

*Political  
Candidates*

9/21

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

This past August, a gentleman by the name of Joe Bonino filed for candidacy for Eureka City Councilman, second ward. Mr. Bonino chose the front steps of Eureka Senior High School to make his prepared announcement as a candidate. From what I have learned from mutual friends, the school site was chosen due to the close proximity of his home to the institution. Even though candidate Bonino works at Humboldt State University in Arcata, I am sure that most of us would not care to see him announce his Eureka candidacy from a learning institution in another city. I have never met Mr. Bonino nor do I know much about his background except for what I read and hear from others. Closely following the announcement from the steps of the high school, a Letter to the Editor appeared in the local Times/Standard newspaper written by Patrick Riggs, who I believe is the President of the Eureka Teachers Association. Mister Riggs wrote that "His (Mr. Bonino's) decision to use the steps of the high school was both a poor and deceptive one, implying that he is somehow supported by Eureka's teachers, which is false." Riggs goes on to say that "The Eureka Teachers Association rarely involves itself in campaigns that are not directly related to education and we have no plans to participate in this race." Riggs also says that incumbent Linda Atkins did approach them and asked if they might consider endorsing her where Bonino disingenuously tried to imply it. This letter leaves me with a few questions: Did Riggs write the letter as an authorized representative of the Eureka Teachers Association? Nowhere in the letter does he identify himself as an organization leader nor did he sign the letter as President, only as Patrick Riggs. Does each candidate have to get permission from a labor organization as to where he or she might announce their candidacy? Since when has the Eureka Teachers Association been given the right to approve or disapprove where free speech may be given? If the Eureka Teachers Association rarely involves itself in campaigns such as this, why did they get involved in the first place? Riggs states that Linda Atkins approached them for an endorsement, did they give her the endorsement or not? The last sentence of Riggs letter states: "If not a patently dishonest act on his (Bonino's) part, it certainly gives the lie to his walk the talk campaign." My question to this sentence is: Huh!!!! As far as I am concerned, any candidate has the right to announce his or her candidacy for any political position from any location as long as it is legal. Of course, if I had a say in it, I might suggest that some city, state and federal political candidates (excluding Mr. Bonino) should announce their intentions from the front steps of their local sewage disposal plant.

Fred Nelson for Community Comment