

1996 PREDICTIONS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR  
Council report cards

Editor: The last issue of the Sonoma West Times & News printed a revealing story about the yearly environmental report card by Sonoma Conservation Action. If I'm not mistaken, the previous incarnation of your paper never bothered covering this because it was a bit too revealing about members of the City Council supported by the editor of the paper at the time.

The Political Report Card for 1995 covered three categories — environmental voting, listens to grassroots, and supports "urban growth boundaries." Councilmembers Sam Crump, Ken Foley and Bill Rowentini received Cs and Ds. Councilmembers Howard Levy and Ann Magnie received As.

About Crump the report said "... hostile to environmental grassroots." About Foley "... represents the building industry," and Rowentini "... shifted pro-development."

About Levy the report said "... consistent environmental leader," and about Magnie "... sound advocate for environmental planning."

These grades reflect a bleak future for the Sebastopol environment, the residents, and for grassroots activists, because three out of five votes are very weak on environmental issues. The definition of "environment" is "the surroundings." How the council votes reflects what they believe in, and affects us all. The neighborhoods, downtown and the edges of town — in other words the surroundings — could suffer from the actions of this anti-environment bloc.

Sebastopol voters should take note. You may have a chance to vote on a 20-year UGB, plating it out of the control of the City Council. It would not make any difference where any council stood on the boundary, would be firmly in the control of the voters, and would protect the town from sprawl while protecting downtown and the neighborhoods.

In addition to voting on the UGB, you the voter can decide what kind of City Council you want. I urge the voters of Sebastopol to carefully watch how the City Council votes on issues of growth and environment. If you don't like what you see, you will have a chance to change the council in November of 1996.

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Sebastopol

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EDITORIAL  
Laguna uplands project enters second phase

The grassroots campaign to purchase eight acres of Laguna de Santa Rosa "uplands" reached another milestone last week when the Laguna Uplands Project turned over a \$10,000 option payment to owners of the property. The group's ambitious goal is to raise \$1.5 million by April to purchase the property and establish it as a cornerstone of a larger effort to restore the Laguna's wildlife habitat and create a cultural center for Native American traditions.

The campaign has received widespread community support from citizens, businesses, city government, the Sebastopol Area Chamber of Commerce and environmentalists. The publicly funded county Open Space District may be another source of funds for purchase of the land. Another key contribution was announced last week when the Chilotti family, one of the owners of the property, made a \$15,000 contribution to the project, a remarkable show of goodwill and support for the campaign. Such a broad base of support bodes well for the campaign, and while these are all encouraging signs, reaching the final goal is by no means a foregone conclusion.

With the purchase of an option on the land, also known as the Palm Terrace property, the campaign enters its next phase. The committee spearheading the project will now start contacting larger corporate donors, foundations, charitable agencies and other groups that may be willing and able to contribute to this worthy effort. Individual donors and donations of all sizes will remain a key part of the fundraising effort.

We encourage businesses, civic and charitable groups and individual citizens to continue to support this important effort at preserving a key portion of the Laguna's fragile ecosystem. Opportunities like this don't occur very often. It is a goal that deserves and requires the entire community's support.

—B.W.D.