

BASS LAKE BULLETIN

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PRADA AND COCO WIN SEATS ON EID BOARD

In a campaign in which Mountain Democrat reporter Dawn Hodson described the candidates as “running more against the district than against each other,” two new members have been elected to the El Dorado Irrigation District Board of Directors.

In Division 2, retired CEO Greg Prada won out over retired analyst Richard Englefield, 59 percent to 39 percent.

In Division 4, Dr. Dale Coco won over attorney Jake Flesher, 58 percent to 42 percent.

Prada said he didn't expect the campaign to be driven so much by money, saying his opponent outspent him 6 to 1. But he said his prior service with EID as a volunteer and his writing articles about the district helped him gain name recognition with voters.



Prada

Prada earlier told the Bulletin that “My candidacy is based on putting ratepayers first. EID’s deep fiscal woes and runaway rate hikes emanate from the EID board perpetually placing special interests above what is best and fair to ratepayers.”

“I’m looking forward to serving on the board as the ratepayers representative,” said Prada, adding he plans to influence certain changes. “The big thing I differ with the board is on spending practices. They think they have cut spending to the bone, but I feel there’s a lot more that could and should be done, especially on the administrative side, and in how they prioritize projects. I’m just one board member, but that will be my agenda. My priorities are to be cost prudent and see what the implications are for rates. Moving back the debt offering

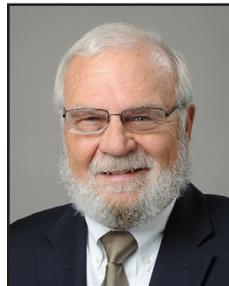
was the reason why EID could push back 6 points off rate hikes. But more can be done if costs are scrutinized, on the overhead side in particular. It’s clear-cut to me that less administrative expenses are needed and could give some rate relief in 2014.”

Promising to “roll up his sleeves and do his utmost to help the ratepayers and represent them on the EID board,” Prada said meetings will be longer in the future and more consideration will be given to ratepayers in board decisions.

The other winner in the election was Dr. Dale Coco.

“I’m honored and somewhat humbled by the fact that I now have the responsibility for a lot of people,” he said. “For providing affordable, clean water to them and taking care of their wastewater and taking care of their needs. I feel the same responsibility towards EID and its constituency that I did towards my patients. That’s a big responsibility and a humbling thing.”

Coco said there were two major factors that helped him win. First were his credentials and experience in administration and leading cost containment projects. “I have a reputation for credibility and integrity in the county,” he said. The second major factor was the coalition he was able to put together. “It was unprecedented in this county and people are still talking about it,” he added. He said he received support, donations and endorsements from slow growth advocates, Parker Development, small businesses and individuals, the chamber of commerce, Realtors, activists, the agricultural community and farmers, wineries and winery owners.



Coco

“All factions and stakeholders were part of this coalition, many of whom had never cooperated before,” added Coco.

Coco said the coalition is part of his vision for the county as being all-inclusive. “One of the reasons I was successful was my ability to bring people together, build



A full Bass Lake in an earlier year

IS IRRIGATION DISTRICT’S SALE OF BASS LAKE STALLED?

The Bulletin has learned that negotiations previously reported to sell Bass Lake and much of the 140 acres of land surrounding it, long held as an asset of the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID), to the Rescue Union School District (District) for a school site may be stalled.

Persons familiar with the legal requirement imposed upon school boards by the Brown Act to disclose real property negotiations on their meeting agendas told the Bulletin that there has been no such notification on the District’s current Board Agenda. This leads them to speculate that the board has again identified a potential school site, only to decide that the site is not acceptable to them. The only real property negotiations earlier reported on the District’s Board Agendas concerned the county-owned 41-acre regional park site which is across from Woodridge along Bass Lake Road.

According to EID documents, negotiations with RUSD to buy the Bass Lake property began in March of this year. However, the notice of real property negotiation no longer appears on the EID Board Agendas for October or November. As a part of the deal, EID would retain a parcel that cur-

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello All,

The other day I was pleased to see the workers building the foundations for the traffic signals that will be soon installed at the intersection of Bass Lake Road and Serrano Parkway. It will be a relief when that intersection is completed, especially the new Sienna Ridge Road part. Looking back, it seems to me that they would dig a trench and bury a pipe one week, then dig another trench for another pipe the following week.

I understand that as soon as the intersection work is completed, and the need for construction vehicles to access the site via old Sienna Ridge Road, the stop signs there on Bass Lake Road will be removed. I think we will all be glad of that.

Though it looks like the completion of the funded part of Silver Springs Parkway will be delayed until next year, I see that the addition of the right- and left-turn lanes at Green Valley Road and Deer Valley Road are complete. These improvements certainly will make a big difference for those of us that drive on Green Valley Road.

Taking into account all the positive things that I see happening, I think that overall we probably live in the best place that can be imagined.

When I am asked how I like living in El Dorado Hills, I always say that we live in the sweet spot of the foothills: we are above the fog and below the snow.

So when we celebrate Thanksgiving Day at the end of this month, let us all be thankful for what we have, because we are blessed with much more than many of those who live in the rest of this world.

Sincerely,

John Thomson
President

EID ELECTION *(continued)*

a consensus and move things forward and that's what I intend to do. And I want to keep that coalition together for the greater good of the county."

As far as his immediate priorities, he acknowledged he's on the front end of a steep learning curve. "I want to learn everything about EID, meet its employees, see its operations and learn how things are done," he said. "Then I intend to do what I said I would during my campaign. Make EID more cost-effective and improve or increase quality. I will also try to freeze rates during my term of office.

"Long-term my goal is to make EID energy self-sufficient in 10 to 15 years. Doing all that includes retooling Project 184, securing the district's water rights and making EID as efficient and cost-effective as possible."

During his campaign, Coco told the Bulletin his plans as director if he won: "Stop runaway rate increases, cut debt, secure and protect our water, and maintain local control of our water to ensure adequate water for our future at a reasonable rate. The first step in controlling runaway rate increases is to control the cost of operations. But that is more than just cutting costs. We must re-tool EID to be more efficient, cost effective and to live within a budget without compromising water quality or quantity. We need solutions that will eliminate the problems, not eliminate quality through cuts alone."

"I also want to thank all my volunteers, endorsers and supporters and those who donated," said Coco. "I received a lot of individual donations with some donating beyond their means. It is extremely gratifying to have that support from ratepayers."

The candidates coming in second also commented on the election returns.

Sounding almost relieved it was over, Jake Flesher said he was gratified by the support he received. He also congratulated Coco for "the coalition he put together and for running an admirable campaign based on the issues."

Joking that "people like doctors more than they do lawyers," Flesher said that he and Coco were similar in many of their positions but he felt his opponent had the edge in the level of financial support he received and the way he framed the issues. "I want to thank everyone who walked precincts and made phone calls on behalf of my campaign," he said. "I wish Coco and Greg the best of luck in working with EID."

Richard Englefield, on the other hand, was upset by his failure to win a seat, saying the money he received from home builders hurt his campaign. Englefield insisted that

it costs a lot to live in the county, and that's because there's a lack of people paying into the service: "Less density means higher utility bills. If that's what they want when they talk about stopping building, they need to understand it comes with a cost. But people don't want to hear the truth."

The new directors will begin their terms December 6th.~

Credit: Dawn Hodson, Mtn.Democrat



BASS LAKE *(continued)*

rently holds the EID maintenance yard at the southern end of the property.

Readers will remember that the District led Parker Development a merry dance when Parker had the obligation to sell the district a school site in Serrano near Bass Lake Road and Serrano Parkway. The District reportedly toyed with the idea of three different school sites, one after another, until eventually rejecting all three. Parker, tiring of the board's indecision, finally set a drop-dead date for the district to make up its mind, a date which has since passed.

The lake itself and the surrounding property, amounting to about 141 acres, was declared redundant by the EID Board last year. EID officials explained then that Bass Lake, formerly used to store recycled water, was no longer viable for doing so. EID then solicited bids for the property.

It is generally known that El Dorado County considered purchasing the EID property last year, led by efforts of then-District 1 Supervisor John Knight. At that time, the idea of a number of public entities banding together to buy the property was considered. Among the alternatives discussed was a proposal that the school district might later purchase a portion of the property for a school site from the county, if the county were to first purchase the property.

The school district at that time expressed a desire to someday use the northern part of the Bass Lake property and part of the adjacent county-owned parcel for a school site. Access for the school site would be from Bass Lake Road, and to satisfy the fire department, the site would have a secondary access road that would connect the school property with Serrano Parkway.

Interviewed last week by the *Bulletin*, District 1 Supervisor Ron Mikulaco stated emphatically that the county was not currently interested in purchasing the Bass Lake property from EID. "No way!" he said. ~



Tax money going up in smoke

ILLEGAL FIRE TAX PROTEST UPDATE

As earlier reported in the Bulletin, the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association (HJTA), along with El Dorado County, is in the process of suing the state, asking the court to order refunds of the illegal fire tax. Our own State Senator Ted Gaines also strongly supports the lawsuit, which challenges the fee on constitutional grounds.

Senator Gaines has been urging those paying the tax to appeal the fee by filing a Petition for Redetermination. If HJTA is victorious in court, it will be easier to secure refunds for those who have filed the Petition for Redetermination. Until now, HJTA has been advising those who filed the Petition after receiving last year's bill that it would not be necessary to file again when paying this year's bill. However, according to a Cal Fire Representative, people should send in a Petition for Redetermination for this year's bill, even if they filed previously.

Last April, Senator Gaines' bill to repeal the illegal fire tax (Senate Bill 17), failed in the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water on a four-to-three vote (with two members abstaining). The bill would have reversed the Governor's and legislative Democrats' decision to raise \$84 million in taxes by charging rural property owners a "fee" for fire prevention services as part of the state's 2011-12 budget. These communities are located in "State Responsibility Areas" designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, even though their property taxes already contribute to the service contracts that counties have with Cal Fire.

In the interest of caution, property owners should protest every billing by filing a new Petition for Redetermination each time. If you need more information, copies of the forms to be submitted, and the addresses to which they should be mailed, please go to firetaxprotest.org. For those who need assistance, you may call senator Gaines' office at (916) 933-7213. ~



EIA: PROPANE PRICES EXPECTED TO HOLD STEADY THIS WINTER

The US Energy Information Administration is forecasting that propane prices in the West, which uses about 16 percent of US propane, will be about the same as last year, with perhaps a slight upward bias.

Their forecast is based on expected inventories and the weather outlook. EIA projects that US propane inventories will remain in the middle of their historic range, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is forecasting that temperatures this winter will be near the ten-year average.

Overall US propane prices tracked by EIA as of November 8 show the wholesale rate as \$1.365 per gallon and the retail price of \$2.450. These prices are a weighted average in the 48 contiguous states.

The wholesale rate at the Mont Belvieu, Texas, hub as of November 8 was \$1.1780 per gallon. Last year at this time it was \$0.9025.

The November 11 price for Bass Lake homeowners who contract with JS West Propane is currently \$1.98 per gallon, based on a fifty-cent markup over the wholesale price and up to ten cents per gallon transportation charge (the retail price is \$2.64).

In other propane news, farmers in the upper Midwest are grappling with a propane shortage.

Unusually heavy rains have left corn from this year's bumper harvest soggy than normal. Farmers are struggling to acquire enough propane to fuel the giant, oven-like machines that dry corn before it is stored so as to prevent rot. The dash for the gas has helped send U.S. domestic propane prices to an 18-month high and is slowing the corn harvest.

The area has received as much as six times the normal amount of precipitation in the past month, forcing farmers to dry more kernels, and ones that are wetter than normal.

"There is adequate supply of propane in the U.S. The problem is getting it where it's needed fast enough," said Roger Leider, executive director of the Minnesota Propane Association, a trade group of more than 180 companies. ~



EDH CSD URGES CC&R COMPLIANCE

In an effort that many homeowners see as "locking the barn door after the horse is gone," the El Dorado Hills Community Services District (CSD) is trying to get homeowners to comply with their neighborhood's Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs) document.

The CC&Rs are limitations and rules placed on a group of homes. Most planned unit developments and neighborhoods have CC&Rs, and the document places restrictions on the appearance and uses of a home. The CSD assumed responsibility for enforcing the CC&Rs in the 1980s. Currently 35 villages in El Dorado Hills are subject to this enforcement. [See list of villages here](#)

Anything that would impact the exterior of your home and neighbors is subject to review and approval by the CSD's Design Review Committee (DRC). This includes new roofs, landscaping, exterior paint color, sheds, windows, swimming pools, additions and more. An application, with a fee, must be submitted to the DRC for approval of any changes.

Most of the time, people are not aware that they need to go through this approval process. They either didn't receive the CC&R's or it's part of a big stack of papers they never read.

Critics of the CSD have in the past faulted the CSD for lax enforcement, while the CSD boards have retorted that the \$10 annual fee does not cover their costs of enforcing compliance. The CSD has usually depended on a number of volunteers to watch for violations and give friendly advice to errant homeowners. However, over the past few years, many of those volunteers have quit in frustration with what they perceived as a lack of support from the CSD.

The DRC meets every Tuesday morning at 8 o'clock in the CSD parks conference room at 1030 St. Andrews Drive. For more information about the DRC or to download a project review application visit edhcsd.org or call (916) 933-6624. ~

Crredit: Julie Samrick, Village Life.



MIK OPENS EDH OFFICE

District 1 Supervisor Ron "Mik" Mikulaco opened his satellite office in El Dorado Hills Town Center last week behind Mama Ann's Deli facing Nugget Market.

The office will be open from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays or by appointment. Call (916) 943-8588.

Asked by BLAC Vice President Kathy Prevost if he would be there during office hours, Mik said, "Don't worry, I'll be around." ~



Leaves

How silently they tumble down
And come to rest upon the ground
To lay a carpet, rich and rare,
Beneath the trees without a care,
Content to sleep, their work well done,
Colors gleaming in the sun.

At other times, they wildly fly
Until they nearly reach the sky.
Twisting, turning through the air
Till all the trees stand stark and bare.
Exhausted, drop to earth below
To wait, like children, for the snow.

— Elsie N. Brady



NOMINATIONS IN HAND, ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY AND ELECTION SET FOR DECEMBER

The November meeting of the Board of Directors of Bass Lake Action Committee was the scene of nominations for officers for 2014. The nominees are John Thomson, President; Kathy Prevost, Vice President; Hal Erpenbeck, Secretary; Fran Thomson, Treasurer; and Terry Crumpley, Director-at-Large. The meeting attendees thanked outgoing Treasurer Tasha Boutselis-Camacho for her service on the board for a number of years.

The December annual membership meeting and Christmas Party will be held on December 2, 2013 at 7:00 PM at the home of Sue and Stuart Colvin, 131 Gage Court in Serrano, El Dorado Hills, 916-358-9333. The election of officers will be the only item of business on the meeting agenda. All BLAC members and invited guests will receive an invitation, with directions and a gate code, in the mail.

The first BLAC meeting of 2014 will be a board meeting that will be held on February 3, 2014 at 7:00 PM at the home of John and Fran Thomson, 501 Kirkwood Court, in Woodridge, El Dorado Hills, 530-677-3039.

All BLAC members are cordially invited to attend all BLAC board meetings. For additional information, contact Kathy Prevost at 530-672-6836. ~

Bass Lake Action Committee
501 Kirkwood Court
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

BASS LAKE VILLAGE LLAD ASSESSMENT TO BE EXAMINED BY BLAC

Acting upon inquiries from homeowners in the Bass Lake Village Landscape and Lighting Assessment District (LLAD), which includes Hills of El Dorado (Zone A) and Woodridge (Zone B), representatives of BLAC expect to meet this month with El Dorado Hills Community Services District (CSD) officials to review the fiscal year 2014 LLAD assessments for Woodridge. Of special interest will be the manner in which overhead expenses are allocated to the LLAD.

The inquiry, which was scheduled to start in September, was delayed because CSD personnel were away on vacation.

CSD Director Terry Crumpley is spearheading the effort to identify direct costs and indirect cost allocations.

The LLAD assessments maintain the entry landscaping and the street lights of Woodridge and Hills of El Dorado under the management of the CSD. ~

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