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EDITORIAL

Supervisor's noble, quixotic act

It seems funny to write it, but Contra Costa Supervisor John Gioia overnight has become a hero for any poor sap who must attend a government meeting. He has advanced the radical notion that such gatherings should actually be intelligible to the public that is supposedly being served.

Gioia proposes to create some sort of small fine system as a lighthearted means of combating the insidious alphabet soup that has come to define government everywhere.

One can't obtain the MOU before the RFP (or is it the other way around?) and, oh my goodness, we certainly mustn't forget the EIR.

Gioia's latest proposal insists that all written documents should contain explanations in plain English of the government abbreviations used within them -- imagine that.

For those of us who love Miguel de Cervantes' most famous novel, "Don Quixote," how could we not love this noble endeavor?

Unfortunately, just like the overly idealistic -- some would say delusional -- Spanish knight of Cervantes' piece of fiction, Gioia may be tilting at windmills and doing battle with armies of sheep.

But just like in the novel, we fear that the fight against government lingo is greater than any one man. Don Quixote was accompanied on his spectacularly unsuccessful adventures by sidekick Sancho Panza, who disagreed often, and loudly, but respected the effort.

We will offer our meager skills to serve in the role of Gioia's Sancho Panza on this quest. From this day forth, these editorial pages will endeavor to dispense with using unexplained government acronyms. We don't know if it will help, but we are willing to do our part.

Yes, we understand that "Don Quixote" was conceived as a comic satire against chivalric romances. But far from destroying those chivalric ideals that he rejected, Cervantes' work actually transfigured them.

Maybe Gioia can do the same thing. Tilt on, John, Sancho's got your back.