



MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

Keeping the California Promise

Week of October 1, 2006

The Patriot Post Founders' Quote Daily

"If men of wisdom and knowledge, of moderation and temperance, of patience, fortitude and perseverance, of sobriety and true republican simplicity of manners, of zeal for the honour of the Supreme Being and the welfare of the commonwealth; if men possessed of these other excellent qualities are chosen to fill the seats of government, we may expect that our affairs will rest on a solid and permanent foundation."

-- Samuel Adams (letter to Elbridge Gerry, 27 November 1780)

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FOLLOW THE MONEY **STAFF EDITORIAL**



Last week's exposé about Orange County's lobbyists prompted readers to ask for more information.

One blog reader responded, "I didn't know about this. The blog needs to explain the connection between county lobbyists and Mission Viejo city politics."

Voters remember the city election of 2002 when Sherri Butterfield and Susan Withrow lost their re-election bids by a wide margin. One of the players was John Lewis, a lobbyist from Orange, who wanted his longtime buddy Frank Ury to replace one of the gals. As a surprise to almost everyone, Ury abruptly moved to Northern California during the summer, and he didn't return to Mission Viejo until after the November 2002 election. When Ury left town, an activist in the Sierra neighborhood recruited Trish Kelley.

Lewis lined up donors in 2002, mostly from San Diego County, who paid for attack mailers against Butterfield and Withrow. Lewis also paid for mailers supporting Trish Kelley, John Paul Ledesma and Lance MacLean. While Lewis' mailers had little impact in the landslide victory for Kelley, Ledesma and

MacLean, he took credit countywide, claiming his political genius caused the upset victory. Residents might not remember Lewis, but his mailers came from "Friends of Mission Viejo." The donors were actually Friends of John Lewis.

After the election, Kelley, Ledesma and MacLean appeared to ignore Lewis' requests for special favors. When Lewis' favorite ambulance company failed to get the city contract, he sat in the audience – his face beet-red – and glared at council members who voted against his client.

In the 2004 city campaign, Lewis was back and so was Frank Ury. Lewis again lined up donors, and Ury ran on a phony promise he would "get all the power lines buried" in Mission Viejo. Voters received another deluge of mailers funded by out-of-town donors, "Friends of Mission Viejo." Ury won a spot on the council, but he was Lewis' lone vote. Ury gradually became unpopular or untrustworthy among the other four council members, and no one would second his motions.

In the election this November, Lewis is backing Justin McCusker, a Mission Viejo resident of three years who is virtually unknown in the city. Lewis is also helping Diane Greenwood, as he needs three votes on the council to enrich his clients. Lewis' agenda includes much more than an ambulance contract. He also represents an independent power provider and, thus, Greenwood has played a role in

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

trashing Southern California Edison. Lewis' vision is to "make Mission Viejo the next Irvine" – a sprawling city that takes in the development of the ranch as well as fledgling communities of Ladera Ranch and Las Flores.



Lewis is among three powerful lobbyists in Orange County who have gained an astounding level of control in the Orange County Republican Party. As an example, Lewis' pup Justin McCusker got the unanimous vote of the county party's endorsing committee. With 10 Republicans running for Mission Viejo City Council, most residents would likely place McCusker at or near the bottom – if they even knew him. The other two lobbyists at the county level are Scott Baugh (chairman of the Orange County Republican Party) and Curt Pringle (Anaheim mayor). As another example of the lobbyist influence in Mission Viejo, Pringle sat in the council chambers in support of his public relations client, UDR/Pacific, while the council voted 4-1 (Reavis dissenting) to pass his client's high-density housing/affordable housing project on east Los Alisos (former Kmart site). The project had no benefit to the community, no community support, and a group of residents worked against it, gathering approximately 3,000 signatures on a petition to stop it.

While the 2002 rejection of Butterfield and Withrow may have brought voters the satisfaction of dumping the old queens, their replacements – Kelley and MacLean – are just as bad. Voters must rally again if they want to preserve their city, including its Master Plan, as both the incumbents and the lobbyists are set to change it dramatically. While Kelley and MacLean have misrepresented the residents on nearly every major issue, it could get worse. The lobbyist's choice – Diane Greenwood and Justin McCusker – are likely to benefit from out-of-town money. Without the lobbyist's influence,



Greenwood lacks support, and McCusker isn't in the ball game.

Voters should be on high alert

for another mailing from John Lewis. While "Friends of Mission Viejo" may not be the name this year, the hit pieces in 2002 and 2004 were signed by the same resident, who is now campaigning for Diane Greenwood.

CITY CAMPAIGN UPDATE STAFF EDITORIAL



It was another busy week for Diane Greenwood's campaign manager, who continues to dig through 30, 40 and 50 years in his attempt to smear other council candidates. Despite his effort, the controversy around Greenwood was a lot more interesting.

Greenwood managed to get herself endorsed by a pro-abortion group, National Women's Political Caucus of Orange County. A city council candidate flaunting her pro-abortion stance to troll for votes appears desperate when most other candidates are focused on city issues. Greenwood seems to lack a platform beyond the power line issue that died two years ago. Her claims about "quality of life" conflict with her dream of putting affordable apartments on top of retail stores at La Paz and Marguerite. Residents have decried any such plan, based in part on other Mission Viejo neighborhoods where high-density housing contributes to crime and decline.

Greenwood's endorsement from NWPC additionally points to the hypocrisy of her supporters, including Frank Ury and her campaign manager, who claim to be model social conservatives. Diane's campaign manager has for months touted her as a "conservative Democrat," which is inconsistent with the endorsement. Given other conflicting descriptions, Diane is a Democrat, Republican, pro-life and pro-abortion candidate who has Ury's support unless the firemen ask her about it. As another demonstration of deceit during the week prior, Greenwood attempted to charge \$100/person to attend her fundraiser that was actually another political candidate's free party. The city's real political news of the week



(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

developed during a meeting where Diane was appropriately absent. When the Saddleback Republican Assembly met on Sept. 21, its members endorsed council candidates Jim Woodin, Councilman John Paul Ledesma and Michael Ferrall in one vote. With eight candidates vying for three endorsements, one would at least expect some pushing and shoving.

At the beginning of the SRA meeting, an uninvited Greenwood promoter was attempting to distribute documents. An SRA member reported, "She was trying to give people copies of emails that were of no interest to anyone. The only excitement of the evening was someone tearing up the copies and handing them back to her."



The documents may be part of the negative campaign orchestrated by Ury in his effort to get Greenwood and Justin McCusker on the council. Greenwood's campaign manager has for weeks been sending daily email blasts against Greenwood's opponents. A recipient said, "It's nasty, but we're dealing with deviant personalities, so this isn't a surprise. We're getting emails with all the usual attacks they make during council meetings."



Based on the vote at the Sept. 21 meeting, SRA members were undaunted by the distraction.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN MISSION VIEJO

I've been involved for the past two years in the affordable housing issues of our city, and I've spoken before the council and the Planning and Transportation Commission on this issue, which is so important to our citizens. I was one of the sponsors of the Citizens Initiative, submitted to the council on Dec. 15, 2005. If

passed by the electorate in Mission Viejo, it will give the citizens the choice of whether or not to rezone commercial property to residential or mixed use. If I am elected to the council, the initiative will be placed on the council agenda for approval to be placed before the voters as a first priority of business.

The citizens of Mission Viejo do not want high-density housing in commercial zones, and they don't want overlays (residential on top of commercial) in commercial or mixed-use zones. The solution to the affordable housing deficiency in Mission Viejo lies in the after-market or resale market. There is no buildable land in Mission Viejo for stand-alone housing and only several small parcels of undeveloped commercial land left. Commercial zoning is needed for future growth and jobs for our citizens and to support the tax base. Apartment conversions, townhouse updates, CDA dollars spent on assisting needy new buyers who qualify (such as teachers, police and veterans and residents similar to the city's current plan of assistance for home improvements for widows, etc.) are all viable alternatives to high-density housing. The state only allows approximately 36 percent to 40 percent credit on updates instead of one-for-one as with high-density. It does require refurbishment of more units to make the state quotas, but it is one of the only viable alternatives in a built-out city.

Let's hope in the future that a realistic approach is taken to the affordable housing issue in a built-out market. As such, the principle solution lies in updating our homes, condominiums, and townhomes and making them accessible on a price basis by conversions. There is also a side benefit. When people have a chance to buy and own a house that was previously only rented, they now become owners. The pride of ownership gives our city a very vital and interested citizenry.

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

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

The Buzz

September 26, 2006



At one of the Back-To-School events this week, a friend of Councilwoman Trish Kelley claimed Trish had been threatened by another council candidate. The friend of Kelley said, "She even has to have an escort to her car." What's the basis of this outrageous claim? If Kelley were actually threatened, where's the police report? Trish either needs to tell the public about this or admit it was all in her head.



Who is supporting Kelley besides her PTA chums? The ire of Capo parents at Kelley should be off the charts. Kelley touted her PTA "accomplishments" and fawned over former Supt. James Fleming while Capo schools declined with leaking, smelly, rodent-infested portables. Newhart Middle School – the city's only trailer park – should be razed. While Kelley was jointly on the PTA and council, a fortune in Mission Viejo tax money was diverted into other cities and the Taj Mahal administration building in San Juan Capistrano. Will the PTA moms again put all their chips on Ms. Clueless in Mission Viejo?



Another group Ms. Kelley is courting is the city's seniors. Kelley promised them a transportation program and the completion of the community center expansion. After Kelley's four years on the council, there's no senior transportation program, and the \$3-million expansion has turned into a \$10-million joke before breaking ground.



One former Saddleback Republican Assembly member continued to be disgruntled over SRA's endorsement of council candidates Jim

Woodin, John Paul Ledesma and Michael Ferrall. The former member, who apparently is campaigning for Diane Greenwood, sent fiery emails to club members saying the club had been "hijacked." Perhaps Ms. Greenwood's fan club of three people should form their own organization. It could be called N.O.P.E. – Negative **Can you say... Sour Grapes!** On Practically Everything.



The Sept. 25 Planning Commission agenda included several items about parking and other neighborhood problems. A common complaint among homeowners revolves around high-density housing projects – illegally parked cars, bad neighbors, noise, trash, "scary-looking people," – spilling over into neighborhoods of single-family homes. No one who complained about the mess seemed to get answers, satisfaction or even a sense that anyone cared about declining areas of town. Would any of them like a Trish Kelley or a Lance MacLean sign for their yard? Despite all the glowing claims of incumbents, things have definitely gotten worse. The council majority – which includes Kelley and MacLean – is causing new problems by approving high-density housing projects that contribute to parking problems, trash, noise, crime and grief for those who live nearby.



One Neighborhoods Way To Solve Their Parking Problems—Tandem Parking! Approved by the City Council AND Transportation Commission !



A city hall insider sent an ominous message, "The council has been deciding things in closed session that will be revealed after the election. They're keeping a lid on it, but the city is going to change dramatically, and it has to do with the affordable housing lawsuit, among other things."



Voters will have only one opportunity – Novem-

**FIRST FORUM,
CITY COUNCIL
CANDIDATES**

The blog recently asked readers to suggest questions for council candidates to answer. The first question went out this week, but not every candidate received it in a timely manner. One candidate's email address listed in city documents was incorrect.

In order to make the forum equally available to all who wish to participate, the deadline for candidates to respond has been moved to Mon., Oct. 2.

Thank you to all the readers who emailed great questions. Each one will be given consideration in the ongoing forum. Please continue to suggest additional questions or topics for discussion.

Thanks to all readers for their patience and to candidates who promptly responded to the first question. The results will be published in the next edition, along with the question for the following week.

ber 7 – to dump the incumbents who continue to sell out the residents.

*** The End ***