Accuses Officials of Failing To Confront 'Impossible' Salaries and Pensions

Editor:

 A look today at the online salary database of Bay Area public employees yields some details that make it easy to understand where a lot of our taxpayer money is being spent.

 And, yes this applies to renters and homeowners. (I think it is easy for renters to think that they don't pay property taxes.....but they
do,
via their landlords.) So
all of us need to wake up and see the truth.

 BART Salaries: Top 16 Salaries are for police officers, not all the top brass, most just lieutenants and "Master" and "Senior" police officers. Salary Range $250,763 - $431,000.

 That’s almost a half a million dollars per year for a police officer. Hey. These folks are great and we need them, but not at that cost. Plus, these guys get a a
lifetime medical care for their spouses and a pension that can be almost this much as well.

 Hayward Fire Dept. (San Leandro is probably about the same): Top 25 Salaries: $231,000 - $344,000, lifetime pensions and medical benefits.

 Hayward Police (San Leandro is probably about the same): Top 25 salaries: $212,000 - $305,000 (the highest, $305,000 is for a 911 dispatcher!). Plus lifetime medical and pension.

 And all of these allow pension spiking so that their lifetime pension is based on the last year or so of their career, where they can do a bunch of overtime and then get a huge lifetime pension.

 Come on. Is it any wonder why we are in the financial mess we are?

 Police officers and firefighters are valuable and appreciated. Let's throw them a big party! Give them a hug. Tell them thanks. But this wage and benefit thing is killing us.

 And, because our city and state leaders (except San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed) are too afraid to go up against the unions who have achieved these impossible to maintain salaries and pension levels, our state leaders just say the schools (and college students' families) will just have to suffer (which they are).

 Please, can anyone see the cause of our state and local budget nightmare? Does anyone have the cajones to stand up and say enough is enough?

—**Andrew Ward**

San Leandro

Councilmember Collecting Photos of Students' Summertime Activities

Editor:

 Calling all middle school and high school youth!

 What did you do *in San Leandro* this summer?

 As your Councilmember, I am working on a summer project to collect as many pictures as possible on what our middle school and high school youth are doing *in San Leandro* this summer.

 Please email your photos to dsouza@sanleandro.org or visit my Facebook page *Summer San Leandro* and post your photos. Ask your friends to consider emailing me or posting a picture also.

 You can include a short description of 10 words or less with your photo if you want.

 If you know of programs/events for our middle school and high school youth to participate in, please feel free to email me or post on *Summer San Leandro* Facebook page.

 At the end of the summer I will be sharing my findings with the entire Council.

 Enjoy the summer!

—**Diana Souza**

San Leandro City Council

Feels Society Has a Right To Regulate Activities That Burden Everyone

Editor:

 New York City Mayor Bloomberg's decision to ban supersized sugary sodas has resurrected the age-old debate over the role of the state in
protecting the public health.

 In recent years, this debate involved bicycle helmets, car seat belts, tobacco, trans fats, saturated fats in meat and dairy products, and sugar (or more aptly, high-fructose corn syrup). Public subsidies for tobacco, meat and dairy, and corn production added fuel to the debate.

 I would argue that society has a right to regulate activities that impose a heavy burden on the public treasury.

 National medical costs of dealing with our obesity epidemic, associated with consumption of meat, dairy, and sugars, are estimated at $190 billion.

 Eliminating subsidies for these products, as well as judicious taxation to reduce their use and recoup public costs should be supported by health advocates and fiscal conservatives alike.

 Benjamin Franklin claimed that nothing is certain except death and taxes. Ironically, death can be deferred substantially by taxing products that make us sick.

—**Dennis Roth**

San Leandro