

## COLAB is Pleased to Make a Very Important Announcement!

COLAB is very pleased and proud to announce that Andy Caldwell, COLAB Executive Director and radio talk show host, has been afforded the privilege, opportunity and honor to be a regular guest opinion columnist for the Santa Barbara News Press. He will be writing two guest opinions per week to be published in the newspapers Friday and Sunday editions.

The Santa Barbara News Press is one of the most respected newspapers in the State of California. It is locally owned and provides the most comprehensive local, state and national news of any paper on the entire Central Coast. To be a part of this grand tradition and important publication is extremely important and exciting.

The opportunity to publish in the News Press coupled with the fact that the Andy Caldwell Show airs on AM1290 News Press Radio daily from 3-5 p.m. (along with airing in the North County and SLO on AM1440), gives us renewed hope that our organization's efforts to bridge an informational gap in South Santa Barbara County will become ever more successful.

We are greatly appreciative of this opportunity and privilege to expand our reputation as opinion leaders on the Central Coast and do hope to become a popular and respected part of the Santa Barbara News Press's grand tradition.

By the way, an interesting side note. When Andy Caldwell was growing up in Lompoc, he was a paperboy for the Santa Barbara News Press and was twice awarded the coveted Newspaper Carrier of the Year Award! He is personally very pleased and proud to be back with the paper some 40 years later!

### The COLAB Board of Directors

*P.S. Unfortunately, the Santa Maria Times and Lompoc Record did not share our joy in this announcement! They were under the impression that having Andy write opeds on a schedule of twice a month meant he could not regularly submit to other publications! Departing from this 17 year tradition, Andy Caldwell will now be submitting other original articles for publication in the Santa Maria Sun.*

# The Race for State Senator

In the race for State Senate, voters have two clear choices in order to take the path to economic recovery; Republican Mike Stoker, a former Santa Barbara County Supervisor of both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Districts, or Democrat Jason Hodge, a firefighter and Harbor Commissioner from Ventura County. Both of these gentlemen understand that government has to do less in order for the private sector to do more.

We need leaders who will serve to lessen the bureaucratic and regulatory barriers that are standing in the way of job creation. And, most importantly, both men have public records to prove their sincerity on this urgent matter.

The third candidate in the race, former Assemblywoman Hannah Beth Jackson, despite her present-day assurances to the contrary, is the wrong person for the job. Hannah Beth Jackson did not earn the nickname Taxin' Jackson in a vacuum. She earned it based upon her record in the Assembly. As of late, she has tried to spin the name into Action Jackson, but unfortunately for her, actions speak louder than words. Whereas, the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association has her dismal voting record on hand with respect to taxes, that is not the whole of the story.

The California Chamber of Commerce issues a list of Job Killing Legislation. While in the Assembly, Jackson's record was nearly perfect as she voted for virtually every job killing bill on the list. Even today, her television campaign commercials tout her opposition to the manufacturing, industrial, real estate and agricultural sectors of the economy, all in the name of saving our quality of life. What Ms. Jackson will never understand is, there is no quality of life without a job.

When times were booming in the State of Cali-

fornia, the State and various communities, like Santa Barbara, adopted a series of rules and regulations that served as a barrier to prevent runaway growth and all the importunate impacts associated with growth such as various forms of environmental degradation. These barriers worked pretty well then, but they are working against economic recovery today. It is important for residents to realize that we need the right prescription for what ails us today and runaway growth is not our current malady.

A perfect allegory to understand this phenomenon dates back to the Painted Cave Fire. Rules and regulations that prevented unwanted growth in the foothills of Santa Barbara and Goleta had to be amended in order to let the people rebuild their homes lost in the fire. I was there when the late Supervisor Tom Rogers led the way to permit streamlining.

California has endured a similar firestorm and now is in need of rebuilding. There are two million people in the State of California who are unemployed and things are going to get a lot worse for many of these people as the paltry unemployment insurance checks they have been relying upon are about to cease. These fellow citizens desperately need a job. Their quality of life depends upon it and so does ours.

What can you do to help them? Believe it or not, voting for the right representative in this current election could work wonders. We need leadership here locally and in Sacramento if we are going to recover. Two candidate names will advance to the November ballot based upon the outcome of the June primary. Vote the record not the rhetoric. Vote Stoker or Hodge for State Senate. *A. Caldwell*

*This opinion first appeared in the Santa Barbara News Press!*

## Proposition 29– A Really Dumb Precedent!

**P**roposition 29 is all about increasing the tax on cigarettes under the guise of using the money to find a cure for cancer. If you are like me and you don't like cigarette smoke, what is not to love?

To answer this question, we have to ask another question and that is, should these same principles be applied to others in society who engage in risky and unhealthy behavior? We are already seeing trends in our society towards that end and those of us who are not perfect should be very afraid of being singled out and punitively punished.

Think about it. Proposition 29 is more than just a tax measure. It represents an ideology that an appropriate use of government power and authority should be used to control otherwise legal behavior in the name of a greater good. It is very ironic that so-called progressives in our society are the primary driving force of just such measures. They seek to employ government controls via taxes, mandates and regulations to create the perfect society, but the question remains, who are the perfect people who can really afford to go

down this path?

Should we tax people for every pound they are overweight in order to find a cure for diabetes? Should we tax the sexually indiscriminate to find a cure for sexually transmitted diseases? Should we tax people who drink to find a cure for sclerosis of the liver? Should we tax salt to find a cure for high blood pressure? Should we tax football players and fans to find a cure for concussions? As you can see, there is no end to this train of logic.

Our Founding Fathers believed in the concept of personal liberty. Sometimes, in the name of personal liberty, people make unwise choices. The question before voters is whether we make people pay for the consequences of their otherwise legal lifestyle choices? Do we really want to go down that path? Will we pledge to fairly and equally discriminate against all forms of unhealthy and dangerous lifestyles via taxes, mandates and regulations? Or, will we simply discriminate against some people?

*(Continued on page 7)*

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# Looting Solves Nothing!

In another week, the County Board of Supervisors will be conducting their annual budget hearings. Unfortunately, although California State law requires a balanced budget be approved, it does not require that all factors be considered in the process of approval. Such is the case for our State and Federal government as well.

In households and offices across America, families and business managers have to pay their bills and budget accordingly. In order to survive, responsible planning requires a long term outlook that takes into account all known assets and liabilities.

Families know they need to start early if they plan to send their kids to college, pay for weddings and plan for their retirement years. The bills associated with these fundamentals of life are more often than not, the most daunting challenges to successful financial planning. Rent and mortgage expenses, medical bills, car payments, insurance, food and clothing have to all be paid year after year and balancing all these obligations is no easy task. But it must be done.

Business owners always have to keep in mind the fact that employee costs, taxes and regulations are always going to cost more. Moreover, replacing capital equipment in a timely manner is incredibly expensive and has to be budgeted for long in advance. Staying one foot ahead of the competition, especially competition from foreign markets makes this a very difficult task. For instance, our local farmers must compete with growers in foreign lands who pay less per day than our growers pay per hour in labor costs.

I said all that to say this. Government doesn't come anywhere close to managing their budgets in a prudent and responsible manner. The US Senate hasn't even approved a budget for the past couple of years! Government at every level has

no plan whatsoever to cover long range deficits and debt payments. They have no plan whatsoever to cover their pension liabilities. They have no plan to catch up on capital maintenance and future infrastructure expansion requirements.

Locally, Santa Barbara County has well over \$500 million in road maintenance and building projects deferrals. They owe another \$500 million in pension liabilities. That is a billion dollars in unfunded liabilities, debt and deficits for a county of only 425,000 people!

The State of California is in the hole to the tune of some \$30 billion not counting pension liabilities that could easily amount to well over \$200 billion. You have heard Governor Brown speak of a debt in the amount of \$17 billion, but that figure is only accurate if voters approve the November tax ballot initiatives! And, it does not include the \$10 billion we owe the Federal Government to pay back what we borrowed to issue State unemployment checks! And, Brown thinks we have \$100 billion to pay for high speed rail?

Finally, did you know that within the next 20 years, the Federal government will be so overwhelmed by the debts attributable to Medicare, Social Security and Obama Care plus interest we owe to China for borrowing trillions of dollars, that we won't have any money left for such things as our military program and public infrastructure?

For those of you who say tax the rich, do the math! We could take all the assets of the so called 1% and still not have enough to pay these bills. The fact that the wealthy are already paying more than half of all taxes should make you realize that this is not a debate about fairness; we as a country are simply living beyond our means.

Looting solves nothing.

# California's Loss is Texas' Gain!

**T**he County Budget hearings begin this week. To fully understand the magnitude and scope of our communities dire financial condition you must understand three fundamental elements of county finances.

The first thing you need to know is that County government is primarily an extension of State and Federal government programs. Approximately two thirds of the county's finances are monies forwarded to the county by the State and Federal government from various forms of taxes such as income taxes, gas taxes and sales tax which typically serve to fund mandates. These programs include Social Services, Public Health, regional infrastructure costs, and a variety of other programs. The county has to typically provide a financial match to these federal and state monies and then hire and pay for the staff to perform the associated programmatic duties.

The county is nearly entirely dependent upon local property tax revenues to provide the match monies and to perform all local discretionary tasks that are not funded and/or mandated by State and Federal government. The monies associated with local spending is referred to as the General Fund. The bulk of the local funding goes to Public Safety programs in the form of Fire, Sheriff, District Attorney, Probation and Public Defender. Ninety percent of the county's revenues for these and other General Fund programs come from property taxes. Our modern day problem is that the real estate market took a nosedive in 2008 and we can't meet our obligations accordingly.

Another major component of county finances has to do with pension liabilities. Typically, employees pay a small percentage of their pay towards their own retirement and the county contributes a little more. However, 85% of the money that will eventually provide the funding for retirement checks comes from investment income. Unless, that is, the returns are insufficient to meet the county's obligation, in which case the money has to come out of

the General Fund. Hence, the stock market losses in 2008 and the subsequent volatility of the market means the county is hopelessly behind in their investment returns, so much so, that we can no longer afford to provide basic services with current employees due to our pension debt obligations to retirees.

These pension liabilities are directly tied to and based upon employee compensation levels. During the tenure of the board majority of Schwartz, Rose and Marshall, the county handed out over \$100 million in raises to some 4,000 county employees. We are now stuck with the bill!

I actually favor early retirement for firefighters and cops. However, we need a plan to pay for the same. The total cost for a firefighter, in terms of salary, health and retirement benefits is now approaching \$200,000 per employee! How do we generate enough tax revenue to afford that?

Well, that brings us to the last component we need to address and that is the private sector job market. High returns and high wages in the private sector market generate economic activity that fuels the economy and generates the tax revenue that funds government services.

However, if the government starts taking too much money out of the private sector in the form of fees, taxes and regulatory costs, there is less money left over for individuals to create consumer demand and less money for businesses to create the necessary profits that serve to create jobs in the first place and grow the economy as a whole. Examples of individuals and businesses leaving the State in droves, due to this phenomenon, abound.

It is no coincidence that Texas actually gained the number of jobs that have been lost in California during this current recession.

## Do You Know the REAL Lois Capps?

Voters, you have three very distinct choices for Congress!

The clearest choice for many will be the least known candidate, Chris Mitchum. Mitchum has never held office, but his credentials and endorsements establish him as the favorite for conservatives. Respected leaders such as Congressman Tom McClintock and the TEA party movement who are concerned with our current economic crisis, taxes and government spending, say Mitchum is your guy.

The perplexing choice for some will be Abel Maldonado simply because he is a Republican. However, what about all the voters who claim to despise partisan rancor and gridlock in politics these days? The former Lt. Governor, State Senator, Assemblyman and Mayor has always been willing to work across the aisle, often to the ire of hardline conservatives when it comes to taxes. Abel should be the choice of independents and moderates of both parties.

So, what about the apparently easy choice, incumbent Congresswoman Lois Capps? I maintain Lois is a political mirage, veritably attractive only to the far left. Most voters do not recognize that there is a difference between the local image vs. the D.C. reality of Congresswoman Lois Capps.

Do you know that Capps has the dubious distinction of being one of the only Congressional representatives in the entire nation who repeatedly gets graded with an "F" by a host of independent non-partisan organizations who rate our representatives on fiscal and social matters?

For instance, Steve Forbes is a board member of the National Taxpayers Union which gives Capps an "F" because she has the record of being a big spender.

The Americans for Prosperity give Capps both an "F" and a "Zero" when it comes to her record on Free Market Issues.

The Club For Growth gives Capps a "1%" out of a possible score of "100%" because she consistently votes against the premise that prosperity and opportunity

come through economic freedom. She actually ranks nearly dead last in all of Congress for her dismal support of our failing economy!

On the other hand, the far left, embodied by such organizations as the Secular Coalition for America and the American Civil Liberty Union give Capps very high marks.

The Secular Coalition would among other things, remove the words "Under God" from our pledge. They give Capps a "B" grade whereas, by contrast Congressman Gallegly got an "F".

The ACLU gave Capps a higher lifetime rating than was earned by both Senators Feinstein and Boxer! She scored a lifetime rating of 89% for her voting record. The ACLU is notorious as being one of the most radical organizations in the country for their campaign against such things as defending kids against being exposed to pornography, the use of government property for Boy Scout gatherings, the display of memorial crosses for veterans, public displays of Christmas creches, and many such things as these.

Have you considered that her self-described mentor is Henry Waxman, one of the most extreme left liberals in Congress. And who did Capps bring into the district to help her raise funds for her reelection? Barney Frank, the politician deemed most culpable for the crony capitalism that led to the mortgage failure and resultant stock market crash of 2008.

Do remember that Capps was originally elected in large part due to her signing a voluntary three term limit pledge in exchange for significant campaign support. She subsequently broke the pledge, but managed to stay in office this long due to the creation of the most gerrymandered district in the entire nation, known as the Ribbon of Shame! The Ribbon is now gone and it is time for Lois to go too.

Andy Caldwell

*This opinion was first published in the Santa Barbara News Press.*

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*(Continued from page 3)*

Another aspect of the tenant of this ballot proposition is to consider whether it is in the purview of State government and the people of our State to enable taxing legislation for the purpose of research? The State of California is broke. It can no longer afford to incarcerate criminals, maintain public infrastructure, and provide basic services for its residents. Should it be using its taxing powers to fund research that is already being performed and funded by both the private sector and our federal government?

Finally, Proposition 29 will allocate money for various other components in the war against smoking. Did you know our county government has already been performing similar functions here locally for more than a decade despite the fact that our county is just as broke as our State government? We have spent millions of dollars trying to help people quit smoking, but with dismal results. In addition, we finance undercover sting operations aimed at eliminating underage cigarette purchases, despite cuts to programs such as those that address gang problems. And, with money left over, we have funded efforts to clean our beaches of cigarette butt litter!

Since we as a society are talking about overcoming destructive behavior, perhaps we should emulate the success of Alcoholics Anonymous? They realize they must be able to accept the things they can not change, the courage to change the things they can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Vote No on Proposition 29. *A. Caldwell*

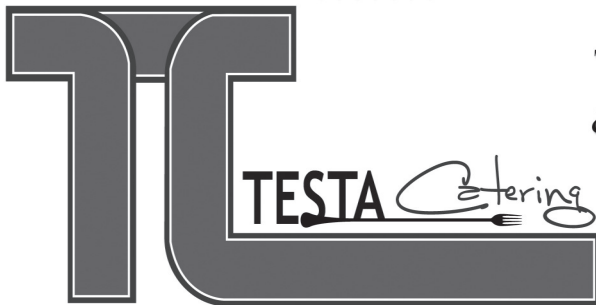
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