

areas in which his Pleasanton company builds.

He donated supplies and his company's services to paint the exterior, repair the lawn; install sprinklers, and fix bathrooms and broken windows at Helms Middle School.

He looked at this dilapidated school—scheduled for overhauling from Measure D money and that he has tried to earmark his fees to West County School District for—and decided the school's needs shouldn't be put off. He said: "This is something we can do."

That's true. Good for you, Mr. Z. Now why didn't people right there in the community say that? Why didn't neighbors and parents do something? Do plumbers and painters and handypeople not have children going through the schools?

As schools throughout the area, throughout the state, wait for state funds or for local bond money, parents and businesses in the community could be giving money, supplies, time and skills to make sure their area schools aren't falling down, that their kids and their neighbors aren't going to schools that bring grown men to tears.

When the state or bond money comes, it will go further and more will get done in the long run. But in many cases, attention is needed now.

A decrepit school can have psychological connections and results. As Zawidski said, to kids in attendance at schools like that, "it's apparent no one cares about them."

That's how their young brains process it anyway. Then the kids in turn don't care about themselves and don't strive to get the benefits that a good education brings.

Parents and the community must be involved. They must be active in all aspects of youths' education. That means: making sure your kids do their homework, meeting their teachers, seeing that they are learning. It also means making sure money for schools is spent as it should be; it means volunteering so that teachers have help and extra curriculum programs remain available; and there is certainly no reason it shouldn't mean that every couple of years you pick up a paintbrush and a screwdriver, to keep the school up to par.

Our schools, all of them, can use the extra help.

SAN PABLO SCHOOL GETS UNEXPECTED GIFT  
(By Jackie Burrell)

Developers don't often get to play hero, but a crumbling San Pablo middle school started this school year with a free facelift thanks to a Pleasanton company's Good Samaritan gesture.

And the builder didn't even toot its own horn afterwards.

Like any developer, Signature Properties coughed up the requisite developer fees to the West Contra Costa school district as it planned a new neighborhood of 3-bedroom homes and townhouses. Then Signature's vice president of forward planning Joe Zawidski stopped by Helms Middle School for a tour.

"We were disappointed with the state of the school," Zawidski said.

Helms principal Harriet MacLean was less circumspect. Zawidski nearly cried, she said, and then he made some calls.

Helms is on deck for a near-rebuilding under West Contra Costa schools' Measure D, a \$300 million bond measure voters passed in 2002 to renovate more than a dozen middle and high schools.

Signature, the same company currently embroiled in litigation with the Pleasanton School District over construction of Neal Elementary School, wanted its fees earmarked for improvements at Helms when the school was rebuilt, a two-year process expected to

begin in 2005. The company also offered to install a new playing field when it did landscape work at the development across the street.

Six weeks ago Zawidski and company owner Jim Ghielmetti couldn't stand it anymore.

"You know these kids are coming in now, this is their school and it's not right," said Zawidski. "The weeds were three feet, ceilings were falling down, the restrooms were not functional. It's not going to enrich those kids. It makes it apparent that no one cares about them. It's a tragedy."

Zawidski called MacLean then showed up with a construction crew to paint the school's exterior, install new spinklers and lawns, replace restroom faucets and repair every broken window.

"You would think he'd only be interested in curb appeal, but he replaced all the broken windows, even the one in the back, faucets in all the restrooms, all because he cares," MacLean said.

"San Pablo is a good community. This is just a way to reinvest in the community," said Zawidski. "This was something we could do and something we wanted to do."

REGARDING THE REINSTITUTION  
OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS ACT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the 1994 assault weapons ban has expired and our nation is again vulnerable to guns known to most in the law enforcement community as "the weapons of choice for criminals."

My bill would reinstate the repealed criminal provisions relating to assault weapons and large capacity ammunition feeding devices, and make America safer.

The House Republican leadership opposed reauthorizing the 1994 Assault Weapons Act and President Bush, though he had said he supported it, did nothing to help keep the law alive.

Indecisiveness. Flip-Flop. Isn't that what the other party calls "saying one thing and doing another"?

Because the President steadfastly refused to put his leadership—or lack thereof—where his mouth is and help renew the ban, it has expired without so much as even a vote in the House of Representatives.

From this Chamber, for the past 3 years, I have been highlighting the President's efforts on behalf of the rich and big corporations at the expense of working families and small businesses. Mr. Speaker, sadly, I once again must speak of the damage our President is inflicting on the average American.

There is no reason why we should let assault weapons back on the streets. Do people need an assault weapon to protect their home? No! Do people need an assault weapon to hunt? No! Do people need an assault weapon to target shoot? No! Semiautomatic weapons are killing machines with absolutely no positive value in any sensible community and lifting this ban has put these weapons of death back in the hands of criminals.

A Bureau of Justice Statistics survey published in November 2001 reported that almost 7 percent of State inmates and more than 9 percent of Federal inmates carried military-

style semiautomatic weapons in carrying out the crime for which they were convicted. In 1997, roughly 43 percent of inmates who carried a military-style semiautomatic or fully automatic weapon fired it and more than 25 percent of them killed or injured their victim.

Mr. Speaker, the expiration of the Assault Weapons Act favored gangs, terrorists, drug dealers, and other criminals, and put in danger my children and yours, and our heroes and protectors, the police officers.

Our local police are not prepared for the re-institution of assault weapons to our streets. The bulletproof vests that we give our police officers are no match for the guns that are going to be back out in our neighborhoods. And we are going to allow criminals to carry large-capacity clips with over 50 rounds, when our police officers can only respond with 10 to 15 rounds?

Every single law enforcement organization, including the Fraternal Order of Police and the National Sheriffs Association, supports our efforts to reinstitute the Assault Weapons Act. I would support my law enforcement officers, and the safety of our communities and of this Nation over any gun manufacturer any day.

President Bush sent America's youth unprotected—in unarmored HUMVEES and without bulletproof vests—to war in Iraq, and now has been instrumental in bringing back to America's neighborhoods weapons of war to threaten police officers and law abiding citizens.

Moreover, we know terrorists are now exploiting the weaknesses and loopholes in our gun laws. A terrorist training manual discovered by American soldiers in Afghanistan in 2001 advised al-Qaida members to buy assault weapons in the United States and use them against us.

The Assault Weapons Act has respected the rights of gun owners. Only criminals and terrorists have been kept from their guns of choice.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SIDNEY  
LANIER McFARLAND

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguish life of Sidney Lanier McFarland. Mr. McFarland, who retired in 1975 after 36 years honorable public service, passed away on August 12, 2004, at the age of 89.

Mr. McFarland served for 20 years as Staff Director for the U.S. House of Representatives Interior Committee from the 83rd through the 93rd Congresses. During that time, he coordinated the efforts that authorized and enacted 79 major water projects into law. These laws authorized the U.S. Department of the Interior to build dams and canals that stored and diverted water for use by agriculture, municipalities and industry. The projects made possible the large and productive habitation of arid and semiarid lands, laying the groundwork for the enormous growth that subsequently transpired in the western United States. Among the committee's accomplishments under Mr. McFarland's direction were the Colorado River Storage Project that included Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell; the Trinity River