

Fears Closing San Leandro Jail will Leave City Short of Police Protection

Editor:

□ Did you know that Police Chief Spagnoli wants to close the jail and have the patrol officers take their “in custodies” to the Hayward jail, and/or transport them to the Santa Rita jail in Dublin?

□ If this is done, it means that the patrol officers would be taken off their beat and the streets of San Leandro. It could possibly mean that there could be up to 2 or 3 officers off the street at the same time, leaving San Leandro without enough coverage and protection. San Leandro needs more officers on patrol as it is, and we do not need them leaving our city to conduct business elsewhere that can be done at their own jail.

□ I have personally spoken to may patrol officers and they are in agreement that the San Leandro jail should remain open.

□ The Chief states that the jail has been running below minimum staffing for a while. Yes, because three staff members have resigned and others have been out for medical leave and/or maternity leave, and the department has chosen not to fill these positions. Their answer is to close the jail and farm everything to Hayward and/or Santa Rita. This does not appear to be in the best interest of the department, nor the remaining jail staff.

□ The closure of the jail is not going to save the city any money as Hayward charges us a fee for each inmate we bring to them, as well as an additional fee charged when we go to Santa Rita. All this could take up to two hours of time, taking the officers off the streets of San Leandro where they belong.

□ The citizens of San Leandro deserve better than this. Please contact Chief Spagnoli at 510-577-3251, or e-mail her at S.Spagnoli@ci.san-leandro.ca.us and let her know that you would like the jail to remain open at all cost, and that you want our officers to remain on the streets of San Leandro where they all belong.

—**Josephine Copeland Thompson**

San Leandro

Mayor Cites Benefits of 5-Year Contracts with Top Cops

Editor:

□ The San Leandro City Council recently authorized City Manager Chris Zapata to enter into five-year contracts with our Police Chief Sandra Spagnoli and Assistant City Manager Lianne Marshall. Importantly, each will now pay their full share of the employee contribution to CalPERS for retirement benefits.

□ Mr. Zapata is currently the only city employee paying his full share of retirement costs. For all other city employees, the City pays both the employee and employer shares of retirement costs due to past negotiations.

□ Our police department has had four different Police Chiefs over the last five years. While San Leandro has one of the finest police departments for a mid-size city in California, the rapid turnover in Police Chiefs has been detrimental to achieving long-term objectives.

□ Chief Spagnoli has implemented reforms to improve operations, training and professionalism of the department, undertaken initiatives to expand the department's community outreach, and has served as the President of the California Peace Officers Association.

□ Ms. Marshall served as our acting City Manager for seven months following the retirement of our former City Manager, and is integral in the management of several city departments.

□ We all benefit by having strong, talented individuals in leadership positions at City Hall. Retaining Chief Spagnoli and Ms. Marshall for the next five years will enhance the welfare and safety of our community.

□ I wish everyone happy holidays, good health, and the comfort of family and friends in the New Year.

—**Mayor Stephen Cassidy**

City of San Leandro

Glad Police are Storing Photos of Citizens

Editor:

□ I will never be “tazed,” arrested or tossed in jail. I say this with confidence, as I will not burglarize or assault anyone nor will I take things that do not belong to me. I am a law abiding citizen, who appreciates the fact that *if* I were wrongly accused of a crime, there will be photos showing
I didn't do it, I wasn't there!

□ Your article (*Police Chief Defends Storing Photos of Citizens, Page 1, The Time, Dec. 13*) makes me wonder “why” people would oppose this program. What do they fear? A few paranoid and vocal people attended that meeting and spoke for themselves not the general public.

□ Most citizens *want* the technology used to solve and prevent crimes. The fact that people who are not suspected of any wrongdoing are captured on film along with the criminals themselves is called “collateral photography.” Get over it! If you aren't the problem, you're part of the solution! You can't have it both ways.

□ If Mr. Katz-Lacabe fears his face on film, maybe he should double check where he goes and with whom. I have no problem being part of the solution...*big smile* and say “cheese”!

—**Janet Gebhardt**, *San Leandro*

Pot vs. Alcohol: Amazed by What's OK and What's Not

Editor:

□ Maybe it's time to open a book. Hundreds of alcohol overdose deaths occur annually. There has never been a single recorded marijuana OD fatality.

□ According to the American Public Health Association, excessive alcohol consumption is the

third leading cause of death in this country. The negative economic impact of extreme drinking is \$150 billion a year.

□ There have been no documented cases of lung cancer in a marijuana-only smoker, nor has pot been scientifically linked to any type of cancer. Alcohol abuse contributes to many long-term negative health consequences, notably cirrhosis of the liver and other cancers. While alcohol is one of the worst drugs one can take for pain management, marijuana one of the best.

□ Alcohol contributes to acts of violence; marijuana reduces aggression. In approximately three million cases of reported violent crimes last year, the offender had been drinking. This is particularly true in cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, and date rape. Marijuana use is absent from both crime reports and the scientific literature.

□ All of which begs the question. If one of these two drugs is implicated in dire health effects, high mortality rates, and physical violence – and the other is not – what are we to make of our nation's marijuana laws? Or alcohol laws, for that matter.

□ Anybody out there want to launch a campaign for the re-prohibition of alcohol? Didn't think so.

The answer, of course, is responsible drinking. Marijuana smokers, for their part, have already shown (apart from that little matter known as the law) greater responsibility in their choice of drugs than those of us who choose alcohol. So next time you want to sound off about “pot shops,” take a look at the amount of shops that sell alcohol. It’s amazing what’s “OK” and what is not.

—Larry Pacewicz, *San Leandro*

Vanishing Stores, Low School Scores Hurt Property Values

Editor:

□ I have lived in San Leandro since 1950. At that time we had a JC Penney, Homemaker store, Karl's Shoes and Singer, all in the Safeway block.

□ I am so disappointed that someone in our city government has not found a way to stop the store-after-store closing in San Leandro. The Lucky store site seems to be a perfect location for a business. Why is it that we have not had any interest in that site (except coffee shops, etc. which we have too many of already) and not a high end food market like Trader Joe's.

□ Why can't we offer Trader Joe's that site with free rent for a year if that is what it would take. To put an extra tax burden on businesses at this time is a very bad idea.

□ My 4 children went through San Leandro school system and I was pleased with the curriculum. It is disheartening to see the low scores those students are achieving now. If Castro Valley gets the same dollar amount that San Leandro does then someone in our school board should be investigating that and correcting it.

□ Shopping and schools. The state that both are in is not good for our property values.

—**Barbara Moyles**, *San Leandro*