



# MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

*Keeping the California Promise*

*Week of October 28, 2006*

## *The Patriot Post Founders' Quote Daily*

"Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph." -- Thomas Paine (American Crisis, No. 1, 19 December 1776)

Reference: Thomas Paine: Collected Writings, Foner ed., Library of America (91)

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## LOBBYIST LETTER BACKFIRES EDITORIAL STAFF

An Oct. 16 campaign letter sent to Mission Viejo voters was signed by Jim and Karen Byrne, but who wrote it? A lobbyist from Orange – John Lewis – might as well have put his name on it. He's directly connected with issues in the letter, and he represents the special interest the letter pretends to condemn.

Who are Jim and Karen Byrne, and why would they put their names on such a poorly written and misleading screed? Council candidate Diane Greenwood formerly lived in the Byrnes' neighborhood, but that doesn't explain the Byrnes' involvement with John Lewis. The Byrnes are connected with Mission Viejo Glass, a business donating to both Greenwood and Bill Barker's campaigns. Barker has lately been driving around in a Mission Viejo Glass delivery truck adorned with his banners.

One might assume the Byrnes knew Greenwood prior to her entering the council race. The Byrnes' support of both Greenwood and Barker, however, raises a **RED** flag. A blog reader sent interesting information about Mission Viejo Glass, speculating why the Byrnes would want influence with two potential council members. While the reader's speculation isn't unreason-

able, the location of the Byrnes' home near the power lines adequately explains at least one of their motives and a connection to Lewis. Aside from donations from the Byrnes, Barker's campaign received a \$10,000 donation from a Santa Ana business, and he's handing out a lobbyist-funded tri-fold brochure. Further examples aren't needed.

Barker attempted to recruit a Mission Viejo resident as one of his campaign volunteers, but she declined. She said, "From the beginning, I had the impression Bill Barker would say just about anything to get a vote. He was contradicting himself every time he opened his mouth. Looking at his financial backers, I certainly wouldn't campaign for him."

The Byrnes' Oct. 16 letter to voters criticizes a 2004 council decision to award the city's ambulance contract to Medix. Lewis, who represented another ambulance company, was in the audience and glaring at the council members as they voted for Medix. The letter fails to mention that Medix is based in Mission Viejo. It provides jobs for many residents and supports a wide range of community programs. All of the ambulance companies vying for the city contract had high ratings from the Fire Authority, and all – including Lewis' client – donated to council members' campaigns.

The Byrnes' letter also criticizes the council regarding Edison's 2004 addition of three overhead power

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lines. Again, the letter fails to mention pertinent information. The decision about the lines was in the hands of the California Public Utilities Commission, not the city council. After the CPUC voted to allow the overhead lines, residents living near the lines had the opportunity to vote on taxing themselves to pay for burying the three new lines. The vote was 84 percent against and 16 percent for undergrounding the lines. While the overhead lines are a sore point for some homeowners living near them, most other residents don't care. As a reason for putting it into the letter, John Lewis just happens to represent an independent power provider who would now like to take over Edison's lines. Wouldn't that make everyone in north Mission Viejo deliriously happy to have the same lines but enriching John Lewis when a different company is using the lines?

As a final complaint, the letter mentions Councilman Lance MacLean's vote to give the Mission Viejo Audi dealership a \$2 million subsidy. By the way, John Lewis called council members, lobbying them to give the Audi dealer the \$2 million subsidy. The letter doesn't mention the vote failed. It also doesn't mention Councilwoman Trish Kelley was the guilty party who brought back the topic, causing the city to pay \$600,000 instead of zero to the dealer. The Oct. 16 letter – paid for by special interest for the benefit of special interest – has the nerve to carp about special interest.

The last paragraph suggests candidates Diane Greenwood, Bill Barker and Justin McCusker are the reform candidates, and that's laughable. Their tri-fold brochure, paid for by the lobbyist, has become their primary campaign handout. Literature paid for as an independent expenditure (by a lobbyist forming a Political Action Committee) cannot legally be distributed by the candidates themselves. Otherwise, the expenditure would have to be reported by the candidates' campaign committee to the Fair Political Practices Commission. When it comes to ethical improvement, representation of the residents and real reform, Greenwood, Barker and McCusker are unequivocally the worst choices on the ballot.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### THE WELFARE OF OUR SCHOOLCHILDREN

Recent controversies in the Capistrano Unified School District illustrate the need for our citizens to be ever-vigilant when tax dollars are used to improve our schools. Our city initiated several audits of the district after parents pointed out the district's apparent disregard for overcrowding and other unacceptable conditions in some schools. An expensive building was built for school administrators when new schools were needed to relieve overcrowding and older schools were in need of renovation and repair.

Children are bused from San Juan Capistrano to Newhart, allegedly to achieve balance, when the school was already overcrowded. While the city is not in the education business, we are responsible to see that every child gets the best education possible and that parents' expectations are met. With an election coming up and new candidates on the ballot for CUSD, each voter living in the Capo district will have a chance to vote for those who will provide the best solutions. Hopefully, the outcome will improve the conditions of the district.



James Edward Woodin  
Mission Viejo

### ACCUSATIONS FAIL TO IMPRESS READER

Cathy Schlicht's letters are often interesting but I'm wondering why her rant was even considered for publication in last week's Saddleback Valley News. Surely she can think of a more positive way to promote her candidates, Diane Greenwood, Bill Barker and Justin McCusker, than by making fictitious accusations and filing a false police report. Assigning guilt by association and demanding recompense was beyond the pale, and dressing up such nonsense in estimable references only added insult to injury.

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I hope the Saddleback Valley News editors will be more thoughtful and consider the consequences before printing another of Cathy's politically motivated diatribes and that Miss Schlicht will find a more appropriate avenue to **Creativity?** express her creativity.

Lisa De Paul-Snyder  
Mission Viejo

**LOBBYIST IS DIRECTING HIT PIECES**

Voters need to watch for letters in the paper and hit pieces directed by a lobbyist-funded Political Action Committee. Last week, mailboxes in Mission Viejo were stuffed with a letter signed by a local couple. The claims in the PAC-funded letter were, at best, misleading.

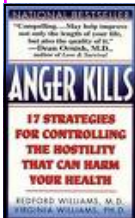


How long will it be before the lobbyist sends another mailer? We have three excellent candidates running for city council -- Jim Woodin, Michael Ferrall and Councilman John Paul Ledesma -- who want to represent the residents and not outsiders. These good citizens are taking the risk of being maligned with mailers that wrongfully portray them.

Mission Viejo residents should be on the lookout for anything "paid for by the South County Leadership PAC." I think the lobbyist in back of it would say or do anything to take votes away from those who would hold the line against special interest and buying of council votes.

Elizabeth Mimm  
Mission Viejo

**THREE CANDIDATES RUN ON VITRIOL**



The letter from Cathy Schlicht last week was revealing – not about the candidates she slammed, but the hostility she displays against decent people who have somehow gotten in her way.

I'm glad Ms. Schlicht made clear who she is supporting – Diane Greenwood, Bill Barker and Justin McCusker. It is valuable information to know which candidates are fueled by anger and vitriol. I attended a candidate forum, and Ms. Schlicht's candidates had little to say beyond criticizing everyone else.

I am fed up with attacks from a few people like Ms. Schlicht. She in no way represents the community's views, and I'm tired of all the negative remarks. Freedom of speech does not give her the right to say whatever she wants whenever she wants or to give her opinion as if it were fact. Knowing who Ms. Schlicht supports for city council gives insight about who NOT to vote for!

Kathy Miramontes  
Mission Viejo

**DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS AGREE**

It's not often that Democrats and Republicans agree, but the Mission Viejo City Council race is a remarkable exception. Several weeks ago, the local Saddleback Republican Assembly voted to endorse council candidates Michael Ferrall, Jim Woodin and incumbent John Paul Ledesma. These three received the state California Republican Assembly endorsement as well.

Recently, the South Orange County Democratic Club recommended the same candidates, Michael Ferrall, Jim Woodin and John Paul Ledesma. Additionally, the club recommended against some of the other candidates, and I am in support of the club's decision.

The attack in the newspaper last week by a letter writer was appalling. I hope everyone also saw through a direct mail letter touting candidates Diane Greenwood, Bill Barker and Justin McCusker. The "paid for" information at the bottom of the letter was a Political Action Committee called South County Leadership PAC, which has been tied to out-of-town money. I would never vote for candidates with a connection to a lobbyist representing special interest.

Milt Jacobson  
Mission Viejo

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**THIS WEEKS QUESTION TO THE CANDIDATES  
A QUESTION SUGGESTED BY BLOG READER  
"T.N." –**

**WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING  
THE CITY?**

**RESPONSE FROM JIM WOODIN:**

Our paramount need in Mission Viejo is for solid, long-term budgetary soundness. When revenues accumulate, they should be applied to pay down debt, as with the healthcare and pension plans for the city. All construction contracts should be monitored to finish within budget. All contracts for city services, such as landscaping and road work, should be analyzed for the most cost-effective approach and to make sure they were competitively bid for price advantage. Budgetary integrity is the key to the long-term success of the city of Mission Viejo.

**RESPONSE FROM MICHAEL FERRALL:**

Mission Viejo is at a turning point, slipping toward urbanism, overcrowding and traffic snarls. Neighborhoods along Los Alisos Blvd. and Crown Valley are overburdened with high-density housing, and many other neighborhoods are being targeted for high-density welfare housing projects. We have graffiti and gang activity occurring near apartment projects. It's not a matter of adding more policemen as things deteriorate. We have to stop changing the Master Plan – no more high-density welfare housing! Some council members and several candidates favor more welfare housing, including an apartment project at La Paz and Marguerite. These changes impact schools, put our citizens at risk and diminish our quality of life.

Beyond the most important issue facing the city, a critical aspect of this election is whether residents or lobbyists will be represented on the council. When council members' first loyalty is to a lobbyist or special interest group, the city is in jeopardy. Out-of-towners don't care about the consequences of overdevelopment or the costs of showing favoritism in awarding city contracts.

Because the council is weak, our city can't hold its own in the region. As a result, we have cut-through traffic from the east turning our thoroughfares – Crown Valley, Oso and Alicia Park-

way – into freeways. The council has failed to address basics within the city (aging infrastructure, cost overruns on every project, threats from the state about affordable welfare housing, impact of illegal immigration on many aspects of our lives, converting single-family homes into multi-family units, failure to manage traffic, etc.), and I see additional huge problems in the region that will have negative impacts on our residents. Growth in population and additional traffic are just two of the regional trends affecting our city. No one is conceiving of long-term city objectives, let alone achieving them.

**FORUM QUESTION FOR NOVEMBER 3**

(Question suggested by "R.B.L.") If elected to the city council, how would you prevent personal disputes that have hamstrung the current council?

(A related question submitted by "C.S.") Describe your views about the council working cooperatively – how important is it to put conflicts and disagreements aside?



Mission Viejo voters received an anonymous recorded phone call on Oct. 27 with a message of "easy as 1-2-3." A lobbyist's slate of Diane Greenwood, Bill Barker and Justin McCusker was touted for the candidates' positions at the top of the ballot. Voters should instead remember "**FIRST ON THE BALLOT, WORST ON THE BALLOT.**" Electing these three candidates would give Orange lobbyist John Lewis the majority he's been dreaming of for four years.

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The battle over campaign signs rages on. Taking a hit are Lance MacLean's signs, which often look as if they've been run over by a train.



His signs are not just knocked down, they're frequently torn to bits. It takes an angry person to rip up heavyweight signboard. Candidates who are retrieving their confiscated signs at city hall report relatively few of MacLean's signs are being taken down by city employees. One theory is the city staff's favoritism toward an incumbent who consistently supports bureaucracy.



A city hall insider said a contractor was hired to take down campaign signs when city employees couldn't keep up with it. High numbers of signs disappear daily, and paid sign-baggers are removing them from private property as well as city streets.



Meanwhile, both Lance MacLean and Trish Kelley have written emails to indicate other campaigns or residents are taking their signs. One such email called the residents "stupid." If MacLean and Kelley were to walk down the hall from their city offices, they could probably find out which department head decided that removal of their signs should be paid for with city tax dollars.



According to informal polls, the candidate in last place is Justin McCusker, dubbed *Justintime* is *Justintime* on the basis of his signs. If it weren't for a ton of money from a lobbyist, Justin-time wouldn't be in the race. McCusker has political endorsements from the good ol' boys, but he lacks supporters in Mission Viejo.

*Justintime* is *Justintime*  
*OutofTune!*



Campaign finance reports indicate a third mailer has been paid for by a Political Action Committee, likely a hit piece funded by Lewis. What does Lewis have to gain by buying council seats? Among his past efforts, Lewis lobbied council members to give the Audi dealer a \$2 million subsidy, he pressured for an ambulance contract, and he represents an independent power provider. Councilman Frank Ury's motion to create a \$100-million regional park off Olympiad Road also appeared to

be related to the lobbyist's financial interests.



Those watching council meetings have noticed the lack of agenda items in the past few months. The city staff is likely waiting to see who will form the majority after the Nov. 7 election before trying to push through staff-generated proposals. If Kelley and MacLean are reelected, they'll probably continue to vote with Ury for more housing development, more traffic and an increase in pointless social programs. Residents should expect more overcrowding and a negative impact on schools, as all three council members – Ury, Kelley and MacLean – have indicated they'll support building new affordable housing complexes. Despite Kelley's denials in her campaign literature, she's supported two such projects along Los Alisos Blvd. in the last two years.



The election of board members to the Santa Margarita Water District usually causes yawns all around. This year, a Mission Viejo resident is trying to enter the race as a write-in candidate. The self-proclaimed watchdog-turned-mad-dog is frequently at the public microphone delivering angry tirades during council meetings. A blog reader who received an email promoting the write-in candidate responded, "I'm not going to write in a name, and I have no reason to empower someone who has caused such a stink in city hall."



Candidates Diane Greenwood, Bill Barker and Justin McCusker haven't spent much time campaigning in public places. They've been absent from the usual street-corner rallies, and their other public appearances have been limited. One resident reacted, saying, "Greenwood and her gang of three have a history of showing up at council meetings to scare people with intimidation and personal attacks. Seeing these folks on street corners won't impress voters who have seen them during council meetings."



Incumbent council candidate Trish Kelley is into high gear shaking hands and calling her former PTA buddies. She appears to rely on residents who don't follow city politics or otherwise know her history of fighting with other council members. Both Kelley and MacLean need the support of uninformed voters to remain on the council.



*The end*