dropping — from the upper deck, where it laded out of sight on the deck below us.

That, oddly, may have been the best thing about the whole afternoon, better than the 8-1 Giants win, and even better than the pre-game ceremony. It is wonderful to know that despite the intentions of fanatics who have killed thousands of us, and would love to kill millions, that the worst thing that happened on the Tenth Anniversary of 9/11 was some poor Giants fan getting bonked by a flying cane.

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.



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

Prices: \$\$\$\$ Expensive (over \$30 pp)
\$\$\$ Mid-Range (\$18 - \$30 pp)
\$\$ Average (\$8 - \$18 pp)
\$ Bargain (under \$8 pp)
(Excludes beverage, tax, and tip)

KC's Downtown Grill

9501 Du Vander / Windsor, CA
707-838-7800
Category: American Dinner
Open: 7-days - 7am till 9pm
B-L-D
Speciality Adult drinks, beer & wine



**** 6/20 & 8/25/2011 \$\$-\$\$\$

Across from Windsor Town Green with outdoor patio seating, and a nostalgic interior of the 40's and 50's diner with great reproduction artifacts of that era. The menu is Fonzi meets California cuisine! Specialty burgers by the dozen, wonderful french fries, shakes & smoothies, sandwiches & subs. This place rocks it.

With 8 different Eggs Benedict served daily, not just for Sunday anymore, this kitchen sings to me with homemade Hollandaise sauce (who does that at a diner?) and eggs that are poached to perfection. For my non-egg loving husband, a side of country potatoes and sausage patties, 3 good sized and very tasty did it for him. The wait staff is friendly and efficient. Plates fly out of the kitchen and arrive HOT at the table. Who can ask for more? But wait, there is more. KC's has specials during the week for dinner. Wednesday night "Ribeye" served with choice of potato, veg and bread \$14.95 from 4pm till they run out! Friday & Saturday, slow roasted "Prime Rib" served with choice of potato, fresh veg and bread \$16.75 - \$22.95 (depends on the size you pick) 4:30pm till they run out. Hurry. Get Thee to KC's Downtown Grill and enjoy some great diner food.

Brixx Pizzeria

8204 Old Redwood Hwy. Cotati
707-664-1418
Category: Pizza
16 Kentucky St / Petaluma
707-766-8162
Open: 7-days 4pm - 9pm D only
Beer & Wine.



** 8/17 & 9/1/2011 \$\$

The new location in Cotati, next door to the Tradewinds bar, would be a welcome addition for pizza since Giovanni's down the street has been closed since July with no sign of reopening. But after two mediocre pizzas from Brixx sampled while at the Tradewinds (the bar and restaurant share a pass-through window for food service) I was overwhelmed and felt over-charged for pizza that had too many conflicting flavors. Less is definitely more, and unfortunately Brixx thinks more is more.

Perhaps I am not the only food critic around these parts. as the once open for lunch sign is now dark, it's dinner only. Our dinner visit at the restaurant was even less of an enjoyable experience as the food came out way too slow. The server was fine, but the kitchen needs help in organizing their time. With a room less than half full (capacity is maybe 30 people) why did it take 25 minutes to get a starter salad? I asked for their signature pizza, "4th Rock from the Sun" sausage, roasted red peppers, purple onion, mozzarella & goat cheese. It looked like a snowy white out on a plate. Way too much cheese and I almost needed a magnifying glass to see the sausage. I think the mozzarella and the goat cheese were in conflict with each other as the taste came across sour. Alias, the thin crust was wonderful so I ended up scrapping off the toppings and ate the crust.

The other dish ordered was a "Monsieur sr." hickory smoked ham sandwich with roasted red peppers, gruyere & pesto. Not very good. Bread was stale and under toasted, and the Caesar side salad was way over-dressed which wilted the lettuce making it inedible. I am hoping the charming owner of this restaurant takes a cue and attempts to re-work his menu of pizzas and gets back to basics.

Yanni's

10007 Main St. Penngrove, CA
707-795-7088
Category: Charcuterie
Open: Wed - Fri 11am - 7pm
Sat 11:30am - 7pm
Sun 11am - 3pm
Closed: Mon & Tues



L-D Soft Drinks only.

***** 12+ visits, 2011 \$\$

Small, but what a find! Yanni's makes hand-crafted, old-world sausages that are out of this world flavorful. For 2 years in a row, 2010 & 2011 Yanni's was awarded "Best Charcuterie" at the Sonoma County Harvest Fair. This year, Yanni's also won a Gold medal for their "Luganega" sausage and a Silver medal for "Thanksgiving in a Link" sausage. My personal favorite is the Limencello sausage. Yanni grills these pork masterpieces along with onions, red peppers and toasts a wonderful soft bun. OMG are they habit forming! But wait. There's more! Check out Yanni's Cheese Burger. It is probably the best cheese burger on the planet. The cheese is fried and it's heaven, crispy and soft all at the same time. Get Thee to Yanni's in Penngrove.

Lagunitas Tap-Room & Beer Sanctuary

1280 North McDowell Blvd / Petaluma
707-778-8776
L-D
Category: Beer Pub
Open: Wed - Fri from 2pm - 9pm
Sat & Sun 11:30am - 8pm
Closed: Mon & Tue
Beer & wine.



**** Every week! \$\$

Lagunitas' motto is "Beer Speaks, People Mumble". Does that say it all? With beer names like Hop Stupid, Little Sumpin Sumpin, Gnarly Wine and Censored, this place does almost everything right. A true beer garden with great outdoor patio and indoor seating, live music and now they are building a small amphitheater on the green, next to the "Schwag Shop" for those who need to buy T-shirts and such to identify themselves as true believers that beer is better than wine!

For me, I prefer only the original brew, Lagunitas IPA. A true ale with a wonderfully nutty flavor and golden color. For the more adventurous, the pub offers many combinations of beer tasting specials, any 4 for \$5 served in 4 oz glasses. Or, you can take home a 1/2 gallon "Growler" of any Lagunitas beer. The menu sticks to panini sandwiches, dips and chips, one salad, a simple cheese and fruit plate, and newly added special sausage sandwiches and chili.

Recently, I made a suggestion that the menu ought to include hand-made potato chips with a couple of dipping sauces as the Spring mix salad with vinaigrette is getting boring. They don't want to intrude on nearby restaurants serving french fries, so potato chips are a good bet. Warning: the chili is not so good and the sausage sandwich isn't much better. But the paninis and the Hummus and Pita Chips rock. The chips are very thin and crunchy. Last week they had a guy BBQ'g fresh oysters, yummy. All told, this is a find and a half. Best visited while the sun is still shining.

Sally Tomatoes

1100 Valley House Dr / Rohnert Park / 707-665-0260
Category: American
Open: Mon-Fri 7:30am - 9pm
B-L-D
Sat - 5pm - 9pm D only
Closed Sundays



Full bar.

* 9/9/2011 \$-\$\$

This cafe used to be in downtown Cotati. Now, it resides in an abandoned Agilent campus building that is not easy to find. Once you do, don't expect much. In fact, I'd say forget the effort.

This place has only one redeeming value; it's bar and the loft-sized space it's in making it interesting and worth a visit, but stick to the cute bar in the corner or play some pool (2 tables only). If you must order some food, stick to french fries or beer battered onion rings (homemade chips are stale).

The pasta bar is on a par with hospital food (gummy penne pasta and mushroom soup sauce for Alfredo?) and the Teriyaki Steak Salad is as close to inedible as I want to get. Truly awful tasting with a cloying, oily dressing. The Port Slider Trio was light on the BBQ sauce so the sandwich was dry. Best visited for cocktails, a game of pool and maybe some fries.

Cucina Paradiso

1



14 Petaluma Blvd N / Petaluma
707-782-1130

Category: Italian
Open: Mon - Sat 11:30am - 2:30pm L
Mon - Thu 5pm - 9pm D
Fri & Sat 5pm - 10pm D Full bar.

***** from 2005-2011 \$\$-\$\$\$

This restaurant continues to please the palate and the pocketbook. Well prepared food at reasonable prices. The new location (original was in the old, Golden Eagle Shopping Center, next to the now defunct Rosens Restaurant) has a very warm atmosphere and the staff is welcoming and efficient. With good by-the-glass Italian wines to choose from and a chef who knows how to consistently turn out clean, flavorful plates of food, you cannot go wrong. As a calamari lover, I always order their signature starter salad with sautéed pieces of the fish lightly dressed on a bed of arugula. Wonderful! On a recent visit for dinner the chef offered a special starter, calamari stuffed with a puree of cannellini beans and prosciutto served atop a light tomato sauce. Absolute heaven on a plate. For a second course, Rigatoni with sweet Italian sausage, roasted red pepper & peas in a creamy tomato sauce that was superb. Pasta and sauce married to perfection. Also noteworthy was the swordfish, grilled quickly and served with a good finishing oil. I highly recommend this restaurant for lunch or dinner.

Until next time, bon appétit.



Heading Cotati in the "right direction" demands a hard left turn, according to Tony Adler

Anthony Adler is a longtime Cotati resident, committed socialist and city council critic.

Here is his letter to the Editor in its entirety

Monday, September 05, 2011

Editor, I find the only truth in your paper to be in the heading at the right of the top. "Right Direction" You seem to be to the right of the Tea Party, which is a shame for a paper, which claims to be for Cotati. Perhaps you do not understand what Fascism is; the simplest explanation is that it is a marriage between corporations and government and to arrive at Fascism one must have a poorly educated proletariat.

Hitler said, "Education is not for the working man, it makes him think and ask questions." Over the years the Republicans have achieved that goal, for education in America is eons behind that of Europe or Japan. Now Cotati is touting White Trash???

I am dismayed to see that our once world-renowned Inn of the Beginning, a bastion of great music and free-thinking has sunken so low. Reveling in ignorance is running this country into the ground we have fundamentalist right wing Republican fanatics vying for President who in spite of famines, earthquakes, tsunamis, and tornadoes do not believe in global warming or even evolution, and are complicit with the corporate destruction of the world's rain forests and oceans, the lungs of our planet. They are also intent eliminating the middle class by dunning down the population.

The scopes monkey trial of the 20s made a laughingstock of America. Cotati is weird because it has always had an involved and intelligent citizenry. We have to keep it that way. Mayor Bob Coleman's tragic death was a great loss to our city. At this time I believe that a new park would provide much needed open space. Cramming in so called low

cost housing, or more commercial schlock is not an answer to our problems. As for police cars, we need them to be always in top shape so that our police can continue to upkeep the excellent service they provide.

Cotati is historically a progressive city and we need to keep it that way. The right wing in government under Bush pushed corporate greed to such a high plateau that our markets crashed and the world went down with them.. Bush inherited a hefty surplus from Clinton and still managed to run us into the ground and every move by Obama to get us out of the Republican mess has been trumped by the far right. The public have been brainwashed to the point that they believe National Health Service is bad. All the European socialist democracies have it, and they pay fewer taxes than we do. Womb to tomb insurance is their social security and their right.. They choose their own doctors and hospitals, and prescriptions cost almost nothing. Ask yourself how France, Holland, and Germany have almost full employment and paid six weeks yearly vacations as well as excellent retirement pensions?

The right wing in America, and apparently in Cotati wants none of this. They support the insurance companies and the corporations. The poor white trash pay all the taxes, get almost nothing in return and the CEO's look down on them from their private jets as they fly and drink their champagne. An educated population is the biggest threat to these Fascists, and a literate population is their greatest fear.

For your information Irony, is a quote or a situation that is the opposite of the statement or meaning put out. Example: Friar Tuck was a 13th century progressive fight-

ing with Robin of Loxley against tyranny of the government. If alive today he would be on the side of Dan Ellsberg or Weki leaks

By the way, I like the bust of Eve Orouрке in the park, but the tombstones to the unknown fallen of the great pillow fight in their cemetery behind the scout hut completely boggle my mind.

Illigitimi non tatum carbourundum

Tony Adler

Editor's response:

Tony, Cotati is not historically a progressive city as you claim. Cotati was once a booming trucking town originally build by the hands of people who were self-reliant and didn't expect anything for free. The past forty years of the socialist lunacy that has infiltrated Cotati City Hall and exasperated our problems here is not the entire history of Cotati. More than half of this town are registered Republicans, Independents (like myself), and voters who "Decline to State" according the Sonoma Country Registrar of Voters. Tony, you need to get out more and meet your neighbors face to face, as I have, and start reading newspapers other than Pravda and discover the political change that's in the air. Cotati is a politically diverse community.

A response to Mr. Adler

By Richard Geerston



When I asked the editor of this newspaper for an opportunity to rebut Mr. Adler, I was informed that as a longtime council gadfly and committed socialist, "Tony is a flowery writer."

"Flowery" would seem to me an overly generous characterization, as I find Mr. Adler's writing symptomatic of the broken education system he so decries.

With zero flare and even less subtlety, Adler simply lofts his verbal excrement against the newspaper in hopes that some will stick. He uses sophomoric and incendiary allusions alongside his biased references to "the rightwing" and "Republicans," hoping for some conclusion of guilt by association. Like an obedient liberal foot-soldier, Adler regurgitates the leftwing talking points du jour and clumsily attempts to create linkage where none exists. Global warming now causes earthquakes? Which of the 57 states has exhibited increased seismic activity as a result of rising temperatures Tony? Clearly, Adler writes for those of his ilk who enjoy being taken for a ride.

No doubt still seething over the 2000 election, Adler blames President Bush for today's economic woes, giving rise to the question: So exactly when will the Pelosi/Reid/Obama trifecta own the economy? And all those wonderful moves by President Obama to turn the economy around; "trumped by the far right?" Which of Obama's moves did the Republics succeed in thwarting? Cash for Clunkers? The take-over of GM? A trillion dollar Wall Street bail-out? Nearly another trillion in "stimulus?" ObamaCare? Frank-Dodd 'Wall Street reform?' Endless unemployment benefits? Raising the debt ceiling? NONE of these 'moves' by the President were trumped, yet we still have a sagging economy, high unemploy-

ment, and zero consumer confidence.

Considering Democrats ran this country from 2007 until nearly 2011, it appears the first half of Obama's tenure have been wildly successful! Perhaps, Tony, it's the RESULTS that so irritate you? If so, you're not alone...

America went to the polls last November and handed the Democrat Party its largest defeat in more than 70 years. From state legislatures, to governorships, to the House of Representatives, the message sent by mainstream America should have been a wake-up call for all you socialists: "We don't want what you're peddling!"

You chastised this paper's editor for being unfamiliar with fascism when it is your party that routinely forces its political will down the throats of mainstream America, be it the wildly unpopular ObamaCare, or the destruction of newspapers you happen to disagree with; and then you blame the other-side for your failures... Hitler's Brown Shirts had nothing on you!

Mr. Adler referenced the Scopes Monkey Trials, which caused me to question whether liberals, like other primates, possess the ability to learn from their mistakes. After all, history is replete with good intentions resulting in mass genocide, yet the Marxist left believes it can manipulate the physics of human nature and mandate equal results in all things. I believe the Tower of Babel was built under similarly self-righteous pretense.

Adler references the same worn-out class- envy playbook with clips from Obama's last speech to pillory "CEO's and their corporate jets..." With WHOM does such a childish message resonate? Certainly not Nancy Pelosi or King Obama, both of whom traverse the globe weekly on private jets with well-stocked bars.

Tony claims socialized healthcare is a good thing because Europeans pay a lower tax rate than Americans. While socialized medicine may

be a good thing in Adler's world, it is a lie to state that Europeans are taxed less than Americans. Average tax rates from France, to the U.K., to the Netherlands, average over 60%. We have a living, breathing, model of an Adler 'Utopia' happening right now in Europe and the results are catastrophic: Greece, Spain and Portugal, with cradle to grave care, are all bankrupt with high levels of poverty. Other western European nations are barely solvent despite confiscatory taxation. This isn't opinion, it's fact. IF Adler so despises the pillars of American independence, he would do very well to relocate to one of the socialist European co-ops where they confiscate more than 60 cents of every dollar in exchange for wiping his nether-regions.

With more than my share of experience debating socialist ideologues, I have purposely kept data and statistics to a minimum. Ideologues have no interest in facts or cause and effect. Theirs is a warped view of the world in which intentions are all that matter... Today's leftists have far more in common with Stalin, Castrol and Mao than Thomas Jefferson.

Tony does make one very poignant point: An educated population IS indeed the greatest threat to fascists, as well as communists, anarchists and socialists who hate self-reliance, independence, and the pillars of liberty upon which this republic were built.

Richard Geertson

The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government..." --Patrick Henry

Richard Geertson

