

Voters' Sources of Information for 2009 City Council election (Palo Alto CA)

<p><b>If you were dissatisfied with any of the above sources of information, please explain. Please identify which source you are commenting on ("candidate coffee", "8a") because these comments will be viewed separately from your ratings.</b></p>		
		<b>Response Count</b>
		77
<i>answered question</i>		77
<i>skipped question</i>		264

Response Text		
1	Candidate statements and responses to PAN questionnaire should have all been grouped together in a separate pullout section so it would be easier to find and keep.	Nov 10, 2009 2:17 PM
2	Most of the candiate information that they put out is vague pablum that repeats generic values - improve quality of life, deal responsibly with issues, promote green, etc. The only useful sources of information are those that did a reasonable and accurate job of characterizing the candidates' positions on the key issues, such as structural budget deficit, stanford university, housing density, overbuilding, etc. It was still hard to get a handle on where some candidates stood on the key issues. The most important thing PAN can do to help in future elections is collect the top several issues, get clear and unabiguous position statements from the candidates on these, and communicate these in a way which allows comparisons. And don't accept ambiguous or vague answers from the candidates! John Morton's booklet was a wonderful example of this.	Nov 10, 2009 3:21 PM
3	The Daily News endorsement came too late to be of any influence and the choices and reasoning of some of their endorsements were neither factually accurate nor logical. The individuals doing the PADN endorsement obviously have far too narrow a range of acquaintances in PA to be in touch with the issues.	Nov 10, 2009 4:17 PM
4	I hate the mailings, junk dropped at my door and adds in print for candidates. They are all one sided and totally biased.	Nov 10, 2009 5:13 PM
5	Most Endorsements=good old boys club. The candidates written opinions on issues are what counts for me,For/against/ambivalent .	Nov 10, 2009 5:23 PM
6	Mailers and advertisements by candidates not useful at all. Anyone can list three things that sounds good!	Nov 10, 2009 5:49 PM
7	Bias toward particular slate of candidates	Nov 10, 2009 6:26 PM
8	I never read single sheet card-stock flyers mailed or left on the doorstep, except to glance at the endorsements.	Nov 10, 2009 6:37 PM
9	Yard signs prove nothing.	Nov 10, 2009 6:54 PM
10	The Daily Post continues to be out of touch with the community and its coverage and endorsements are too biased towards an agenda to be credible. The Weekly's online Forum (Town Hall?) is too populated with people who have no credible information and usually just use the Forum to vent anonymously. Of all the media resources, this is the worst. The Weekly's coverage and endorsements are the most helpful of the media, though I use them as a guide, not an imperative for how to vote.	Nov 10, 2009 7:46 PM

Response Text		
11	The vast majority were empty statements of candidates alleged qualifications and identification with he community/voter. Useless. Most candidates avoided making their positions clear on important issues. The PAN questionnaire was by far the best source, as it asked specifically for candidate positions (and I did not vote for those who took vague positions).	Nov 10, 2009 8:36 PM
12	I don't read the Daily Post rag. I usually vote opposite of the Daily News rag. Rag means that I do not respect their opinions and use them for crossword puzzles only.	Nov 10, 2009 8:48 PM
13	The newspaper comparison chart I saw stated that two candidates had not responded, but there was another, Mr. Hackman, who was not included and whose omission was not explained or even noted!	Nov 10, 2009 10:26 PM
14	I was outraged by the SEIU literature. I find lawn signs a waste of money and certainly clog up the landfill. I was displeased by Jack Morton's 'hit piece". Very inappropriate and not fair. It was a waste of his money and my time. The candidate literature could have been better served by an ad in the Weekly which most residents receive. The literature came in our mailbox and went right to the 'blue garbage can'.	Nov 10, 2009 10:31 PM
15	Palo Alto Online advertisements by candidates irritated me.	Nov 10, 2009 10:33 PM
16	Newspaper coverage was weak in this election. Perhaps because there were so many candidates, there was little depth or probing questions. I hear the forums were more informative but did not have time to attend. So lots of candidates said they would rein in spending, but articles did not press them on how. Rumors were that some of the candidates were "hard to get along with" which would have been explored in prior years, but no mention of that this year, even though those who had been on commission with candidate complained of person always having to have own way. And very little coverage of the large glossy mailers and phone calls made on behalf of the labor associations; instead, most articles mentioned just taking an endorsement as if that was all their was to union support. The mailers could only be detected as being from the union by small print, and rather than discussing labor issues, which would have been relevant to the reason for the endorsement, the brochures highlighted "neighborhood concerns" such as tree lined streets or good schools. very misleading.	Nov 11, 2009 1:06 AM
17	I also look to see how many pieces each candidate sends. If they send several, then I know they're well funded, and probably supported by folks with money to spend.	Nov 11, 2009 1:21 AM
18	My computer unable to mark the above questions.	Nov 11, 2009 1:28 AM
19	The editorial value of some of the press has weakened on objectivity. They seem reluctant to attack the highly endorsed double-speak candidate, Gail Price	Nov 11, 2009 1:37 AM
20	The Daily News and the Post have truly awful websites. I don't want something which looks like a physical newspaper. That's just plain ungainly when using a computer. I really prefer a one-article-per-webpage format.  The weekly has a real agenda, so I don't pay the slightest attention to their endorsements.  Comments on the Palo Alto Weekly's website are worse than useless, in large part because they're tolerant of neo-nazi sockpuppets.	Nov 11, 2009 2:08 AM
21	The Daily News & Daily Post have lost all appeal / objectivity. They seem only interested in creating "News" "Stories" that is easy to write and drive up circulation.	Nov 11, 2009 3:49 AM
22	Object to "dropped on your doorstep" material	Nov 11, 2009 6:32 AM

Response Text		
23	<p>Endorsements: I tend to discredit a candidate who is endorsed by every elected office since the beginning of time. This tells me I can expect more of the same, when in fact I am looking for needed change. I tend not to vote for such candidates. I will not vote for a candidate who is endorsed by any organization about which the council will be making future decisions, such as the union. This is a serious conflict of interest and amounts to taking a bribe - all such endorsements expect and usually get a payback, regardless of how much they deny this..</p> <p>Coffees and such: Candidates are on their best behavior and make statements that in my experience are so vague and non-controversial as to be worthless. For example, when asked how one would solve the deficit, the answer is Well, I believe in sound fiscal management and I have a plan. Worthless and tells the candidate doesn't know squat about the issue and is afraid to commit him/herself. For these reasons I have stopped going to them.</p>	Nov 11, 2009 7:18 AM
24	I did not think the live candidate forums were well publicized. For whatever reason I never knew about most of them.	Nov 11, 2009 5:35 PM
25	<p>Didn't get to coffees of some candidates because I am too busy at night with boards, etc. Pity really. Coffees are the most influential because you get a chance to talk.</p> <p>Missed the PAN meeting which would have been very useful, too.</p>	Nov 11, 2009 5:52 PM
26	While I review the Daily News and Post regularly, I no longer trust the content in them, particularly editorials. Their content and editorials (especially the Daily News) have become less and less relevant to Palo Alto over the past five years. Because of this, I no longer read their endorsements.	Nov 11, 2009 5:59 PM
27	<p>I do not read the Daily News because it is too opinionated and biased.</p> <p>I do not know what the Daily Post is.</p> <p>No candidate came door to door.</p> <p>I do not have cable TV.</p>	Nov 11, 2009 6:10 PM
28	<p>Newspapers--particularly the Weekly--are so intertwined with the politics of City Hall, and so dependent on City Hall advertising dollars, that anything that comes out of that paper might as well be considered as propaganda.</p> <p>Newspapers in general (with the possible exception of the Post) .. generally are not very objective.</p>	Nov 11, 2009 6:23 PM
29	There is a barrage of political info through the mail and dropped off which I do not consider to be useful. The most useful info sources are candidate forms, personal interaction and Palo Alto Weekly interviews and profiles.	Nov 11, 2009 6:25 PM
30	None of the papers in Palo Alto are unbiased. I am wary of the papers' endorsements.	Nov 11, 2009 6:35 PM
31	I have little faith in the media, the candidate forums, or the candidates' materials, because, in my view, they didn't deal with the important issues in any meaningful depth, and to the extent they did, were more 'politically correct' than substantive. Sadly, this was true of most of my personal interviews, which is why I could only support 2 of the candidates.	Nov 11, 2009 6:48 PM
32	<p>I really hate having campaign literature left at my door step.</p> <p>I travel quite a bit and this literature is an advertisement that I am away.</p> <p>I have been known to actually not vote for someone leaving material.</p>	Nov 11, 2009 7:00 PM
33	Flyers on the doormat and mailings are usually ads with little useful information for casting an informed vote. I find them annoying.	Nov 11, 2009 7:02 PM

Response Text		
34	8d. Candidate's supporters - I received a call asking if they could count on my vote for Shepherd, Levins, and Price. I asked a couple of simple questions about Levins, because I was not familiar with him, but the caller didn't know the answers and stammered about checking their websites. I was very annoyed with that - she called me, and if I took the time to talk I don't expect to be directed to a website. I don't want to be bothered with candidates requesting a rubber stamp vote if the person calling doesn't have any knowledge about the candidates or their views.	Nov 11, 2009 7:06 PM
35	IMO, the county voter guide is put together too far ahead of time to be as valuable as information that comes out closer to the time of the election. I think that the candidates reveal more of "who they are" as the election draws nearer and issues surface.	Nov 11, 2009 7:07 PM
36	n/a	Nov 11, 2009 7:24 PM
37	Daily News and Daily Post (esp the Post) are terrible newspapers displaying poor editorial decisions in what to print, how to print it and what endorsements to give.	Nov 11, 2009 7:45 PM
38	Mailings, newspaper ads, and doorknob drops after mid-October are useless because so many people in Palo Alto vote by mail now.	Nov 11, 2009 7:58 PM
39	Forums: time too short for thoughtful responses Newspapers: Daily Post negative and looking controversy rather than what's good for Palo Alto. Weekly's blog not constructive.	Nov 11, 2009 8:05 PM
40	I DO NOT like door to door solicitations of any kind.	Nov 11, 2009 8:27 PM
41	6. Candidate Forums - I never heard about them ahead of time. That was a great disservice to the voters. I read the papers but still did not realize that there would be forums.  7c: The League of Women Voters brochure never came and that was a big disappointment.	Nov 11, 2009 9:42 PM
42	4d Comments in online forums... - these comments (from end users not the article author) are usually so vitriolic and blatantly one sides that they are useless. It must be frustrating to those who created these forums because I believe they intended to foster dialog not this name calling and bashing that it often becomes.	Nov 11, 2009 9:47 PM
43	this was an unusual election cycle for me because of an injury that limited my mobility and energy to participate - I usually attend at least one candidate forum to get a personal impression of the demeanor of the candidates.	Nov 11, 2009 9:55 PM
44	I am opposed to all the fliers and brochures sent thru mail and left on doormat. Trees dying for nothing. I don't even open them and I think they should be banned or by request.	Nov 11, 2009 11:34 PM
45	8a. coffee was very useful - the "chronic" politician turned me off with promises to do what he's never had the courage to do before (cut budget) and a "newbie" was hopelessly optimistic that a course had prepared her to lead.	Nov 11, 2009 11:43 PM
46	This year I was unable to attend a candidates' forum, but hearing how candidates respond to questions and issues is by far the best way to make decisions.	Nov 12, 2009 12:37 AM
47	I would like to have seen candidate forums on cable or online, but did not know about them. I read the Weekly online and in print, but if this was covered, I missed it.	Nov 12, 2009 12:41 AM
48	I don't get anything but PA Weekly	Nov 12, 2009 1:40 AM
49	Mailers were completely useless - all of them referred to "proven leadership" without expressing details on where they stood on specific issues.	Nov 12, 2009 2:12 AM
50	I will not consider any information from special interest groups as I believe they are slanted and will not provide objective information. Also, I will be very leary in listening to current or former elected officials as I beleive they equally are not objective but have special interest bias.	Nov 12, 2009 2:57 AM
51	advertisements, brochures, mailings all get trashed	Nov 12, 2009 2:59 AM
52	Candidates' own leaflets seemed mostly glossy puffery; much better to read side-by-side responses to common questions	Nov 12, 2009 5:23 PM

Response Text		
53	Candidate brochures and lawn signs are a horrible waste of resources.	Nov 12, 2009 8:06 PM
54	5e: the mailings partially or fully sponsored by political parties and unions are a real turnoff re: candidates. Less so about propositions and measures. Also 5e: When there's a deluge of posters/flyers/brochures - like a half dozen or more, like "Yes on..." or "No on....", I begin to believe the huge funding behind those measures make them suspect for me and I'll tend to lean the other way, or become skeptical if it's a measure I thought was worthwhile on its own merits.	Nov 13, 2009 12:05 AM
55	Found editorial endorsements in Daily offensive; too much influence by realtors on print media.	Nov 13, 2009 3:23 AM
56	Candidate forums (LWV) are useless because the candidates only have a few minutes to speak and not all submitted questions are asked.	Nov 13, 2009 5:33 AM
57	brochures and flyers distributed door to door and in the mail are a waste of time. All the candidates say the same platitudes; these materials do not help differentiate one candidate from another. They only give us a chance to see "who's on who's list" -- but it's typically the same people on all the lists, so again, not much differentiation. If we had a city-wide campaign finance limit, candidates would not be allowed to spend the money to mail these slick brochures -- and this waste would not occur.	Nov 13, 2009 6:01 AM
58	Candidate brochures were often vague or nothing but endorsements.	Nov 14, 2009 12:16 AM
59	While I disagreed with the assessment and recommendations of the Palo Alto Weekly, I did like their descriptions and backgrounds of all candidates.	Nov 14, 2009 1:01 AM
60	I think fliers are really unhelpful bits of propaganda and bad for the environment (5d and 5e). The calls I received from candidate supporters 5d were awful. Usually the person calling could not answer my most fundamental questions on where the candidate stood on an issue and ended up hurting my opinion of the candidate rather than helping.	Nov 14, 2009 1:11 AM
61	Palo Alto Weekly not as useful as it used to be (cutbacks, I think). Daily News and Post were useless, but I expected that.	Nov 14, 2009 1:26 AM
62	SCC Voters Guide - too brief to be helpful - but good to have at the polls if nothing else.	Nov 14, 2009 3:13 AM
63	The Daily News and the Post seemed so off base.	Nov 14, 2009 8:17 AM
64	I felt that the league of Women Voters candidate forum was so structured by time limits that you did not really learn much about the candidates thoughts on important issues.	Nov 14, 2009 6:18 PM
65	All sources that I looked at were really vague on what the people would do. They emphasized more how caring, thoughtful, and responsible the people were. It was hard to tell them and their policies apart.	Nov 14, 2009 9:22 PM
66	Candidates must have their forums and discussions much earlier since most people use absentee ballots.	Nov 15, 2009 12:52 AM
67	I was somewhat disappointed with the LWV guide because the three questions they asked candidates weren't the most important issues, in my opinion.	Nov 16, 2009 2:15 AM
68	Didn't have time to focus on other things other than the voters guide because I was out of town. I put a lot of faith in the voter guide, however.	Nov 16, 2009 3:34 AM
69	Palo Alto Weekly coverage biased and not useful	Nov 16, 2009 7:52 AM
70	I truly dislike individual candidate ads, mailings, door drops, etc. I don't trust them because there's no opportunity for directly testing their claims. They do however improve name recognition, but I'd hate a candidate who simply goes for name recognition.	Nov 16, 2009 4:33 PM
71	I'm totally disappointed with the newspaper this year. I got more information from user blogs than from the article the newspapers put out.	Nov 16, 2009 5:34 PM
72	Sometimes you just know ahead of time whom the paper will endorse by previous experience.	Nov 16, 2009 8:12 PM

Response Text		
73	All I had was the online information, and it was hard to differentiate the candidates. They all seemed pretty much the same. It should have at least identified the incumbents so that I could decide to vote for or against them based upon what they had done in the previous cycle.	Nov 17, 2009 6:48 AM
74	I throw out all glossy flyers that the candidates send!	Nov 18, 2009 4:08 AM
75	I get annoyed by repeated mailing and material that is dropped off at my door. although I recognize that I do not mind one for each candidate. I show how the person presents him or herself.	Nov 18, 2009 10:53 PM
76	I was not comfortable at the PAN meeting at the Art Center. Maybe just because there were too many candidates. Also because the questions were predetermined presumably by PAN and were only about finances. I came away feeling confused though I did get a sense of some of the candidates' approaches. I would have liked to have questions that tell me something about the candidates' ability to consider issues and make decisions and their knowledge of the services in the city and the demographics. I would like these meetings to be held in the neighborhoods with attendee participation.	Nov 19, 2009 6:09 AM
77	local news have profound bias towards real estate interests	Nov 20, 2009 2:47 AM