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## Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer – Listening for Consensus

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“I can’t recall a time in my adult life where I wasn’t involved in a civic or charitable activity. Service is enjoyable, fulfilling and a gift to me. I am grateful to be able to serve.”

Another of his hectic, high profile roles is his membership on the Board of Trustees of the California State University’s 23-campus system. Appointed to the position by Gov. Jerry Brown, Glazer is finishing the fourth year of an eight-year term. Each year, trustees attend six full board sessions plus meetings of their assigned special committees. “It is a great honor and responsibility. Our challenging role as a board of trustees is to hire exceptional leaders for our campuses and set policy that ensures a high quality and affordable education is available to top performing California students.”

Glazer, who has chosen to decline all compensation for his service and function as a volunteer the way he does as Orinda’s mayor, is currently chairing the search for a new president for Sacramento State University. “The CSU is the largest higher education system in the United States. It provides affordable learning opportunities for almost 450,000 students and employs 45,000 faculty and staff. We award degrees to about 100,000 students annually with around 60 percent going to students who are the first in their families to graduate from college. Helping students fulfill the dream of advanced education is extraordinarily rewarding.”

Running a sprawling univer-

sity system spread over nearly 164,000 square miles might seem dramatically different from running a small city, but Glazer says there are genuine similarities in the tasks he takes on. “All of our campuses are mini-cities with housing, roads, public safety, health care and educational elements. The budgets are different – \$11 million for Orinda versus \$4 billion for CSU, but you still need to set goals, instill accountability and make thoughtful choices in order to stretch every dollar.”

Positioning himself as a fiscal conservative during his recent run for the California Assembly, fiscal prudence has been another of his favorite touchstones over the years. He takes great pride in Orinda’s ability to maintain a balanced budget during America’s recent major recession.

But what is most clear when one interacts with Orinda’s mayor is that, while others would be utterly exhausted by his demanding schedule, Glazer thrives on public service the way redwoods draw strength from a dense California fog. “Sitting in the mayor’s chair gives me the opportunity to work with my fellow council members and community members in finding common ground on the important issues that are before us. Building consensus in an open and respectful way is an enjoyable part of the job. Good mayors talk less because they have to listen for the common ground between their council members and the community.”

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