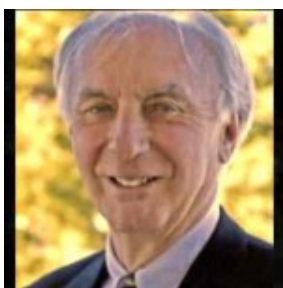


Opinion: Media slant DiMatteo-Swanson articles

To the community,

Last week several sources published a report that Angela Swanson was cleared of bribery charges. They simply quoted what the district attorney said as if it is fact. You asked no one else to comment while knowing full well that many of us came to question the district attorney's actions and in fact the DA dismissed all charges against Mr. Gino DiMatteo, in embarrassment over the way this matter was handled.

They articles leave the reader with the impression that Mr. DiMatteo is some sort of hated criminal and Ms. Swanson is innocent with statements like, "no receipt was given." Does not sound very innocent to me. It sounds like she took the money with some other intention than charity. They call Mr. DiMatteo a "career criminal" when in fact he followed the letter of the law in opening the store and at that time ran another very mainstream business.



Ted Long

They copy the DA's statement that, "Mr. DiMatteo clearly believed that he needed to make a donation." Based on what evidence? As a person who actually looked into it, that is far from the truth. Had you bothered to ask, I would have shown you so.

The expression, "You scratch my back, I scratch yours" was said when the DA was trying to get Mr. DiMatteo to wear a wire to entrap Ms. Swenson and Mr. DiMatteo refused. This by the way has a lot more to do with the circumstances than anything else.

As to the conclusion that Mr. DiMatteo is a prior convicted felon, a statement taken without support, isn't it the city's job to investigate potential applicants? Yes, in deed it is, and they did. Did you question or even wonder why the police investigation prior to the issuance of the license did not reveal such information? No, you did not. Had you, your story would have been very different. As to the federal arrest and Mr. DiMatteo prison sentence, to this day believe he was set up. Look at the facts. He is running a California legal, city authorized dispensary, he has inventory and products, the city without notice closes him down. What is he supposed to do with the inventory? Under the California law he must return it to the cooperative member growers, the raid was days after the closing before final arrangements could be made. It certainly is no big surprise that he would have some product left over, is it?

I do not have nor have I ever used marijuana, nor have any interest. I do believe the so-called war on drugs is a joke, just as Prohibition of the '20s was. I have seen first-hand the benefit of the use by cancer patients, and I am sure if you had a loved one doing cancer treatment, you would want them to have the benefit. I also know that there are many more deaths and tragedies from alcohol than there ever has been with marijuana, and society needs to work this out. I also know that the force of the government is overwhelming. If an average citizen is arrested, guilty or not he may look forward to months of struggle and tens of thousands of dollars to spend to defend himself. The issue is only aggravated when a newspaper publishes the authority's views, with no counter balancing opportunity for comment; the public is left with a

very inaccurate view. I am not Mr. DiMatteo's best friend, I do know him and he comes across much more like a loving family man than "Bragger of connections to organized crime." Which, by the way, I never heard him say.

Ted Long, South Lake Tahoe