A Welcome Back to School's Students and Employees

Editor:

 On behalf of the San Leandro Unified School District, we would like to welcome back the over 8,800 new and returning students to another school year. We hope everyone had an enjoyable summer and are returning eager to learn!

 We would also like to welcome back the over 1,100 employees of the District who continue to work hard to support all of our students under the incredibly difficult conditions that this economic crisis has put our schools in – your sacrifices are appreciated.

 The safety and well-being of our students are of utmost concern to us. Thanks to our ongoing partnership with the City, we welcome back Officer Tom Rogers and are happy to introduce Officer Kathy Pickard as our Student Resource Officers team.

 The City also partners with us by partially funding our crossing guards. Our community can help ensure San Leandro students are safe by driving cautiously, especially around our schools, and by notifying the police if you see a student in a dangerous situation.

 We also want to encourage our parents to support their child's success by making sure they arrive to school every day, on-time and prepared. You would be amazed by how much learning happens in just the first 15 minutes of the day!

 Finally, we would like to thank the community for its ongoing support of our schools. Together we are preparing San Leandro's youth for a great future!

—**Morgan Mack-Rose**, *President,*

SLUSD Board of Trustees

SLHS Teachers' Summer Assignments, First Day Tests Called 'Unreasonable'

Editor:

 The teachers of San Leandro High School are being unreasonable with our students. They have already given summer assignments and now they want to test our students on the first day of school with results that could impact their grades unfairly.

 The school year provides ample challenges for learning and testing with the summer break as a vacation away from academic rigors. Students already have the choice to opt for continued summer learning while others are spending time with their families or getting involved in many other activities.

 Our diversity of students, when it comes to intellectual or vocational learning, is vast. It is important for us not to be discriminate against this diverse base.

 The teachers' responsibilities are to prepare our students through curriculums that they have arranged; however, first day of school testing has no pre-staged preparations for the students whatsoever. First day of school testing can demoralize some if not a majority of our students into feeling penalized for not being self-prepared.

 There are no California State Education requirement for students to test on the first day of school. As a result, we must not permit teachers or the school administration to act outside of these requirements.

 Students, parents and all who care for educational empowerment, please let your voice be heard by the San Leandro School Board.

—**Hendy Huang,** *San Leandro*

Though Disagreeable, Parcel Tax Vote is Necessary

Editor:

 The School Board's unanimous vote to put a parcel tax on the November ballot is a disagreeable but necessary effort to maintain our schools, not some odd attempt to "implement more programs ... to teach kids homosexuality and lesbianism," as Leo West bizarrely claims *(" Says No on School Parcel Tax Until Current Board is Gone," Letters, Aug. 9).*

 The dismal economic times we find ourselves in are eroding our infrastructure and public institutions, hitting hardest the most important and vulnerable, such as schools, libraries, police and firefighters.

 The School Board's vote simply puts the measure on the ballot for San Leandrans to decide whether they want decent public schools or failing ones. We intend to support the measure and

vote for public schools.

 With respect to Mr. West's naked display of bigotry and intolerance, we say this: We support and applaud San Leandro schools for teaching tolerance, respect and understanding to its pupils. Schools can no more "teach homosexuality" than they can teach race or gender.

 Our older son has attended school in San Leandro for the past four years and we appreciate that his school is teaching him to accept and respect others regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation. We want our children to grow up free of bigotry, intolerance and prejudice, and we want our schools to continue to function. We hope San Leandro wants these things too, and vote for the measure.

—**James Browne & Kristen Jones**

San Leandro

No Exemptions on Parcel Tax; Says All Should Pay

Editor:

 I am against another parcel tax, not because I am against helping our educational system, but because of how they get passed.

 They are heavily marketed to the biggest voting block, the seniors, knowing that they will write in a senior exemption. Hell, I'll vote good things in if I don't have to pay for them.

 I am not a senior citizen, but I am on a limited income, too. I work for the education system, have not had a raise in five years, get paid once a month and the amount I take home does not change. But strangely enough, my grocery bill goes up, my gas goes up, my tolls go up and my

property taxes go up, and I have to make ends meet.

 You may not think that a $39 parcel tax is a lot, but add that to the other 660.94 in additions to my assessed value tax bill and you see where I am going. I have no more money to give!

 And let’s not talk about how less my home is actually worth. Tax everyone with no exemptions or tax no one! Get rid of the church exemptions too! Looks like if they have money to sue the City, they can pay the taxes to preach here, too!

—**Karen Williams**, *San Leandro*

Lake Chabot Improvements Could Produce New Olympians Among Local Youth

Editor:

 Hats off to the East Bay Parks for their groundbreaking efforts to ensure improved public facilities at the Lake Chabot marina and adjacent areas.

 The district continues to make great strides and progress. It is without question one of the best uses of public funding to support the local community by offering access to outdoor recreation, including access to the waterfront.

 Extending these benefits to persons with disabilities is a high priority and should be addressed by these new improvements at Lake Chabot. The planned gangway and dock will enhance access to the lake even during periods of extreme low water elevations, and year-round access allows community members of all ages and abilities to engage in activities that otherwise would not be available to them.

 Such facilities may also help local area youth achieve things they never dreamed were possible. In fact, rowing teams on the nearby Oakland Estuary have allowed three local youth to pursue the ultimate dream: competing in the 2012 Olympic Games. Clayton's 21 year-old Kara Koehler recently picked up rowing at Cal and just earned a bronze medal in women's quadruple sculls at the 2012 London Olympics.

 Zach Vlahos, 23, was an Oakland Stroke during high school, and went on to cox the men's eight to a fourth place finish in London.

 Former Oakland Stroke Scott Gault won a bronze medal in the men's four.

 These three athletes may inspire others to seek such high goals as well. And now that the long awaited improvements at Lake Chabot will facilitate access to such activities here locally, perhaps Castro Valley or San Leandro or Hayward could be one of the next communities that produces an Olympian, or Paralympian, with nearby Lake Chabot as a place to learn a new skill.

—**Vince Horpel**, *Castro Valley*

Balancing the Budget with Federal Spending Cuts Would Only Make Matters Worse

Editor:

 As I read Mel Lavine's commentary on Romney's Choice I couldn't help but think how the Republicans have presented us with two candidates who seem to base their whole campaign on balancing the budget and trying to make everyone think that a balanced budget will solve our countries economic problems, which was first created by the Bush administration.

 A balanced budget created by cutting federal spending is not going to help our houses from

being underwater, it will not make us more secure in our jobs, it will not allow us to spend more money. It will only create more unemployment and make the middle class less likely to spend money.

 But most of all the republicans would like to distract us from remembering that we still have a war going on in Asia. We also must deal with several other countries governments that affect our relations in the Middle East which are about to explode as well the several counties that are showing attempts at creating nuclear bombs.

 Neither Romney nor Ryan offers us any leadership experience in global politics and Romney's recent attempt at showing he had international experience really only showed how he blundered every time he spoke in all three country's that he visited.

 Ryan, who is touted as fiscal conservative, in my view is really a fiscal radical. He wants to cut, cut, cut government spending. How will cutting jobs to teachers, firemen, and police improve anything in this country?

 Let's not forget the government is the biggest employer in the US. Every *cut* the Republicans

make will mean lost jobs either on the federal, state or local level.

 Cut, cut, cut, but at what cost? At the cost of reducing the quality of life for seniors, compromising our children's education and reduced state and city services.

—**Harry Orner**, *San Leandro*