



# MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

Keeping the California Promise

Week of March 11, 2006

## The Patriot Post Founders' Quote Daily

"He that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing."

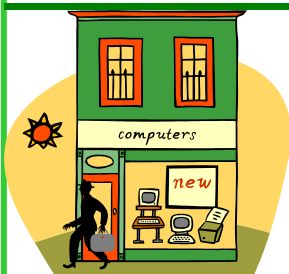
-- Benjamin Franklin

(from his writings, 1758)

Reference: Franklin: Writings, Lemay, ed., Library of America (1300)

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## 211 NEW COMPUTERS NOT NEEDED BY DALE TYLER



On March 6 the City Council approved the purchase of 211 new computers, averaging more than \$1,000 each. One-hundred and nineteen of these computers will be installed in city business of-

fices, 80 at the library and the rest at rec centers. While the information technology group at city hall claims that we need to upgrade almost all of the computers the city now uses, I have a hard time believing this is correct.

Many of the computers that are being replaced are five or more years old. However, age alone is not a predictor of usefulness. Some components such as hard drives wear out, but I have seen companies refurbish computers and get years more use out of them for less than \$300 per system, including parts and labor.

In industry, as some on the council should be aware, businesses rarely perform wholesale replacement, even though Dell, Microsoft and Intel and AMD might like them to. Instead, they set up a hand-me-down policy, where computers used by executives, artists and engineers are passed down to clerical staff and other less intensive users when the high-

function workstations are replaced with the latest technology. Mission Viejo's information technology department claims to do this, but if you examine their request carefully, you will see that the 80 units designated for the library could easily be served with the P3 and older P4 units. In fact, I question why we need 100 new units for city hall, given there are rarely 100 people there at any one time, and most part-time staff members do not need a dedicated computer.

Since at least 50 of these \$1,000 computers will be placed in public spaces at the library, I wonder why we need 1 GB, 3.2Ghz dual core systems? These systems are used for browsing the Internet and running word processing applications. Of course, in Mission Viejo, money grows on taxpayers, and the city does not need to consider any actual need when spending our money.

<http://www.livestockweekly.com/papers/04/03/04/scbull.asp>

Then, there is the matter of operating system upgrades. Instead of claiming that computer upgrades are needed to upgrade to Windows XP, why not begin using free open-source platforms like Linux, which will work fine for the library and most clerical staff and is provably more secure than Windows XP.

I volunteered my time to help migrate all of the

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existing public computers at the library to Linux as a demonstration of what can be done. In response, Frank Ury, claiming that "Geek is spelled with EE," an apparent reference to his engineering background, stated that we would never use free software in Mission Viejo because "there are all those problems with Linux and Windows XP." I would expect a self-proclaimed geek to be aware of office suites like Open Office that completely replace all of the functions needed on the public computers in the library. Of course, Ury could have been engaging in the time-honored practice of spreading

**FUD**

as **F**ear, **U**ncertainty and **D**oubt! Perhaps our so-called geek on the council should study the offerings of companies like IBM and Sun Microsystems, which are heavily investing in Linux, and then reconsider his claim of incompatibility. I know of several people who share documents and other data between Linux and Windows XP with less difficulty than sharing documents between Windows XP and Windows 95.

Many municipal and larger governments have switched to open source systems because they are more reliable and more secure, as well as less costly. Many governments believe in not forcing their citizens to use special, costly programs to view public records and, thus, insist on open document formats. Examples of this conversion are the state of Massachusetts, the California ARB and Largo, Florida. Garden Grove runs many of its servers and its web site on Linux. Yet our IT staff seems incapable of advancing as technology changes and has instead opted for a much more expensive solution.

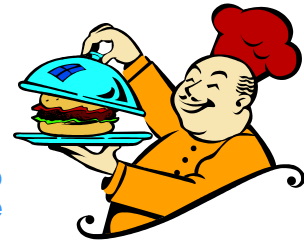
The citizens deserve more from our council and staff than spending money blindly, just for the sake of having the newest and shiniest computers.



## LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

### WE NEED A PEOPLE'S COUNCIL

The Steadfast project was a done deal well before the Feb. 20 city council meeting. This council group will not go down as the people's council. They are congratulating themselves and seem very satisfied with their compromise.



Although the project scope changed from the original plan of apartments to owner townhomes, and holding on to the majority of the property as commercial, we're the ones who will have been ultimately compromised with high-density housing. Unfortunately, the current council felt their hands were tied and didn't have the motivation to fight for us. Did they even blink when presented with 2,800 signatures?



This should be an exciting election year!

Lin Marelic  
Mission Viejo

### COUNCIL IS UNRESPONSIVE

I'm exasperated that the council members wouldn't answer any questions from the residents during the Feb. 20 meeting about the housing development. Council members are so arrogant and impressed with themselves that the residents no longer matter.

Thank you for writing the Mission Viejo Buzz, as the weekly newspaper has fallen off the planet.

Lammerchina Allen  
Mission Viejo homeowner

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## COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY STAFF EDITORIAL

Few residents attended the March 6 council meeting, and they all left half-way through the four-hour meeting. Even diehards found no attraction in council members sniping at each other while sidestepping the city's problems.



Those who watched TV coverage until the end saw a meltdown with Mayor Lance MacLean's inflammatory remarks to Councilwoman Gail Reavis. She had attempted to promote a measure protecting residents from eminent domain, which got no support. Instead, MacLean enjoined City Attorney Bill Curley to explain why eminent domain isn't a concern. If anyone isn't concerned, it's probably because Curley's long-winded gibberish is incomprehensible.



As matters of record, the council approved by 5-0 the purchase of 211 Dell computers at \$235,000, and the city will adopt a Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Battalion (5-0). Despite objections from residents at the public microphone, the council voted 5-0 to approve the highly controversial Aliso Ridge development agreement and zone change on the parcel next to Unisys.

Appearing disinterested in proceedings, Councilman Frank Ury leaned back in his chair, hands clasped behind his head, at times ignoring other council members or residents who spoke at the public microphone. Responding to Reavis' reminder of Ury's campaign promise not to decrease the city's soccer fields, both Ury and MacLean brushed off campaign promises. Ury said, "Thanks for the stroll down campaign memory lane."

Most of the meeting was spent on the mid-year budget review.

Senior transportation: after 3



1/2 years, Kelley has failed in her campaign promise to create an effective program, and the ideas presented March 6 were misleading.

The false acclaim of a "pilot program" has no pilot and no plane. The concept of discounted taxi coupons for 269 of the city's seniors who are at least 85 years old is projected to cost \$317,000, or \$177,000 if a portion can be recaptured. No one clarified the cost of a full-time employee to manage the program. The council voted 4-1 (Reavis dissenting) to spend \$20,000 to "study the problem."

**Prevaricator**

**Phony**

Insurance issue at Marguerite aquatics facility: a \$400,000 insurance payment became the focus regarding the \$1.2 million fire at the swim club. Beyond \$1.2 million in damages, the city attorney's fees were \$659,000. Total cost: \$1,859,000. Net loss: \$1,459,000.

Underfunded retiree healthcare benefits: an estimate of the current obligations runs between \$2 million and \$5 million. MacLean led the discussion to defer any payment until 2006. If the intent is to improve the appearance of the city's balance sheet, one should consider that delaying payment significantly raises the price to pay off the obligation.

Unfunded pension liabilities: The council voted 5-0 to amortize the \$3.8 million PERS unfunded pension liability over a 15-year period with a \$316,000 down payment (8 percent). Reavis attempted to formulate a more aggressive plan.

Thanks for the stroll down campaign memory lane.

Throughout the budget review, no one talked about the city's balance sheet. Numbers

have been bandied about, with some council members

(three months ago) referring to \$32 million in city reserves. The backup documents on March 6 mention \$21 in reserves, with only approximately \$500,000 in unencumbered funds that are not appropriated.



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## MORE CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS (FROM THE PUBLIC MICROPHONE ON MARCH 6)

I'm discouraged with my city council. The council has been discussing the redevelopment money during closed sessions. At the public meetings, we in the audience hear nothing about it.

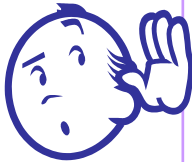
On Feb. 17, the Saddleback Valley News had an article that quoted one of the council members. It also quoted Peter Whittingham, who is a spokesman for UDR/Pacific, the developer of the former Kmart site. He stated that it's going to cost \$7 million in redevelopment money, and the city has only \$3 million. Where's all the money going to come from?

Councilman Frank Ury was the council member quoted in the newspaper. I would like an answer to my question. In the article, Mr. Ury said he was being backed into a corner. What did that statement mean?

**Explain** Last week, Mr. Jim Woodin spoke at the council meeting and got permission from the mayor to ask the city attorney questions.

The attorney didn't answer. When will we get answers?

Mickey MacDonald  
Mission Viejo



**Good Question!**



## COUNCIL COMMENTS, MARCH 6 BUDGET RESERVES AND ALLOCATIONS

At the mid-year budget review for 2005-2006 for the city of Mission Viejo, it is critically important to address and resolve our city's employee healthcare defined benefit unfunded liability. We all attended John Moorlach's discussion of this issue at the [Casta del Sol] luncheon last week. We have approximately \$3 million or more owed, which constitutes the unfunded liability. If you divide it into three

parts, claiming to pay off the liability in three years, you simply replace this year's payment with next year's accrual. You still have three parts. Nothing is accomplished. In the meantime, people live longer, and healthcare costs compound at 10 percent to 14 percent per year actuarially so that during the next budget cycle, you are even further behind. This taxpayer does not want Mission Viejo to become another San Diego.

I realize that most if not all of the city reserves are encumbered. The solution to this problem will be painful. You will have to borrow from other reserves where possible to liquidate this obligation. At the same time, it is imperative you must amend and adopt a defined contribution plan capped at Medicare payout dates, currently at age 65. You will wind up with a two-tier system covering old and new employees.

Once this obligation is paid, you will still look at future obligations, which must be kept current but will be palatable from a budget point of view. The alternative to this scenario is huge, future unresolved debt for our city, resulting in massive financial problems.

Recently, this council has procrastinated on our city attorney appointment for more than a year, costing taxpayers thousands of dollars. We have a voter initiative on zoning, submitted Dec. 15, 2005, sitting in committee for three months. This large pension liability has been sitting on the table for an even longer period.

**Wasteful!**

The locomotive pulling the train is this council. The train is the city. At this time, the train is on a siding, parked with the caboose in the front and the locomotive in the rear, and it's going nowhere.

The council must bite the bullet and get the job done immediately.

James Edward Woodin  
Mission Viejo



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## MAR. 6 COUNCIL COMMENTS "ANOTHER STEADFAST MONEY GRAB"

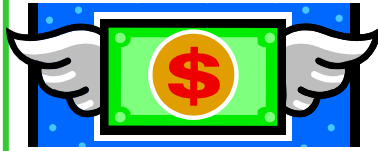
An item on the closed-session agenda and previously reported in a local paper discloses that Steadfast is now requesting money from the city to pay for the low-income housing that they agreed to build as part of their project.

As I recall, and I have DVD's of every public meeting on the Steadfast project, they stated that they "had not applied for and did not intend to apply for any low-income housing grants." Was

Ralph Deppisch deliberately misleading the public and the city with those statements? Perhaps he knew that claiming not to want city money would make this misguided project more "sellable."

Once again, this duplicity is another example of why Steadfast should not be permitted to do business in Mission Viejo.

Dale Tyler  
Mission Viejo



As 177,000 petition signatures were stacking up to recall CUSD trustees, the trustees' PR guy, Roger Faubel, hatched a "brilliant" plan. For only \$38,000, he masterminded rescission postcards, whereby voters who signed the recall petition could withdraw their signatures. How many people jumped at the chance to rescind? The grand total was 36 voters who signed the petition – at a cost of more than \$1,000 per postcard. What else is Roger up to? The M.V. council recently awarded him a \$100,000 contract to

"educate" residents that Crown Valley Pkwy is being widened. Faubel received public criticism for wanting to burn \$20,000 of taxpayer money on a balloon fest and catered lunch for VIPs for the official road opening. As public ire grew, he scaled back the cost ... sort of. To compensate for the so-called shortfall, city vendors were pressed to donate to this civic circus. As usual, residents won't be invited to the party.



Roughly translated, the five phases of a project are enthusiasm, confusion, panic, punishing the innocent and rewarding non-participants. With the CUSD recall signature drive completed and the District Attorney's investigation under way, would any non-participant like to stand up and take credit for someone else's work? Frank Ury has put his name on the effort. Did he even sign the petition?



Ury has a history of taking credit for the labor of others. In the 10-year-long anti-airport battle, he was nowhere. As mentioned in earlier blogs, Ury falsely claimed he was "an anti-airport fighter from the beginning." If Ury has accomplished anything on his own, why did he lie about his involvement fighting an airport?

## Pants on Fire

This week's award goes to Mayor MacLean, who was blatantly campaigning when County Treasurer John Moorlach spoke at Casta Del Sol on Feb. 26. In front of more than 100 people, MacLean touted the city's fiscal accountability. Here's an example of MacLean's views on finance. Instead of responsibly budgeting the city's \$2-million to \$5-million under funded retiree healthcare benefit obligations, MacLean led the council on March 6 in punting the obligation into 2006. Considering the rising cost of healthcare, deferring payment can exponentially increase the amount due.



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One item mentioned by the geographically challenged council during the budget discussion on March 6 was a dog park. Isn't the new dog park locale the same area as the soccer field that is alternately displaced and then reinstated in the community center expansion plans? When the council deals with parents, it's a potential soccer field; when the council deals with dog owners, it's a potential dog park. Why not both? It would teach children to be extra careful not to fall down while playing soccer. Estimated cost of a dog park (fence and grass): \$660,000.



"I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts."  
~ Will Rogers ~

"Common sense is not so common."  
~ Voltaire ~

"If Stupidity got us into this mess,  
then why can't it get us out?"  
~ Will Rogers ~

Councilwoman Kelley has supported the CUSD trustees throughout the turmoil of boundaries, a recall effort and, now, a criminal investigation by the District Attorney. What's the net worth of Kelley's getting endorsements from people wearing orange jumpsuits? Following the bombshell last week of the D.A.'s investigation, a rumor emerged that Trustee Mike Darnold is doubtful he'll run for another term. Since his term doesn't expire until 2008, such a rumor would be more interesting if it involved trustees up for reelection this fall: John Casabianca, Sheila Henness and Crystal Kochendorfer.



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