



# MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

Keeping the California Promise

Week of January 26, 2006

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## The Patriot Post — Founders' Quote Daily

**"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."** -- John Adams (Address to the Military, 11 October 1798)

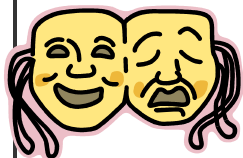
**Reference: America's God and Country (10-11)** \_\_\_\_\_

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### STAFF EDITORIAL

Residents frequently criticize council members for taking campaign donations – BRIBERY – from Steadfast, UDR/Pacific and other developers.

After a barrage of such barbs at a recent meeting, four council members remained silent while Councilwoman Trish Kelley said, "I have never taken any money from a developer." Kelley should have added that she hasn't yet started demanding that developers and city vendors ante up for her 2006 campaign.



Some corrupt officials have a pay-to-play policy. Kelley has a different angle whereby developers play and the residents pay. As an example, she recently voted for UDR/Pacific's high-density housing project on the former Kmart site. The project offers no benefits while adding traffic and dingling the city for endless services. Kelley seemed to think she would cleverly squeeze large sums of cash from the developer for things such as park fees. This woman hasn't

outsmarted anyone, and she certainly won't beat developers at their own game.

Some residents with distaste for Kelley's buffoonery say she's not savvy enough to get paid for her council votes. To the contrary, she thinks she's a player, wheeling and dealing in commercial real estate. This housewife/secretary/PTA mom makes multimillion-dollar decisions and talks about spending "free money." If that doesn't scare the pants off residents, they're not paying attention.

In Kelley's efforts to save the recreation centers – one of her campaign issues – she allowed exorbitant cost overruns that compromised the city budget. Raising entry fees limited who can use the centers. A person well-suited for office does not take a good idea and wreak havoc implementing it.

Three years ago, Kelley was recruited to unseat Sherri Butterfield. Kelley has become so addicted to power she's abandoned her promise to serve only one term. Residents who worked hard in 2002 to push Kelley into office will now gather again to



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push her out.

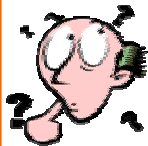


How is Kelley's campaign going? She has no money, no campaign consultant, no campaign manager, no activist support, no political club support, no volunteers and no one who will run with her. After failing to remove Gail Reavis from office, Kelley next took on

John Paul Ledesma, vowing to knock him off the council. Kelley meddled in school district business regarding boundaries and alienated parents of Tesoro students. She next supported CUSD trustees in the recall effort. A professional political consultant says Kelley is even more vulnerable than MacLean, and that's saying something.



Aside from making bad decisions, what has Kelley done in three years? She still has her character counts program. A resident said, "Kelley's character words come across as empty. Her behavior belies the words." Kelley orchestrated an egregiously nasty campaign against Reavis in 2004. Poorly written hate flyers were left on windshields of cars in church parking lots on Sunday mornings and secretly placed in grocery bags at Ralph's. It's time for this character to go.



**Goodbye Trish!!!**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### FIGHTING BACK IN AMERICA

ABC's "20/20" had an outstanding program on Jan. 13 titled "Stupid in America." The program focused on the decline of public educa-

tion in the United States. A report by John Stossel can be found on the program's Web site at <http://abcnews.go.com/2020/Stossel/story?id=1500338>.

A flurry of emails went around cities in Capistrano USD a few days before the program aired. The word went out that "20/20" would include the \$35-million administration center under construction in San Juan Capistrano. Keep in mind the story focused on bad examples. A palatial office building makes no sense in a district with children in portables and programs cut to bare bones.

Part of the problem of American schools is a failing system. Another problem is in thinking those who caused the problems will fix them.

Connie Lee  
Mission Viejo

## CONNECTING THE DOTS

I read OC Weekly's recent issue (and covered in part by the Times and the Register) about Irvine's Larry Agran and the Grand Jury investigation of his antics. He is accused of, among other issues, devising methods of separating his fellow councilmen from input into the General Plan of the Great Park, as well as blocking general public oversight. He allegedly has pushed forward private energy companies without open bid, granted closed-bid contracts for favored attorneys and taken it upon himself to work directly, without oversight, with the homebuilders of massive housing projects the voters never intended to have built.

Is the same game plan being played out in Mission Viejo with advice and direction from similar if not the same consultants as in Irvine? Haven't Ury and McLean been dealing and talking with private energy concerns? Did they appoint themselves to a housing committee to prevent scrutiny by the public, even closing the doors to our own Planning Commissioners' oversight? Will the same homebuilder(s) contribute or have they already contributed to a fund intended to enrich Mission Viejo councilmen? Larry Agran is accused of securing a \$200,000 per year job after his term expires on the Great Park. Will MacLean secure the janitorial contract for a new gym,



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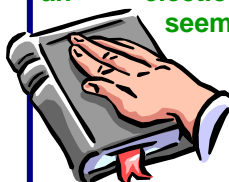
and will Ury negotiate the lawn mowers' contract for a grand sports complex if allowed or if the city is pushed into building it?

New housing and energy projects bring in big bucks from political consultants, which are then contributed to councilmen. That's part of the Grand Jury's investigation. I wonder how many players' names could be cross-referenced if one looked closely at Irvine's proposed projects and those of Mission Viejo.

As good news, the court agencies are well aware of the "good old boy" system Orange County has had for decades. The court is now exposing and prosecuting officials at a faster rate and with more vigor. A politician should remember what the statute of limitations is for prosecution. It's more than a year, and it is frequently played out during the end of an election cycle. Witnesses and evidence seem to surface when least expected.



Bo Klein  
Mission Viejo



## HIGH PRICE OF INDECISION

It is interesting to note that the council's closed-session process to retain a law firm as city attorney for Mission Viejo has taken more than a year. Such a process should have taken about 30 days and resulted in lower costs. Can you imagine the costs to the city for taking such a long time to retain a law firm? The meter is always running, and it would seem that the majority on the council voted instead to open the city's wallet.



James Edward Woodin  
Mission Viejo

## TREND REVIVES COMMUNE STYLE

A Register article ("Sunset Magazine applauds Brea," [Local Section](#), Jan. 19) indicates there may be some truth to the notion that the hot trend of redeveloping downtowns with apartment lofts and trendy shops and restaurants is really a revival of Soviet-style commune living. Opponents denounce it as social engineering.

The media for sure is buying into Soviet-style propaganda on new downtowns. Sunset Magazine cites redeveloped downtown Brea in labeling the city as one of the five best places to live in the Western US. Without attribution, the Register reporter called downtown Brea "a thriving regional entertainment center." It also features two theaters with 22 movie screens.

Some Mission Viejo officials want to mimic downtown Brea in redeveloping the shopping center at La Paz and Marguerite. But the Brea prototype is virtually empty, even at a peak times, as I wrote in a recent letter to the editor. Sunset Magazine says Brea residents are "like-minded" in wanting a small-town sense of community. This may not make them comrades, but for sure Brea folks are like-minded in staying away from their new downtown.

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What was the council majority thinking in its yearlong charade of looking for a new city attorney? Councilman Lance MacLean cam-

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paigned in 2002 on finding a new law firm, and Councilman Frank Ury made it an issue in his 2004 campaign. Council Members Ledesma and Gail Reavis expressed their dissatisfaction with the firm, Richards, Watson and Gershon. With a vote of 3-2 to renew the contract, at least two council members flip-flopped behind closed doors. RWG has a dismal record of failing to protect the city from financial disasters, including the Vigilantes baseball franchise, funding of Kaleidoscope and giving millions of dollars to Simon Property Group for a parking structure at the mall.



City Hall occasionally buys a pricey bookcase to display awards. Insiders say at least one city employee spends a great deal of time



applying for the awards and filling out extensive paperwork. Entry fees are not cheap – the city is essentially *buying* awards, particularly when competition for meaningless trophies is limited or nonexistent. As trophies and plaques spill out of their showcases, they can go into storage to gather dust.

The city is continuing to negotiate with the YMCA about its lease of the Marguerite rec center. One option on the table is to unload the facility altogether. Meanwhile, MacLean continues to fight for a new city basketball gymnasium, and Ury wants a regional sports center. A blog reader wrote: "Those pushing a regional sports complex have already forgotten the World Cup Soccer Center, a world-class fiasco."

In response to a Buzz article about Mayor MacLean's side

show prior to council meetings, another reader wrote, "I'm wondering where he'll even find people to perform in Lance MacClown's Flying Circus." In

California – the land of fruits and nuts



– are you kidding? When former Councilwoman Susan Withrow was running for reelection in 2002, she predicted that "chaos will result" if she and Sherri Butterfield weren't reelected. It's getting there.

THE BUZZ, several weeks ago asked a question about city reserves. Figures are tossed about during council meetings, with claims that the city has up to \$32 million available for new projects. After subtracting the owed, appropriated and encumbered funds that are in some way obligated or unavailable, what's the real number? The blog will publish the answer, and it's a shock.

