

# Opinion

YOUR LETTERS EVERY DAY

“I’ve got a job to do here in New Jersey that’s much bigger than presidential politics, and I could care less about any of that stuff.”

**Chris Christie, New Jersey governor, when asked Tuesday on “Fox and Friends” if Mitt Romney would be touring damaged areas. Christie, a Romney supporter, heaped praise on President Barack Obama’s handling of Hurricane Sandy.**

## WHAT OTHER PAPERS ARE SAYING

### Obama, Romney pander on US nuclear waste

Exposure to nuclear waste is dangerous. Exposure to hypocrisy over nuclear waste should also be avoided.

That’s a tough challenge in the current race for the White House. Both President Barack Obama and challenger Mitt Romney say they support a new generation of nuclear power plants. But both have muddled plans on what to do with the high-level nuclear waste from those plants and waste from an older generation of reactors.

These muddled positions are no accident. They have everything to do with politics — namely, Nevada’s six electoral votes that are up for grabs on Nov. 6.

Since 1987, Yucca Mountain in Nevada has been the federal government’s leading candidate for a high-level nuclear waste repository. Yet despite the \$10 billion spent on the project, the Yucca Mountain repository is unlikely to open in 2017, just as it failed to open in 1998, the original deadline. And it certainly won’t open anytime in the future if Obama or Romney have anything to do with it.

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Since becoming president, Obama has attempted

to kill the Yucca Mountain project, as he promised to do while on the campaign trail in 2008. Obama’s Energy Department has sought to withdraw its application for license on the project. And Obama has appointed Allison Macfarlane, a critic of Yucca Mountain, to chair the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

No doubt, studies have found technical and engineering challenges with Yucca Mountain. Water moves through this site’s underground geology quicker than scientists originally thought.

That means that storage of waste would have to be carefully engineered to avoid groundwater contamination.

But that is not the reason Yucca Mountain is facing a near-death experience. Even the Government Accountability Office has concluded that political, not technical, hurdles have stalled this project. The biggest of these is Harry Reid, the Senate majority leader from Nevada. Reid, still angry that Congress teamed up against Nevada to designate Yucca Mountain as the nation’s waste repository in 1987, is determined to kill the project and has an ally in Obama.

It would be one thing if Reid and Obama were philosophically opposed to nuclear power. They are not. Both say they support a new generation of nuclear power plants. Yet they have still to outline a long-term plan for safely storing waste from these plants, and more ominously, highly toxic waste from the nation’s nuclear weapons plants.

Yes, dry cask storage will safely handle used fuel rods for a century. But should utilities embark on another wave of nuclear plant construction with no firm plan for storing more waste? Already, more than 62,000 metric tons of used fuel rods have accumulated statewide, including some now stored at the closed Rancho Seco plant in Sacramento County.

You might think Romney, as a supporter of nuclear power, would point out the contradictions of Obama’s policy. But he seems as interested in pandering for Nevada votes as the president. In last October’s primary debate, Romney argued that states should be allowed to decide if they wanted to host a nuclear waste repository. “I think the people of Nevada ought to have the final say,” he said.

Good luck, Mr. Romney. If you left the decision to the states, the nation’s next nuclear waste repository would be built on ... Mars.

— Sacramento Bee

## MENLO PARK

# We recommend Carolyn Clarke and Catherine Carlton for council

Though Menlo Park finally has a specific plan for El Camino Real and its downtown, the hard work isn’t over yet. With developers knocking on its door with prospects of building homes, offices and retail businesses where three- to five-story buildings and parking garages now will be allowed, the city will have to closely guide activities so the traffic and parking nightmares feared by the plan’s opponents don’t come true.

And that won’t be the only challenge. Forced by a lawsuit settlement to encourage construction of up to 1,975 new homes — half of them priced for families with low to moderate incomes — Menlo Park is getting plenty of push-back from organized residents of affluent neighborhoods on the city’s west side. The result is additional pressure to build most of those homes in the city’s low-income Belle Haven neighborhood, which already is bracing for a major transformation as Facebook continues to hire more workers at its campus off Bayfront Expressway and the nearby Bohannon Gateway Project awaits the first signal of a full economic recovery to take off.

Five candidates for two seats on the Menlo Park City Council say they’re ready for the task at hand — incumbent Kelly Fergusson, city Parks and Recreation Commission vice chairwoman Catherine Carlton, city Transportation Commissioner Raymond Mueller, city

Housing Commissioner Carolyn Clarke and firefighter Dave Bragg.

The Daily News endorses Clarke and Carlton, but won’t be terribly disappointed if Mueller ends up getting elected.

Clarke, an accountant and small business owner, lives in Belle Haven and if elected would be the area’s first representative on the council in more than 20 years. That doesn’t mean current council members have given the community short shrift or that the other candidates would. Council Member Rich Cline, in particular, has been one of its outspoken advocates. But as a resident who long has been active in the area — she founded the Belle Haven Community Foundation — and has kept her finger on its pulse, Clarke would be a vigilant guard against unwelcome project impacts and a champion for its needs.

She isn’t as politically polished a speaker as some of the other candidates and her answers are usually brief, but Clarke is versed in Menlo Park’s issues and shows a common-sense approach in addressing them.

Two equally impressive candidates are Carlton and Mueller. Both are bright, thoughtful, knowledgeable and see the big picture. Both believe the city needs to show a friendlier side toward businesses yet ensure that public benefits remain a part of the permit equation. Both say government

transparency is an area that needs improvement. And both recognize that putting a lid on employee pension and benefits is key to maintaining Menlo Park’s financial health. Carlton, in fact, was an active supporter of the Measure L pension reform initiative that city voters overwhelmingly approved two years ago.

Although residents would be well served by Mueller, we give the nod to Carlton because of her business acumen — among other things, she founded and managed a bank in Hong Kong — which should prove valuable on a city council that wants to foster a positive business climate and a responsible city budget.

We endorsed Fergusson last time but feel that Clarke and Carlton would be more effective going forward. In aligning herself so tightly with the unions in opposing Measure L, Fergusson damaged her credibility by showing how out of step she was with her electorate. Menlo Park is no anti-union city and the majority of its voters are moderate Democrats, but many voted for Measure L simply because they didn’t trust the council to stick with the modest pension controls it adopted in a futile effort to preemptively sink Measure L. In her current campaign, Fergusson would have done herself a favor by not trying to repaint herself as a fiscal reformer.

It’s time for the council to move on, and we believe Carolyn Clarke and Catherine Carlton should do the steering.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Whisper campaign

**Dear Editor:** Negative whisper campaigns are not consistent with our community values. We need to support transparent and honest debate, and not opinions disguised as facts.

Recently, falsehoods about Palo Alto School Board candidate Ken Dauber have been circulated in the form of neighborhood emails, specifically in the Duveneck-St. Francis community.

Ken is a decent, caring individual who has the right background, values and leadership skills to be an effective advocate for positive change to school policy affecting academic stress and achievement for all students. He would make an outstanding member of the Palo Alto School Board.

As a mother of three children who attended Duveneck, Jordan and Palo Alto High School, I support Ken Dauber without reservation.

Let’s keep to the issues that affect our students, and keep personality attacks out of our public discourse.

**Karen Kang,  
Palo Alto**

### Vote for Dauber

**Dear Editor:** Ken Dauber, a software engineer and former sociology professor, brings expertise to the Palo Alto Unified School District race. With very strong research, data analysis, critical thinking and communication skills, he understands educational research and innovative practices. He has already contributed to an improved homework policy, a modified calendar and a stronger, more comprehensive examination of counseling models that really work for students — all related to reducing student stress.

He is reflective and sensitive to detail and nuance and recognizes that current practices need to address the academic and social needs of all students, including the achievement of students of color. Ken recognizes that current decisions shape education for the future.

He advocates positive change and speaks directly to the issues. He raises concerns and proposes solutions; he has a high level of integrity and engagement. This will enrich the quality of

discussions and outcomes. Vote for Ken Dauber for school board.

**Gail A. Price,  
Former school board member,  
Palo Alto City Council member**

### Voting rights

**Dear Editor:** Proponents of San Mateo County Measure B on the November ballot are asking voters to change the county charter and with that to give up voting rights. Simply stated, you are being asked to give up your right to vote for four of the five county supervisors who are now elected countywide. If Measure B passes, you will only be able to vote for the district supervisor.

Today, we have the best of both worlds in that supervisors must reside in and run from a district but be accountable to the entire electorate. We need only to look at the experience with district elections in San Francisco and San Jose, where parochial interests dominate the politics of decision-making. Today, voters and taxpayers in San Mateo County have equal access to all five supervisors — not just their district supervisor.

County voters have twice rejected attempts to change the county charter on this very question. Please make this the third and final failed attempt.

You are now represented by all five supervisors, with elections held every other year, instead of voting for one supervisor every four years. Please don’t give up four votes. Vote no Measure B.

**John M. Ward,  
San Mateo County supervisor,  
1975-86**

### Time for district elections

**Dear Editor:** I believe it’s time for district elections for San Mateo County supervisors. The key question for me is how would district elections benefit the voters?

As I see it, the biggest benefit will be to bring the public closer to at least one member of the board. Many people in our county don’t know who their board members are or what they do. That puts them at a disadvantage in terms of deciding whether or not they should be elected or re-elected. Because our county is so big (more than 300,000 people), candidates for the board are spread thin as they campaign up and down the county. That does a disservice to the voters of the district they’re elected to represent.

One argument I’ve heard against making this change is that the current system allows us to hold all supervisors accountable, not just one. The reality, however, is that the public often only has one choice on the ballot. Once an incumbent, or even a popular challenger, starts rolling up endorsements and money, they end up going unchallenged. The fact that no incumbent has lost a seat in more than 30 years bears that out.

My friends in Santa Clara County have told me they are very happy with their system of electing supervisors by district. They feel connected to their supervisors, and feel that person really understands the issues of the district. I think it’s time for San Mateo County to give that a try as well.

**Ian Bain,  
Member, Redwood City  
City Council**

### Liz Kniss for council

**Dear Editor:** As the Palo Alto Unified School District, Palo Alto, Santa Clara County and the state face increasingly complex and interconnected issues, Palo Alto City Council candidate Liz Kniss brings exceptional experience across the multiple jurisdictions.

Having served on our school board and then the city council — twice as mayor — she has an in-depth understanding of the city/school relationship. As our county supervisor, she has demonstrated that she can maneuver through entrenched bureaucracies, collaborate at all levels of government and get things done.

During her tenure as supervisor, she has brought fiscal responsibility to county government. This year her work paid off with a \$4.15 billion balanced budget the San Jose Mercury News called “a remarkable achievement.” As a VTA board member, she played a vital role in building support for VTA funding of many Palo Alto infrastructure improvement projects to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety. These included repaving Oregon Expressway, widening Highway 101 and improving safety at Middlefield Road and the Oregon Expressway. While a Caltrain board member, she voted to keep all trains running in the face of a threatened fiscal crisis; that decision contributed to a 12 percent increase in ridership.

We know that as a council member, Liz Kniss will work hard for the city and the neighborhoods we love, and be committed to keeping Palo Alto a special place to live, work and raise a family.

We urge you to vote for Liz Kniss for Palo Alto City Council on Nov. 6.

**Jon Foster and  
Catherine Crystal Foster,  
Palo Alto**

### Another vote for Kniss

**Dear Editor:** I was privileged to serve on the Palo Alto City Council with Liz Kniss for 11 years. She was an outstanding council member — smart, wise, energetic and with a great gift for reaching out to people. Our council colleagues saw her similarly; they twice elected her mayor, making her only the second woman in Palo Alto history to serve two terms as mayor.

Now, after completing three terms as an exemplary county supervisor, Liz is running for the Palo Alto City Council. We are fortunate that she has decided to seek another term on the council. Her considerable skill, experience and good judgment related to local, regional, state and federal issues will benefit Palo Alto.

Please join me in voting for Liz Kniss for Palo Alto City Council.

**Gary Fazzino,  
Former Palo Alto mayor  
and council member**

### Letters to the editor welcome

Letters require the author’s first and last name, home street address and phone number. (The phone number and address are for verification, not publication.) Letters of more than 250 words aren’t considered. Email letters to letters@dailynews.com. Mail them to 255 Constitution Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

## DOONESBURY



## PRICKLY CITY

