

Juan M. Hernandez

For Santa Rosa City Council

Openness. Reason. Progress.

By Jim Brumm

Juan M. Hernandez is a man who understands that the best way to approach problem solving is with an open mind. He possesses that rarest of qualities: the ability to listen. Growing up in California's Central Valley, Juan faced his share of challenges, from prejudice to poverty, but rather than becoming bitter, he chose to use those challenges to creatively solve the problems for himself, and help others as well. Juan learned early that if a man approaches life honestly, fairly, and with hard work and determination, he can achieve not only his own goals, but help lift others along the way.

A philosophy of giving back and helping others has been a driving force in Juan's life and in his Santa Rosa-based businesses, Mawson Computer Center, and Santa Rosa Motorcycle Training, which he runs with his wife, Cindy, and his daughter, Cecilia, and son, JP. Never content to merely tap the community for profit, Juan has worked long hours to provide free training—and free computers—to underprivileged members of his community. He has also worked for years helping feed the hungry. Many times Juan and JP, have driven through the night to Oregon and back to deliver thousands of pounds of food to those in need.

Now Juan has turned his dedication for helping others to his community at large. Over the past year he was approached by representatives from both sides of the political spectrum—people who knew and trusted him—and asked to run for Santa Rosa City Council in the fall of 2010. After careful consideration, Juan decided to accept this new challenge, seeing an opportunity to use his skills and experience to bring positive change to Santa Rosa and help the community he loves.

Juan chuckled when asked about his being labeled as a “pro-business” candidate, as opposed to being “green” or “progressive.”

“What does progressive mean?” he asked. “It means being in favor of progress, of change. Yes, I'm pro-business; to



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me business is what drives progress and makes change possible. That doesn't mean that someone who is pro-business doesn't care about our environment. If you want a green community, you need to create favorable conditions for green businesses. My platform is promoting businesses that help our community *and* our environment.

“For the environmentalist, the business door is closed; for those in business, the environmental door is closed. If we keep those doors shut all we'll do is hear the noise on the other side. Maybe we can crack these doors and find mutual understanding.”



Juan M. Hernandez with his son, JP, wife, Cindy, and daughter, Cecilia

Juan feels that the whole progressive/pro-business argument has been, like so much of American politics today, oversimplified. To be “green” does not mean you are against all business, to be “pro-business” does not mean you have no interest in a healthy environment. As in all debates, the truth usually lies somewhere in the middle, and, according to Juan, there is much to be learned from both sides.

He has been accused of having an “Hispanic” agenda, because of his Mexican heritage and his work with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. He smiled and showed off the tattoo on his arm, depicting an American flag. “I’m not a Mexican-American,” he said with a grin, “I’m an *American-Mexican*.” (By the way, Juan has *never* even been to Mexico.)

He rolled his sleeve down and said, “I’m not an easy guy to pigeon-hole. I’ve had to adapt my whole life; I know the complexities of life, business, and the environment. There is *always* more than one side to an issue, and if we keep an open mind, we can work together.”

That theme—working together—is at the heart of Juan’s philosophy, in life, business, and politics. He is solution

oriented. Through his experience working with non-profits he has, in his words, “. . . learned how to brainstorm, how to ask others for ideas, to throw

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nothing out, to learn to connect the dots and reach consensus.

“A good leader is one that can be lead,” he said. “And who leads the leader? His community. You have to listen to *everybody*. The more you reach out, the more people want to help and cooperate. I am drawn to the quiet ones,” he added. “Not the ones that are yelling. The quiet ones often have the best solutions, but you have to ask.”

If he wins a seat on the Santa Rosa City Council, Juan plans to bring his experience as a small business owner to bear on his interactions and

decisions. “In business, a person has to focus on customer service,” he said. “When I am on the City Council, my customer will be the community. When someone applies to open a business, we need to treat them like a customer, with the respect and openness they deserve. If we make it hard for them to do business, we have to realize that they’ll still open that business; they’ll just take it somewhere else.”

Juan paused for a moment to collect his thoughts. Then he said, “I hope to bring communication, a sense of working together, a sense of understanding to the City Council. My ego is not attached to being a councilperson, but I know that by serving I can make a difference in my community.”

Juan M. Hernandez started the non-profit organization, “Sonoma Community” which provides free technology training and free computers to those in need. He is president of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. He serves as president of the board of directors of KBBF Radio. He was appointed to the Mayor’s Gang Task Force. He has served on several city council sub-committees, and he was recently asked to be on the steering committee for California Youth Outreach. He is also dedicated to feeding the hungry. He is a dedicated father and husband. This is clearly a man who is involved with—and loves—his community.

A vote for Juan M. Hernandez for Santa Rosa City Council is a vote for openness, reason, and progress.

To support Juan or learn more:

info@hernandezforcitycouncil2010.org

707-528-2841