

April 9, 2012

This is Jill Duffy, with Community Comment

Once again we are moving into the political silly season, and national and local candidates are establishing their understanding of the turf through characterizations and assertions.

Nationally the Republican Presidential marathon has been the show to watch and frankly it's not just the candidates who walk around with Etch-A-Sketches. Our collective political memories have been demonstrated to be remarkably short, and its' been compounded as enormous amounts of information become more available, but with relatively few memorable events to leave a lasting impression.

Locally there are several political horse races to watch over the next couple of months. The Congressional race with 12 candidates will be messy at best, as each contender tries to stand out. With the exception of the First District Supervisorial race, there are only two candidates in both the Third and Second District races, meaning by June we will know the winners in those political sprints.

In their efforts to stand out, candidates will make bold and exaggerated pronouncements about the state of the office for which they are running. Because these pronouncements are designed to emotionally resonate with voters, statements are often asserted in the absolute and tend to over generalize.

A case in point. Last week a Supervisorial candidate asserted publicly that (quote) *'it is deplorable that the County does not work with tribes'*, and this was the quote pulled and highlighted in the daily newspaper. Except, here's the thing. It's not true.

First. The topic at hand was HCOAG, a joint powers authority comprised of representatives from 7 cities and 1 from the county. HCOAG is responsible for prioritizing and programming State transportation funds used on local highway, street and road improvements and public transportation projects. This is not a County entity, but rather an agency the County is one of 8 members of.

Second. Humboldt County has developed and worked closely with a many tribal governments here on the north coast. From coordination with law enforcement, public works, natural resource to social services and many others. During my tenure on the Board we renewed an agreement with the Hoopa Valley tribe to cross-deputize law enforcement personnel and established a similar agreement with the Yurok tribe. We worked closely with tribes on road improvement projects including Martin's Ferry Bridge, Bald Hills Road, Scenic Drive and Blue Lake Boulevard. And natural resource issues such as Klamath Dam removal, Trinity River restoration activities and developing a plan designed to protect, preserve and ensure respectful management of Yurok cultural legacies at Big Lagoon. Further, County social services has coordinated and developed several programs specifically with tribal

entities.

Third. The voters of the Fifth District elected Humboldt County's first Native American onto the Board of Supervisors in the last election.

Could the County do more? As with everything. Absolutely.

I appreciate that candidates are doing what they can to be memorable, but there is also a responsibility to be armed with basic facts because it does a tremendous disservice to the public's understanding of government to assert otherwise.

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