

# SLCAN News & Views

A publication of the San Leandro Community Action Network

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By Margarita Lacabe

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#### LOCAL CAMPAIGNING WORKSHOP

Saturday, November 3  
10:30 am to Noon  
San Leandro Main Library

#### WAR MADE EASY

Thursday, November 1  
7pm at Zocalo Coffeehouse

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We welcome feedback—e-mail us at [elist@slcan.org](mailto:elist@slcan.org).  
For more information about SLCAN, visit [www.slcan.org](http://www.slcan.org).

# San Leandro Election News

By Margarita Lacabe

## ELECTION DAYS

In San Leandro City Council elections are in June and School Board elections are in November. While it is unlawful to serve both on the City Council and the School Board, it is possible for someone to run for the City Council, lose, and then run for the School Board as well.

The City Council, however, is considering moving the City Council elections to November. For this to work, the City needs to implement “instant run-off,” a system through which voters rank their candidates in order of their support, and their latter rankings are considered in case no candidate gets a 50% majority of voters’ first choice. Without instant run-off, if no candidate received more than 50% of the vote, a special election would be held later in the year. This happened in 2004 in

the Joyce Starosciak/Mike Mahoney City Council race, costing the city \$118,000.

Consolidating all of the elections and having instant run-off would be positive for electoral campaigns in San Leandro, as it would shorten the length of campaigns and reduce the amount of money candidates would have to spend on their campaigns. However, this is unlikely to happen next year. Electronic voting is almost essential for instant run-off, and the California Secretary of State recently decertified all of the electronic voting machines because of multiple security flaws. Without any significant new development, San Leandro’s City Council elections will likely remain in June. In any case, the City Council will have to make a decision by February 5th, the deadline for participating in the June election.

## TERM LIMITS

In other election news, the Rules and Communications Committee has considered changing the term limits of the City Council and the Mayor. Currently, both the City Council and the Mayor are limited to two consecutive terms, but they can run again after sitting out one term. The new rules—which would need to be approved by a referendum—would allow City Council members to serve a total of three terms maximum and the Mayor to serve a total of two terms maximum. This new rule would allow most of the members of the current City Council to remain in office for an additional four years, up to a total of 12 years.

Whether this is a positive step depends on your views on term limits, campaign finance (it takes considerable money to defeat an incumbent), and the current City Council members.

# Another Wal-Mart?

By Ellen Dehr

In July, City Manager John Jermanis announced that San Leandro will soon be home to a second Wal-Mart. It will be located at 15555 Hesperian Blvd., near Lewelling, a site recently vacated by a Target store. The thought of a second Wal-Mart has many people asking how the City of San Leandro could allow such a thing.

According to Mike Katz’s blog ([www.sanleandrobytes.com](http://www.sanleandrobytes.com)) the property is currently zoned for “big box retail” and therefore Wal-Mart does not need any approvals from the Board of Zoning

Adjustments, the Planning Commission, or the City Council.

So what is a concerned citizen to do? Some possibilities are:

- Join an anti-Wal-Mart movement, such as [www.wakeupwalmart.com](http://www.wakeupwalmart.com).
- Don’t shop at Wal-Mart. But, as mentioned by several people who attended the SLCAN screening of the film *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*, Wal-Mart is not so different from many other retailers today. Are we willing to abandon all sources of cheaper goods in favor of smaller

businesses? Many who try to support local businesses already find it difficult to locate many items in San Leandro without going to a large retailer or chain store.

- Ask the City to support local businesses and to change the zoning laws so that the San Leandro is not overtaken by big box retail and fast food chains. There are models in other cities that we could emulate.

And, of course, let SLCAN know if you have any other ideas. E-mail us at [elist@slcan.org](mailto:elist@slcan.org) with your thoughts.

# Shopping Locally

## What It Means and Why It's Important

By Tim Holmes

**T**here are common misunderstandings of what it means to shop locally. Shopping locally is a term commonly used, but rarely explained.

In a recent discussion, one person noted she shopped locally at Whole Foods, Borders, Peet's, and Pasta Pomodoro. Certainly this person never left her local area, but to equate any of these businesses with "shopping locally" is an error of the first degree. None of these businesses contributes much more than a small number of low-wage jobs and a minor amount of sales tax revenue to the local economy.

"Shopping locally," in the sense that will have an impact on your town or city, means keeping the money you spend in your local economic community. So, how do you do this?

If you purchase something from a company not owned by someone within your economic area, less than 15 cents of every dollar spent stays within the local economy. The majority of the money leaves the area, returning to the home region of the company. Alternatively, spending your money in a locally-owned business keeps over three times that amount—about 45% of every dollar—in your local economic community. ("Economic Impact

Spending your money in a locally-owned business keeps about 45% of every dollar in your local economic community.

Analysis: A Case Study" published by Livable City)

The owner of a locally-owned company lives within your economic area and will use the revenue and profits from that business locally to purchase goods for resale, buy a home or a car, eat out, buy coffee, launder clothes, see a movie, and, of course, pay taxes. Local businesses donate more dollar per revenue, keep wages higher, provide better variety, increase property values, and more.

None of the businesses mentioned at the beginning are owned by someone living in San Leandro, or in Alameda County, or even in the East Bay. And, of course, any publicly-owned companies aren't local as their owners are wherever the shareholders live. The only thing local about these businesses is that they have a local retail outlet in which to take our money.

In the end, the closer to home your money stays, the better for your community. For a San Leandro, that order would be San Leandro, then Alameda County, then California, then the United States.

I state this order because sometimes it's just not possible to purchase something locally. Buying a car within the bounds of San Leandro contributes sales tax, a profit to the sales rep and the owner of the dealership, but the car

manufacturer certainly isn't "local."

Most businesses, however, have alternatives. Pasta Pomodoro? Try Bella Italia. Borders Books? Try Grey Wolf Books on E. 14th or World of Books in Pelton Center. Going to Safeway or Trader Joe's? How about Estudillo Produce or Porter's Market on Farnsworth, both locally-owned. Going to Starbucks or Peet's? Well, let's just say San Leandrans have a great selection of locally-owned coffeehouses to choose from.

This fits into the larger need for communities to focus on walkable human-scale cities and create communities in which residents can raise families without the lack of accountability our car culture brings by separating people from one another to the point that they are strangers... but I'll save that for another article.

### RESOURCES

The Hometown Advantage: Reviving Local Owned Business  
[http://www.newrules.org/retail/news\\_archive.php?browseby=slug&slugid=150](http://www.newrules.org/retail/news_archive.php?browseby=slug&slugid=150)

Economic Impact Analysis: A Case Study Local Merchants vs Chain Retailers  
<http://www.liveablecity.org/lcfullreport.pdf>

Civic Economics, The Andersonville Study of Retail Economics, October 2004  
<http://www.civiceconomics.com/Andersonville/html/reports.html>

Shopping locally to benefit the community means shopping at businesses owned by someone in your economic area.

CALENDAR



*Connect with community, participate in stimulating discussion, and learn more about important social and political issues at SLCAN's monthly film series.*

**WAR MADE EASY**  
Thursday, November 1  
7pm at Zocalo Coffeehouse

**War Made Easy: How Presidents & Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death** reaches into the Orwellian memory hole to expose a 50-year pattern of government deception and media spin that has dragged the United States into one war after another from Vietnam to Iraq. Narrated by Sean Penn, War Made Easy gives special attention to parallels between the Vietnam War and the war in Iraq. Guided by media critic Norman Solomon's meticulous research and tough-minded analysis, the film presents disturbing examples of propaganda and media complicity from the present alongside rare footage of political leaders and leading journalists from the past.

**FREE LOCAL CAMPAIGN & ELECTIONS WORKSHOP**

Interested in San Leandro politics? SLCAN will be holding a free campaign education workshop this coming January. Anyone interested in learning more about how San Leandro elections occur, how campaigning is done, or finding out what it takes to run for office should attend this event.



Special guest speakers are planned from the City Council, City Commissions, and the San Leandro School Board to address from their experience on what these institutions do and what it takes to run for office or get appointed. This event will also cover how to run a successful political campaign.

An opportunity to ask questions and mingle with elected officials and other San Leandro politicians will follow the presentations.

Don't miss this unique opportunity! watch for details about the actual date and time in upcoming *SLCAN News & Views*.