

Dear Council Members, City Manager, and Assistant City Manager

I write in support of the Sebastopol Cultural and Community Center, West Sonoma County Swimmers, the Senior Center, and any other nonprofit entity that plays a significant role in maintaining the health and well being of the residents of Sebastopol. I am not a resident, but sometimes feel I should be. I was born and raised in Sebastopol, and lived in the town for a third of my life. I know live just outside Sebastopol. My grandparents came to live with my mom and aunt in 1920. They already had relatives in the area before 1900. I still spend a great part of each day in Sebastopol.

My father practiced dentistry in Sebastopol from 1947 until his untimely death in 1985. He served two terms on the city council and one term as mayor when I was in high school. Needless to say the duties of a council member were less in the 1960's than now. He and his fellow members were concerned about streets, lighting, police and fire. **The city was lucky to have received the land for Ives Pool and Ives Park** from Mrs. Ives, and she wanted a public pool to be built in Ives Park, as she said for the public health.

I was born in 1948. At that time there were no nonprofits in the city. Period. When I was a kid, the park and rec consisted of free membership on the swim team, low fees for public swim, and lessons, **only for the summer**. There was a summer arts programs for kids in the park for the summer. There was no Cultural Center, no Center for the arts, no West Sonoma County Swimmers, no Ragle Park. Morris street was literally a dump. In 1980 the city was going to pave over the pool, but folks including myself came forward to pay for the gas bills. Eventually the West Sonoma County Swimmers took over **managing the pool for the city**, offering public swimming, a swimming team, lessons and aqua therapy.

The Cultural Center was established in the early 1980's **by the efforts of one concerned citizen**, Kim Caruso. The city had very little to do with that. She also had folks build the park at Brookhaven. Not the city. The SCCC offers a plethora of activities for the community, **on behalf of the city**. I personally know this because I served on the SCCC board. The city of Sebastopol would never be able to fund all of those wonderful activities. Cut any of them and the city will experience financial pain.

My Rotary Club has not received monies from the city, but has spent many thousands of dollars in the city, donating materials, and volunteer time for various civic projects. Rotary funds the **Learn to Swim Program** at Ives Pool. Not the schools, not the city. For 38 years 13000 second graders have taken swim lessons which has enabled them not only to learn to swim, but also instruct them on water safety. National statistics state that for every ten children receiving swim lessons, one life is saved.

My wife and I have donated money over the years to all of the above entities and their activities. We enjoy them all. Call it a voluntary tax. Those dollars went to activities that the city could never have done by itself. A city is not in the business of selling products. It provides a safe, enjoyable, and healthful place for thousands. It is not in the business of selling products, but offering important services. I am not an accountant, economist, or municipal expert, but I was a District Attorney in this county for 35 years, and I know the value of our nonprofits for the well being of our residents.

Greg Jacobs

