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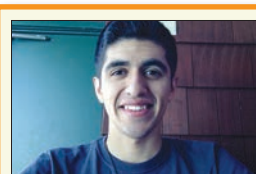
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Alameda Sun

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Election 2014

Mayoral candidates Gilmore, Spencer

Michele Ellison
The Alamedan

The *Alamedan* assembled a group of community members to draft candidate questionnaires to make sure readers have all the information they need about local candidates and ballot measures before absentee voting begins Oct. 6. The members included Alison Greene, Richard Hausman, Audrey Lord-Hausman, Dave Hart, Ed Kofman, Bob Larsen and Vicki Sedlack.



Photos courtesy The Alamedan

Left, Mayor Marie Gilmore
Right, School Board Vice-
President Trish Spencer,
candidates for Mayor of
Alameda in 2014.

The *Alamedan* and the *Alameda Sun* are sponsoring a city candidate forum from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. this evening, Thursday, Sept. 18, in the Regina K. Stafford Room at the Main Library, 1550 Oak St. A school board forum will follow from 10 to 11 a.m., this Saturday, Sept. 20, in the multipurpose room at Maya Lin School, 825 Taylor Ave.

Today *The Alamedan* presents just four of the questions answered by mayoral candidates Marie Gilmore and Trish Spencer. Read the answers to all the panel's questions at www.thealamedan.org.

1. What skills do you possess that make you uniquely qualified to be Alameda's mayor?

Marie Gilmore: I have 20-plus years of proven leadership experience as mayor, vice mayor, president of the Planning Board and president of the Recreation and Park Commission. I have a proven track record of working well with others, building consensus and getting things done for Alameda. In addition, I understand the complexities and challenges of the job.

I work well with others and have developed strong regional relationships (e.g., my peers in Alameda County elected me president of the Alameda County Conference of Mayors) that benefit Alameda on regional issues such as traffic.

Trish Spencer: I'm an attorney and have practiced business litigation. I'm also vice president of the Alameda Unified School District Board (my sixth year on the board) and currently serve on the Peralta Colleges Foundation Board (which provides scholarships and grants to community college students).

I was Alameda PTA Council president and am a community volunteer of many civic causes, including environmental issues; I supported the effort to protect the Mif Albright golf course from housing and currently support Friends of Crown Beach (which aims to expand Crab Cove for the public rather than new housing adjacent to Crab Cove), Harbor Bay Neighbors (who oppose new homes at the site of Harbor Bay Club), and Project Leaf, which is supporting community gardens.

2. What is the key role the mayor plays in our community?

Gilmore: The mayor has many roles, but the most important is protecting the health, safety and quality of life of our citizens. The mayor must always keep this in mind in leading the City Council in setting policy for city staff. The mayor must also insure that City Hall operates in the most transparent manner possible so that the community may fully participate in our democracy, and the mayor should communicate council policy to the community.

Finally, the mayor must be a leader for Alameda in the Bay Area. Alameda is an Island, but we cannot act like it. Many issues facing Alameda are regional issues (e.g., traffic, housing, etc.) and the mayor must have experience and credibility with other regional leaders in order to be able to work well for Alameda's benefit.

Spencer: In addition to representing our community, being out and about in our community, being accessible to our community, and supporting local businesses, it is critical that the mayor not allow further deferment or postponement of tough

discussions, including traffic and financial concerns. City Hall must welcome public involvement and thoroughly address challenging problems.

3. If elected, how will you address the city's unfunded pension and OPEB liabilities?

Gilmore: We have already started addressing our unfunded pension and OPEB liabilities through

cooperation with our employees. Our employees are paying more for their pensions. In fact, they are paying part of the city's share. Spouses of newly hired public safety personnel will not be eligible for retiree benefits. The city has also established an irrevocable trust for the payment of these liabilities. We anticipate increased funding to the trust as well as asking our employees to help shoulder more of the cost of their benefits.

I believe that working collaboratively with our employee bargaining units is the best way to solve the problem. Before I took office, the city was at war with its bargaining units and could not reach agreement on new contracts. As a result, when the eight-year contract expired the city was forced to continue paying high rates for another four years until I took office. In other words, the prior approach turned a bad eight-year contract into a bad 12-year contract.

The city does not have the unilateral right to cut salaries or pension costs — those items must be negotiated by law. The city does have the unilateral right to reduce employees and services, but such cuts put the health, safety and well-being of our residents at risk (as we have seen in nearby cities). Cities that have taken the litigation approach to this problem have found that approach to be costly, frustrating and not at all successful in arbitration or in the courts.

Spencer: For clarification, OPEB stands for other post employment benefits and are primarily health care benefits (other than pensions) that U.S. state and local governments provide to their retired employees. This must be addressed and a priority. As my service on the school board has demonstrated, I welcome public involvement and scrutiny of issues, especially serious issues like this. There needs to be complete transparency of the numbers and projections.

This is a complex issue and will require serious consideration of funding priorities to start to move Alameda in the right direction on this significant issue.

Everything needs to be on the table, as a review of the city's five-year forecast through 2017-18 (presented at the City Council meeting of June 3, 2014) shows that this fiscal year (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015) the city has a deficit of \$3.5 million, rising each year to \$8.9 million in 2017-18, at which point Alameda's reserves are exhausted.

The trend is highly unfavorable. These numbers actually require a review of 10-20 years forecast, and the sooner we access this situation fully, the better for all involved.

4. What if anything should the city do to address rising rents? Should the city regulate rents and if so, how?

Gilmore: The city should certainly look into the issue of rising rents. On Sept. 16, the City Council will address this issue and discuss the formation of a task force. However, it is premature to determine if, and how, rents should be regulated.

The task force should provide, at a minimum, information on the extent of the problem, how well regulation has worked in other cities, the cost and how to pay for the program. In addition, consideration should be given to what, if any, changes should be made to the Rent Review Advisory Committee.

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We Remember

Firefighters create memorial to 343 fallen NYFD brothers

Photos by Hans Siebert

Last Thursday, Alameda firefighters set up a glowing memorial outside Station No. 1 on Encinal Avenue to the firefighters who lost their lives following the events of Sept. 11, 2001. The firefighters arranged 343 luminarias in the shape of the number "343" to honor each of the New York Fire Department members who perished that fateful day. Above, a member of the public takes in the presentation of names and faces while members of Alameda Fire Department look on in the



Alameda Bank Robber Charged with Murder

Dennis Evanosky

The Alameda County District Attorney has charged Calvin Earl Odom of Berkeley, 25, in connection with the murder of Vittorio Jackson, 37. Odom is currently serving a seven-year sentence in a Southern California federal prison.

In January he and his accomplice Craig Goatley pleaded guilty to the Aug. 3, 2013, robbery of the Citibank branch at 1526 Webster St. ("Duo Pleads Guilty to Alameda Bank Heist, Jan. 16"). The pair left the bank with \$8,869. Goatley received a six-and-one-half-year sentence.

According to the DA, Odom shot and killed Jackson on March 31, 2013, some five months before he and Goatley robbed the Alameda bank. Jackson and Odom knew each other.

Odom has told police that he was present at the Wash Zone

Laundromat, 8900 International Blvd. in Oakland when Jackson was shot, but has denied pulling the trigger.

Odom was the victim of a shooting in Oakland less than a month later on April 25, 2013.

At the time he told police that he was the victim of mistaken identity; no arrests were ever made.

In addition to murder, the DA has charged Odom with being an ex-felon in possession of a firearm. The robbery and alleged murder are not Odom's only brushes with the law.

In the four-year period between 2007 and 2011 the Alameda County Superior Court convicted Odom of three felonies that involved illegal gun and drug charges.

Contact Dennis Evanosky at editor@alamedasun.com.

New AMP GM to Speak This Wednesday

Sun Staff Reports

Alameda Municipal Power's General Manager Glenn Steiger will be the guest speaker at the Kiwanis Club of Alameda meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 24, at noon at the Elks Lodge, 2255 Santa Clara Ave. The topic will be, "AMP: What's Next?"

"Your local green utility, AMP, will be embarking on some exciting new initiatives over the next few years," said Steiger. "While they will continue our progress toward a greener Alameda, some will also transition us to a new level of customer-focused technology."

The meeting is free and open to the public, though there is a charge for lunch. Contact Jim Franz at 913-0171 or trumpet.jim12@comcast.net for info.



Youth Join Community Helper Field Trip

Photo Courtesy Gayle Thomas

Nea Community Learning Center's facilitator Mariah Mills looks on as her first-graders give Alameda Police Department Officer Jerrod Suth their rapt attention. The students learned the workings of APD as part of a field trip that launched their community helper project. They rode the AC Transit bus from school last Friday to visit City Hall, the Main Library and the police station.