

West County Newsletter

MARCH 2012

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- John's Message 1
- Wood Burning is Harmful to our Health 2
- Air District Board Meets in the Community 2
- Doctors Medical Center Update 3
- West County Health Center Construction Update 3
- RYSE Center Grows Outside 4
- County Library Partners for Family Deals 4
- Breakfast with John in May at Retirement Community in Pinole 5
- Think Preparedness 5
- PICTURE THIS! 5
- Back Page: Staff Contacts Meeting Schedules Commission Openings 6

A message from Supervisor John Gioia



This year, I'm taking on a few more challenges in the interest of providing leadership on some important issues.

I'm currently serving as a Vice-President of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), a group representing all 58 California counties.

As a Vice-President of CSAC, I'm working with Governor Brown and State Legislators to reform state and local government to more effectively solve our pressing fiscal problems. One of the top issues we're working on is protecting local tax revenues for cities and counties so that the state does not divert these dollars.

I'm also excited to serve this year as the Chair of the California Cities, Counties, and Schools (CCS) Partnership. The CCS Partnership brings together leading city councilmembers, school board members and county supervisors from across the state to develop collaborative strategies to improve the conditions of children and families.

In this role, I plan to work hard promoting the "Community Schools" model, where counties, cities, and school districts work together to make schools hubs of critical resources for children and their families. This includes school-based health clinics, after-school programs, adult education, and summer learning opportunities.

Community schools are growing nationwide as they've been proven to enhance learning and educational performance. Here in West County, I'm proud of successfully working to ensure that health services are available in all of our local high schools.

This is one example of how different agencies can work together to help children in our community.

I'd like to help drive more of these collaborations.

This year, I'm also Chair of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Board, which is charged with regulating stationary sources of air pollution (including industry).

Air quality in the Bay Area is substantially cleaner than it was 50 years ago when the Air District was created, primarily due to new controls on open

burning and industrial sources, as well as new state requirements for cleaner automobiles and fuels.

You can read more about some of the Air District's initiatives in this newsletter, including the reason we prohibit wood-burning fires on winter Spare the Air Days.

There's a strong correlation between health and clean air. I'm honored to serve in a position where I can help ensure healthy breathing for all.

Yes, I'm busier these days, and these leadership positions require more time and travel on top of my existing duties as a County Supervisor. But everything I'm working on presents an opportunity for local improvements, here at home in West County. This is service to Contra Costa County.

I'll keep you posted on how things go.

- John

Wood Burning is Harmful to our Health

“While wood-burning fires are appealing, that appeal is lost when the smoke they produce leads to serious health problems..”

This winter, the Bay Area experienced a number of cold, dry days without a lot of wind or air movement — literally trapping dirty air close to the earth’s surface, where it most affects people.

In response, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District declared several “Winter Spare the Air Alerts.” On these days, wood-burning (including logs and pellets, in fireplaces, stoves or outdoor fire pits) is prohibited.

Complying with these alerts is critical for our health.

Wood smoke contains tiny particles, or soot, as well as toxic gases, such as dioxin. These microscopic pollutants can penetrate deeply in our lungs and are linked to numerous health problems including asthma, chronic

bronchitis, and may even lead to heart attacks. These particles are especially harmful to the one in seven Bay Area residents who suffer a respiratory illness.

There’s an estimated 1.4 million fireplaces and wood-burning stoves in the Bay Area. During the winter, they produce a significant amount of harmful air pollution.

While wood-burning fires are appealing, that appeal is lost when the smoke they produce leads to serious health problems.

That’s why the Air District is encouraging residents to convert their fireplaces to natural gas, which is hundreds of times cleaner-burning than wood.

In Supervisor Gioia’s role on the Air District Board, he helped pass regulations governing new homes or remodels which allow only cleaner-burning technology such as EPA-certified woodstoves and fireplace inserts, pellet stoves, or natural gas devices.

The Air District’s website www.baaqmd.gov contains excellent information on its wood fire regulations, including information on cleaner burning methods. You can also call the Air District’s Outreach Office at 415-749-4900.

For more information contact Luz Gomez in Supervisor Gioia’s office at 510-374-3231 or luz.gomez@bos.cccounty.us.

Bay Area Air District Board Meets In The Community

If you see a group of official-looking board members gathering at an oil refinery, dry cleaner or gas station it may be a regular public meeting of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District board.

To better understand its mission of regulating air pollution, the “Air Board,” which Supervisor Gioia chairs, is holding some of its meetings at the sites it regulates,

The Air District regulates stationary sources of air pollution, such as industry and business, not moving sources, such as vehicles.

This includes power plants, gas stations, work place diesel generators, factories, and any business with air emissions that could be polluting. It regulates more than 10,000 sites in the nine-county Bay Area.

The goal of community meetings is to help board members, and public participants, get firsthand case-by-case knowledge about air emissions and the regulatory process.

Strengthening Doctors Medical Center

Thanks in large part to West County voters, Doctors Medical Center in San Pablo is securing its future as the *only* full-service hospital and emergency room serving everyone in the region.

Voters last November overwhelmingly passed Measure J, a \$47 annual parcel tax to help Doctors Medical Center, which is publicly owned and operated by the West Contra Costa Healthcare District. The campaign was co-chaired by Supervisor Gioia and the measure received nearly 74% of the vote.

The San Pablo hospital has struggled financially due to a combination of state budget cuts, inadequate MediCal reimbursement rates, and an increase in patients who can't pay for services.

The ballot measure, which takes effect this July 1, will raise about \$5.1 million a year to keep the hospital open. If the hospital and emergency room were to close, the tax will automatically end.

Supervisor Gioia, who grew up in West Contra Costa County and has chaired the medical center's governing board, is committed to the hospital's survival.

He led efforts for the County to help bring the hospital out of bankruptcy and thanks voters for their support of this critical West County health resource.

Doctors' future is looking stronger, but as with all public medical centers, it still faces financial challenges. The team running the hospital, including Supervisor Gioia, is working hard to implement a financially sustainable operating plan which preserves vital and important services.

For more information contact Terrance Cheung at 510-374-3231 or terrance.cheung@bos.cccounty.us.

"Doctors' future is looking stronger, but as with all public medical centers, it still faces financial challenges. "

On Track to Open This Fall, New West County Health Center

A new, state-of-the-art West County Health Center is slated to open this September, offering patients a range of treatment and preventative care.

The new County-run center, near Doctors Medical Center, will be located on San Pablo Avenue near Church Lane in the City of San Pablo. It is replacing the aging Richmond Health Center near 39th Street and Macdonald Avenue, which was built in the 1960s and faced increasing maintenance and space problems.

The new facility will create a modern, regional medical hub, offering a range of services to an estimated 80,000 patients annually.

The goal is also to increase partnerships between the County's health center and neighboring Doctors Hospital.

Its design follows the "medical home" model, where most patient needs are met under one roof. This includes primary and secondary care, outpatient surgeries, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment.

Prenatal care, pediatrics, immunizations, dental care, behavioral health, radiology and laboratory services are also among the center's mix of services.

Supervisor Gioia, who is committed to ensuring access to quality health

care for all West County residents, led the effort to replace the old Richmond Health Center. The project received a significant boost in 2009, with a \$12 million Federal grant under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. San Pablo officials worked cooperatively with the County to locate the new health center in their city.

A community ceremony and tour will be held when the center opens. Check back on Supervisor Gioia's website for details, www.cocobos.org/gioia.

For more information contact Luz Gomez at 510-374-3231 or at luz.gomez@bos.cccounty.us.

RYSE Youth Center Grows Outdoors

The non-profit RYSE Youth Center in Richmond may soon have a new outdoor space ready for long summer days.

Groundbreaking on "RYSE Outside," as the yard project is called, is slated for this spring, with completion done by summer. The area is now a vacant parking lot.

Plans for the outdoor space include a stage, shaded seating area, basketball half-court, garden, and art-display area for the works of youth members. Funding for the \$250,000 project is from foundations and individual donations.

RYSE, located on 41ST St., off of Macdonald Ave. in Richmond, is a safe space for youth to "hang out," participating in enriching activities such as media arts, computer lab, dance, and academic tutoring. It also provides access to health and wellness services. RYSE is committed to helping develop youth leadership.

Supervisor Gioia is one of the founders of RYSE and also serves on its Board of Directors. Since RYSE's opening in 2008, it has served more than 1,300 youth between the ages of 14 and 21.

The outdoor area allows RYSE to grow its offerings in a safe, fresh-air setting, as an extension to its indoor space.



Left—RYSE's back lot design.
Above—Back lot's current condition

If you'd like to support this project, join Supervisor Gioia at the annual RYSE "Be a Kid" Fundraiser **Friday, April 27 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.** 205—41st Street It's lots of fun!

For more information, contact Connor Fu at RYSE at 510-374-3401 or Connor@rysecenter.org.

County Library Partners for Deals on Family Outings

Did you know that the County Library system partners with a range of Bay Area arts, music, and science venues to offer free or discounted admission to anyone with a library card?

This wonderful program is called "Discover & Go", and includes such fun and interesting places as the Bay Area Discovery Museum, the Lawrence Hall of Science, the Asian Art Museum, the Exploratorium, the Golden State Model Railroad Museum, Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, the Oakland Museum and the Oakland Zoo - among others.

It's easy to use via the Library's website. Simply go to www.ccclib.org then click on "Discover & Go" in the left column under the "Museum Passes" headline.

You'll find a list of discounts and venues, with easy explanations on using the program.

If you don't have a library card; no worries. The site tells you how to get one on-line.

Plus, the website provides a list of suggested reading, for children and adults, to learn more about topics covered in the outings.

There's even an on-line form for providing feedback on your trip, and Discover & Go participants are encouraged to post photos and comments on the Library's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ccclib

You can also call the Library at 1-800-984-4636.

Pinole Community Breakfast Will Focus on Seniors

Do you have questions about senior services, from housing to healthcare?

Supervisor Gioia will be hosting a community breakfast in Pinole on **Saturday, May 19** to help.

The event is open to the public at no cost.

What: Senior Resource Fair/Community Breakfast
When: Saturday, May 19, 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Where: Bay Park Retirement Community, Community Room, 2621 Appian Way, Pinole
For more information: Terrance Cheung at 510-374-3231, or at Terrance.cheung@bos.cccounty.us

Supervisor Gioia holds periodic community events at locations throughout his district. These free events are a great opportunity to ask questions and get information about County matters.

When the Ground Shakes, Think Preparation

The sharp tremblers we experienced this month along the Hayward Fault in the El Cerrito hills remind us of the importance of earthquake preparedness.

Home to eight active earthquake faults, the Bay Area faces a 63% probability of experiencing a 6.7 magnitude quake within the next 30 years according to the U.S Geological Survey. The Hayward fault, which runs north-south through the East Bay Hills, is considered one of the most dangerous faults because of its proximity to hospitals, freeways, and millions of people.

This is sobering. So, what can we do to prepare?

Quite a bit as it turns out. For excellent details take a look at the Ready.gov (www.ready.gov) website of the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) for recommendations.

Here are a few Key recommendations::

A home earthquake kit with water, a battery-operated or hand crank radio, a flashlight with extra batteries, a whistle, an emergency contact list, a wrench or pliers to turn off utilities, non-perishable food.

Family emergency communications plan, outlining what family members should do in an emergency; where they should go; who will be checking on whom; emergency contact numbers.

Brace and secure loose objects, wall hangings, furniture, and appliances. Check your local hardware store for instructions and supplies on doing this yourself.

Install automatic shut-off valves on your gas lines. Contra Costa County requires these valves on new construction, major remodels, and upon sale of property in unincorporated areas. For more information on this requirement, contact the County Building Inspection Division at 925-646-7200 or search for the "shut-off valve ordinance" on the County Website www.co.contra-costa.ca.us.

Residents can also receive training on emergency preparedness by enrolling in CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams) classes. Go to www.citizencorps.gov/cert to find classes near you.

For more information on emergency preparedness, contact Terrance Cheung in my office at terrance.cheung@bos.cccounty.us or 510-374-3231.

Picture This!

www.flickr.com/people/johngioia



Left—Construction on the New West County Health Center is making steady progress. A community Grand Opening is expected this September.



Before and after pictures of Tara Hills where more than 20 volunteers helped clean their neighborhood.

Tara Hills Cleanup 2/25/12. Left—Residents Lesli Rudd, Kelly Boice, and Ramona Rudd stand in front of piles of garbage collected.



Office Staff

Terrance Cheung

Chief of Staff

terrance.cheung@bos.cccounty.us

El Sobrante Liaison

East Richmond Heights Liaison

Pinole Liaison

Cynthia Patton

Office Manager/Scheduler

cynthia.patton@bos.cccounty.us

Luz Gomez

Deputy Chief of Staff

luz.gomez@bos.cccounty.us

North Richmond Liaison

Montalvin Manor/Bayview Liaison

Tara Hills Liaison

Kate Rauch

District Coordinator

kate.rauch@bos.cccounty.us

Kensington Liaison

Joan Carpenter

District Coordinator

joan.carpenter@bos.cccounty.us

Rollingwood Liaison

Contact Us:

11780 San Pablo Avenue, #D

El Cerrito, CA 94530

(510) 374-3231

(510) 374-3429 Fax

e-mail: John_Gioia@bos.cccounty.us

Office Hours: Monday – Friday

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Our Website: www.cocobos.org/gioia

Other Elected Officials

House of Representatives:

Congressman George Miller, III

(District 7)

(510) 262-6500 - Richmond Office

(925) 602-1880 - District Office

Congressman John Garamendi

(District 10)

(925) 932-8899 or

(925) 757-7187 - District Offices

State Senate & Assembly:

Senator Mark DeSalunier

(District 7)

(925) 602-6593 – District Office

Senator Loni Hancock

(District 9)

(510) 286-1333 - District Office

Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner

(District 14)

(510) 559-1406 - District Office

Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla

(District 11)

(925) 372-7990 - District Office

Commission & Volunteer Opportunities

Interested in community issues? Want to get involved? The County has numerous citizen boards that advise the Supervisors on a range of issues. For a complete list of openings check the county's website at www.co.contra-costa.ca.us. Click on Board Advisory Body Information. Applications are available on-line, or through our office. There are current openings on:

Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board

Fatima Sol—925-335-3307

Economic Opportunity Council

Joanne Denardo —925-313-1779

County Fire Protection District

Vicki Wisher—925-941-3318

El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council

Terrance Cheung - 510-374-3231

North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council

Luz Gomez - 510-374-3231

West County Alcohol Policy Working Group

Luz Gomez - 510-374-3231

Regular Public Meetings

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Meets at 9:30 a. m. every Tuesday at the County Administration Building, 651 Pine St, in Martinez

El Cerrito City Council

Meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of every month at the El Cerrito City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every month at the El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way, off San Pablo Dam Road

Kensington Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 7 p.m. the last Tuesday of every month at the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington

North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 5 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month at 515 Silver Avenue in North Richmond

Pinole City Council

Meets at 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday at Pinole City Hall, 2131 Pear Street, Pinole

Richmond City Council

Meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday at Richmond City Hall, 440 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond

San Pablo City Council

Meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Monday of every month at San Pablo City Hall, 13831 San Pablo Avenue, Maple Hall, Building Two, San Pablo