

MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

Keeping the California Promise

Week of December 2, 2006



The Patriot Post Founders' Quote Daily

"It is said that 'power corrupts,' but actually it's more true that power attracts the corruptible. The sane are usually attracted by other things than power." --David Brin

Founders' Quote Daily is a service of The Patriot Post, the most widely read conservative journal on the Internet. If you would like to receive Founders Quote Daily, and this highly acclaimed Digest of news, policy and opinion delivered FREE by e-mail to your inbox, link to: <http://PatriotPost.US/subscribe/>

CARL SCHULTHESS, EDITOR IN CHIEF carl.s@cox.net
DALE TYLER, PUBLISHER edt@missionviejoca.org
KATHY MIRAMONTES, CONTENT/DESIGN MANAGER katmiris@cox.net

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE? EDITORIAL STAFF



Trish Kelley, who was reelected to the city council on Nov. 7, wrote a self-congratulatory letter to Saddleback Valley News, which was published Nov. 17. If Kelley wanted to thank anyone for voting for her, she could have done so with a few sentences. Instead, the 300-word screed was an attempt to look good, despite her record as a council member. Readers are apparently supposed to believe Kelley should take credit for everything taxpayers funded during her four years in office.

Kelley was likely at the height of her ability as a community volunteer prior to running for council in 2002. She doesn't appear to understand the difference between volunteerism and responsible decision-making. Kelley has no business background and, according to city hall insiders, she can't add two and two. Staff members control her vote, either by cajoling her into believing they can make her look good, or they scare her out of voting against their wishes. Imaginary threats from the state and "loss" of city revenue are just two of their methods for controlling a council member who either can't or won't do her

homework. Kelley doesn't represent the residents, and her claims to "listen" are evidently limited to listening to city staffers. Some errant Capco school district parents mistakenly believe Kelley is on "their side" with CUSD. They need to look at the results – the deplorable condition of Newhart, for example, and the district's diversion of their tax dollars to facilities in other cities. Kelley has blindly followed district administrators including Deputy Supt. David Doomey and former Supt. James Fleming while she ignored the fact Mission Viejo schools were falling apart.



ILLUSTRATION BY DON KILPATRICK

Examples might shed light if anyone thinks the blog has an axe to grind with a woman who merely wants to appear as a friendly do-gooder. First, can anyone cite an example of Kelley's attempts at do-gooding that hasn't cost the city a fortune? Would anyone like to delve into the Mission Viejo Community Foundation, which Kelley pushed after pretending she invented it? Would anyone like to discuss Ms. Kelley's costly city of character program? The basis of the character program – designed for schoolchildren – attempts to teach one word a month in schools failing to teach the Three R's. As a digression, those claiming "award-winning" schools should look at the number of students who graduate with honors and soon thereafter enroll in remedial math AND remedial

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

English at state colleges because they failed minimum competency standards. Similarly, the city of character has council members who need to enroll in remedial ethics.

Two recent examples of Kelley's council non-performance are the board-and-care facilities concentration in Aegean Hills and the senior transportation fiasco.

Kelley has had four years to address the issue of an over-concentration of board and care homes in Aegean Hills. She claims there's nothing she can do about it because the city staff told her such licensing is controlled by the state. According to city staff, no law enables the city to intervene as long as such facilities don't have more than six occupants. Two weeks ago, an Aegean Hills homeowner wrote a letter to SVN, imploring the city to do something about the over-concentration and asking for the council's help. Particularly ironic, the letter writer was among the few people campaigning for Kelley in the recent election. If the letter writer had been paying attention, she might have noticed that another council candidate has expertise in the field and knowledge of how other cities successfully curtailed conversions of homes to care facilities.

When the Registrar of Voters releases a Statement of Votes with a breakout by precinct, it will be interesting to note how many Aegean Hills voters supported the incumbents. The incumbents have already given their answer regarding board and care, and it is the status quo, including overgrowth of care facilities, changing the character of neighborhoods, ambulance calls at all hours and caretakers' cars crowding the streets around such homes. The irony is when Aegean Hills residents vote for the incumbents and expect anything to change.

Kelley in her Nov. 17 letter to SVN bragged about keeping her 2002 promise of delivering a senior transportation program. She ignored the issue for nearly four years and then desperately tried to slam a program together. The so-called pilot program focuses on residents who are at least 85 years of age. As a Casta del Sol senior remarked, "The only transportation seniors need at that age is an ambulance."

Rather than starting with a needs-benefit analysis for senior transportation, Kelley instead found a solution for which there is no defined problem. A similarly costly program currently serving seniors provides rides for a grand total of nine participants in a city of nearly 100,000 people. Cost of the new program will exceed \$200,000, and no one has bothered to ask how many residents qualify or have an interest in participating. Part of the cost will be a new city employee at \$100,000 to manage coupons for taxi rides. For \$200,000, the city could buy a taxi and hire a driver, providing free rides within the city to anyone who "qualifies." An article in the Nov. 24 issue of SVN stated the cost of the program at \$100,000. Did someone "forget" to mention the administrative costs – an additional \$100,000?

Results of the Nov. 7 city election have been certified, and even Lance MacLean will get four more years to misrepresent the residents. Several blog readers pointed out that the total percentage of votes against the incumbents well exceeded the percentage of votes in their favor. Ms. Kelley in 2002 received more than 19,000 votes with approximately the same number of contestants in the race (nine candidates in 2002 and 10 in 2006). On Nov. 7, 2006, Kelley's total was approximately 12,000. As one way to look at it, 7,000 people who supported Kelley in 2002 realized she shouldn't be on the city council. Twelve thousand still don't get it.

A READER RESPONDS TO LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In response to two of our articles in the Nov. 25 issue of the Buzz, a reader writes:

I just read "More Affordable Housing Thugery" by Dale Tyler and Letter to the Editor by V. Dunn and W. Drudy, and I am feeling a little bit sick to my stomach. I bet you call yourselves "Christians." Unfortunately, you lack basic human compassion. Can you remember a time when you were considered "low income"? I can. And I can assure you I did not leave a trail of "dirty diapers, not-always-empty six packs of beer,



(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

partially eaten fast food, containers, plastic water bottles." And I always picked up after my kids and pets, which is more than I can say for my upper-middle class neighbors' teenage son who is left alone all weekend while his parents are off on a holiday weekend without him. He and his drunken and/or drugged friends party it up in the nice pad and dispose of their evidence at the end of the street down a slope which backs up to some innocent family's backyard. Don't you dare act like your own upper-middle class kids are not doing the same things you blame on "low income" kids, because I see them "riding their skateboards, bikes," and YES, even "old desk chairs down hilly city and private streets." Keep in mind that you can be moral and hard-working, and still be considered "low income" in Orange County. Just try to support a family on a new teacher's salary like my brother-in-law did. He would not have been able to do it without a housing subsidy. It was not forever, but it was necessary for a time. I do not want to pay the legal fees Mission Viejo will incur when we are in default of our legal obligation and I certainly hope that all my neighbors are not as narrow-minded as the three of you.



LOW INCOME? NOT!

Mary Gonter
Stoneridge, Mission Viejo

Dale Tyler, Publisher of the Buzz, responds:

Thanks for responding to the articles you mentioned.

I think you have to realize there is a difference between individual compassion and government handouts. In the "More Affordable Housing Thuggery" article, I was simply pointing out that forcing the City of Mission Viejo to comply with what I believe to be unattainable goals should not occur. HCD has the capability (and has stated its intention to do so publicly) to specify that the city must zone areas for affordable units without regard to standards of appearance or location that have been the hallmark of Mission Viejo housing stock since the inception of this planned community.

I simply took the logical next step and proposed that we house the low-income residents in trailers inside a walled compound. While this is the extreme end of the spectrum of solutions, I wanted to show from the point of view of the poverty purveyors, they would be happy with this solution, because they do not care about the means or the people who would be living there, only the result.

It is my belief that it is not a government responsibility to provide housing for anybody. The United States is known as a competitive meritocracy. This is what drives our greatness and why people from all over the world aspire to come here and succeed in their chosen professions. Mission Viejo, now the third safest city of its size in the United States is a goal, not a birthright. I worked hard, as I'm sure you did, to afford to live in the houses we own today. I got some help from my Mom who loaned me part of the down payment. This allowed me to buy a house a few years earlier than I would have otherwise done. No government handouts were needed.

Now, I'm sure your brother-in-law is a good person, but why should the government pay his rent for him or buy him a house? He is free to buy anything he can afford, and if he cannot afford to live where he would like, then he needs to live somewhere else. I know of several places in the Midwest where nice houses in good areas can be had for less than \$40K and they are looking for teachers. Instead, your brother-in-law took the easy way out and got welfare to pay for his housing. I have little respect for those who choose government assistance over hard work. Their "I'm owed a house, job, food, etc. by the government" is what is wrong with this country, in my view. It is the responsibility of the individual to make his or her own way, perhaps with the help of family, friends and church.

As to the description of the lower-income housing areas mentioned in the other article, the point was that some people, similar to those who would occupy the HCD housing, have not yet understood the connection between pride in one's surroundings and success. I have been to the location in question and can see what they are talking about. As you point out, income and morality have little to do

(Continued on page 4)

Compassion is Always in Fashion

(Continued from page 3)

with each other. Yet, there is a close association between morality and a sense of self-reliance. If the government gives you a house, it undermines that feeling of accomplishment and self-reliance that we all need.

There are rich, spoiled brats as well as poor kids who trash neighborhoods, but drive around Mission Viejo and look at the neighborhoods that are well maintained and clean compared to those that are not. I find there is a strong correlation between areas that have a high percentage of owner-occupied residences, value of such residences and neatness. Conversely, less affluent and rental areas are often messier. Many of the people living in these areas are sick and tired of the mess caused by a few of their neighbors. Unfortunately, the bad apples have little or no stake in the community and cause problems for everyone around them. Adding to this problem by providing housing almost for free, thus sapping the pride and sense of accomplishment of those who live there, is not a viable solution to the problem.

HCD wants Mission Viejo to provide 94-plus additional, permanent housing units to low-income people. These units can be for-sale or rental units. If they are for-sale units, the 'buyers' (gift recipients) will own the units and, except for a sale covenant, they will profit from this gift to the detriment of everyone else. If they are rental units, the occupants may or may not change from time to time, but the "gift" and, thus, the loss to the community are still permanent. In addition, Mission Viejo will have to build several hundred more of such units every five years in perpetuity.

There are people of different means in America. Some are rich, some are poor, some are healthy, some are disabled and sick, some are young and some are old. Yet, none of them have a right to impose by government will on the assets or property of another. Each of us is responsible for our own wellbeing and that of our families. This country was founded on responsibility and self-reliance. We need to get back to that ideal and stop depending on the nanny state, because it will someday be unable to provide for all our needs.

In your letter you refer to the possible legal expenses of fighting HCD and the poverty purveyors. I liken their threats to those made by Iraq

in the very war your brother-in-law participated in. We cannot permit these threats to ruin our community. As someone once said "Millions for defense, but not one penny for tribute." Sometimes one has to stand up for what is right. If you have a suggestion on how to solve this problem without paying millions of taxpayer dollars, I'd love to hear it.

MORE LETTERS...

COUNCIL REFUSES TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES

Following is the essence of my response to the city's request for ideas or suggestions to meet affordable housing goals, which I sent to city hall.

I've responded numerous times on previous occasions -- in writing, during public comments at council and planning meetings and in conversations with city staff and council members. I've heard great ideas from other community members, including creative approaches for meeting goals, e.g., helping qualified homebuyers with down payments on homes with low-interest loans. These ideas have not been considered, listened to or compiled as a list of possibilities. I believe it's because no one on the city council wants to hear any suggestion except what they have already decided to do. What I don't see on the council is motivation to address the issue in a way that represents the views of residents. Ultimately, the council is neither working for the residents nor helping those in need, despite using the latter as an excuse for destroying commercial zones in order to build new high-density projects. The council, thus far, has only helped developers and enriched council members' campaign treasuries.

My primary suggestion has been to convert existing market-rate units because this method addresses what should have been done in the first place. I've also supported entirely workable ideas and plans proposed by others. None of these plans involve new construction or enrich developers. My preference for conversion of market-rate units is not uniquely mine. It's been mentioned more times

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

than I can count, and no one has followed up on it. Why not? I called the three apartment complex owners/managers -- the complexes that were supposed to have affordable units but the owners were allowed to back out. No owner or property manager I talked with knew anything about the objective of conversions, despite repeated mention by the city that "a letter was sent." There was no follow-up to find out why no one responded or if the appropriate person received the letter. I heard someone say "the owners weren't interested." How would anyone know? If the council would actually consider conversions, I would gladly outline details. I'm not inspired to put time into a letter when I don't see any motivation on the council to listen to the residents. My additional suggestion (beyond converting market-rate units) is for the city to STOP considering new construction. Increased traffic, overcrowded neighborhoods and lack of parking are real problems, and bringing in more high-density projects further compounds each problem. The city is built out, and that should end the talk about new residential construction of any kind.

Some people who have made comments or written letters to the editor seem not to know that the city has a fairly high number of existing affordable units. The claim that Mission Viejo isn't doing its fair share is unfounded -- ridiculous. It does show that some people who are without information or grossly misinformed are taking the bait. Some council members fan the flames so they can continue rezoning other commercial property and accepting campaign donations from developers. One such council member runs to the L.A. Times and calls our residents elitists and racists when new, high-density housing projects are being proposed by developers. Developers then write a check to his campaign treasury -- what a coincidence! Developers also support (fund) the group that sued the city. It was either this councilman or the developer (Steadfast) who ran to the state and made Mission Viejo the focus of complaints, when the city has a better-than-average record of providing affordable housing. As a result of all the noise, not one new affordable unit has been built, but tens of thousands of dollars have been funneled into campaign accounts. When the council rezones commercial property to residential, the property value in-



creases tremendously, which provides the developer with a windfall.

I am in complete support of residents who are fighting against new high-density projects in their neighborhoods. From all the evidence at hand, these projects have a negative impact, which includes declining schools and undermining the character of neighborhoods.

Connie Lee
Mission Viejo



Capo USD interim Superintendent Charles McCully has a different approach from that of former Supt. James Fleming. When backed into a corner, McCully spills the beans. As an example, Fleming and his administrative goons lied about funding of the \$35.5-million administration center, saying the money came from the San Juan Capistrano redevelopment agency and for very limited use. Under pressure, including an effort to recall all seven CUSD trustees, Fleming continued to lie. McCully revealed on Nov. 26 that the money also came from Mello-Roos funds from Mission Viejo, Aliso Viejo and San Juan Capistrano. Additionally, Mello-Roos funds from Rancho Santa Margarita and Talega will pay interest on related loans for the administrative center.



The Nov. 30 OC Register ran a story about the big lie regarding the source of funds for CUSD's administration center. Deputy Supt. Dave Doomey was quoted, "It was misinformation that was provided. It was corrected this evening [during the Nov. 26 meeting]. ... The building is here, and it's time to move on." Move on? The community should be outraged. Fleming resigned in August, and Doomey will retire in a few months. One CUSD trustee, Crystal Kochendorfer, decided months ago not to run for reelection in the Nov. 7 race, and two trustees (John Casabianca and Sheila Hen-

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)



"Will you stop saying 'ouch' everytime I cut something out of your budget?"

ness) were defeated in their reelection bids. The Flemingdom is coming apart, but damage to the schools has been done. The trustees will discuss this month and next how to cut approximately \$18 million from the current budget. Some CUSD parents correctly predicted the revelation of huge financial problems following the Nov. 7 election.



The Registrar of Voters has certified the Nov. 7 election. Mission Viejo results are: Trish Kelley - 12,191; John Paul Ledesma - 10,763; Lance MacLean - 8,574; Diane Greenwood - 8,480; Neil Lonsinger - 6,272; Bill Barker - 6,219; Michael Ferrall - 6,198; Justin McCusker - 5,543; James Edward Woodin - 5,457; Brian Skalsky - 4,686.



The Dec. 1 Saddleback Valley News had a letter, "Edison contributions suspicious," written by a person who campaigned for Diane Greenwood. He criticized SCE's campaign donations to the incumbents. City vendors and franchisees generally support the incumbents -- it's nothing new. According to the letter, SCE donated \$2,000 to Ledesma, \$2,000 to MacLean and \$1,250 to Kelley. The writer implies that Ledesma and MacLean might not have been able to pay for the yard signs, "Reject Greenwood and Barker," without SCE's donations, which is a ridiculous comment. The writer also asks, "Were their last-minute contributions due to a concern that Diane Greenwood might create grief for Edison if elected?" Not only is SCE likely tired of Greenwood's harangue about power lines, most normal residents are quite tired of it, as is reflected in this one-issue candidate's loss.



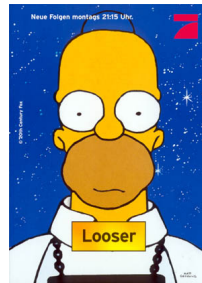
One the day after the election, another of Greenwood's campaign team members sent an email to those who had participated in campaigns of other challengers, saying essentially, "Ha ha, you lost." Greenwood was at the time three votes ahead of MacLean with thousands of votes yet to be counted. Someone who is a sore winner is likely also to be a sore loser. The problem for Greenwood's team was that

Too bad, so sad
YOU Lost!!

her lead was only a temporary scare for an entire city.



The vote tally released by the Registrar of Voters shows incumbents together received 31,528 votes while those running against them received a total of 42,855 votes. Just in case the incumbents would like to continue congratulating themselves on being reelected, they only succeeded in fooling some of the people some of the time. A similar outcome occurred in 2000 when Bill Craycraft benefited by being reelected while the vote was split among too many challengers. A former city activist who said he didn't vote this year may have been representative of others who didn't participate. He said, "I saw the mess of signs and I was turned off." While those who didn't vote (the turnout in Mission Viejo was very low this year) shouldn't complain about the outcome, those who did vote should feel free to complain about those who didn't.



The End