



# MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

*Keeping the California Promise*

*Week of June 17, 2006*

## ***The Patriot Post Founders' Quote Daily***

"In our progress toward political happiness my station is new; and if I may use the expression, I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely any part of my conduct which may not hereafter be drawn into precedent."

-- George Washington (letter to Catherine MacAulay, 9 January 1790) Reference: George Washington: A Collection, W.B. Allen, ed. (537)

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## **WATCH THE BAIT AND SWITCH CAMPAIGN STAFF EDITORIAL**



A volley of angry emails came from Councilman Frank Ury's camp just before the June 6 Primary Election. When Ury threw a party and no one came, one of his henchmen lashed out at almost everyone. A few bullies who surround Ury attack community members on his command. He rewards their loyalty by voting against their pleas on almost every issue.

Ury tried to organize a precinct walk on Sat., June 3, supposedly to campaign for a candidate who was running in the June 6 Primary Election. The last-minute gesture failed for several reasons. For openers, volunteers can work for a candidate without a middleman who wants to look good. One of them wrote in an email, "I don't need Ury taking credit for what I do."

Ury recently got himself appointed as "Mission Viejo Republican Deputy" by the county for this year's election. It's not the first time he'll have the opportunity to impose his own agenda. His tack was similar in 2004 when he was a city council candidate and in prior elections as far back as the 1990s. Volunteers in 2004 went to Ury's residence, expecting to pick up cam-

paign literature for the official city precinct walk. Why were they also given flyers to promote Ury as a council candidate when he received no official Republican Party endorsement?

As an additional problem with the unofficial flyer, it contained no "paid for" information or tax ID number as required by the Fair Political Practices Commission. While the 2004 precinct walk was sporadic at best, some homeowners who received the flyer promoting Ury asked who paid for it. <http://www.fppc.ca.gov/>

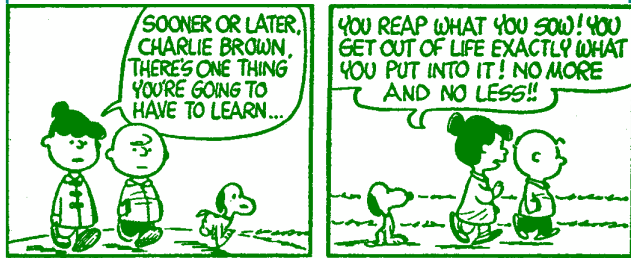
One volunteer who lives off Jeronimo Road implied the 2004 experience was a bait and switch. She said, "I would be willing to work for the Republican Party, but not for an opportunist. I won't be pushed into another candidate's campaign."

Ury came up short on June 3 when he failed to attract the Primary Election candidate's support group – or anyone else, for that matter. Many of those Ury invited had already been campaigning for the candidate. Others said they didn't want to go over to his house and then be roped into a campaign for his own council candidates. In a variety of ways, Ury is reaping what he's sown.

**YOU REAP  
WHAT YOU SOW**

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purposes.

It's amazing how a fine city like Mission Viejo can become a target for predators. But, then again, we seem to have hatched some of them from our own council nest. As a result, our city's future nest eggs are in jeopardy.



## DRESSED TO KILL EDITORIAL BY BO KLEIN



I have been asked my opinion as to why the city is now involved in a lawsuit over the state's affordable housing program.

First, in my opinion, there's someone who wants to profit from a lawsuit, namely, the attorney who filed the case. This attorney has been lurking around City Hall for some time, like a buzzard circling a kill. Her clothing even has a dark, tattered look about it in a way I have seen cartoon buzzard characters dressed. At any rate, my understanding of her situation is that she performs challenges in the legal system and gets paid from grant money. Perhaps, if she wins a case, maybe even some cash from a city would be forthcoming, but I haven't heard of it occurring before.



The second and most likely reason our city is currently jeopardized with a lawsuit is because some city council members personally took it upon themselves to handle the housing issue and, clearly, they are not qualified to do the task. Council Members Trish Kelley, Lance MacLean and Frank Ury deliberately removed the prior planning commission, which was working on a cohesive housing plan, and they scrapped the plan. To replace the plan that the experienced and educated planners had in place, Ury and MacLean planted themselves on a special ad hoc housing committee, which went nowhere but to the current lawsuit in a short time. I suspect they were attempting to wheel and deal the special privileges attached to an affordable housing plan to whichever landlord or developer best suited their own

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### DON'T OVERLOOK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Letters have appeared in this blog about economic loss that comes from shopping in other cities. It's a double-edged sword if shoppers have to go to other cities to find what they want. I don't think enough effort is put into developing businesses or keeping them in Mission Viejo.

Mission Viejo has nice stores and restaurants, but you have to know where they are. I think the best part of the Saddleback Valley News is Marilyn Grein's column, "Business Watch." More could be done to promote business in Mission Viejo. For example, the "City Outlook" could do this, which would help both the businesses and the newsletter's contents.

Many businesses fail, and it brings down the city's economy. We can stop some of the loss by spreading the word about what's here.

Nadine Harder  
Mission Viejo

### THE EMPEROR'S NEW WINCHESTER MYSTERY HOUSE

(With sincere apologies to Norman Murray, a man who deserves high respect. The following is an analysis of our Community and Senior Center.)

Recently, I had occasion to visit our

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**Community Center. It reminded me of the Win-**



chester Mystery House in San Jose. You will remember that the Mystery House was built by a wealthy widow who was deluded into thinking she would not die as long as she continued to build her house. Over many years the house ended up being a hodgepodge of rooms – a real mess.

In the case of our Community Center, our hodgepodge of rooms was designed by an architectural firm. Now, as I understand it, the same firm is planning to build an addition to the original building, to add to its ill-conceived plans. The addition seems to be in the same style, but on a grander scale. (Is it that the city staff was unable to enlist any other firm because no other firm would want to be associated with such a pitiful original design? Or is it that, if another firm were to take on the addition, it would first want to demolish or radically alter the original structure?)



The entrance to the building is entirely too small and out of scale with the rest of the building. (It is probably not as big as some walk-in closets) Moreover, upon entering, it seems that one has entered a high-security bank or prison, with the center staff ensconced behind a half-

walled and half-glassed barricade. One must proceed into the body of the building by descending an extensive ramp, and one can proceed through the rest of the building only by passing through sides or corners of rooms in order to get to the next rooms.

You no doubt remember the story of “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” The Emperor was being swindled by a group of shysters who were pretending to fashion beautiful and expensive clothes for the Sovereign. The Emperor doubted his own eyes, and his sycophant advisors were afraid to tell him the truth. Moreover, the King was ill-served by a citizenry hesitant to acknowledge the problem of his embarrassing new “clothes.” But then a little boy came along and stated the obvious, and the “tailors” were booted out of town.



Maybe we’re in the middle of a retelling of this classic tale. The updated version goes like this: Our City Councils, doubting their own eyes, were being swindled by a group of shysters parading as architects. The citizenry was hesitant to acknowledge the embarrassment of its Community Center. However, at a crucial point in the story, when the Council was displaying and parading around its new plans for the Center, a lowly citizen came along and stated the obvious; the citizenry was jolted into recognition; and the “architects” were booted out of town. (Let us hope that is how the story ends.)

Oh, how wonderfully the story could end. Just take a look at the Laguna Hills Community Center to see what can be done. What a beautiful building! Remember that saying: “Measure twice and cut once,” which could be modified to “Plan twice (that means, rethink your plans) and build once.”

Meanwhile, would the good people managing our Community Center please 1) reconsider their helter-skelter placement of the various and sundry information racks bolted to the cinderblock gray walls, 2) at least thoroughly wash the green, plastic four-foot topiaries, and 3) because of the developing odors, air out the place!

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(Again, sincere and profuse apologies to Norman Murray. This article is not meant as an insult. Is not the real insult the Community Center building itself?)

Paula Steinhauer  
Mission Viejo

### SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS IN MISSION VIEJO

A drive is in progress to support a local coffee shop and the local mom who owns it at Mission Foothill Marketplace (on Los Alisos Blvd., east of Marguerite Pkwy). The coffee shop is called Moxie Java. It is in the troubled center adjacent to the former Kmart property.



Vons wants to put a Starbucks in its store, which could put the neighborhood place out of business. In my opinion, the landlord is doing little to stop it. This is a very low-traffic center with struggling stores. Hundreds of community members have written to business.ethics@Safeway.com asking them to withdraw the proposed Starbucks. In my opinion, the corporation seems insistent on being a big business bully and not listening to its customers. Other supporters who do not shop there want to save a neighborhood coffee house. Please spread the word and inform the local media. We still need to show our young people the American Dream can be achieved without being run over by big business that couldn't care less about a small family-owned business.

Vons keeps saying Moxie Java will not be harmed – I disagree.

Jill Hanoka  
Mission Viejo



### RESPONSE TO THE BUZZ COLUMN, JUNE 9

Thank you for mentioning the May 2005 one-time, unique method public input meeting offered by that Community Services Commission. The commissioners agreed to a one-time, no-speaker-time-limit meeting that followed a town hall opinion/question format. There were 32 public attendees, and 22 citizens took 2 hours and 10 minutes to speak. The only constraints were that they must stay within the subject at hand, the joint-use gymnasium. Having no time clock, one person, I believe a teacher, explained the needs and potential benefits for P.E. classes especially in wet weather conditions spoke for a 20-minute duration. All project questions were answered by the city staff.

As the moderator of this unique speaking opportunity, I sensed that the public appreciated this relaxed opportunity to speak without any time constraints. (Question: Do you find it interesting that this meeting allowed twice the time recently allowed for last month's Council Town Hall meeting?) The meeting tape records show that speaker queue waiting times were sometimes paced by previous speaker lengthy questions and answers. At the conclusion of the last request to speak form and a call for last opportunity to speak, five additional citizens came forward and spoke turning in their request form afterward. And you were correct I did speak after each and every speaker as the city staff wanted to get an accurate opinion count of for vs. against, requested that I as chairperson question each speaker if this was their first and only time speaking and had they emailed their same opinion. Afterward, several commissioners expressed concerns that maybe allowing so much time was not the best way to proceed in the future. I can understand where this could become a concern for certain formal hearings. However, this being a public input information wants and needs assessment meeting I feel strongly that in order to serve the people when there is no previously available needs assessment data, I would again be willing to propose to a governing body that they allow additional speaker time. Especially if



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quality of life issues and non-approved budgeted expenditures are involved. I also realize that all community leaders have one vote and being a "harmony and ethical team player" would naturally yield to the due process of the democracy voting rules. On this matter there was no vote required by the commission as this was a public input meeting focused on determining public needs and opinions. This is what the council requested of the commission.

Bill Barker  
Mission Viejo

### CUSD RALLY – THANK YOU FOR COMING

Thank you to all the Mission Viejo residents who came to the June 6 rally to protest Capistrano Unified School District's new \$35-million administration center. Although the recall of seven trustees didn't make the ballot, the administration continues to lose the public opinion battle.

I want to remind everyone to check for updates on the Web site.

<http://www.cusdwatchdog.com/>

To all parents and other community members following CUSD issues, please sign on to the Web site to get on the email list for updates.

Teri Morelli  
CUSD Parent

### REGRESSIVE EFFECT OF AD HOC COMMITTEES

One of the benefits of a democratic government is to have public discussion and discourse relative to issues that concern the public. When our council in Mission Viejo or various agencies of any government form ad hoc committees, the purpose is, ostensibly, to resolve certain problems quickly or with less oversight. The resulting effect, however, stifles public comment and results in policies that are, at best, regressive.

An example of this practice in Mission Viejo is the Ad Hoc Committee on Affordable Housing Goals established when our council took the issue over from the Planning and Transportation Committee on January 3, 2006. Little public discussion has been held on housing issues, and our city is currently in litigation.

The failure of such committees is simply in the track record. Our city for many years had its best-ever Planning and Transportation Commissioner. A plan was in the works to meet all state and local requirements for affordable housing, but our new council members in 2005 dismissed the commissioners and appointed new ones. The process began all over again. Failing to support their own appointed commissioners, certain council members formed an ad hoc committee to get results quickly. The vote was 3-2 with MacLean, Kelly and Ury in favor of the ad hoc committee and Reavis and Ledesma against.

As with all issues, the council majority's failure to involve the public and communicate with their own appointees created a disjointed result.

James Edward Woodin  
Mission Viejo



### WHAT DID BRITNEY DO NOW? VILLAGE

Poor Britney can't get a break... but she does ridiculous things. While shopping for pink thongs at Victoria's Secret in Mission Viejo, Ms. Britney reportedly got down on the floor next to the cash register and [changed Sean Preston's dirty diaper](#) right there on the floor.



VICTORIA'S SECRET

"Britney then tried to hand it to an employee," a source told Us Weekly. "The salesperson wouldn't take it."

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR NEWS BLOG SHOWS BIAS

It is dishonest to state you are a watchdog representing the residents of this city. From reading your paper, it becomes apparent you only represent the Christian conservatives and Republican Party. I don't want to be part of a group that is not truly non-partisan and does not represent all the people.

I dare you to print this in your paper!

Milt Jacobson  
Mission Viejo

*Editors Note: Milt, thanks for writing us about your concerns. Over the years we have worked together on a variety of city issues, including the wasteful City Hall, monuments to existing council members, redevelopment and many others. While we may differ on national politics and religion, I have never doubted your commitment to improving local government and your watchdog role in our city. Thus, I'm a little surprised when you say that Republicans (or Christians, or Muslims or Jews or ???) cannot be watchdogs just because they talk about their other beliefs.*

*While I may be wrong here, I wonder if you were primarily upset at the opinion of Nancy Sandoval in our June 3 edition. The article was clearly labeled as her personal opinion. We attempted to get a similar piece from a Democratic perspective, which we felt would also interest readers. Unfortunately, no one we contacted was able to provide a letter. While most articles here are not written from a Democratic or Republican perspective, it seems important to get people to think about their choices before they vote. If we can help there, we will do so,*

*This NewsBlog is dedicated to sharing the opinions of readers, and those opinions may not always be to your (or my) liking. However, presenting opinions allow us to better understand where each of us stand and to encourage further discussion. I hope you will continue to contribute to the NewsBlog and to improving government in our city.*



City Hall documents confirm UDR/Pacific is trying to sell the parcel on east Los Alisos, the former Kmart site. The council on Sept. 19, 2005, approved (4-1, Reavis dissenting) a zone change from commercial to residential, providing UDR/Pacific with a dramatic increase in property value. The housing plan approved by the council includes 250 condos, with 38 designated as affordable units. The developer wanted to pay a fee to avoid building the affordable units, but the council said no. If the developer can sell the rezoned property for a huge profit without building anything, why not take the money and run?

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Progress has also stopped for Steadfast on Los Alisos / Jeronimo next to Unisys. The Pacific Law Center's lawsuit regarding affordable housing is against Target as well, which now owns all 23 acres. Some residents suspect Steadfast never wanted to build anything but affordable apartments and Target never wanted to open a second store 1.4 miles from its current location on Alicia.

<http://www.steadfastcompanies.com/news/archive/02-21-2006.htm>

<http://www.steadfastcompanies.com/news/archive/12-11-2002.htm>

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A Buzz reader responded to last week's editorial about the \$9,000 / month salary of Mission Viejo Community Foundation Director Bob Zuer. The question: "How was the amount of \$9,000 decided upon?" When Zuer was first contracted to set up the foundation, the amount he received was approximately \$9,000 a month. While it doesn't explain why his current salary is \$9,000, it shows the precedent. As an aside, watch for a reaction following the next council meeting when the foundation releases information about its overhead.

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Another reader responded to The Buzz's description of the p.r. contract for widening Crown Valley Parkway. The Buzz said "p.r."

stood for *public rip-off*.

The reader said, "The p.r. contract was a \$100,000 sweetheart deal to a former city politician with the residents getting no benefit whatsoever. That's what happens when the city puts all its eggs into one bastard."

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A reporter for the OC Register wrote (**again!**) on June 7 that the Capo Unified School District is "saving" money by owning and not renting space for its administrative staff. The new administration center was built with borrowed money, and the payments (more than \$1.5 million a year) far exceed the amount of the former leases (\$550,000 a year). How does the reporter propose to put a yearly loss of \$1 million into a savings account?

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In December 2005, OC Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley said 35 percent of the 177,000 signatures submitted to recall seven CUSD trustees were invalid. A hearing before an Orange County Superior Court Judge is scheduled for Tues., June 27, at 1:30 p.m. in Department C20 in Santa Ana to review complaints regarding Registrar of Voters errors that stopped the recall effort.

<http://www.occourts.org/cfdocs/civilcalendar/calendar.cfm>



**That's all folks!**