

# Get behind Mraz for Boys & Girls Club

**'D**irty Harry' John Mraz has a heart for kids, knows his three R's and has a mind for root-cause analysis. Such a combination of traits may not play well in a spectacular shoot-from-the-hip, blood-and-guts cop flick, but it certainly could be a blockbuster bonanza for Fairfield. Why?

Mraz, Fairfield's fresh councilman – the tough-talking, lantern-jaw valedictorian of the Clint Eastwood evangelical school of kick butt – promised he would get cracking on crime before high noon. He has.

In a recent Daily Republic article, Mraz, in his first official cannon shot against crime, targeted the need for a Boys & Girls Club. Mraz stated why a Boys & Girls Club is crucial, gave out a contact phone (428-0455) and challenged the populace to form a commission.

So, what of the three R's? In undertaking this tact, Mraz showed a welcome depth of understanding that is rare. Such haste usually demonstrates that the wrong three R's of Rant, Rave and React are typically destructive. However, Reason, Reflect and Respond are fruits of the well-tempered mind and spirit with lasting luster and sustaining nourishment.

The heart for kids part is apparent. So, what of this so-called root cause analysis for which I praise Mraz? There are many root causes of



Kevin Ryan

crime in our fair little metropolis. It is essential, especially in a time of publicly mandated wallet-watching, that far-reaching, dividend-paying visionary steps are taken that address root causes of crime.

The Citizens Police Academy (428-7644), Crime Free Multi Housing, Crime Stoppers (644-STOP), public accountability and public praise of the police by the media, gang-suppression units and the like, are all strong arms that can ensnare the many-headed beast of crime. So will Boys and Girls Clubs. The data showing their cost-effectiveness is overwhelming and no further than a Google click away. Frankly, the truth of their worth is a close as the cupboard of your heart and the jewel-laden treasure chest of plain old common sense.

**M**raz has grabbed the bullhorn and resurrected a time-proven solution and challenge. Fairfield needs a Boys & Girls Club for all the reasons, and more, that he articulated. Mraz's challenge and quest is visionary, heart-felt and borne of minding the right three R's. It is a prime example of intensity and passion focused in a pragmatic manner. It's also an example of leading.

It is also cause for concern. We did not hear of a unanimous move by all council members in a coordinated

press release with a strategic plan to go forward with this initiative; at least, not yet. Powerful personas, such as former cop Mraz can both charm and disarm. The worthy cause of a Boys & Girls Club will suffer if he flies this alone. We all will suffer if this announcement is fired from the muzzle of an admirably well-aimed, but loose canon. Fairfield needs all the artillery in line – City Council, police, educators, taxpayers, parents, civic groups and columnists to bring these clubs here.

**A**s is true of a cardinal lesson underpinning the Boys & Girls clubs, kids have to play well together in the sandbox of life or everybody ends up with sand in the most uncomfortable places and castles are never built.

In short, huzzah to Councilman Mraz, and pre-huzzah for his cronies on the City Council with whom I hope Mraz consulted and whose absence from the press release was simply because they were putting gas in the Boys & Girls Club team bandwagon. You have my support.

If it's a bake sale that does the trick for funding, I bet Daily Republic staff, led by Brad Stanhope, will bake the best cupcakes – that is if they can remember that one uses cake mix.

*Kevin Ryan is a retired Colonel, physician, musician and author who lives in Fairfield. Reach him at [ryan\\_k@comcast.net](mailto:ryan_k@comcast.net).*