

TAKE BACK SONOMA COUNTY

Coalition for a
Better Sonoma County

Coalition for a Better Sonoma County • P. O. Box 6298, Santa Rosa, CA 95404 • 707-545-7349 • www.bettersonoma.com

SUMMER 2003

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Coming Soon:

Jobs-Housing Impact Fee
Petaluma City Council Elections – 2004
Campaign Finance Reform
Local Hiring Preference Ordinances
Sonoma County Conservation Action Column
Santa Rosa Parking Attendants Sign Union Contract
Institute for Ecology and the Economy: Training Future Leaders
Early Endorsements in Political Races

What We Do:

The mission of the Coalition for a Better Sonoma County is to elect candidates who agree with, and will abide by, our Statement of Principles. See www.concernedcitizensforsantarosa.com

Who We Are:

COPE of the North Bay, AFL-CIO
Sonoma County Conservation Action
Petaluma Tomorrow
IBEW, Local 551
Operating Engineers, Local 3
Sonoma County Latino Democratic Club
SEIU Local 707
Concerned Citizens for Santa Rosa
World Stewardship Institute
Sheetmetal Workers, Local 104
Let the Voters Decide Coalition
UA Local 38, Plumbers and Pipefitters
UFCW, Local 101

Working Together to Take Back Our County!

Welcome to the first issue of The Coalition for a Better Sonoma County's Newsletter – Take Back Sonoma County. CBSC is a group of individuals and organizations who have joined together to ensure our local government acts for the benefit of all people, not just for the benefit of big money interests.

We are environmentalists, union members, neighborhood activists, and concerned citizens, who believe that by working together we can make Sonoma County a better place.

Our Key Policies:

- Affordable Housing for all Income Levels
- Smart, Responsible and Sustainable Growth
- Local Jobs for Local Workers

Our Core Principles:

- Conserving our Natural Resources
- Reducing the Influence of Money in Politics
- Living Wages for Working Families

You are invited to read our full Statement of Principles at www.concernedcitizensforsantarosa.com, and you'll see the link at the bottom of that page.

Got News?

Our Newsletter will report on news that matters to members of the Coalition – updates on issues we believe in, reports on the local political landscape, and news and information about candidates we support. Submissions are always welcome. Contact Guy Conner at guyc@sonic.net or 695-6783.

Join the Coalition!

To be effective, we need to expand our membership, raise money, and recruit volunteers so we can change the course of Sonoma County. If you aren't happy with the way things are, become a member of the Coalition now! There's a membership form on page 3 of this Newsletter.

Let's work together to take back Sonoma County!

TIRED OF "BUSINESS AS USUAL"?

TIRED OF NOT BEING HEARD?

LET'S TAKE BACK SONOMA COUNTY NOW!

Join your friends and colleagues at our first party!

We're going to raise money, enjoy great food and drink, have fun and plot the demise of "the way things are."

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH, FROM 6 TO 8 P.M.

PARADISE RIDGE WINERY, SANTA ROSA

Join Assemblywoman Pat Wiggins, many of our elected officials, and all the rest of us cool people!

Watch your email, or contact Guy Conner at guyc@sonic.net for more details.

District Elections for Santa Rosa

Caroline Bañuelos, for the Let the Voters Decide Coalition

The Let the Voters Decide Coalition (LTVD) consists of groups and individuals who strongly feel that the voters of Santa Rosa have the right to determine their own form of government. Following the last Charter Review, the majority of the Santa Rosa City Council again denied the voters the right to determine how they would be governed. Despite the close vote of the Charter review committee and the tremendous lobbying efforts of various groups in favor of district elections, Mayor Martini, stated that there didn't appear to be a "ground-swell." Thus, he implied there was no need for the council to listen to the citizens of Santa Rosa. After witnessing a majority council that

continues to display arrogance and operates with little or no accountability to the voters, it was inevitable that the LTVD Coalition would be born.

The LTVD Coalition believes that district elections will:

- Increase the geographic diversity of the council. Citizens must have a way to make their voices heard. They will be able to vote for someone who knows and can identify with the issues of their neighborhood;
- Make our officials more accountable. Council members will have to be more responsive to their constituents or face being thrown out at the next election. They will inevitably be more accessible and receptive to neighborhood issues;
- Allow ordinary citizens to run for office. Potential candidates will only need to raise enough funds to run a strong campaign in their own district. We cannot continue to allow only the affluent to dominate our council. They have

demonstrated consistently that the needs of average voters are not of much import and not critical to their re-election. Consequently, there is little or no accountability to ordinary voters;

- Bring diversity to our council. Electing people of color or those less fortunate than the majority, continues to elude this council. Different perspectives and voices need to be present so that the citizenry will truly be represented. People of color and those less privileged need an opportunity to demonstrate that they too are capable and willing to serve. District elections will give them the chance to compete and participate. This will enrich the council and serve to assist them in improving the quality of life for all the citizens of Santa Rosa.

Please join our efforts to bring District Elections to Santa Rosa. For more information contact: Caroline Bañuelos at caroline.banuelos@att.net.



"I voted to let the people decide, because that's the right thing to do; the majority of the City Council disagreed."

Noreen Evans,

Santa Rosa City Councilmember,
Candidate for Assembly



"I believe district elections would promote more diversity on the City Council and better represent people in our community."

Steve Rabinowitsh,

Santa Rosa City Councilmember

The Facts about Project Labor Agreements (PLA's)

Steve Benjamin, IBEW Local 551

PLA's are negotiated agreements used to coordinate multiple contractors and tight construction schedules on medium and large construction projects. PLA's have been used successfully on California construction projects since 1940. Some of our largest most complicated public works projects have been completed on time and on budget using PLA's. PLA's eliminate hidden costs, reduce shortages of skilled workers, use apprentices in State approved apprenticeship programs and increase productivity and safety. It's a proven fact that workers compensation claims are 72% lower

than statewide construction averages, on jobs using a Project labor agreement. PLA's save taxpayers money by reducing the need for costly change orders and extras due to better coordination, planning and a higher skill level of tradesmen on the jobsite. This translates to getting the job done right the first time! Both union and non-union contractors operate under PLA's, contrary to popular belief. Many non-union firms have raised the argument that PLA's discriminate against them. The California Supreme Court confirmed that PLA's "exclude no contractor, union or non-union,

from bidding on a public works project under a PLA." PLA's guarantee the use of responsible contractors with proven track records of performing on time and on budget projects. PLA's offer much needed protections against unscrupulous contractors who prefer to cheat the system and try to break State laws for their own greedy purposes. PLA's are clearly beneficial to our State and our community in offering good common sense protections to ensure that our tax dollars are spent wisely on public works construction projects.

Join the Coalition for a Better Sonoma County – make a difference!

YES, I want to become a member of the Coalition for a Better Sonoma County.

Enclosed are my annual individual dues: \$25 (Annual Individual Dues)
Enclosed are our annual organizational dues: \$100 (Annual Organizational Dues)
I want to really help the Coalition. Enclosed is: Other Amount _____

YES, I want to attend the September 25th Event!

Enclosed is my contribution: \$25 Other Amount _____

YES, I want to be notified of the Coalition's Meetings and Action Alerts.

For more information, call Guy Conner at 695-7863, or email to guyc@sonic.net

Print Name(s) 1) _____ 2) _____

Address _____ City/State/ZIP Code _____

Phone: _____ FAX #: _____ Email: _____

Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Signature(s) 1) _____ 2) _____

Please make checks payable to: the Coalition for a Better Sonoma County

Please clip and return this form in an envelope to Coalition for a Better Sonoma County • P.O. Box 6298, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

Sebastopol City Council Considers Living Wage Ordinance

Martin Bennet, Co-Chair, Living Wage Coalition of Sonoma County; Board member, Sonoma County Conservation Action

The Living Wage Coalition of Sonoma County introduced an ordinance to the Sebastopol City Council on June 17th. The ordinance requires that all employees of the city, city contractors, and firms receiving financial assistance from the city pay their workers \$12.25 an hour with benefits, or \$14.00 without. Additionally the ordinance mandates that covered employees receive 12 days compensated time off and a cost of living adjustment in the hourly wage each year. Businesses with less than six employees, temporary workers and student interns are exempted from the ordinance.

Dr. Peter Hall, an economist and city planner affiliated with the UC Berkeley Institute for Labor and Employment presented a fiscal impact report to the council. His research indicated that the ordinance would cover 9-13 workers below \$12.25 an hour, and the maximum increased costs to the city would be approximately \$32,300, which represents 0.4% of the 2002-2003 city budget.

The *Sonoma West* endorsed the living wage campaign as did numerous Sebastopol civic and religious leaders. These include the Rev. Gene Nelson of the Sebastopol Community Church (United Church of Christ), Nick Stewart, Burbank Housing Development Corporation, Una Glass, Sonoma County Conservation Action, and Susan Wells, League of Women Voters of Sonoma County. The Living Wage Coalition has initiated a petition and signature drive to demonstrate to the city council that there is strong community support for the legislation.

City Council member Sam Spooner who is a leading proponent of the proposed ordinance stated "any person who works should receive a wage that will provide for the basic needs of a family." A solid majority of the Sebastopol City Council supports the concept of a living wage.

The Living Wage Coalition anticipates that the council will pass the first living wage law in the county after Labor Day. In September, the coalition intends to introduce a

comparable measure to the Sonoma City Council. Tabling and signature gathering are planned for both Sebastopol and Sonoma.

The City Council will hold another study session at its meeting on Tuesday, August 19th at 6 PM at the Youth Annex, 425 Morris Street. Please attend this meeting and show your support for the ordinance.

Please call Lynne Hollander at 823-7293 or savio@sonic.net for information about the Sebastopol campaign or Rev. Norman Cram at 939-1425 Dootscram@aol.com for information about the Sonoma campaign. To download the ordinance and/or fiscal impact report go to: www.livingwagesonoma.org.



"I am glad that we will be introducing a Living Wage Ordinance for Sebastopol."

Linda Kelley,
Sebastopol City Councilmember

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TAKE BACK SONOMA COUNTY!

Join your friends and colleagues:

THURSDAY,

SEPTEMBER 25TH

FROM 6 TO 8 P.M.

PARADISE RIDGE WINERY

SANTA ROSA

Santa Rosa City Council Elections – 2004

Anne Seeley, Concerned Citizens for Santa Rosa

In November, 2004, there will be four seats up for election, Council members Sharon Wright, Jane Bender, Mike Martini and Noreen Evans will complete their terms. This is an opportunity to either continue more of the same, or to make a significant shift in the balance of the Council to reflect the interests of all Santa Rosans. Noreen Evans has announced her candidacy for Pat Wiggins' State Assembly seat, and if successful in the March primary, she would not be a candidate for City Council.

The other incumbents haven't announced their intentions yet,

but are expected to run again for City Council. For Sharon Wright, this would be her fourth term, for Martini, the third, and for Bender, the second. The known no-n-incumbents who have indicated interest in running, or announced intentions to run are: Don Taylor, the Omelet Express owner who recently served on the Planning Commission, and current Planning Commissioner Robin Swinth, an engineer at Agilent. The deadline for application is in August of 2004, but any candidate who is serious will commence his or her campaign committee formation and

fundraising by late this year or early 2004.

Concerned Citizens for Santa Rosa seeks candidates who support our goals. We will again be working with the Coalition for a Better Sonoma County, to coordinate campaign work and fundraising.

We look forward to engaging you in the important work of electing a City Council that looks beyond the service of development to creation of a balanced community that works for all of us.