

AROUND TOWN

Diving into Measure W



PAT ORR

Once again, for purposes of clarity, I am personally a member of the founding team of H2O-Our Water Now, the support committee for Yes on Measure W. As such, I have talked to literally hundreds of folks about our water issue and while I am in no way impartial, I can give you both sides with a dollop of truth — as I see it.

Of course, by now, you should know this entire political “he-said, she-said” argument over dueling water measures started with the town’s move to file eminent domain against Liberty Utilities which many independent observers feel will eventually result in a court awarding the town the right to purchase the water company as has

been the exact same case in Missoula, Montana. The move to eminent domain was made after several attempts to buy the system were rejected by the last two private owners of the water company and residents were clamoring for action on skyrocketing water rates and surcharges. Ultimately, this is a court decision and no vote on Measure W or Measure V will stop that process from moving on.

Rather than just depend on good will, better friendships and lawyers to save their company, Liberty Utilities crafted a unique plan to put a ballot initiative before Apple Valley voters to do as much as possible to restrain the town from having the borrowing power to get the

funding to buy the water company.

This reasoning has all the sex appeal to the average voter of a dead carp. All political campaigns and good advertisements need what I call “a good hook.” The “hook” for Liberty was to use the natural “I don’t trust the government to spend my money wisely” argument to power a ballot initiative built on that suspicion that would force a future Town Council to hold a special election each time they wish to borrow money. Rather than get too specific about a large amount, the water company is expected to

finally cost between \$88 to \$100 million (based on what Montana sold for) — Liberty decided on \$10 million as the price point that stirred the most voter’s hearts. To reinforce the “we don’t trust government” aspect of the undertaking, a focus on transparency (audited reports) and accountability (public hearings) was built into the initiative wording.

So, the “hook” for Liberty and Measure V is “Your right to vote on debt.” Yes, I have been critical of at least one of the proponents who is the face of Measure V because they do not pay Liberty’s

outrageous water rates. I will give them their due that they really have been convinced this is a “right to vote issue.” Knowing the full back-story of course, I disagree.

Measure W came into being because several of us — there are a grand total of five core members of H2O — felt that to run just a No campaign against the water company was a loser. You spend all your time on negative issues and never get to what good things will come out of town ownership of our water. We agreed up front that personal attacks were off limits. We literally begged

the Council members we knew to keep it simple, and if possible, just make it a yes or no question on a proposed ballot initiative. The lawyers were restrained as much as possible and Measure W is the result.

Measure W established a series of audit markers and public hearings when the town wants to borrow in excess of \$5 million for any project. Measure W does not require an expensive election each time the town wants to exceed that borrowing

SEE ORR, A4

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MUSIC

From Page A2

in 1965 and turned it over to Greif-Garris Management.

The ensemble then became more of a variety act, performing novelty and pop songs, as well as light comedy.

In 1965, it scored a Billboard Top 100 hit with a cover of "Chim Chim Cher-ee" from the Disney film, "Mary Poppins."

Three decades later, Sparks re-joined the New Christy Minstrels as their director and he and his members have been

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touring ever since.

He said he couldn't be happier about his decision to reunite with his beloved ensemble.

"The billing of the act, both on record and in live performance was (originally) The New Christy Minstrels, Under the Direction of Randy Sparks," said Sparks.

According to Sparks, The New Christy Minstrels launched the careers of hundreds of artists, including Kenny Rogers, Kim Carnes, Barry McGuire and Steve Martin, to name a few.

"Now, over 56 years later, it's exactly the same.

I take much pride in not just being fossils in a museum.

"We're the hardest working entertainers out

there. The audience matters and we work at it every show."

According to Sparks, The New Christy Minstrels launched the careers of hundreds of artists, including Kenny Rogers, Kim Carnes, Barry McGuire and Steve Martin, to name a few.

"For the younger folks who may not know anything at all about me and my group, Kenny Rogers & The First Edition came out of The New Christy Minstrels," said Sparks, who worked as Burl Ives' opening act for more than 30 years. "Kenny was our third bass player."

Along with Sparks, The New Christy Minstrels' lineup includes Tholow Chan, Becky Jo Benson, Sue Harris, Greg O'Haver, Dave Rainwater and Dave Deutschendorf (uncle of the legendary John Denver).

In 2013, the group released a CD titled "Nice Time To Be Alive," which features original songs written by Sparks.

Tickets to The New Christy Minstrels' concert are \$35 per person, or \$30 per person for groups of 10 or more.

Seating is extremely limited, so advance ticket purchases are encouraged.

ORR

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limit as does Measure V. We have tried to be very upfront that we believe, and the town has certified, that the current profits taken out of the water company by Liberty Utilities will pay the debt service on the required loan the town will take to buy the water company.

We have been assured water rates will be stabilized, if not immediately reduced and surcharges (many mandated on the private company by the state) will disappear. There are dozens of other issues about unfair fees, the possibility of future growth in North Apple Valley and on and on, but space is limited.

Measure W exists because a foreign owned company has, in our opinion, bled us dry for several years and shows no signs of stopping. Liberty isn't

evil, they are in it to win it and keep their profits flowing. We are in it to keep the water flowing at affordable rates to existing and new businesses and homes that won't come to Apple Valley under these circumstances.

You get to tell both sides which way you see our community moving.

— Pat Orr is a local

PROGRAM

From Page A1

for anyone turning 65. We also hold a benefits meeting for Medicare so that seniors can compare side-by-side, seven different Medicare Advantage plans."

Along with Senior Select's array of benefits, members also receive discounts at local hotels, restaurants, pharmacies, health clinics, home

To join the program

Download an application at www.stmaryapplevalley.com. Applications also can be obtained by calling Senior Select's member services department at 760-961-0971.

improvement stores and more. Participants include Chili's Grill and Bar, Marie Callenders #17, Papa John's Pizza, St. Mary Medical Center cafeteria, A Family Pharmacy, Carpet Club Inc., Hawthorn Suites, The Wine Seller and Bear Valley

Party Rentals, to name a few.

Bodrog says Senior Select is unique in that it is the only place in the High Desert that offers the American Cancer Society's "Look Good Feel Better" program for women going through

cancer treatments.

Other features of Senior Select include its nightly "Supper Club," which offer special rates on senior dinners every evening in the hospital cafeteria.

"Senior Select provides a fun and safe environment for seniors to come and socialize, as well as learn how to get healthy," said Bodrog. "Everyone is welcome to come and check out a class or workshop before joining

in order to see if it's something they'd be interested in. I just tell people to make sure they let myself or one of my other coordinators know who they are when they get there so we can make sure they get all of their questions answered."

Almost all of Senior Select's workshops and activities take place at its resource center at 19333 Bear Valley Road, Suite 103, in Apple Valley, Bodrog said.

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