

## Bill Foulk, Danny Lau and Chris Norwood are best choices

### Will maintain Milpitas school board's cohesion, momentum

Turnover doesn't occur rapidly on the Milpitas Unified School District's Board of Education. And the board's unity is part of the secret that keeps the district on course toward achieving its goals of continually improving our local school system. This year's election of trustees on Nov. 4 will see the replacement of one long-time dedicated school board member, Marsha Grilli. It also offers the opportunity for voters to ratify the good job the district is doing by returning two incumbents: Bill Foulk and Danny Lau.

A third trustee must be chosen to fill the position left by Mrs. Grilli's term limit, and that choice must be made among the remaining six candidates.

The large field contains a number of unusually varied and impressive seekers of

the office. Voters will choose from those with a range of experiences from high tech, the non-profit world and even a past superintendent of the East Side Union High School District. It makes for a confusing and difficult choice.

The forum held last week

### EDITORIAL

among seven of the eight candidates illuminated differences in style but all appeared to want to keep the district's schools on a continuing improvement path. Detailed stories in the Milpitas Post flesh out their ideas and attitudes.

In our view, it is important to return the two incumbents. Mr. Foulk has been on the board for 24 years. He serves as the institutional memory for the district and at times of stress

in the past he has served a key role as a calm mediating force to bridge divides on the board. Although he's been a Realtor in Milpitas for many years, he did serve as a Milpitas High School teacher. With his nine children going through our schools (he also has 41 grandchildren), Mr. Foulk has been a hard-working trustee who deserves to continue serving.

Mr. Lau is seeking his second full term following an appointment to fill a vacancy. He always has been a link to reach out to the community explaining the district's policies and its needs, including explaining the Common Core curriculum changes. A program developer at Juniper Networks, he has helped focus the district emphasis on the sciences and math.

The school board would be infinitely weaker without these two veteran trustees.

We think that Mr. Norwood, 48, could bring a

unique and missing perspective to the board because of his work in the innovative private education sector. He has developed a strong tutoring company and is involved with the Bay Area Tutor's Association offering support services to school districts and empowering parents. As a 40-year resident here, he's gone through Milpitas schools, has volunteered in classrooms and has the endorsement of retiring board member Grilli. He will add valuable insights for the trustees and we endorse him.

The other candidates, with their great diversity, do offer some unique talents. Vance Vuong, who is a translator and interpreter



Bill Foulk



Danny Lau



Chris Norwood

for Vietnamese residents, has important connections to that community. Russell Bargstadt is a high-tech executive at Raytheon, who could also help with the district's emphasis on science, technology, engineering and math. David Freeman has a similar tech background along with an interest in special educational needs of learning disabled. Deme-tress Morriss, currently a Milpitas Planning Commission member, founded a non-profit, Flame Keepers, which works to close achievement gaps.

A four decade veteran

educator-administrator, Bob Nunez, 62, has been retired since leaving his post five years ago as superintendent at the high school district in San Jose's East Side. His record there came under fire. We suspect that former top school executives might get tangled in the line be-

tween policy-setting of the board and the role of the staff, teachers and others who report to the district superintendent. But with his long background in education, Mr. Nunez does have the backing of Mrs. Grilli, the Milpitas Teachers Association and the California School Employees Association.

After hearing the candidates' views at a forum last week and through previous interviews, we think the community will be well served by electing Mr. Foulk, Mr. Lau and Mr. Norwood.

## Crossing guards coming soon to provide safer passage

Last year, there were 26 fatalities involving pedestrians and bicyclists in San Jose, and there have been 16 so far this year. Almost all of them were on major roads and at busy intersections, and some near schools.

Even one fatality is too many, especially when we have the resources to make our walkways safer.

So in September, the Housing, Land Use, Environment and Transportation Committee that I chair voted to recommend that Santa Clara County spend its reserve of \$389,980 on deploying crossing guards or installing safety devices

at intersections that we think are the most dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. Supervisor Mike Wasserman, who is also on this committee, gave his approval.

Since 2001, the county has contracted with San Jose and Cupertino to provide crossing guards near schools in Cupertino and the Burbank and Alum Rock areas of San Jose. The county pays about \$79,000 a year for this service.

At my request, the Roads and Airports Department is studying other "hot spots" that might warrant extra protection. The de-

partment is studying 22 intersections at county expressways and Monterey Highway that might warrant extra measures to protect pedestrians in unincorporated areas that straddle a county expressway.

Besides the analysis to determine intersections that would benefit from crossing guards, the department is looking into an automatic pedestrian detection system that could be used at expressway



DAVE CORTESE  
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intersections. This technology, which costs about \$35,000 per intersection to implement, will detect pedestrians in a crosswalk and automatically adjust the signal timing to give them more time to cross.

The next report on these safety measures will be the Housing, Land Use, Environment and Transportation Committee's meeting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 20, in the Board of Supervisors' Chambers at the County Government Center, 70 W. Hedding St., San Jose.

The county contracts with the City of San Jose to staff crossing guards

at 11 expressway intersections where children must cross to get to school. Even though expressways have traffic signals at intersections, the width of the roads and the heavy traffic volumes may qualify them for added protection for pedestrians. The county operates eight expressways: Almaden, Capitol, Central, Foothill, Lawrence, Montague, Oregon and San Tomas.

Though San Jose has the highest fatality rate in the county, the study is looking at all our expressways. To view a list on your computer, type in this address: <http://bit.ly/1rBuOqM>, and then let me know what you think about safety at these intersections or if there are others you are concerned about. And in the meantime, you can also find some tips on bicycle and pedestrian safety on this county webpage, [www.sccphd.org/traffic](http://www.sccphd.org/traffic).

For questions on any topic, please contact by office at (408) 299-5030 or email me at [dave.cortese@aol.com](mailto:dave.cortese@aol.com).

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