



MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

Keeping the California Promise
Week of February 14, 2006

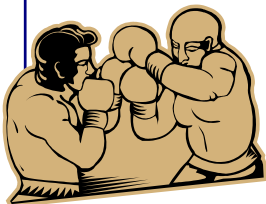
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THE PATRIOT POST ~ FOUNDERS' QUOTE DAILY

"To all of which is added a selection from the elementary schools of subjects of the most promising genius, whose parents are too poor to give them further education, to be carried at the public expense through the college and university. The object is to bring into action that mass of talents which lies buried in poverty in every country, for want of the means of development, and thus give activity to a mass of mind, which, in proportion to our population, shall be double or treble of what it is in most countries."
-- Thomas Jefferson (letter to Jose Correa de Serra, 25 November 1817)
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STAFF EDITORIAL WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

During the Feb. 6 council meeting, Councilman John Paul Ledesma abruptly asked for a point of personal privilege. Ledesma and Mayor Lance MacLean walked off the dais together. MacLean had just appointed Councilwomen Gail Reavis and Trish Kelley to serve together on an ad hoc committee. Apparently, Ledesma reacted to MacLean's risky venture.

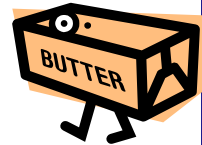


Even first-time observers of council meetings sense hostility on the dais. After watching TV coverage a few minutes, an Aegean Hills resident asked his wife, "Why do these people hate each other?" Five people were elected to serve, and they won't work together. What's wrong?



Council Members John Paul Ledesma and Gail Reavis worked together from 2000-2002 when they served with members of the old regime. Ledesma and Reavis shared ideals of fiscal responsibility and open government. On Nov. 5, 2002 – election night – Kelley, MacLean, Ledesma and Reavis celebrated together after voters put Kelley and MacLean on the council.

While MacLean in 2002 ran on his own volition, Kelley's campaign was initiated, fueled and largely financed by friends of Ledesma and Reavis. Ledesma won his reelection bid, and Kelley and MacLean unseated Sherri Butterfield and Susan Withrow. While MacLean appeared to be the third vote to move the new platform forward, Kelley promised to create harmony following the trouncing of two contentious and annoying councilwomen.



Within weeks, MacLean pulled back from the new team. To Ledesma's public suggestion of enacting the foursome's platform (Bill Craycraft was still on the council), MacLean said,

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“What’s the rush?” Ledesma intended immediately to fire then-City Manager Dan Joseph, who had been blamed for years of financial fiasco and turmoil.

MacLean quickly bonded with Joseph and adamantly defended him. Ledesma and Reavis expected Kelley to vote for Joseph’s dismissal, but she balked, saying, “He’s never done anything to me.” Thus, the community’s frustration set in after winning yet losing. Ledesma and Reavis had knocked themselves out to elect two new people who turned away and never came back.

When MacLean began promoting increased bureaucracy, social programs and corporate welfare, his campaign supporters felt deceived. As MacLean met resistance, his former supporters were impugned and called names in the L.A. Times.

Kelley drifted from her campaign positions back to her P.T.A. roots. Instead of representing the city to the schools, she represents the schools to the city. Her focus is on “character words,” an inane and increasingly costly social program promoted with laughable hypocrisy.

Is the situation beyond repair? By 2003, some of those who had supported Kelley saw she was either unable or unwilling to work with Reavis. Supporters twice attempted to get them to talk out their differences. Reavis agreed to meet both times; Kelley both times refused. Ratcheting up the hostility, Kelley fiercely campaigned against Reavis in 2004 but failed to unseat her.

When viewed in totality, the feuding among council members is unacceptable. With both Kelley and MacLean up for reelection, voters have an opportunity to dump two council members who have brought little to the dais beyond misrepresentation and attitude.



OUR READERS COMMENT

SUPPORT THE CITY BLOOD DRIVE

This is a call to all activists in reasonably good health to participate in the city blood drive from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Feb. 21 at the civic center. For information, see the home page of the city website,

<http://cityofmissionviejo.org/news/pressrelease/s/pr-06008.pdf>. The website also can link you to the Red Cross site.

You may recall when the gym issue brought activists together at a council meeting, I appeared in a Red Cross donor shirt at open comments and encouraged healthy citizens to give blood on a regular basis, every 56 days or more. There is a permanent blood shortage in Southern California, which regular donations could eliminate.



Information on how to become a regular donor via Internet alerts can be obtained from the Red Cross website or at the Mission Viejo drive. It is very convenient, but if you don't want to take this step, please give blood at the city drive.

Let's show the community how supportive we activists are for community health.

Allan Pilger
Mission Viejo



STEADFAST RETURNS

The return of Steadfast to the council for the second time flaunts the legal maxim “Let the buyer beware.” This developer has had more opportunities for rezoning than most. When the buyer bought the commercially zoned property, he

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was aware that it was not residential or mixed use, and the risk is with Steadfast to build accordingly. Now the property has been sold with caveats restricting Target's full use of the property within the existing zoning for the property.



Developers would love to have all property zoned residential or mixed use with today's inflated prices. Simply cube space out and create high-density housing – the cities are forced to fend for themselves in the aftercare market.

The property is a classic forced push in a commercial zone surrounded by commercial buildings. Profit is the motive. Master plans, residents' desires, infrastructure and traffic have all been subrogated.

Let Target develop the property commercially as it is currently zoned. To do anything else is to flaunt the citizens of Mission Viejo.

James Edward Woodin
Mission Viejo

COUNCIL SELLS OUT RESIDENTS



The oath of office for the Mission Viejo council should contain the words **"FIRST, DO NO HARM."**

The hope that some council members might actually do good evaporated shortly after their election. Instead of serving our residents, the council majority

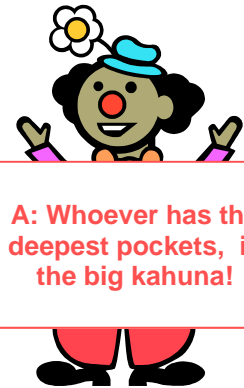
is bringing in more problems with increased housing and traffic.

Steadfast has tried numerous times to overturn commercial zoning on the parcel next to Unisys. The Planning Commission throughout 2003-2004 rejected homebuilding of any kind, and the previous council majority voted down housing in the commercial zone at Los Alisos and Jeronimo.

With a council majority recently giving UDR/Pacific a windfall by rezoning commercial property to residential, the door has been

opened to more housing and detrimental rezoning. Steadfast will reappear at the Feb. 20 council meeting after donating to the campaign accounts of at least four council members. If at all possible, residents should attend this meeting and ask the council members who they're working for.

Connie Lee
Mission Viejo



A: Whoever has the deepest pockets, is the big kahuna!

READER REACTIONS TO FEB. 11 BUZZ

A READER RESPONDS: "While the ad hoc housing committee of the council (MacLean and Ury) rushes to find more high-density housing for Mission Viejo, the citizen's initiative submitted to the ad hoc committee languishes in a snail's race with the law firm appointment. It took more than 12 months to resolve the city attorney issue; will it take more than 12 months to resolve the citizen's initiative submittal? **GUESS WHAT, IT PROBABLY WON'T OCCUR BEFORE THE NOVEMBER ELECTION!**"



FROM ANOTHER READER: "The Steadfast project is due before the council on Feb 20. It will be interesting to see how many of Steadfast's supporters are in the audience and how many are actual residents. If there are more than 20, the Krakatoa Volcano may erupt."

EMAIL RESPONSE FROM JOE HOLTZMAN: "In your gutless manner of not identifying yourself you have now attacked Frank Ury. Once again you do not know what you are talking about--not unusual though for you. As an insider I am very familiar to what was going on concerning the Viejo System Project and our inter-



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faces with the CPUC. And as I have stated before you and your bunch sat on your fat asses on the sidelines on this vital issue to the city. On burying the Viejo System Power Lines that issue was won until the Mission Viejo City Council was manipulated by Edison and a former council members into the proposal for a special district. NOPE had the CPUC on its side until Edison pulled off their ploy. And as I might remind you--Frank Ury was not on the City Council that voted to sell out the community on burying the lines. Get you facts straight--but once again I am sure that does not matter that you distort the facts."

Blog response to Joe Holtzman:

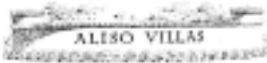
THE BLOG STANDS BY ITS FEBRUARY 11, 2006 COLUMN.

The time line supporting the blog's statement is a matter of public record: The California Public Utilities Commission filed a notice to proceed (giving Edison permission to install new lines above ground) on July 15, 2004. SCE began construction on July 19, 2004. Ury filed papers for his council candidacy on Aug. 6, 2004. NOPE's attorney failed to file a timely application for rehearing on Aug. 17, 2004. Ury's campaign mailers, stating he would force SCE to bury its lines, were hitting mailboxes in late September and throughout October 2004.

The reader's implication of backroom machinations that influenced the July 15 CPUC ruling also appears to support the blog's point that **THE DECISION HAD LIKELY BEEN MADE BEFORE URY'S CAMPAIGN BEGAN.**

NEVER SAY AFFORDABLE & HIGH DENSITY IN THE SAME BREATH

Aliso Villas I was built in 1972 by the Mission Viejo Company. Homes were sold to single families at affordable prices, everything was new and no one ever had a problem parking. Planning ahead was unheard of when expecting guests. It is now apparent that this very competent de-



veloper did not anticipate or consider how the area would develop and how it would affect the condominium community or the rest of Mission Viejo.

Many of the problems we face today could have been alleviated had the developers designed the community to accommodate homeowners needs instead of using every square foot for their own profit. Street parking is at a premium, although each unit has a one-car garage and one assigned parking stall; no consideration was given to growing families and additional vehicles that come with teens and their friends. They built as many units on the land they had to make the most money they could in as short a time as possible.

There are 424 units, 106 buildings, 424 one-car garages, 424 uncovered, assigned parking stalls and 14 guest parking slots. Parking for 862 cars total. It is virtually impossible to know what the exact number of residents is today; but a good guess is in the high 2,000s plus, plus. In all probability, it's even closer to 3,000 due to the high influx of multifamily use.

A recent parking survey by the city shows there are 334 parking spaces along Via Nuez, Via Roble, Via Cereza, Via Pimiento and Via Pera, the streets that make up our community. Compute the figures: city street parking, plus our private parking, not even factoring in for guests; 1,196 parking slots is just not enough parking especially when a good number of the multifamily units have five cars or more! We also have our fair share of crime, vandalism, cars broken into and stolen and all because the developers tried to fill as much space as possible with too many homes. Affordable and high-density should not be used together.

City employees refer to this area as "Mini Santa Ana" and call it "a blight on the city," and most recently stated they want to "raze this area because of the trash always thrown on the city slopes."

What makes anyone think the Steadfast Project won't bring the same problems to the city in the future?

Don't allow the Steadfast Project to become another burden to the city because of their greed. Couples have babies, they grow to become teenagers, buy cars, get married and come home to visit, where are they going to park? Protect the future of our city against developers that want to move in and change our

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city zoning codes to suit their bank account.

Kathy Miramontes
President of the Board
Aliso Villas HOA
Mission Viejo

LATE-BREAKING RUMORS



Councilwoman Trish Kelley allegedly tried to pressure Councilman John Paul Ledesma into bringing back the joint-use gymnasium at Newhart Intermediate School. He put the item on the agenda and then pulled it. While the school gymnasium is clearly CUSD's responsibility, gyms are springing up all over. Saddle-



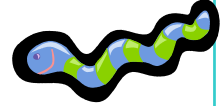
back Valley USD is adding two gyms at intermediate schools with the use of bond money. As an aside, members of Saddleback Church say their church is also adding sports facilities, including gymnasiums. The numerous outdoor basketball courts throughout the city are largely unused by community members.

Is it true (?????) Councilman Frank Ury told elected officials in other cities that he'll endorse Kelley and MacLean in the November election? Insiders say he is also supporting his appointee to the planning commission, Chandra Krout, as the candidate to knock out Ledesma. Don't forget that Krout in the L.A. Times called Mission Viejo residents elitists for not agreeing with her affection for affordable housing projects.

A closed-session item on the Feb. 20 council agenda is the discussion of a real estate deal. Those watching carefully believe the city is now considering getting into the real estate business by buying acreage in the deeply troubled retail center next to the former Kmart site. Will this become the affordable housing project that MacLean and Ury have been pushing?



Why is Ury meeting with developers behind the scenes? Keep in mind Anaheim Mayor Kurt Pringle was lobbying for UDR/Pacific's housing project next to the former Kmart site. Pringle's disappearance from the project may have coincided with UDR/Pacific's belief three council votes were lined up in favor of rezoning and approval of high-density housing on the site. UDR/Pacific appears now to be wriggling out of its affordable housing component ("undesirable and unprofitable"), instead paying an in-lieu fee the city could use toward buying the acreage next to the former Kmart site. If anyone is questioning why Ury is meeting with Kurt Pringle, follow the dots to former assemblyman-turned-lobbyist John Lewis. Lewis, who lives in Orange, funneled \$50,000 into Mission Viejo's council race in 2002, raised cash for Ury in 2004, and he's a Pringle associate.



Guess which developer Ury is meeting with regarding the potential affordable housing site next to the Kmart property? That would be Kurt Pringle's client, UDR/Pacific. Pringle sat in the audience in support of UDR/Pacific when the project came before the planning commission – it's no secret.



Remember the blog's statement that the Palmia HOA president's words might come back to bite him regarding the UDR/Pacific project across the street? Without checking with residents in his community, he said Palmia didn't object to the zone change and high-density project. If he likes high-density housing, he's going to LOVE the affordable housing project right next door. Palmia residents need to ask "why the HOA president is pretending to represent them."

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The Buzz

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A blog reader asked about the process of filing a police report. He said, "What can I do when people in my neighborhood repeatedly break the law? I even took a picture of the culprits, but they were gone by the time the police arrived. The officers said they didn't witness a crime, so they can't pursue it." A representative of OC Sheriff's Dept. said to call City Hall, (949) 470-3000, and ask for Police Services. The representative said he wants to work with the resident to establish the times and dates of any wrongdoing, particularly when it's a recurring problem. If it's a criminal act, police will pursue it.



Congratulations to Councilman John Paul Ledesma, who announced his engagement to Sarah Hoogstad. Ms. Hoogstad lives in Lake Forest and works in real estate. A July 9 wedding is planned.

The city apparently has a letter from Capistrano U.S.D., signed by Dave Doomey. He says the door is still open if the city wants to pour millions of dollars into a joint-use gymnasium at Newhart. Remember the urgent deadline last fall when CUSD needed an answer "right away"? Did someone misrepresent the facts? The letter indicates the city has until June to reconsider. With gymnasiums planned at two middle schools in Saddleback USD, why would the city want to reconsider any arrangement with such a seriously troubled partner as CUSD?



What else is brewing at CUSD? Remember when Supt. James Fleming was bemoaning the cost

of the recall, saying programs were being cut to pay for it? Since CUSD didn't have to pay for the recall, which programs will now be restored? Those driving by CUSD's Taj Mahal construction site say it is inappropriately named the CUSD Education Center because no education takes place there. How about calling it the James Fleming Lie-brary?

Why hasn't CUSD picked up the state money for modernizing Barcelona Hills Elementary, Hankey Elementary and Capistrano Valley High School? Click on this link and check out the amount that became available on May 25, 2005:

http://www.applications.dgs.ca.gov/OPSC/PT/SFP/SFP_projects.asp?dist_code=66464&dist_name=Capistrano%20Unified&co_name=Orange&co_code=30

The money, still sitting on the table after seven months, isn't small change. The CVHS grant alone exceeds \$5 million. Does CUSD not have the required matching funds to pick up the grants?



The Spring 2006 "City Outlook" includes an update on the Mission Viejo Community Foundation. Residents were expecting to see a balance sheet. The Outlook writer has had a problem in the past distinguishing "fundraising" from the city's grant. So far, the city has donated approximately \$184,000 in the form of a grant. Last week's update says \$335,000 has been "RECEIVED" in gifts and pledges. Does this amount include the city grant? Since one cannot spend or deposit a pledge, how much money is in the bank and where did it come from? In addition to a director who makes more than \$9,000 a month, the foundation just hired a half-time assistant. Any pledges and gifts are commendable – no doubt about it – but the update wasn't meaningful.



~~ That's All Till
Next Week! ~~

