

# Pinole three have earned recall

*Guest Commentary*

*Contra Costa Times*

July 21, 2007

By Jeff Rubin

**W**hat going on in Pinole? While it would be fair to recall Maria Alegria, David Cole, and Stephen Tilton merely on their voting bloc that enabled their good friend, Pear Street Bistro owner Gary Wong, to defy making contractual payments for 21 months on nearly half a million dollars he borrowed from the Pinole Redevelopment Agency, other issues demand their removal.

Alegria, flaunting her office, accused the police of “selective enforcement” while she interfered with a police officer during a traffic stop of a Latino male and told the officer he needed sensitivity training.

According to police reports, Alegria, a Latina, threatened to cut police department funding. When this became public, she said she had been misunderstood.

Cole can't figure out who his company belongs to, who is doing the work and who his customers are, and he cannot accurately fill out state Form 700, “Statement of Economic Interests,” which requires elected officials to report assets and income that could materially affect their official actions. Cole has done work for the Kivelstadt Group, which works for the city, but he didn't report it until it became public knowledge.

Tilton was heard taunting a Pinole business owner at a recent community event, using a four-letter word that is unacceptable in public.

Then the city manager's contract was not renewed because she was blamed for allowing that bad loan to Wong to go uncollected; a chronology of the fiasco showed that was not true. The support of Alegria, Cole, and Tilton made it difficult to get Wong to the table.

Their lack of ethics is most egregious. Will Alegria, who told this newspaper, “That's the problem with being mayor: Everybody wants me to handle their problems,” advocate for motorists of other ethnicities who are stopped by the police, or will she continue to practice “selective assistance” for her Latino constituents? Will Cole learn how to fill out Form 700? Tilton has missed several council meetings and excused himself from a recent session to discuss interim city manager candidates to attend to personal business; he was seen handing out fliers opposing a recall election at the Pinole Farmers' Market.

I don't want my City Council to be the joke that is the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the Richmond City Council, where officials either hate or refuse to work with one another. I support the recall of Alegria, Cole and Tilton. These arrogant people must go.

— Rubin is editor/owner of The Newsletter Guy® and is a resident of Pinole.