



KLEIN



PRICE



LEONG



LEVENS



DYKWEL

Our picks for Palo Alto City Council

Palo Alto, like many Peninsula cities, is feeling the pinch of an economic recession. It's being forced to take a hard look at spending while creating new sources of revenue that won't unfairly gouge businesses or residents.

On Nov. 3, voters will be asked to elect five city council members, at least four of whom will be brand-new to the nine-member panel. There are at least twice as many candidates with the qualifications and expertise to do the job as there are seats. That, of course, didn't make our recommendations any easier.

In the end, we are supporting candidates who we feel are up to the challenge of solving the imminent institutional and fiscal challenges facing Palo Alto, such as repairing its reputation as being unfriendly to business and a \$10.3 million budget shortfall. Our recommendations for the five open seats are thus Larry Klein, Corey Levens, Gail Price, Leon Leong and Dan Dykwel.

The lone incumbent among the 14-candidate field, Larry Klein brings experience and a no-nonsense approach to city governance. Given Klein's years of service, we trust him to guide what will be a relatively green city council through the difficult task of solving a severe structural deficit, among other challenges facing the city. And we appreciate that he realizes we can't get there through taxes

alone, but need to consider spending cuts as well.

Corey Levens isn't part of the establishment and strikes us as someone who will ask tough questions and not be afraid to express a contrarian position. He also brings a business owner's perspective to the table as the former proprietor of "Once Upon A Child" stores in Mountain View and San Jose, and the owner of a solo practice law firm in Palo Alto. Though

Levens is backed by unions, we feel he would be independent enough not to be swayed by them.

Having served on the Palo Alto school board, Gail Price knows what it's like to be held accountable by constituents who demand a great deal of their elected representatives. She often asked tough questions of district staff and we expect her to do the same as a council member. We also believe Price's experience as a Sunnyvale city planner will be useful as Palo Alto updates its comprehensive plan. Her union backing and previous stint as a negotiator in Sunnyvale is of concern to us, but, as with Levens, we expect her to remain impartial.

Leon Leong may come across as soft-spo-

ken, but his grasp on the city's fiscal situation made us sit up and take notice. We believe he will lead the charge to bring city expenses, including employee wages and benefits, in line with its revenues. His opposition to dense housing has a residentialist ring to it, but we believe it's representative of a growing number of Palo Altans who don't want to

see more neighborhood-serving retail replaced by housing. We also appreciate his opposition to high-speed rail, but are

a bit nervous by his call to employ lobbyists to that end.

Local businessman Dan Dykwel is active in the school district and many other facets of the community. As a member of the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce, he brings a robust business background to the table but also has shown he's not afraid to go against the grain since he broke from the chamber to support the proposed business license tax. We're confident he will work hard to represent the city.

Though we believe several of the candidates we didn't endorse are capable of doing the job, we are confident that these five have the right mix of experience, enthusiasm and accountability to guide the city through these difficult times.

DAILY NEWS EDITORIAL
