

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

August 11, 2013

## Of puppets and process

It amazes me to no end that the people with the power to make things right at Victor Valley College, and who will pontificate at meetings and to the press about how all they want is what is best for the students and the school, refuse to take the action that would achieve that result. Board President Lorrie Denson took the first step to filling the vacant trustee seat through a public notice for applications for the vacant seat. This is not a bizarre action on her part, but a method used by the trustees in the past, i.e., Joseph Brady filled a seat in this manner before he won election. So why is there so much opposition this time?

You must look at who is pulling the strings on the puppets. The puppets in this case are Trustees Dennis Henderson and John Pinkerton. These men are the cause of the gridlock. If you have a puppet you must have a puppeteer and that would be California Teachers Association President Lisa Ellis, although she will share that duty with Joe Range. Mr. Range's name has popped up more times as the most logical candidate to fill the vacancy than the Mojave Desert has grains of sand.

Mr. Range has served on the board and was on the board when this mess was accomplished and discovered. He lost his seat when he lost the last election; the people spoke. And he felt so sure that his puppets would slide him back into the vacant seat that he turned his application for consideration in after the deadline. With all the misleading and game playing going on here I have a buzzing in my ear that makes me believe that had Mr. Range not been tardy with his paperwork the process would have been approved. That is until Mr. Range was only receiving two votes.

Then we have Lisa Ellis, whose theatrical performance of shouting and storming out of a public meeting would have made Jimmy Hoffa proud. Shouting and negative behavior may be normal behavior in a union hall, but in general the public sees it as immature.

Bernadette McNulty said, "This is ludicrous; they want to spend \$100,000 for a special election for a one-year position." That is true. However, everyone loves a sale; you know, buy one, get one free or two for the price of one. What about three for the price of one? Then we could eliminate the chance of gridlock.

George Kroepil

Apple Valley

I applaud the 12 people who bravely placed their name in consideration for appointment to the Victor Valley College Board of Trustees. After sitting through the Aug. 8 meeting, I'm sure that some may be reconsidering.

This may well have been the most dysfunctional board meeting I have ever observed. The board, its lawyer and secretary had great difficulty following what was going on. The 2-2 board split continued with no real effort being made to find a solution.

Two of the trustees could not make a decision on their own, even to determine if they were available for the proposed date of the next meeting in a week. I wonder who they had to ask.

We, the tax-paying community need to make some changes to the board. The trustees were elected by the Victor Valley community and not by special interest groups. All four need to keep in mind who they are serving. While the unions have backed the election of two, all trustees must vote their conscience as influenced by the taxpayers and not their financial backers. Another night like Aug. 8 and the entire board needs to be disciplined like a bad child.

By default and not by vote, the trustees chose not to seek a special election. A motion was never made to hold a special election, which means it died for a lack of a motion.

There was no action on the appointment of a replacement trustee, so the item was continued until the next special meeting when I expect to see more of the same inaction and disharmony with no movement toward resolution. Maybe the Board needs to consider arbitration to achieve resolution. There remain only 21 days until the Superintendent of Schools forces an election, a \$100,000-plus election and another message to the accreditation committee that simply says that VVC lacks leadership and the ability to meet the requirements of the students. Do we want to see that happen? Write to the trustees via the college and let them know that they must appoint a trustee in the next 21 days.

Rick Danzey

Victorville

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The VVC board meeting was a travesty, a sham, a farce. In 25 years of attending public meetings, I must say I have never seen such a mess.

There were only two items on the agenda: a provisional appointment of a community member to the board or a special election. Yes or No — simple, right? Not so simple for these folks. First, they let every single interested community member speak, even voting an extension of public comment time so they could do so. Why waste the time and effort? It was clear from the body language of Trustee Dennis Henderson that he could not have cared less.

After several minutes of discussion — arguments really — it was obvious that the four could not agree to even try to select someone, let alone actually agree on an appointment. Mr. Henderson continued to insist that the process itself was illegal, even with VVC's attorney, Jeffrey Morris, telling him otherwise. So they moved on to the item on the special election. For once, they had a unanimous decision. They indicated they were unwilling to spend the \$100,000-plus of taxpayer money, knowing the whole time that they will be forced to if they cannot select a new member by Aug. 30.

The trustees are forgetting one thing; here has never been more urgency than in this moment. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges may give them more time; a slim chance but possible. The County Superintendent of Schools will not. They must put their own interests aside and work with one goal: to serve the people and the students of the community.

Holly Noel

Apple Valley