



# MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

Keeping the California Promise

Week of October 14, 2006

## The Patriot Post Founders' Quote Daily

"Nothing so strongly impels a man to regard the interest of his constituents, as the certainty of returning to the general mass of the people, from whence he was taken, where he must participate in their burdens."

-- George Mason (speech in the Virginia Ratifying Convention,

17 June 1788) Reference: The Papers of George Mason, Rutland, ed., vol. 3 (1093) [Sheehan (5:5)]

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## FOLLOW THE MONEY – AGAIN STAFF EDITORIAL



A mailer hitting Mission Viejo mailboxes on Oct. 10 appears to be the work of a lobbyist from Orange.

The brochure promoting council candidates Diane Greenwood, Bill Barker and Justin McCusker has a San Juan Capistrano return address. The mailer was apparently paid for by South County Leadership PAC (political action committee), not the candidates.

Residents who meet Greenwood, Barker or McCusker in person should ask who paid for their brochure. One resident did just that, confronting Barker. According to the resident, Barker gave a false impression by saying, essentially, that the three candidates had to do a joint mailer because they couldn't afford to pay separately for individual mailers. Thus far, Barker has admitting to receiving \$10,000 from "a businessman" in Santa Ana, and he appears to be misleading residents about who is funding his other campaign activities, including the Oct. 10 mailer.

Aside from the problem of Barker's implication he chipped in for the mailer, the real financier should take offense for not getting credit. The financier is likely the same lobbyist from Orange – John Lewis –

who arranged financing for such mailers in the 2002 and 2004 Mission Viejo council campaigns. As a further indication of the financial tangle, campaign finance reports indicate Lewis' buddy, Councilman Frank Ury, recently donated from his "campaign treasury" approximately \$1,500 each to Greenwood, Barker and McCusker's campaigns. Did the money come from John Lewis' business connections in San Diego County? A steady stream of cash has been flowing from San Diego County into Mission Viejo council campaigns since 2002.

Why would John Lewis raise money to get "his" candidates elected? This year's election isn't about new ideas from his candidates. It's about a takeover by the county lobbyist power club. As the Orange County Register reported, including a quote by retired Assemblyman Gil Ferguson, the lobbyists intend to enrich themselves. Some loyal Republicans in Mission Viejo might be duped into voting for the "Grand Old Party" candidates funded by the county lobbyists. For example, Justin McCusker (a resident of three years who seems not to know anyone in Mission Viejo) has a long list of endorsements, including state assembly members.

A political consultant who resides in Laguna Hills also commented recently about the takeover of the Republican Central Committee of Orange County. He said, "The lobbyists are few in number, but they have control of the county party. Beyond the three main

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

players – John Lewis, Scott Baugh and Curt Pringle – there are only a dozen people who are in their camp. The rest of the Central Committee members dutifully attend meetings while the money men decide who will be elected and which businesses will benefit. The lobbyists buy influence and intimidate others to go along. The only way to overcome it is for voters to elect real leaders to the Central Committee who won't cave in to the lobbyists."

Mission Viejo has become vulnerable because its city council is dysfunctional and incompetent. As a consequence, other cities – and lobbyists – have the opportunity to take advantage. After years of having shallow council members who focus on personality conflicts and social engineering, Mission Viejo residents shouldn't be surprised they're in danger of losing even the pretense of representation.

In 2002, voters arose to dump Sherri Butterfield and Susan Withrow as unbearable buffoons who only wanted to spend money and name city facilities after themselves. The lobbyist who now wants to grab the city's cash by putting his puppets into office makes the old girls look pretty good.

Introducing the "JustAPuppets"!



**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

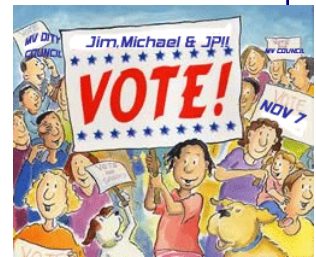


## CANDIDATES MERIT A VOTE

Watching the city council meetings has become a real challenge. The demeanor alone of some council members shows they're not suitable for the job, and several of them refuse to represent the residents. We have 10 candidates running for three open seats, and our voters have an excellent opportunity to improve the council by choosing carefully.

Of the 10 candidates, two challengers would be real assets on the council: Michael Ferrall and Jim Woodin. Michael and Jim have a grasp of city issues, and they talk about solutions. The tone of several of the other challengers is so negative and spiteful, they would be even worse than some of the current council members.

On Nov. 7, I'm voting for Michael Ferrall, Jim Woodin and Councilman John Paul Ledesma as the only incumbent deserving a vote. I believe the three of them will engender the diplomacy and competence the council has lacked for years. I'm strongly recommending a vote for Michael, Jim and John Paul.



Elizabeth Mimm  
Mission Viejo

### LETTERS CON'T:

## IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL EVENTS IN OUR CITY

The heart and soul of Mission Viejo are expressed in the cultural events that occur in our city. The Cultural Arts Committee and those who work on such boards as Fun With Chalk create important events that are essential to Mission Viejo and its identity.

In addition to cultural arts programs, art classes are available for enrollment, and special programs for youth and seniors are sponsored regularly. Our city has taken the time and funded the expense of offering excellent programs for the full range of our citizens. Community excursions are

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

available through the Norman P. Murray Community Center for those who wish to go to selected places by bus.

I feel that the Cultural Arts Committee has done an excellent job along with all the related boards and committees in providing benefits for our citizens. I hope our residents will take advantage of the offerings and attend as many cultural events as possible to enjoy the programs offered. The life of a vibrant city is reflected in its cultural events, and many people are already enjoying the excellent concerts and Norman P. Murray Community Center activities.

James Edward Woodin  
Mission Viejo

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## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CANDIDATE EVENT EDITORIAL STAFF

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The South County Chambers of Commerce hosted a council candidate forum on Tuesday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Saddleback Room at City Hall. The format was a mock council meeting with theoretical motions on the floor. Candidates first indicated how they would vote and then spent one minute each elaborating on their decision. Several of the votes were unanimous, but the process gave audience members a glimpse of each candidate.

Approximately 60 people attended – two-thirds of them dedicated followers of one candidate or another. The event wasn't well publicized, which likely accounted for the low turnout.

Opening and closing remarks by each candidate were more revealing than the votes. For example, incumbent Lance MacLean wanted to talk about how the campaigns of others were annoying him. He complained about a promo piece featuring Diane Greenwood, Bill Barker and Justin McCusker – a mailer likely funded by a lobbyist from Orange. MacLean indicated the brochure was paid for by out-of-town interests “with a Sacramento connection.”

There were no clear winners during the event, although those making negative remarks about other candidates gained no points. Two candidates – Neil Lonsinger and Bill Barker – recited their résumés at every opportunity, as if trying

to relive the past instead of talking about city issues.

Following the meeting, supporters gravitated to the candidate they favored going into the event. The lobbyist-funded brochure mentioned by MacLean was a topic of discussion. One person said, “The picture on the cover looks like a tombstone with the city seal on it – how appropriate. We can kiss our assets goodbye.”

Another topic of conversation was candidate Justin McCusker, whose arrogance seems to rub almost everyone the wrong way. One audience member seeing him for the first time gave him a nickname, “Spike is either infatuated with himself or he’s delusional. I liked the candidates who talked about the city instead of talking about themselves.”



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## COUNCIL CANDIDATE FORUM

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This week's question for city council candidates: What is your solution to resolving traffic issues near Newhart Middle School?

### RESPONSE FROM JAMES EDWARD WOODIN:

The traffic situation around Newhart is among the worst I've seen anywhere. Adding to the problems, CUSD is bringing students to Newhart who live in San Juan Capistrano, and that's wrong. Schools in their city are closer, and I would put ample pressure on CUSD to get those students sent back to their own schools. The city has a vested interest in getting involved because it's a quality-of-life issue that affects our residents, their well-being and safety. I would work with the Planning and Transportation Commission regarding the clogged neighborhoods instead of passing the buck. School traffic shouldn't be cutting through residential areas, period, and this isn't the only school where it's an unresolved problem. The traffic flow around Newhart clearly isn't working, and it's unacceptable. It's bad for parents bringing their children to school, it's bad for the neighborhood and I'm concerned

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

about safety issues as well. Traffic is detouring to avoid main streets and going into areas where no safety measures are in place. We have so many alarms going off – it's broken and needs to be fixed.

#### RESPONSE FROM MICHAEL FERRALL:

Newhart was designed as a neighborhood elementary school, and it's become an overpopulated middle school with more than 1,800 students. The city has attempted to partner with Capistrano Unified School District to resolve a number of issues, including traffic. The city has performed numerous traffic studies and spent city tax dollars to determine how to resolve an issue created by CUSD. The city must now find a solution – with or without CUSD's partnership – for the sake of the neighborhood and parents of Newhart students. School traffic must stop cutting through the neighborhood, and the city must create alternatives for parents so that cutting through the neighborhood isn't the best route for dropping off and picking up their children. I'd additionally explore common-sense approaches including staggering the arrival times at Newhart, with families opting to arrive earlier or later. I'm too often hearing that people who ask for help from City Hall get the response "we can't do anything about it." The purpose of city government is to serve and protect the residents. The current traffic situation at Newhart must change.

#### RESPONSE FROM JOHN PAUL LEDESMA:

First, it is not now nor has it ever been the policy of the city of Mission Viejo to "divert traffic" onto a residential street. Newhart has close to three times the students compared with its originally designed maximum capacity. The best solution is to have the school stagger the starting times. The city paid to improve the school's entrance, and a loop road around the back of the school to the Potocki Center may be a possibility for resolving the problem.

#### Response from Trish Kelley:

Attempts by CUSD/City to address this problem have not solved the problem. Newhart is at peak enrollment, which magnifies traffic. CUSD should balance enrollment among middle schools, provide affordable bussing to reduce parent transportation, and prohibit loitering by students. Police Services should spot enforce and ticket driving violations. Planning Commission should provide recommendations again

for this neighborhood and the impacted Pacific Hills.

## FORUM QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK

*"If elected to the city council, would you favor increasing the number of homes in Mission Viejo in contradiction with the Master Plan?"*

This question is reflected in two questions suggested by readers. One reader further asks if candidates want to scrap the city's Master Plan, and the other asks if candidates are supporting plans to overturn zoning at Marguerite and La Paz to enable the building of apartments.

The Buzz emails all council candidates the forum question for the week. While all 10 candidates have chosen to make public appearances by attending two poorly attended community forums, five candidates (Lance MacLean, Diane Greenwood, Bill Barker, Justin McCusker and Brian Skalsky) have not responded to questions asked by residents in the blog's forum. An additional candidate (Neil Lonsinger) responded but didn't address the question.

**Note:** Justin McCusker gives his email address as iwarrior8@cox.net, however each time it has been sent, it is returned as an invalid address: Your message did not reach some or all of the intended recipients.

Subject: Will try again...  
Sent: 10/13/2006 3:08 PM

The following recipient(s) could not be reached:

'iwarrior8@cox.net' on 10/13/2006 3:08 PM  
550 Invalid recipient: <iwarrior8@cox.net>  
'iwarrioreight@cox.net' on 10/13/2006 3:08 PM  
550 Invalid recipient: <iwarrioreight@cox.net>

**Note:** Justin, we did try, please give us your correct email address.



The lobbyist from Orange – John Lewis – says it's a war. He's raising funds and mailing brochures for "his" candidates, Diane Greenwood,

(Continued on page 5)



Bill Barker and Justin McCusker. Why would any viable candidate accept help from "Big Daddy" of Orange? Greenwood and McCusker both lack connection with the community and need Big Daddy's slick mailers. Barker says his campaign lacks cash, despite a donation of \$10,000 from a "businessman" in Santa Ana. Big Daddy has so much cash

he can buy three candidates. Just mark them...



Lewis has been using the term "war" when referring to his battle to take over the Mission Viejo City Council. According to the message leaking out of Greenwood's camp, Lewis intends to have all five council members reporting to him by November 2008. He plans to knock out the three incumbents who oppose him in this election cycle, and the fourth one who opposes him will be gone in 2008.



This actually happened: council candidate Bill Barker was handing out his lobbyist-funded brochures at Mission Viejo High School's Back-To-School Night on Thurs., Oct. 12. Other candidates' supporters were across the driveway distributing their candidate-funded flyers. Barker repeatedly

yelled at them, "You guys are gonna lose! We're having events, and we're just getting started. You're gonna lose!" Barker would then turn to parents approaching the school and announce, "I AM the candidate; I AM the candidate." Is anyone seriously thinking of voting for this guy?



How does Barker get his signs into people's



yards? According to two other candidates, here's his technique. When Barker spots an opponent's sign in a yard, he knocks on the homeowner's door. He tells the homeowner that he's either running with the other candidate or that the two of them are working for the same things. Unknowing homeowners have accepted Barker's signs on his false claims. Barker is not running with or alongside any candidates other than Greenwood and McCusker.



City vendors at a recent gathering exchanged information about calls they've received from Councilman Frank Ury. They say Ury has been leaning hard on them to donate to the campaigns of his protégés – Greenwood, McCusker and Barker. As vendors have declined, they said Ury has increased the pressure and called them daily. It takes a great deal of money to push off three unfit candidates and fool the electorate.



Diane Greenwood appears to be either unemployed or a housewife. According to the brochure produced by the lobbyist, Diane is now a "high-tech entrepreneur" for a rope company. In August, she was a former teacher. What's next – rocket scientist?

*Brain Surgeon maybe?*



Lance MacLean didn't mince words at the Casta del Sol candidates forum last week when the topic of burying the power lines came up. Both Diane Greenwood and Justin McCusker's platforms in their ballot statements include getting Mission Viejo's power lines buried. The information lacking is whether the cost (estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars) will be covered by a tax increase or a rate increase. MacLean said at the forum, "If council candidates tell you they're going to get the power lines buried, they're lying."

*Maybe Greenwood & McCusker plan to pay for the burial as a gift to the city?*

**the end!**