

-----Original Message-----

From: Tim Redmond

Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2007 2:22 PM

To: 'Kimo Crossman'; 'James Chaffee'; Steve Jones

Cc: Bruce Brugmann; Amanda Witherell; 'Peter Warfield'; 'Christian Holmer'; 'Diana Scott'; 'Deetje Boler'

Subject: RE: Chaffee -- Steve Jones Salvo re Bay Guardian Endorses Prop. D v. The Facts

Thanks, Kimo, for being polite and respectful, which is how this discussion ought to be conducted. I understand the Chaffee points, and I know that he and others are very unhappy with the idea that the measure allows the library to issue revenue bonds backed by what are essentially tax increments and use that money for construction, not programs, I am very aware of how this works and what it means, I read everything Chaffee and Warfield have written about this, I paid close attention to their case and I just respectfully disagree. I think the revenue-bond component of this measure is okay, and might actually be a good model for the future. I think it's far too hard for government to issue bonds or raise taxes these days (the impact of Prop. 13); I wish the PUC could issue revenue bonds without going to ballot to buy out PG&E or construct a city wi-fi system.

So we disagree on this, that's all. Isn't the first time and it won't be the last time that we happen to disagree with people who normally share our views.

And by the way: I wrote the editorial. I was not only alive when Reagan was president, I was living in San Francisco back then and covering the city budget. And yes, Dianne Feinstein did target the library -- esp. the branches -- for cuts. City budget cuts were never across-the-board; police and fire, for example, got all they wanted under Feinstein. So did any agency that served downtown's interests. And with the emerging AIDS crisis, it was hard (and criminal) to cut public health. So the libraries were absolutely a target.

I also think that starving an agency for money is not the way to fight privatization. Me, I'd give the library twice, three times, five times its current funding levels, abolish the Friends altogether, and tax the rich to pay for it. But that's just me.

-----Original Message-----

From: Kimo Crossman [mailto:kimo@webnetic.net]

Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2007 1:52 PM

To: 'James Chaffee'; Steve Jones

Cc: Bruce Brugmann; Amanda Witherell; Tim Redmond; 'Peter Warfield'; 'Christian Holmer'; 'Diana Scott'; 'Deetje Boler'

Subject: RE: Chaffee -- Steve Jones Salvo re Bay Guardian Endorses Prop. D v. The Facts

Steve -

I believe one of the points that Warfield and Chaffee were making was that this initiative did not need to be on the current ballot otherwise funding would revert. There were two or three more elections which this could occur in allowing some of the significant problems with this proposal to be addressed.

In fairness, it seems it would have been best to allow the No on Prop D group (who are also mainly Sunshine Activists) to meet directly with your editorial board before the Guardian made its decision

From: James Chaffee [mailto:chaffeej@pacbell.net]
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2007 1:23 PM
To: Steve Jones
Cc: Bruce Brugmann; Amanda Witherell; Tim Redmond; Peter Warfield; Kimo Crossman; Christian Holmer; Diana Scott; Deetje Boler
Subject: Chaffee -- Steve Jones Salvo re Bay Guardian Endorses Prop. D v. The Facts

Yeah Right! I am well aware this is your opinion. Redmond and Brugmann are trying to humor me. This is much better. P.S. I wasn't born yet when FDR was president.

James Chaffee,

----- Original Message -----

From: "Steve Jones"
To: "James Chaffee"
Sent: 10/04/2007 11:57AM
Subject: RE: Chaffee -- Bay Guardian Endorses Prop. D v. The Facts

It's just inaccurate to say we didn't consider your opinion and that of Peter Warfield. Both of you have flooded our in-boxes with your arguments, and Bruce has diligently forwarded them to everyone else. We respect your perspective and weighed it carefully against the likelihood that a defeat of D would mean less money going to the libraries, which are valuable institutions despite their mismanagement. But respect cuts both ways, and after reading this misleading garbage that you're putting out, I'm starting to feel that your personal grudge against library officials is compromising your credibility. I'll take that into account as I read your future missives.

Steven T. Jones
City Editor
San Francisco Bay Guardian
(415) 487-2552

-----Original Message-----

From: James Chaffee [mailto:chaffeej@pacbell.net]
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2007 12:06 AM
To: Savebooks
Subject: Chaffee -- Bay Guardian Endorses Prop. D v. The Facts

Bay Guardian Endorses Prop. D - Please Look At the Facts First

By James Chaffee

How often have we seen it? The Bay Guardian has some background in city government and should know by now that it is wise to check with the activists and gadflies before swallowing whole the City Hall line. Instead, the Bay Guardian adds a bit of progressive pepper to the stew and serves up the story from City Hall the same as it was served to them. The Bay Guardian certainly did not check with me. But more to the point, the San Francisco Public Library is one of the great privatization, philanthropist, influence-peddling scandals of all time. The Bay Guardian has the resources to do its own research and should be publishing major articles exposing the

truth leading up to this election. Instead, on the Library issue, it has an endorsement based on a couple of paragraphs apparently straight off some press release.

I have quoted the entire endorsement from the Bay Guardian on the left below, and attempted to briefly lay out some of the facts on the right.

Claims from Bay Guardian Endorsement	The Public Record
<p>1. In the 1980s and early 1990s, San Francisco mayors loved to cut the budget of the public library. Every time money was short - and money was chronically short - the library took a hit. It was an easy target. If you cut other departments (say, police or fire or Muni or public health), people would howl and say lives were in danger. Reducing the hours at a few neighborhood branch libraries didn't seem nearly as dire.</p>	<p>1. Whoever wrote this was not born yet when Ronald Reagan was President. This is total nonsense. The threats of budget cuts in those years were across the board for every department. It was the Library that howled like a stuck pig at the suggestion that it should be subjected to the same budget realities as every other department. What people tend to remember was the noise that the library was very good at creating. Although there was some erosion in purchasing power because of increases in salaries, the Library was never hit as bad as other departments</p>
<p>2. So activists who argued that libraries were an essential public service put a measure on the ballot in 1994 that guaranteed at least a modest level of library funding.</p>	<p>2. This is true but it sweeps quite a bit under the rug. The threat at the time was that opening of the New Main in 1996 would suck all the life out of the branches. San Francisco now has one of the highest per capita support for libraries in the country, but there has been no accountability for what we got. The current budget of \$70 Million is \$105 Billion over 15 years before inflation. If inflation for the next fifteen is like the last fifteen, it will be \$2.2 Billion with inflation. If you want to give that to the library with even less accountability - based on their record - you are not a library supporter, you are a library zombie.</p>
<p>3. The improvements have been dramatic: branch library hours have increased more than 50 percent, library use is way up, there are more librarians around in the afternoons to help kids with their homework... In that sense, the Library Preservation Fund has been a great success.</p>	<p>3. Do you know what the term "canard" means? All of these claims for the fund are from the first year when the voters and the press were watching. In the first year of the Fund, the Library Budget went up 59% (\$20.6 Million to \$32.8 Million) and the hours increased 801 to 1172 or 47 %, the Materials Budget increased 279%, (\$1,975,300 to \$5,409,689). Since first year the budget is up 160% to \$78.2 million. while the CPI went up</p>

	<p>40%. In the same period, not one hour has been added to the schedule, actual service hours have dropped 15% (except for Mirkarimi's extra funding for Sunday hours that the library has turned into an "October Surprise"). The materials budget has dropped as a percent of the total budget. Interestingly, in 1995-96 the library purchased 220,631 volumes, but in 2005-6 purchased 175,111 volumes.</p>
<p>4. The program is scheduled to sunset next year; Proposition D would extend it another 15 years.</p>	<p>4. Helloooo. What year are you in? The program is scheduled to sunset in 2010. It is true that the property tax assessment ends in July of 2009, but that is not next year unless you are driving around with Marty McFly.</p>
<p>5. If the current management of the public library system were a bit more trustworthy, this would be a no-brainer. Unfortunately, the library commission and staff have been resisting accountability; ironically, the library - a font of public information - makes it difficult to get basic records about library operations. The library is terrible about sunshine; in fact, activists have had to sue this year to get the library to respond to a simple public-records request (for nonconfidential information on repetitive stress injuries among library staff).</p>	<p>5. Thank you for small favors. Yes, the Library Administration has been a nightmare of secrecy and illegality for decades. It was the Bay Guardian that quoted Jim Wheaton of the First Amendment Project in which he compared SFPL to the "Nixon White House." The question is, Why this is not the overriding issue? Shouldn't openness and democratic accountability be a prerequisite for any public funding. Without sunshine there is no way to tell how deep the corruption goes. Why is the Bay Guardian willing to rationalize this issue?</p>
<p>6. And we're not thrilled that a significant part of the library's operating budget is raised (and controlled) by a private group, Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, which decides, with no oversight by an elected official, how as much as 10 percent of library money is spent.</p>	<p>6. Oh My Gawd! Where did you get this, and what the hell are you talking about? The "private group" claims that they give \$929,644 in the current year. The Bay Guardian is not suspicious when they show a good result right before election? In the most recent years it was \$225,914 in '06, \$182,867 in '05, \$90,748 in '04. The five highest paid executives of the Friends & Foundation alone made \$622,501 in 2006, and Chief Executive Dona Bero herself made \$167,241 that same year. The Friends & Foundation have \$19.5 Million in total assets, and their net income in 2006 was \$3.57 Million. The Bay Guardian has the resources to find out why they give the library less than the two highest paid</p>

	<p>employees in three of the last four years and, more importantly, what the donations went for. The F&F use to have an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approved in open hearings by the Board of Supervisors. The MOU was discontinued rather than face the disclosures requested by Supervisor Leland Yee at the time. The library budget is \$78.2 Million with \$12.4 Million in reserve and the Friend & Foundation control it all. Again, what the hell are you talking about?</p>
<p>7. But libraries are too valuable and too easy a budget target to allow the Library Preservation Fund to expire. And the way to fend off creeping privatization is hardly by starving a public institution for funds. So we'll support Prop. D.</p>	<p>7. This is why the corporations win. We think that privatization is not really serious, and we should be grateful for whatever paternalism is thrown our way. I go to Library Commission meetings. The Library Commissions as agents of the Friends & Foundation openly regard the public sector as a joke. Of course, the public sector is all too eager to agree, with the help of the Bay Guardian. With that attitude we will wake up one day and there won't be any democracy left.</p>

The conclusion is probably redundant at this stage. Democracy is comprised of process and accountability. This set aside bypassed process and the accountability is even less than it was before, in a library where the privatization and lack of openness has been a disgrace. The current measure called Proposition D is both a bond without a direct goal and a set aside without a priority. The current administration of the library is controlled by the most anti-democratic forces in society. The truth is that libraries are too valuable to be turned over to the philanthropists and the influence peddlers.

There are really only two points that need to be kept in mind. In a corporate system the increase in benefits comes from reducing the number of beneficiaries. In a democratic society the lies cost more than the money.

How could the Bay Guardian do this? The Bay Guardian may be innocent as to some of these details, but it should know that these privateers are lying and that the public is being played for suckers without knowing the details. It is democracy that comes first. Our Public Libraries, as the most democratic of institutions, cannot be abandoned to the forces of privatization. That is what we cannot allow.

Please visit us at SaveOurLibraries.com.

