



"Accountability"
The Government Watchdog

**IF YOU'RE NOT
OUTRAGED
YOU'RE NOT PAYING
ATTENTION**

Vanguard
News Service Vol V
Week of May 16, 2010
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BORROW OUR WAY OUT OF DEBT

Vanguardians Purpose: To Inform, Educate, & Motivate for Involvement, Engagement & Advocacy



Iran - December 27, 2009: Neda Agha Solan and three others are killed as Iranian Troops shoot protesters of the election results.

Glendale - March 15, 2009: Hundreds of protesters march on city hall complaining of high electricity rates and unfair utility burden on the poor.

Bangkok - May 13, 2010: Journalist covering protesters who demand immediate elections is shot by Thai Troops. Many others killed and injured.

Glendale - May 13, 2010: Mayor Ara Najarian, during GWP budget discussion, blasts utility rate protesters who marched around city hall in protest of high rates. Najarian labeled their protest as illegitimate. No deaths reported, but Democracy severely wounded.

Glendale -- Fire Battalion Chief saves taxpayer money by only having his Yukon SUV detailed with the Gold treatment for \$95 when he could have had the Platinum for more.

Glendale – Taxpayers pay \$18 to mail tax returns for a family on assistance.

Glendale – Taxpayers foot Damon’s catering bill for firemen at station 21. It was only \$100. The Fire Chief spent \$394.83 of taxpayer money for treats from Porto’s plus \$1009 for Honey baked ham.

Glendale -- Budget Task Force identified a number of significant taxpayer savings starting with taking away 400 city employee credit cards... they are called procurement or P-Cards to make them sound official...which would represent a savings of

- \$ 6 million per year. Cross training employees to do other jobs would represent a savings of
- \$ 2 million a year. Changing Fire Department staffing levels from constant to demand would save
- \$10 million a year.

Less significant savings would come from

- ✓ cancelling all travel;
- ✓ having employees buy their own food, beverages and snacks;
- ✓ have employees pay for their own licenses and certifications along with the CEUs and CLUs;
- ✓ cancelling overtime compensation for all managers;
- ✓ have employees pay 50% of their pension and healthcare contributions;
- ✓ cancelling all take home vehicles;
- ✓ cancelling all COLA increases. (Social Security recipients received no COLA for two years)

The Task Force located these savings without resorting to layoffs or furloughs or reducing services to the public.. The Task Force recommends filing for chapter 9 Federal Bankruptcy if employee unions don't wish to negotiate these changes.

Luna Playhouse, 3706 San Fernando Rd., presents the Sunshine Boys on Saturdays and Sundays in May and Aunt Dan and Lemon on Thursdays and Fridays in May. Call 818 500 7200 for tickets and information. www.lunaplayhouse.org

Is your electric provided Glendale Water & Power (GWP)? Has the power been cut off at your home? Do you know others like friends, family or neighbors who have had their utilities shut off for failure to keep the bills current? Let Vanguard know your story. We need to create public awareness of this growing problem. You are not alone..

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1 COMMENTARY

You may agree or disagree with the views below. Feel free to comment on them. The commentaries do not necessarily reflect the position of Vanguardians

From the Publisher...CHANGE ARROGANCE



WHICH CAME FIRST? THE POLITICIAN OR MANAGEMENT?

DISTRACTION AND MISDIRECTION...the magicians tools to keep your eyes where they won't see the manipulations. We blame poor City Manager Jim Starbird for the woes of the City. He only suggested that the Council change the pension program to make it more generous; and they agreed. He only suggested that there was a need for more middle management; and Council agreed. When he wanted to increase the amount he could spend without Council approval to \$100,000 they said, 'No'. They were paying attention.

The Council affirmed Starbird's wishes, "Let's go for 4-year employee labor contracts and a two year budget and a 10-year CIP..." After all he would need more staff if these items were on an annual basis.

The taxpayers bought a lot of open space preventing 1500 taxpaying homes from being built.

Rockhaven not only cost the taxpayers \$10 million to date and counting but there still is no use for it. The taxpayers lost the tax base.

The Neon Museum has already cost the taxpayers \$4 million and the City has refused to share the financial documents with the taxpayers.

The City has refused to share ALL the information about who received performance bonuses and how much they were. Were those funds used to reward people for keeping their mouths shut? For making sure that major political contributions were paid over to politicians? We do know that a political campaign manager was 'comped' for the State of the City luncheon at the behest of the former Mayor. Taxpayer dollars for a cheap politician who wouldn't dip into his own pocket for \$50 bucks.

Most recently the City Manager approved 400 credit cards for City employees that could circumvent the purchasing department for the toys they wanted. To make it worse, the purchases are approved often by the purchaser. Those purchases put the taxpayer on mark for \$6 million a year. How much of that is for a legitimate purpose and how much to circumvent purchasing? How much such as a \$428 purchase from the Café Inn by Management Services is an excuse to rip off taxpayers?

Believe me YOU have paid for the best meals in the finest restaurants (although the taxpayers did spring for a meal at BJs for Jim Starbird, Chief DePompa and cable TV personality Larry Zarian), the best resorts and car detailing. One executive flies home to Arizona on the taxpayer dime to 'inspect' city assets.

Come with me and review the records and see for yourself!

The City Council, the pols, give the City Manager everything he wants because he panders to them.

So, which came first?

BARRY ALLEN

PS: The only “special interest group” that gets zip, nada, zilch is the taxpayers.

PPS: Today many city employees are looking at credit cards, perks and performance bonuses as entitlements.

Most people want the benefits of an accountable government but are afraid to work for accountability or to support those that do often because they fear retaliation or are the beneficiaries of the largesse or corruption of government



LAUREL MILLER IS OFF THIS WEEK

COMMENTARY

VROOM! YOUR LIFE ON THE LINE A HOLLYWOOD ACTION MOVIE SCRIPT



Scene I

A city councilman is finishing a late lunch with a developer who's been quite generous with the cocktails. The councilman leaves the Irish Pub with a full belly and a high alcohol content running through his veins. He runs his car into a tree, the air-bags deploy, and he is knocked unconscious. It gets worse. He has a stroke.

Scene II

Passersby near the scene pick up their cell phones and call 911. The operator identifies their location from the caller's GPS and directs the call to the nearest paramedic. Despite the traffic congestion, the Motorcycle EMS is on the scene within a minute providing some urgent life-saving aid, and three minutes later the four-wheel EMS unit arrives. The patient has already received critical assistance, the nearest hospital with an emergency room and available staff has been contacted. They have already identified the patient from electronic medical records and are aware of other pre-existing conditions that may impact their approach to the patient. The patient is transported to a Glendale Hospital for treatment in less than ten minutes. The patient has a full recovery.

Scene III



The Glendale Motorcycle Paramedic Unit members are standing at attention next to their shiny Harley-Davidson motorcycles in front of city hall. They are wearing their finest uniforms and are ready to receive an important award. The television cameras are there as well as a cadre of dignitaries from the Governor, the County Supervisor who happens to live in the city, and former mayors. They are there to commend the best life-saving record of any EMS unit in California. The Glendale EMS regularly arrives within 90 seconds after the 911 call is made to this emergency unit, stroke patients arrive alive at the emergency room a whopping 60% of time. It's the best record in the nation and response times rival those of Miami-Dade Motorcycle EMS.

Scene IV

Study groups from other cities arrive at the Bob Hope Airport. They are ready for a conference held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Glendale on the most effective use of GPS/GIS technology in California. There, in the main ballroom, is a large display of the city's dynamic GIS system. The fire department, police, and critical resources are fully integrated into one of the nation's best emergency response systems. Not only is disaster preparedness incorporated into their GIS policy, all the city's essential assets have been included. If an essential water mains break during an earthquake, teams are there within minutes to stop the loss. If gas lines are broken, other teams are in place to correct the problem and prevent major fires. Damaged hospitals and clinics are identified. Emergency room doctors are contacted and crews sent to pick them up and take them to triage centers.

Scene V

As part of their demonstration, volunteers show their Electronic Medical Record (EMR) code to emergency responders who access them via the internet and know immediately the essential medicines these patients need. Instead of the chaos we saw during the Katrina disaster, we see order and effective use of resources. Residents that were home-bound have already been identified. Trained volunteers in their neighborhood are already on their way to help. Worried parents know where their children are and all of them know the destination where they should assemble.

Scene VI

We are at a city council meeting where the council chambers are full. A tax-payer association will be giving an award to the city council on the most effective use of taxpayers' money.

Scene VII

You wake up. It has all been a dream. You walk up to the kitchen to pour yourself some coffee only to find the notice from the city's public works department. They've increased your rates once again. The city is short on funds. You are enraged. You pick up the phone to give them a piece of your mind, but you have a heart attack instead. You manage to call 911, but no one shows up for more than four minutes. As you feel the pain shoot down your arm, you think of Miami-Dade County. You start fading into unconsciousness. Will the paramedics arrive in time? You hear an approaching faint siren in the distance. HM

THIRTEEN

Why is it that the same people who continue their assault on proposition 13 are often the same bureaucrats at the top of the bureaucratic food chain?

I've sat at the Glendale city council chambers and listened repeatedly as Jim Starbird, the city manager, blamed proposition 13 for Glendale's financial woes. I have also sat in those chambers, stunned, as former Police Chief Randy Adams hammered proposition 13 for what he perceived as insufficient city revenues to fund his ineffective expansion. I knew that the city council had gifted police and fire with major pay and pension benefits, yet there he was, Randy Adams, immersing himself in politics, sucking more taxpayer money for himself, then blasting the passage of proposition 13.

To me, what is so cynical about those remarks is the sheer depravity of that delivery. Chief Randy Adams got his cushy Glendale job after coming from a much smaller city – Simi Valley, yet started in Glendale earning substantially more than the Glendale Police Chief he was replacing. Yet, Chief Siverling had the experience of running a much larger police force. What's more cynical than to complain about not getting more while the pension benefits awarded to all uniformed and sworn personnel amounted to a pension gift of at least one million dollars to each of them?

Position Title	Gross 2001	Gross 2006	Gross 2009	Actual % increase	If CPI Salary	Over CPI
City Manager	185,820	231,770	\$251,196	35	\$225,102	\$26,094
Assistant City Manager	148,689	199,518	\$209,148	41	\$180,122	\$29,026
City Attorney	164,660	204,870	\$229,620	39	\$199,469	\$30,151
Director of GWP	149,512	205,445	\$230,268	54	\$181,119	\$49,149
Police Chief	149,150	212,442	\$218,989	47	\$180,680	\$38,309
Fire Chief	141,532	207,399	\$214,223	51	\$171,452	\$42,771
By Name						
Harold Scoggins	118,148	182,591	\$214,223	81		
Ron DePompa	124,441	178,351	\$218,989	76		

Recession in America? Not according to the pay city executives get.

The history of payroll abuse by some city employees is not just incomprehensible to a reasonable mind, it is disastrous to city finances. For the past ten years low-level employees can tack on so much overtime pay that they earn as much as an

experienced surgeon of an emergency hospital. But that doesn't stop many from claiming that their compensation could be so much fairer with a trumped up "competitive" pay. If only they could get proposition 13 out of the way.

It is not as if these employees with the mantle of public servants didn't know of the circumstances that led to proposition 13. Many home owners, especially the elderly on fixed incomes were losing their homes. As home values increased, so did their taxes. People on fixed incomes were losing their homes but these bureaucrats would not give a damn. But don't expect any life-long bureaucrat to imagine that those circumstances bear relevance to them. Today, we could have thousands of Glendale rate payers losing their electric service, but these bureaucrats scoff at their plight. It seems as if to most career bureaucrats tax-payers are the ultimate suckers.

Find the city budget trends if you can. There you'll find a substantial and relentless increase in the city's payroll year after year. No economic downturn slows it down. Some city departments have doubled their payroll expenses in the last ten years. Many city employees with just a high school education and the backing of strong public employee union make on their second year on the job as much money as a first-year medical doctor at a Kaiser hospital. But these city employees don't have the \$250,000 student loan to pay back, or the many, many years of grinding, competitive, college study.

To blame proposition 13 while pocketing our money, they need the essential element of chutzpah ingrained in their bloated perception of self-worth. When the Glendale Managers' Association was formed, I could not comprehend how they could find a rationale for forming such a group. They are the managers, for God's sake. To whom would they address their grievances? Would they go on strike? Would they get paid on their own performance or on some vague compatible pay? Would they push to hire more colleagues and work less? Would they try to pool their money and buy themselves a city council candidate?

The awful truth is that you can choose nearly all of the above. It's brazen plunder. Top city managers protected by Civil Service rules? Unbelievable! They increased their numbers by 40% these past ten years, so as a result, are much less productive. Yet they still want to be paid on what other managers at other cities make? Why? Because their job titles sound the same? The point is that we have council members so clueless about the real world that they drink that bromide blindly. The employee unions know it. They don't want performance measures, but cry all the time about not having enough pay. I think they must have the city council members over a barrel. These city employee unions must be using knowledge of councilmen wrongdoing as leverage. Those employee benefits accepted by councilmen go beyond leadership malpractice. The pay and benefits are so excessive that nothing else makes sense. The portrayal by Glendale councilmen that the pension benefits were justifiable, clearly demonstrate their spectacular dishonesty with the public.

So, does it matter to them if taxpayers are struggling? No. Does it matter if taxpayers are unemployed? No. This is the age of the sociopath/bureaucrat who's concocted a self-serving, corrupt political arrangement aimed at their own financial benefit. It doesn't matter if this economy hit the skids and the taxpayers landed on their face with sudden impact. If they can't suck more money out of property taxes, they'll do it from the city-run utility and other fee increases.

Well, I'd like to confront the next brazen bureaucrat aiming for the demise of proposition 13 with Dirty Harry's words. Through clenched teeth, "Do you feel lucky? Well, do ya punk? [Go ahead, make my day!](#)" HM

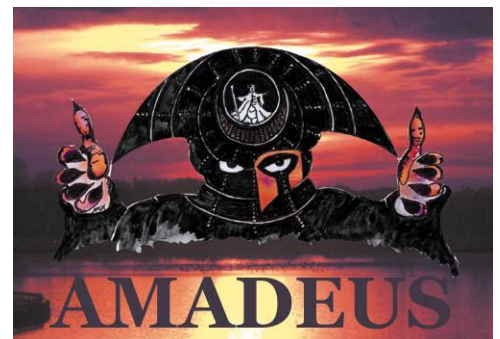
AMADEUS IN GLENDALE – "CONFUTATIS, MALEDICTIS"

Scene from the original Academy Award winning movie:

Jeffrey Jones as Emperor Joseph II of Austria. After listening to the composition by Antonio Salieri, he stands up, pauses, looks around at his subjects sitting before him and pronounces to everyone listening: "I declare, that henceforth, this composition shall be known as the finest music ever written."

Modernized Scene:

John Drayman as Emperor Joseph II of Glendale with his subjects sitting before him and after watching the GWP PowerPoint by Water-Meister Steiger. The emperor sits up, pauses to oversee the audience, breathes in to take in a lungful of intoxicating power and pronounces in perfect baritone pitch for the whole city to acknowledge: "Let it henceforth be known, that this presentation be distributed throughout the land, as the finest presentation ever written."



Original Screenplay: Peter Shaffer

Modernized version: Herbert Molano

HERBERT MOLANO



TAKE ACTION – GET INVOLVED – BE INFORMED – SHARE VANGUARD – VOLUNTEER

2 Shout Box

ED – Letters published do not necessarily express the opinion of Vanguardians, Vanguard News Service, the organization or Barry Allen. Names are used only when requested. Initials are used as there are people, believe it or not, who are concerned with retaliation or have issues before a legislative body. Letters will be published that are signed and are not hate oriented.



Barry, Herbert's and your commentaries last week were fantastic. I have long felt that Starbird has an agenda at variance with the city's citizens/ratepayers. Not only does the city need an elected controller, it also needs an elected mayor to replace Starbird. CW

3



Public



Information



"Just the facts"

The LA Daily News compiled the following databases from public records:

- Database: Madoff's California connection
- Database: L.A. County unemployment
- Database: State buildings for sale?
- Database: Major League Baseball draft
- Database: State parks closures list
- Database: L.A. Fire Department overtime
- Database: LAPD's 'Most Wanted'
- Database: FBI crime statistics
- Database: Stimulus money
- Database: Real estate fraud
- Database: LAPD settlements
- Database: San Fernando Valley crime
- Database: College football signings
- Database: LAPD's 'Missing Persons'
- Database: Death Row inmates
- Database: Nursing home ratings
- Database: LAUSD salaries
- Database: Foreclosures
- Database: City Hall salaries
- Database: California's licensed gun shops
- Database: Medical marijuana
- Database: Left-hand turn signals
- Database: Top students
- Database: Valley pothole map
- Database: Top ranked preps football athletes
- Database: Local opinions on 2008 elections
- Database: IRS stimulus checks
- Database: L.A. County Commissions

[Home Page of Open Government \(???\) in Glendale California](#)



Click to view the agenda [City Council](#) [Housing Authority](#) [Redevelopment Agency](#)
Meetings at City Hall (CH) are in the Council Chambers, 2nd Floor at 613 E Broadway.
Meetings at the Municipal Services Bldg. (MSB) are in room 105 at 633 E Broadway.
Meetings at the Perkins Bldg (PB) are in the Conference Room at 141 N Glendale Ave.
Phone numbers are in area code 818 unless noted otherwise

Please note: City Council Chambers will be closed from March 17 through May 31. All meetings that are normally held in Chambers will be moved to Room 105 of the Municipal Services Building, 633 E. Broadway.

Tuesday, May 18

2:30 Housing Authority – MSB 548-2060
 2:30 Redevelopment Agency – MSB 548-2005
 6:00 City Council – MSB 548-4844

Thursday, May 20

2:00 pm Arts & Culture Commission – MSB 548-2000
 5:00 pm Design Review Board #2 – MSB 548-2140

Wednesday, May 19

9:30 am Planning Hearing Officer-- MSB 548-2140
 5:00 pm Planning Commission – MSB 548-2140

Friday, May 21

2:30 pm Community Development Block Grant Committee – MSB 548-2060

4 *Vanguardians*

Vanguardians is establishing a City Wide Financial Oversight Committee to review public documents and report on them. If you have an interest, contact Barry Allen for details and a meeting.

Vanguardians, a local government accountability organization, **needs a volunteer construction project manager**. We sometimes find it necessary to review public documents such as construction plans, bid documents, work and change orders and want a chartered professional to prepare our reports.

FOR SALE.... a 1975 34' Silverton twin engine Cabin Cruiser located in Long Beach. Serious inquiries only. Revenue will be used for Vanguardians operations.

Vanguard is following the Charter Cable Lawsuit (2); the 5 GPD officers; Ovasapyan; Foothill Lumber; AIG (Gladys); they can be found at www.vanguardians.org


Get breaking News by signing up for an RSS feed at www.vanguardians.org

VANGUARDIANS needs your Continuing Financial Support

Please make checks payable to "VANGUARDIANS" Mail to: POB 11202 Glendale, CA 91226
 Your contributions are tax deductible. You will receive a receipt for income tax purposes
 You may donate online at www.vanguardians.org

- The [Ralph M Brown Act](#) that mandates legislative bodies to provide each of us an opportunity to speak and requires that agendas are posted and meetings open.
- The [California Public Records Act](#) (PRA) is the tool we use to get information about the operations of government.
- The [Political Reform Act of 1974](#) allows public access to the financial reports of public officials.

To become more involved in your community, to learn how to use these important tools, you can go online to www.vanguardians.org or call 818 243 1502

5  **the Insider** is written by city employees that care about the way the City is run. As they are concerned about retaliation, their identities are secret. Vanguard provides them the opportunity to have this forum. The comments are their own.



It was interesting to hear Mr. Wells state emphatically that the City never retaliates, especially seeing the series that you've had about Bear and Lee. The folks in charge are power hungry folks unaccustomed to being bound by rules. With budget situation so bleak, you can expect layoffs to be retaliatory based.

McFall appears to be on his taxpayer paid farewell tour stringing together meeting after meeting with his potential future consulting clients.

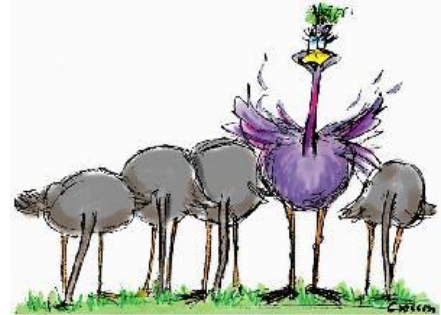
6 THE DENIZENS ON THE DAIS

Some men are born mediocre, some men achieve mediocrity, and some men have mediocrity thrust upon them. – Joseph Heller, Catch 22.

When did it begin?

Weaver*	Quintero	Najarian	Drayman*	Friedman
1997	2001	2005	2007	2009

* Drayman and Weaver terms end in April 2011



7 NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Vanguard of Davis reports: [Suddenly No Candidate Willing To Take Firefighter Money in June Election](#)

[CITIZENS GROUP SLAMS CITY COUNCIL, SETS TONE FOR RECALL ELECTION](#)

Roman Porter, the executive Director of the Fair Political Practices Commission, took a proactive approach after reading an expose in the [Sacramento Bee](#) about a government employee that was involved in an alleged conflict of interest case in the building and permit section.

"[The majority of current public pension programs](#) under the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) and most other public retirement systems in California are not financially sustainable," according to a memo jointly issued by the Alameda County City Managers Association and the Contra Costa County Public Managers Association.

The warnings from the usually discreet city managers are similar to those issued in the past year by their colleagues in other counties, including San Diego, Orange, Marin, Monterey and San Mateo. The city managers agree that public employee pensions have become too costly for taxpayers. It's a message elected officials need to hear.

Unfortunately, the reforms proposed by the city managers, who are themselves major beneficiaries of the pension system, don't go far enough. The managers recommend council members, during contract negotiations, roll back pension benefits for new hires and insist current employees pay more toward their retirement plans. That would help to a small extent, but would still leave most of the tremendous pension cost increase that was pushed onto taxpayers during the past decade.

[Sacramento grand jury issues dire financial warning to school districts](#) Sacramento County school officials may be ignoring mounting debt that could bankrupt districts or leave retirees without health benefits, according to a grand jury report released Monday.

Municipal Bankruptcy Bill Now Opposed by More Than 180 Cities another blow to Fire Unions

The number of cities that have sent AB 155 (Mendoza) opposition letters has grown to more than 180. A fundamental attack on local control, AB 155 undermines the ability of local governments to manage local financial resources and make decisions in the best long-term interests of city residents. This bill would require municipalities seeking federal bankruptcy protection to obtain approval from a state committee (the California Debt and Investment Advisory Committee) with no experience in federal bankruptcy law. Cities are facing unprecedented financial challenges, and can't afford state micromanagement of their fiscal affairs. [\[FULL STORY\]](#)

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