

DAILY SOUND



**THURSDAY,
JUNE 11, 2009**

TODAY'S WEATHER

Mainly Cloudy,

Mild

High 73°

Sunrise: 5:45 a.m.

Sunset: 8:11 p.m.



DOW: 8,739.02 -24.04

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VOLUME 4 ISSUE 58

Pritchett makes Council run

BY JOSHUA MOLINA

DAILY SOUND CORRESPONDENT

If Santa Barbara had its own version of filmmaker Michael Moore, that man would be City Council candidate David Pritchett.

Pritchett is a bona fide rabble-rouser who has logged more hours deep in the trenches of political, environmental and social justice issues facing the city than any other council candidate. With his video camera in hand, Pritchett regularly pops up around town to document community events and civic life. He's a regular blogger, spokesman at City Council meetings, and along with his journalist wife Cathy Murillo, hosts a cable access television show.

But Pritchett, 45, is more than just a videographer and vocal critic of government. Armed with a fertile mind of ideas and incumbent-like knowledge of the problems facing the city, Pritchett, has demonstrated experience as a city decision maker. He was a founding member of the city's creeks advisory committee and now sits on the transportation and circulation committee, where he is in the eye of the storm as Santa Barbara grapples with community unrest over traffic congestion.

"People love living in Santa Barbara, of course," Pritchett said. "But many feel that the city is getting off track for serving regular folks in the neighborhoods, controlling city spending, or maintaining public safety and environmental quality."

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PRITCHETT

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In front of an enthusiastic and diverse crowd, Pritchett last night officially announced his City Council candidacy just steps from Mission Creek at Oak Park. More than 60 people were in attendance at the event, where organizers gave out free turkey and beef hot dogs. Those in the crowd illustrated Pritchett's array of support – from homeless advocates and neighborhood activists, to transportation and environmental leaders. His mother Patricia Pritchett even made the trip from San Jose.

Pritchett, who broke from his traditional garb of Hawaiian shirts and jeans, donned black slacks and a gray sports coat and tie for the event. The crowd frequently applauded his hearty speech, which he delivered in both English and Spanish.

"He's an all-around great guy to have in our community," said Alison Hansen, a Pritchett supporter. "He's a good person. He's really sincere and genuine."

But whether Pritchett can be effective enough on the campaign trail to win a seat on the City Council remains to be seen. Even though he shares

largely the same platform as the Santa Barbara County Democratic Central Committee, the group, which historically has been influential in getting Democrats elected to the council, passed on endorsing him.

When Pritchett late last year began floating the idea of a council run, the first question that came to mind among City Hall insiders was "who is his base?" and "can he win?" And when Pritchett was looking for political consultants, he thought of James Kyriaco, who at the time was telling everybody in town that

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he was not likely to get involved in any council races this year because he had other priorities.

But without telling Pritchett first, Kyriaco changed his mind and ended up working for mayoral candidate Iya Falcone, Olivia Uribe and John Thyne, both council candidates.

Pritchett eventually connected with the popular publicist Mo McFadden, who is his communications director.

The candidate has vowed to raise \$50,000, knock on doors and use social networking sites to get the word out.

Name recognition alone will give Pritchett a fighting chance at a council seat, but rising to the top of the ballot will take significant work. His strengths can also be his weaknesses. Some perceive the opinionated Pritchett to be too much of an independent and overly aggressive in his advocacy.

Pritchett is relying heavily on his environmental credentials to push him ahead of the pack. One of his most significant civic victories was his outspoken criticism of the ill-

fated Veronica Meadows project. He blasted developer Mark Lee's promise to restore Arroyo Burro Creek in favor of building luxury homes. Pritchett was a lead advocate against the project and in doing so raised his political profile.

He has also been an advocate for restoring the habitat of the steelhead trout in urban creeks. He has pushed for the removal of concrete channels in favor of natural restoration and successfully helped block the city from installing a controversial ultraviolet disinfection system to zap bacteria in the Arroyo Burro lagoon.

Pritchett believes his grassroots campaign and real-life, tangible experience will matter when voters take the time to study the records of individual candidates.

"If elected I certainly will represent and balance the needs and wishes of all Santa Barbara residents," Pritchett said. "I especially will remember the points of view of this silent majority of residents whose incomes are not so high, whose political savvy is not so sharp, and whose neighborhoods are not so well organized."