

MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

Keeping the California Promise

Week of September 23, 2006



The Patriot Post Founders' Quote Daily

"No Taxation without Representation!"

Anonymous slogan in response to British Tax Policy, Circa 1765

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THE SACKING OF MISSION VIEJO STAFF EDITORIAL

DISASTERS HAPPEN



The city staff claims to be working on a disaster preparedness plan, which has become somewhat of a joke. It's no joke, however, that the imminent threat to the city might not be from Mother Nature.

Residents should be concerned about Mission Viejo being sacked by the Orange County Republican Party in the November election.

A Mission Viejo Democrat observed that city residents are accustomed to the good ol' boys trying to gain influence. He said, "For a long time, the Orange County Republican Party was fairly organized and effective. They did their homework and supported the best local candidates."

The county party changed with the departure of county chair Tom Fuentes in 2004. What emerged was far worse – for Democrats and Republicans as well – when a group of lobbyists took over. If the lobbyists couldn't back winners, they could buy seats.

They already control the Orange County Sheriff and the District Attorney. A candidate running for a supervisory seat is making people uneasy by having the county power club's blessing. The time has passed when having a long string of endorsements is a good thing.

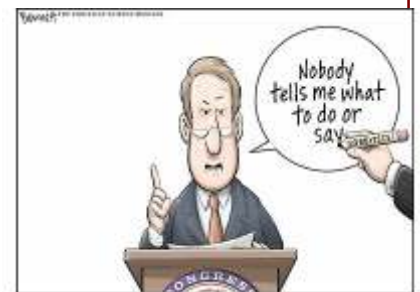


Two weeks ago, the Orange County Republican Central Committee endorsed Mission Viejo council candidate Justin McCusker. McCusker's campaign would be laughable if he

didn't have the Orange County lobbyists backing him.

McCusker, who attended only one city council meeting and stayed for about 10 minutes, has otherwise been invisible in

the community. McCusker won the endorsement over other Mission Viejo challengers who are clearly superior, self-funded and well-known. County hacks said McCusker's record of participating in several Republican campaigns around the state made him the best candidate for the Mission Viejo council, and they unanimously recommended endorsing him. The endorsement process was as transparent as it was



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rigged. Those on the lobbyists' payrolls aren't even subtle about their motives and methods – they don't have to be. It's business as usual.

The county lobbyists are supporters of Mission Viejo Councilman Frank Ury, who has become so unpopular on the city council he can't get anyone to second his motions. Ury, who won a seat in 2004 with large campaign contributions coming from San Diego County, has been unable to repay the special interest donors with his lone effort. The pressure is on to get Ury's "boy" elected in November.



One factor making Mission Viejo so vulnerable is the disharmony on the council and a lack of collective will to accomplish anything positive for the residents. As a result,

some residents think the reelection of Council Members Trish Kelley and Lance MacLean would be the worst thing that could happen. A far worse result would be Justin McCusker getting into office along with Diane Greenwood – another Ury enabler – which would form a new majority with Ury in charge.



Orange resident and lobbyist John Lewis, who is Ury's buddy and political consultant, raised cash in 2002 to help Trish Kelley and

Lance MacLean win seats on the council. They apparently had no taste for Lewis and didn't shower his clients with city contracts. Lewis now is helping two more unfit candidates, McCusker and Greenwood. The threat of a lobbyist taking over Mission Viejo should give residents strong motivation to vote in November.

With Mission Viejo being the largest South County city, one insider observed that the smaller cities would fall like dominos. "It's about power and money," he said. "They don't care what happens to the residents."



NEWS BRIEF ENDORISING MEETING

During the Sept. 21 endorsing meeting of the Saddleback Republican Assembly, one of the candidates appeared to reveal a leak of information from a **CLOSED-SESSION** council meeting. An SRA member in the audience was questioning council candidate Justin McCusker about his ballot statement claim of burying the Edison power lines in Mission Viejo. The SRA member asked how he would do that.

McCusker responded that a new report would soon be released concerning electromagnetic field levels under the lines, which could force Southern California Edison to pay for burying the power lines in Mission Viejo. The follow-up question was, "What report?" Three council members were in the audience, and one said, "That's a closed-session item, and if Mr. McCusker knows what's in the report then **someone on the council is leaking closed-session information.**"

Another person raised the question, "Since McCusker is supported by Councilman Frank Ury, is Ury leaking the information to McCusker?" **Shame on Ury!**



The exchange is reminiscent of the November 2004 city election when Ury ran on a platform of "forcing Edison to bury its lines." Some residents who didn't support Ury believed all along the campaign was a scam, particularly when the California Public Utilities Commission gave SCE permission to add overhead lines in July 2004. Several months later, Ury was still campaigning on having the lines buried as if the decision hadn't been made. Ury's group wanting the lines buried had even failed to file a timely appeal, and the CPUC decision was unchallenged. The issue is back in this year's city election, with residents again questioning the legitimacy of McCusker's implication the lines will be buried and someone else will pay for it.



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NEWS BRIEF

SRA ENDORSES THREE

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The Saddleback Republican Assembly met on Thurs., Sept. 21, to decide on endorsements in several city council races. No candidates from Lake Forest were endorsed. Two Rancho Santa Margarita incumbents – Jim Thor and Neil Blais – received the group's endorsement.

Of 10 candidates in the race for three Mission Viejo council seats, eight were vying for the group's support. Contenders included Bill Barker, Michael Ferrall, Councilman John Paul Ledesma, Neil Lonsinger, Councilman Lance MacLean, Justin McCusker, Brian Skalsky and Jim Woodin. Challenger Diane Greenwood and Councilwoman Trish Kelley didn't apply or attend the meeting.

With three open seats, SRA members could vote to endorse three Mission Viejo candidates. Receiving the group's endorsement were Woodin, Ledesma and Ferrall after one round of voting. The organization requires a majority of two-thirds of those voting to endorse any candidate.



Letters To The Editor

UNREALISTIC DEMANDS FOR HOUSING

Hey, I don't live in Laguna Beach. There are several reasons why that's so. One is that to live in a house comparable to the one I live in now in Mission Viejo would cost me about four times as much, and I don't think it would be worth it. To put it another way, if I were to live in a house that would cost the same as what I am living in now, I would be living in a teeny, tiny, three-room house without a garage and without a yard.

Now, I love the ocean and I go to Laguna Beach several times during the year. Nobody's stopping me. But I'm not about to go to Laguna Beach's City Council and demand that I be given subsidized housing. I'm not demanding that the city residents help pay for my shelter. And I'm certainly not suing Laguna Beach because they're not providing me with said shelter. How preposterous!

Go think, Mission Viejo! Do we know of a place where this is being done? Oh, yeah! And the Mission Viejo City Council is all wrapped up in it.

Paula Steinhauer
Mission Viejo



THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING RACKET

It is difficult to believe that Paris Merriam ("Lay the foundation for affordable housing" Letters, Sept. 17, Orange County Register) is unaware of what a racket "affordable housing" is in California right now.



Mission Viejo was built as affordable housing for residents of Orange County in the 1960s. It was a planned community. Unfortunately, the plans have been shown to lack several features now known to be important. There was not enough room for commercial development that would cut down on commuter traffic. What little we had has been eroded over the years by city council members supported by developers. The "affordable housing" law firms are also supported by developers.

The racket is this. The legislature keeps upping the ante of how much affordable housing each community must provide. Developers are rich and powerful enough to fend off efforts to locate such affordable housing in new communities like Ladera Ranch with its \$900,000 homes on postage-stamp lots. Older, built-out communities, like Mission Viejo, have no room to spare, but the remaining commercial zoned parcels are coveted by developers.

The law firms sue or threaten to sue, and the city councils cave in. We lose what little commercial space we have. The city loses sales tax revenue and traffic gets worse. Our streets were designed for traffic volumes now greatly exceeded.



High-density housing means big profits and more traffic.

John Paul Ledesma is the only incumbent council candidate running this year who is trying to defend the city from the rapacious developers and their phony "public interest" law firm allies. I suspect Mr. Merriam knows this. It's no big secret, except from voters.

Michael T Kennedy, M.D.
Mission Viejo
Former member, Planning and Transportation Commission

MANAGING CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS IN MISSION VIEJO



On the eve of awarding a construction contract for the expansion of the Norman P. Murray Community and Senior Center, several issues confront our council. To begin the discussion, the original budget was in the \$6.5-million range, which would have included \$3 million from the state and approximately \$3.5 million from Mission Viejo. Bids received came in at approximately \$8.5 million or \$2 million higher than the budgeted figure. The higher number is approximately 25 percent to 30 percent more than estimates and cannot be explained entirely on material cost increases alone. Time constraints due to deadlines with the state may prevent a re-bid process.



Based on the history of past construction contracts, our city has a poor record of managing contracts of projects coming in on or under budget. The community center expansion will require a serious review to ensure it stays within budget. All change orders by the city or the contractor will require review. All material cost changes, labor costs and architectural changes will need to be analyzed selectively so that the contract comes in on budget. A design review board comprised of city personnel and citizens should be designated to control costs and report to the council any changes that would affect costs. Cost containment should be designated from the beginning of the contract as a major goal and enforced throughout the contract by judicious monitoring.

Change orders during construction contracts are a major source of cost increases. When our city makes a change in the middle of construction, it affects costs, slows construction and results in increased burdens passed through to the taxpayer. Once the design is cast in stone, change orders should not be tolerated or accepted during the course of construction. Any change should require council approval, and cost containment should be reviewed periodically.

Let's hope that the community center expansion can be the one contract that stays within the budget and does not become a burden to the taxpayer. Continual cost increases and contract cost overruns will do little to inspire confidence in our city's ability to manage construction contracts. We must succeed in managing contracts within the designated dollar figures for the contract and make sure our citizens are not penalized by poor management.

James Edward Woodin
<http://www.woodin4mv.org>
Mission Viejo

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MISINFORMATION IS OFTEN REPEATED

(Continued from page 4)

The Or. Co. Register continues to print lies about the "affordable housing" issues in Mission Viejo. It recently had a letter alleging that "firemen, police officers, nurses, teachers, " etc., are eligible for the subsidized housing being demanded in Mission Viejo by developers and "public interest" law firms ("Silly definition of success," letters, Sept. 20). The letter writer gets away with it by using the term "affordable housing" without specifying that he means the sort of subsidized housing in the dispute. There are income caps for eligibility to occupy this housing. I know that much of the public is ignorant of these facts, but you should not be.

1 person	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Orange County, CA PMSA FY 2005 MFI: 75700 30% OF MEIAN							
4900	26750	28550	30400	16150	18450	20750	23050
VERY LOW INCOME							
26900	30700	34550	38400	41450	44550		
47600	50700	LOW-INCOME					
43000	49150	55300	61450	66350	71250	7	
6200	81100						

Why do you allow this misinformation to be repeated?
 These are the figures from the HUD site. The columns are for 1 to 8 people. A family of four would have to have an income of \$61,450 or less to qualify for any support. There are probably a few teachers who are single who might qualify, although not for the Section 8 projects that are the subject of dispute. Please print the truth. It is hard enough to resist the developers.

Michael Kennedy, M.D.
 Mission Viejo
 Former member, Housing and Transportation Commission

OPEN LETTER TO POLICE SERVICES FOLLOW THE MOTTO OF SERVE AND PROTECT

Please realize I have only what was related to me by an upset homeowner to go by, but when one of my homeowners stops me to tell me of her experience and is as adamant about the facts as this lady was, I have to ask what happened.

On Mon., Sept. 18, 8:30 a.m., as I was walking my dog, a female homeowner reported to me that she had called the police twice over the weekend regarding her neighbors and was disappointed in the response of the officers who arrived.

The residents at a nearby condo (and about 40 of their best friends) were having a birthday party that began on Saturday and lasted until after 4:00 Sunday morning. From her upstairs bedroom window, she can see and hear what goes on below her in the courtyard. Being quite close together, all sounds reverberate between the buildings, making our rule of no parties a necessity.

When the officer(s) arrived, they asked what was going on. Given that it was 11:52 p.m., I'm surprised they had to ask. The residents/partygoers told the officers they were having a birthday party and went inside to bring out the 16-year-old male honoree. In addition, yes, alcohol was being served. This area is a small, grassy quadrant, and the guests were all over outside in the common area, plus the males from the party were using the landscaping alongside the next condo as a urinal!

The officers had no more than left when the disturbance started up again. The resident reporting the incident and her family were deprived of their sleep Saturday night while these irresponsible residents and their guests were allowed to continue to disrupt several families. Many of them get up early on Sunday mornings for church. I realize your officers may have seen things differently, but when she called the

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police back at 2:06 a.m., she was told they had already been out there. They said she would have to sign a complaint and that they would not come out again.

She explained to the woman dispatcher when she called back that being in very close proximity to the residents she was reporting, she was afraid of signing a complaint against them for fear of retaliation.

I have no way of knowing exactly what was said or went on, nor, of course, do you. My primary concern is that this woman called twice regarding an incident that was clearly the responsibility of code enforcement, and the police should have closed this party down with the first call at 11:51 p.m. Why this party was allowed to continue until after 4 a.m. is a mystery to everyone.

What would you have wanted a citizen to do when they have done all they can do to work with your department and they are ignored? I tell my residents all the time to use the services that are available to them to resolve non-compliant police issues; it is the only way the police will realize they have a problem. When we have our Neighborhood Watch programs, residents are advised of the same thing – call when they need assistance. However, when they do call and there is no resolution, we all wonder why we are paying for services they are not receiving. (As a side note, our HOA is currently out to bid for a new security service because the quality of service we were being provided is no longer worth paying for.)

We contract with a security service eight hours a day, seven days a week, in an effort to enforce the rules of our HOA, but when the problem goes outside the normal rules and regulations, residents are encouraged to contact our police dept. This disturbance was outside of the hours and scope of our security, and police services were required.

Our homeowners complain that calling the police is a waste of time. I constantly tell them the police WILL do something, and residents just have to contact them. However, when they do, they have learned the police will handle the situation with less than a lack of regard for the reporting citizen's complaint. No one should have to put up with disrespectful, inconsiderate

neighbors, and the police should have reacted accordingly and closed down this party the first time they were dispatched. There should have been no need to a second call or request to sign a complaint. Following is information copied directly from the dispatch records.

9/17/2006 2:06:57 AM 9/17/2006 3:15 AM DISTURBANCE-MUSIC OR PARTY VIA PERA
9/16/2006 11:51:10 PM 9/16/2006 11:52:08 PM DISTURBANCE-MUSIC OR PARTY VIA PERA

Please comment, as I have promised an answer for this homeowner and others in the same situation. They deserve to know why the law was not enforced and why the resident was told the officers would not come back out when, in fact, they did but nothing was done. Situations such as this do nothing but create ill will between homeowners and the police. This is not something I relish having to deal with; I WANT our homeowners to feel they can depend upon our police services and use them whenever they feel they are needed. After all, your motto is to "Serve and protect."

I appreciate our police and have always had a high regard for the services they provide. I also work very hard at creating the same sense of awareness by our homeowners. I look forward to your response and wish to make you aware it will be published in our HOA newsletter.

Kathy Miramontes, president
Aliso Villas Condominium Association
Mission Viejo

As a side note, I was contacted again by the homeowner about this incident on Monday. I informed her I had written a letter to the police dept. and spoken to Lt. Bernardi and Sgt. Meyer. I said Sgt. Meyer would be calling her. The officers have both apologized for the way in which this situation was handled and will look into it so that in the future this type of situation can be avoided.

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CANDIDATE FORUM AFFORDABLE HOUSING TOPS LIST

As announced last week, the blog is hosting a forum for Mission Viejo City Council candidates. When Carl Schulthess, the blog's founder, conceived of the Mission Viejo Buzz, he envisioned it would host an online candidate forum prior to the city election.

Readers responded during the past week by suggesting questions, and the first topic will be affordable housing. The blog will ask all 10 candidates the same question and publish all their responses next week. Answers will be limited to 60 words per candidate.



Forum question for the week: How would you resolve the state's goal for adding affordable housing units in Mission Viejo?

Readers should continue suggesting questions for coming weeks. Blogfather Carl thanks all those who are participating.

Community members got a rare glimpse of the phantom council candidate, Justin McCusker, this week. He attended the Saddleback Republican Assembly's Sept. 21 meeting to ask for the group's endorsement. After hearing McCusker's speech, one person reacted afterward to his arrogance and self-proclaimed expertise by saying, "He looks, talks and acts like Neidermeyer in "Animal House." Justin "Neidermeyer" McCusker failed to get an endorsement from the SRA, which instead endorsed Jim Woodin, council incum-



bent John Paul Ledesma and Michael Ferrall.

Also vying for and failing to get the SRA endorsement on Thursday was Councilman Lance MacLean, who had the group's support in 2002. One audience member during the meeting pointed to the inconsistency between MacLean's votes during the past four years and his responses to the 2006 SRA questionnaire. MacLean stated on the questionnaire he's anti-tax, but he supported taxation of Mission Viejo residents in 2004 by putting Measure K on the ballot. When asked about the inconsistency, MacLean said, essentially, no no no, you don't understand. He said he merely wanted to give residents the OPPORTUNITY to tax themselves because he's such a fair-minded politician.

Surrre Lance, we believe you.

Not to give undue reference to the movie industry this week, but it's relevant to recall a dialogue from "O Brother, Where Art Thou." With new MacLean running against old MacLean, a scene about a floundering politician, Pappy O'Daniel, comes to mind.

Pappy O'Daniel: "We need a shot in the arm. You hear me boys? In the bleep-damn arm! If the election were tomorrow, that son of a bitch Stokes would win it in a walk!"

Junior O'Daniel: "Well, he's the reform candidate, Daddy."

Pappy O'Daniel: "Yeah."

Junior O'Daniel: "A lot of people like that reform. Maybe we should get us some."

Pappy O'Daniel: "I'll reform you, you soft-headed son of a bitch. How we gonna run reform when we're the damn incumbent? Is that the best idea you boys can come up with? Reform?! ... That's it! You may as well start drafting my concession speech right now."

If Pappy in the movie could rely on voters' faulty memory, perhaps he could win in a walk as MacLean hopes to do. MacLean had to re-



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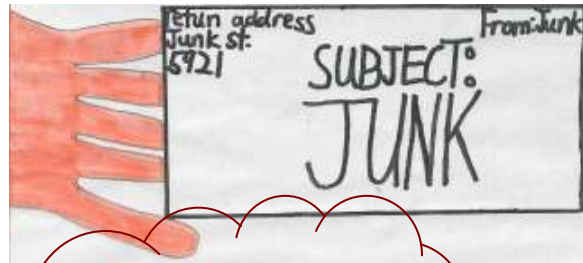
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wise history at Thursday's SRA meeting to say he in 2002 hadn't implied he would fire then-City Manager Dan Joseph. MacLean stated, "I said in 2002 that I would like to work with Dan Joseph and then decide [whether or not to fire him]." If MacLean had said that, he would have received no support from any activist group and certainly not the SRA. Residents correctly remember that MacLean additionally claimed in 2002 that he would sell Dan's \$6,000 desk on eBay and donate the proceeds to charity. After MacLean was safely seated on the council after the 2002 election, he said he'd been joking about selling the desk. He apparently was joking back then about being anti-tax, anti-special interest, anti-redevelopment and anti-big government. The result of the joke on voters is the growing number of residents who are anti-MacLean.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
The Or. Co. Board of Supervisors in August allocated \$25,000 for a so-called investigation of Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley's performance during the Capo school district recall. Community members who closely watched the recall said the investigation was a whitewash. One parent said, "Kelley broke laws and influenced the outcome of an election, and his bosses gave him a slap on the wrist." As an ironic outcome, some of the recall proponents have joined forces with the Republican good-'ol'-boy power club to get party support for their three reform candidates. To remain friendly with the lobbyist-run power club, one of the recall faction groups came up with a statement accepting the investigation. Initially, the whole recall effort was to oust a bunch of trustees who put aside their principles to gain power in the Flemingdom. Apparently, that was a long time ago.



The Joke's on YOU Lance!



LOOK
IT'S A CAMPAIGN
LETTER FROM THE
INCUMBENTS!
HAHAHAHAHAHA!

The End