

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

On the other foot

Editor:

I was amused that Linda Shockley, ("Tell it like it is," Letters to the Editor, Sept. 4) who is tired of Democrats "whining," etc. actually quoted a Democrat in her letter, only she got it wrong. And she didn't, of course credit the quote but used it as her own. So Linda, it is not "Don't ask" it's "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country" and it was said by John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the Democratic President Elect in his inauguration speech, January 1961.

She also says that Sen. Obama says he's for "Change" but doesn't say what that change is. Has she noticed that in the last few days, Sen. McCain's big slogan also incorporates the word "Change?" Can't he think anything else up on his own? Must he copy? And had Linda listened to Sen. Obama's acceptance speech, she would now know exactly what those changes are.

And now that there is a personal family issue on the Republican side, both the Democrats and the Republicans have made it an "off-limits" issue, as they most definitely should. However, I can't resist wondering if the shoe was on the other foot, so to speak, how "off limits" would it be? I recall the Republicans spending a terrific amount of time and our money pursuing President Clinton on what was also a "personal" matter.

Marilyn Brennan
Santa Monica

Life on the ground level

Editor:

This is a letter to everyone who is living one paycheck or less, from being homeless. There are programs to help you eat and stay clean. They have homes and computers that you have to sign up to use. You have to give all of your life history personal information. You are assigned a social worker that tries to help you find housing, which is a very difficult thing to do because of housing shortage. Its against the law to be homeless, so you will be seeing police and getting camping tickets. Some of your new roommates are cool, while others will steal you blind. Welcome to the sewer of reality, how to keep your sanity trying to deal with life on the ground level. Like I said there are programs, stay in touch with God and you will make it, this is just another test from life. Good luck.

P.S. I'm homeless.

Mari Ston
Santa Monica



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Following the money

WHEN YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT candidates or issues, just follow the money. Nowhere is this truer than with Proposition T, formerly known as the Residents' Initiative to Fight Traffic. If approved by voters, Prop. T would restrict commercial development for 15 years, potentially reducing traffic increases in Santa Monica.

The Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City (SMCLC), who shepherded the measure onto the November ballot, seems to be getting support (most donations around \$100) from artists, writers, creative types and neighborhood activists, according to their financial disclosure statements.

It's a much different story with "No on T's" Save Our City group that raised \$77,589 just as of June 30th. It'll be much easier to find out who's paying their freight now that SOC leaders say they'll comply with city rules on filings of campaign disclosure statements — filing the same as all city candidates and ballot measures: Oct. 6, Oct. 23 and daily late expenditure reports up through election day.

Don't kid yourself, SOC is raising massive amounts of money. In reviewing early campaign disclosure statements finally posted on the city's Web site www.smgov.net, some familiar names jump out.

The Edward Thomas Management Co., which owns Casa Del Mar and Shutters on the Beach, kicked in \$10,000. ETMC has been a consistent and a solid supporter of business-backed interests in recent elections, having financed the failed "Swift-boating" of Councilman Kevin McKeown's reelection bid in 2006 and a number of anti-living wage measures.

Hines 26th Street, LLC owns the Paper Mate property at 26th Street and Olympic Boulevard and hopes to build four, two- to-four-story office buildings totaling about 300,000 square feet on the 7-acre site, according to news sources. Hines ponied up 10 grand for SOC.

Maxser & Co., LTD is an owner/operator of commercial properties and motels. They seek a development agreement to remodel the 77-year-old former GTE exchange/offices at 710 Wilshire Blvd. into a 256 room "boutique" hotel with restaurant and retail. They coughed up \$10,000.

The Fairmont-Miramar Hotel donated \$9,000. The Belle Vue Plaza, listed on campaign statements as "Real estate property owner/investor," contributed \$10,000. The law firm of Harding, Larmore, Mullen, Jakle, Kutcher and Kozal, LLC have contributed \$9,500 in legal services. Harding family members have also made contributions.

Village Trailer Park, LLC, developer of the Village Trailer Park has contributed \$2,500. They're negotiating a development agreement to redevelop the site at 2930 Colorado Ave. with a large, mixed residential, studio commercial and neighborhood commercial

project. The property is currently a 109-space, rent-controlled mobile home park.

Stockbridge Real Estate Fund, based in Northern California, has added 10 grand to SOC's coffers. Stockbridge finances or co-finances various sized developments and also owns Hollywood Park Race Track and Bay Meadows Land Co. (race track) in San Mateo.

RTK Architects, (Mayor Herb Katz is a partner) and Pugh + Scarpa architects, which has numerous projects with the city including "The Village at the Civic Center" and redesign of downtown parking garages, contributed \$1,000 each. Additional smaller donations came from local architects, developers, hotels, tourist-related businesses and real estate interests, for the most part.

On SOC's June 30th expenditures statement, one item caught my eye — \$7,500 to veteran SMRR Steering Committee member Bruce Cameron, with another \$5,000 owed. I asked Cameron at the recent SMRR congress why he was involved in what I called a "pro-development ballot measure." After assuring me that he wasn't pro-development, he dodged the question. Now, I know why. He's on SOC's payroll as a consultant.

Lastly, Colleen McAndrews is SOC's Treasurer. She was also the treasurer for the failed Prop. 98 campaign on the June ballot that would have abolished rent control throughout the state. Talk about strange bedfellows.

Santa Monica Democrats also wimp out
The big political shocker last week was the Santa Monica Democratic Club's failure to endorse incumbent Bobby Shriver for City Council. Very few people are as synonymous with Democratic politics as Shriver. As one observer told me, the club is loaded with Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights types, so much so they're called "Little SMRR."

SMRR didn't endorse Shriver either. I don't think he asked for it. Although some felt Richard Bloom wouldn't get their nod, they did endorse both incumbents: Ken Genser and Bloom. And, I've heard there's no love lost between Shriver and Genser and Bloom.

Ocean Park activist Ted Winterer wasn't endorsed either, even though the club's executive committee backed him. Making things worse, they endorsed embattled incumbents Jose Escarce and Maria Leon-Vazquez for school board, keeping the door open for four more years of poor school oversight.

Government in this city desperately needs a change. With the two major political powers (which may be one and the same) recycling the same old faces, it's the major reason why problems such as school governance, homelessness, parking, traffic, overdevelopment, higher taxes and fees and poor services are never properly addressed. It's OK folks. It's not about a better Santa Monica, it's about power.

Bill can be reached at mr.bilbau@gmail.com

PUBLISHER
Ross Furukawa
ross@smdp.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Kevin Herrera
editor@smdp.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Daniel Archuleta
daniela@smdp.com

STAFF WRITER
Melody Hanatani
melodyh@smdp.com

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Brandon Wise
brandonw@smdp.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Bill Bauer, David Pisarra, Meredith Carroll, Kenny Mack, Jack Neworth, Lloyd Garver, Seth Barnes, Taylor Van Arsdale, Dane Robert Swanson, Ryan Hyatt, Steve Breen, Elizabeth Brown, Maria Rohloff, Merv Hecht, Mike Heayn, Brian Hepp, Mariel Howsepian, Cynthia Citron, Amanda Cushman and Steve Parker

NEWS INTERNS
Alexandra Bissonnette, Alice Ollstein, Christina Yoon, Nora Casey, Stephanie Taft
news@smdp.com

PHOTOGRAPHY INTERNS
Morgan Genser, Soraya Danesh
news@smdp.com

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER
Rob Schwenker
schwenker@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
Julie Martinez
juliem@smdp.com

Robert Hertel
roberth@smdp.com

Erin Collins
erinc@smdp.com

ADVERTISING TRAFFIC FACILITATOR
Amber Kesse
amberk@smdp.com

OPERATIONS MANAGER
Connie Sommerville
connies@smdp.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Robert Summa
summa@smdp.com

CIRCULATION
Keith Wyatt
Oswaldo Paganini
circulation@smdp.com

Santa Monica Daily Press
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410 Broadway, Suite B
Santa Monica, CA 90401
OFFICE (310) 458-PRESS (7737)
FAX (310) 576-9913

Visit us online at smdp.com



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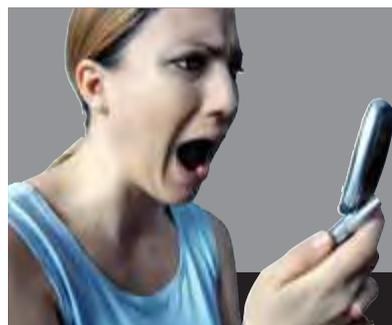
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