



"Accountability"
Glendale's Watchdog

GFD GETS THE BIRD FOR MCFALL

The four stages of Vanguardians "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."
Mahatma Gandhi describing the stages of establishment resistance to a winning strategy of nonviolent advocacy



Vanguard was right on when it predicted retiring police Chief Randy Adams going off to the City of Bell. Sources in the GPD clammed up when Vanguard inquired as did the resources in Bell.

Assembly member Paul Krekorian has filed his intention to run for LA City Council District 2 in a special election. If he loses then he still will be able to run for re-election to his 43rd Assembly seat. If he wins there are a number of Assembly wannabe's that are salivating over that post.

In response to Barry Allen's remarks that Mayor Quintero's Statement of Economic Interest for 2003 was not correct, Quintero acknowledged that he had closed his business which, somehow, seemed to absolve him of his perjured statement. Public documents indicated that Quintero received over \$207,000 from the City in 2003. Below are the Verification and the income statement from form 700.

5. Verification

I have used all reasonable diligence in preparing this statement. I have reviewed this statement and to the best of my knowledge the information contained herein and in any attached schedules is true and complete.

I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date Signed 3-27-04
(month, day, year)

Signature Frank J. Quintero III
(File the originally signed statement with your filing official.)

FPPC Form 700 (2003/2004)
FPPC Toll-Free Helpline: 866/ASK-FPPC

NAME OF SOURCE
ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATION

ADDRESS
PO BOX 251149 Glendale 91225

BUSINESS ACTIVITY, IF ANY, OF SOURCE
Work Force Development

YOUR BUSINESS POSITION
Director

GROSS INCOME RECEIVED
 \$500 - \$1,000 \$1,001 - \$10,000
 \$10,001 - \$100,000 OVER \$100,000

CONSIDERATION FOR WHICH INCOME WAS RECEIVED
 Salary Spouse's income Loan repayment
 Sale of _____
(Property, car, boat, etc.)
 Commission or Rental income, list each source of \$10,000 or more
Retired - closed business

Oops: Lobbyist David Turch's contract wasn't renewed by a vote of 3-2. 3 Dems against and 2 Reps. For renewal. Mea Culpa

THIS JUST IN: Judge Sides With Jarvis: -- Padding of Water Bills Is Prohibited

Los Angeles water customers will benefit from a judgment issued in a case litigated by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association (HJTA) and the Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles (AAGLA).

In late March, the Los Angeles Superior Court issued a tentative ruling in Los Angeles vs. All Persons finding unconstitutional the city's plan to take \$30 million derived from 2005-06 water rates and transfer it to the city's general fund to balance its 2006-07 budget. Proposition 218, a constitutional amendment passed by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association in 1996, provides that revenues derived from fees or charges "shall not be used for any purpose other than that for which the fee or charge was imposed."

Uncertain at that time was whether the Court would limit its ruling to the proposed 2006-07 transfer. Court papers filed by the City admitted that water rates produced a surplus not only for the 2006-07 fiscal year, but for subsequent years as well, and that the City planned to make similar transfers to balance its budgets for 2007-08 and 2008-09, etc.

Jarvis Association attorney Tim Bittle argued that if it was illegal to pad water bills to pay for unrelated city expenses in 2006-07, then it would be illegal to do it in other years.

Last week the Superior Court agreed with HJTA and AAGLA and issued a judgment prohibiting the city from transferring water revenue to the general fund for any of the years in question. The judgment further orders the city, when calculating future water rates, to limit the rate to the amount needed to provide water service.

This ruling sends a strong message to local governments across the state not to try to circumvent the taxpayer protections contained in Proposition 218 because they will lose in court.

[ED – Glendale may be in a similar situation with transfers from Water to the General Fund.]

A Question of Ethics or Law: What is the obligation of an Official that turns down a bribe offered by a go-between to have a legislative body vote on a particular matter in a specified manner?

Bribery defined ... Federal law and California law both prohibit bribery. The purpose of most bribery statutes is to prevent people from seeking preferential treatment from public officials and to prevent public officers from using their offices for personal gain. Specifically, if a government official is offered or seeks anything of value for himself or herself in exchange for performing an official act, a fraudulent action, or any action in violation of his or her official duty, the elements of bribery may be met.

Here are the choices of what you might do:

- Go to the appropriate authorities and make a statement about the attempt bribery.
- Just put it aside because, in your opinion it would be two people against each other and there would be no conclusion.
- Forget it because, by being a snitch, it could ruin your chances for when you run for re-election or another office.

Sacred cows make the best hamburgers. Abbie Hoffman, political activist

JULY 17 FRIDAY BUSINESS BREAKFAST

See you at Foxy's at 7AM

Advertisement

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Vanguard is published independently by *Vanguardians, Inc.* Advocating for Accountability— Our vision is to live in a community where all people, regardless of geography, background or economic status, can enjoy accountability, integrity, effectiveness and responsiveness from our elected officials and each of the city's departments, through grass roots involvement, engagement and advocacy.

An Immodest Proposal



The Design Review Board's decision to go ahead with the expansion of an existing residence on Buckingham Place was overturned by a unanimous vote (excluding Dave Weaver who was absent) by the City Council. City staff had worked with the applicant to meet provisional conditions set by the DRB for the residence to be approved. The conditions revolved around shrinking the scope of the second story so that not only would the additions be smaller, but they would consider the neighbor directly adjacent. Still, promises to meet the DRB's conditions were not enough for the Appellant, the public and the four members of the City Council to be dissuaded from disapproving of the design.

Complaints ranged from the “mansionization” of Glendale, to wrecked views, to a design that had little to no resemblance of the intended Ranch-house style of the neighborhood. Both sides grasped onto anything that could help their cases, which left one member of the council to ask for no more filler.

Newly elected Council Member Laura Friedman put frivolities on both sides to bed as she smacked down arguments that seemed more emotional than objective. Instead of basing her decision on the claim that being able to see a home from the street below is somehow garish, or that the obstruction of a view is enough to leave the neighboring house in complete shadow, she decided to take a holistic approach. For her, the proposed project would leave the property without the Ranch style essence, which emphasizes strong horizontal lines. Ms. Friedman, being a Design Review Board alum, showed her architectural prowess, insisting her vote to overturn the DRB was not about size, view, or any other particulars, but about lines.

Friedman even dared to wax philosophical, debating the appellant’s claim to a view asking, “Who deserves it?” She pointed out the hypocrisy of the appellant whose own home is two-stories, which very well could be blocking their next-door neighbor’s one-story home from any view.



The rest of the council served to underscore CCM Friedman, though council members had their own issues with the plan. Council member Ara Najarian was shocked to learn that only three of the five Design Review Board members had been present in making the decision, especially when the two missing were Senior members with Architectural backgrounds, revealing a flaw in the overall system. This sentiment was echoed by the public when Larry Barnes, president of the Chevy Chase Homeowners Association hinted at unfair influence the City Staff now has on the Design Review Board discussions and that misleading language was presented in the planning staff’s report.

The modifying of one's home past anything other than small additions, trims and lifts can often bring the most totalitarian of responses, and one might think, a 4-0 vote to overturn a Design Review Board's decision backs that theory up, but the grey in a seemingly black and white matter, led by Laura Friedman was a welcomed surprise.

Council Reporter Laurel Miller

All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good women & men to do nothing

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You may agree or disagree with the views below. Feel free to comment on them.



From the Publisher....DOES THE CITY NEED TO LOSE MONEY ON PARKING GARAGES

After sitting through yet another session on the parking garage contract I thought that CCM Najarian was heading in the right direction when he asked how much revenue the garages brought in. The response was about \$2.2M. We spend over \$5M to collect less than the revenue derived? Strange. I asked around to knowledgeable people. Why would you spend \$3M more than

you brought in? Here are some of the answers:

1. To show the City is sensitive to the parking needs of the merchants
2. The amount of \$5M+ covers pass throughs like security, maintenance and elevator service
3. To provide security for parkers.

How about this? Do away with charging for parking in the garages. Free parking. Have the police drive through the garages or add some phones, alarms or TV cameras to provide security. Close the garages once a week at 3AM and run the street sweepers through.

Do you have a better idea? One that doesn't look like the contract award was the result of certain backroom nefarious activity, allegations of which kept my phone busy all week long.

Enterprise businesses in Glendale have not been well thought out with the exception of the GWP but that was set up many decades ago.

The Fire Department took over the Paramedic program and it was to generate \$17M. The program is being continuously subsidized.

The fingerprint Live Scan and Passport Service. Another fiscal fiasco.

A lot of this mishegoss is caused by a City Council that would rather pick out the colors of Panneras' mural or sit in judgement as an appellate body for the Planning Department and DRB. Meanwhile the Council forgets that they are the policy makers, not the judges or the art critics. The rebukes they give the audience are rebukes they should be giving themselves, self-flagelation. Meanwhile, Mr. Najarian, go the next step and ask

why we set a policy that doesn't give a financial return. And a reminder to all the Council members...read the staff reports before you throw them away. The questions you ask are generally contained therein.

Then again we look at the policy making by the Redevelopment Agency... Their direction to staff was to advertise to get business in Glendale. Staff comes back with a proposal to start a Loyalty Card program. Vanguard brings in an expert on Loyalty Card programs and the program dies because of ego. Council approves a budget to advertise. Advertise what?

Unfortunately there is no plan. Sales tax revenue is very important to the City that is why there are four farmers' markets each week closing streets and creating traffic issues and they DON'T BRING IN SALES TAX! [ED We have nothing against the farmers' markets and do shop at them.]

The Americana has done wonderfully with its marketing program. Has the Caruso team been co-opted to help or is there friction between the Americana and Mr. Montrose?

Time and time again, Vanguard has acknowledged that the path through the recession is not retail sales – that is a beneficiary of the exodus- the path is to create a technology that puts people to work because the product or service is wanted and needed globally.

Council spoke about the true economic engine coming to Glendale, Panera Bread Co., and yet they had to debate the color scheme of the mural on the California Wall. Believe me...anything would be welcome. But the policy makers are now the connoisseurs of street art.



Redevelopment should be more about recovery than walking around with a flash light in the daytime. Once upon a time I wrote a proposal for an Orange County City that encouraged the use of SCOR offerings (Small Corporate Offering Registration) to bring in technology based companies to create the future financial path.

The policy makers need to think about and plan for the result being sought before advertising.

BARRY ALLEN

"If you can't drink a lobbyist's whiskey, take his money, sleep with his women and still vote against him in the morning, you don't belong in politics." And, "Money is the mothers' milk of politics." Jesse Unruh

"The American Republic will endure until the day Congress discovers that it can bribe the public with the public's money" - [Alexis de Tocqueville](#)

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. [Albert Einstein](#)

Commentary: HUNGRY TAXPAYERS SEE PENSION SYSTEM AS THE HOT POLITICAL POTATO



The retirement of Police Chief Adams from Glendale to head the police department of the city of Bell raises many questions on the legitimacy of the pension system. (GNP July 6, Retiring Chief to Lead Bell Police)

In my mind, you can't call the Chief's exit from Glendale a true retirement. He is not leaving employment to travel the country in a recreational vehicle. He is leaving his employment for another job while claiming a retirement pension. The pension system allows him to be employed at another job and practically double his take-home pay.

This is double dipping pure and simple. The State of California increased pension benefits and allowed a younger age of retirement (at age 50) for safety and prison system employees with a full pension. City safety unions have been compelling city councils and other local governments to follow the trail blazed by Governor Gray Davis in 1999.

By my calculations Chief Adams will collect over \$200,000 per year for the rest of his life. At 90% of his last year's pay he will follow a now common practice of claiming retirement at a time when many more fruitful working years remain, so he will take up another job.

As baby boomers, we now reclaim our vigor so much that it is not unusual to lop off 10 years from our chronological age. We often hear that yesterday's age 60 is today's 50. Better nutrition, exercise and effective treatments for common diseases now allow for a much more vigorous 55 year old. So by all logical reasoning, reducing the retirement age to age 50 as Governor Davis did ten years ago was done on purely political expediency.

That change in the benefits may just be one of the major factors in the State's budget deficit. Today, someone at age 50 can expect to reach 80. You make the calculation. If Chief Adams lives another 30 years, that's a cool 6 million retirement handout. Create a new police chief every five years and you'll see the millions piling up quickly. Take other retirees aiming for the last paycheck at well over \$100,000 and you'll see budget deficits from here to Kingdom come. The alternatives are huge bond issues, higher utility bills, or a nearly total collapse of the infrastructure as money from capital improvements is taken to pay for luxurious retirements.

But the State of California is not the only entity suffering the impact of that policy change. Our own councilmen did just that in 2001. Three of them approved it just two days after being elected. Today, Glendale's pension contribution for the general fund alone exceeds 17 million compared to an average of about 5.5 million just ten years ago. But hold on to your purse strings. That yearly pension obligation will expand at an accelerating rate as more retirees move on to claim that wonderful benefit.

The way CALPERs (The California Pension System) generally works, it takes the employee contributions and invests them in stocks, bonds, real estate and other investments. If they screw up, or if the economy tanks, the city is obligated to pay the expected return on the agreement. Glendale guarantees a 7.75% annual return.

For the rest of us, financial advisors would be very happy in keeping the growth of your pension at 5% average return per year. Today, financial advisors are asking people to postpone retirement by a few years as investments have tanked. But when taxpayers are on the hook to guarantee a return, politicians are free to hand out favors, and CALPERs investment managers can screw up and fall on their safety net – The taxpayers.

Discussions on pension trends and future obligations were avoided by all the council members during the budget study sessions this year. It is not just a hot potato, it is the invisible potato. Add to the pension obligations this year's the 6% pay increases to the Police Officers Association and Glendale's budget problems become very clear.

Let's hope the city council tackles this hot potato before taxpayers are resigned to eating rice and beans to afford those increasing public employee benefits. **HERBERT MOLANO**



Thanks TO CHRISTIAN ARBID

The writer is a Real Estate Broker and Loss Mitigator. 818.232.7899
Questions Relating to Foreclosures, Short Sales, Saving Your Home,
Loan Modifications check out his blog at www.LenderLies.infoEmail
Christian at christianarbid@gmail.com and your question may be
answered in the next issue of Vanguard.

Total Number
of Current and
Active Glendale
Foreclosures as
of July 10 2009

are **849**

The only way to make sure people you agree with can speak is to support the rights of people you don't agree with.

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

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

Moral cowardice that keeps us from speaking our minds is as dangerous to this country as irresponsible talk. The right way is not always the popular and easy way. Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character. [Margaret Chase Smith](#)

2 Shout Box

ED – Letters published do not necessarily express the opinion of Vanguardians, this publication, 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.



We get mail: Thought you might be interested in knowing that on July 3rd, the pet bird of Asst. City Manager Bob McFall got loose and Mr. McFall had the hook and ladder truck from the GFD out for several hours trying to get the bird. I'm pretty sure they were also out early on Saturday morning, July 4th as well. I'm just wondering who pays for this. Also, if my pet bird gets loose, will the Fire Dept. come out to help me or do I have to be the Asst. City Manager to get that kind of service?

GK [ED – A request was sent to the City Attorney to verify this.]

You said it, published it, yet still no takers. Perhaps now that the Chief is going to the City of Bell your future statements will carry more credence. I sincerely hope so. Take care. CG

Everyone is being fooled by GWP's five year strategic plan. And its Manager

1. If the Manager fails to meet his goals by 2014 it won't matter. He will have vested and can take retirement.
2. His Primary residence is Mesa, AZ. not Glendale.
3. The City has notified the Scholl Land Fill Gas Co. it intends to hire a law firm and file law suits to try and get gas cost from Scholl Land Fill to be reduced after 15 years of doing nothing. This will be the biggest law suit ever filed by the city, and most likely they are going to lose. Without this GWP cannot meet their 5 yr Strategic Plan Goals .
4. How much money has GWP rate payers had to pick up and pay for due to the Fairmont Street extension causing the operations center having to relocate their facilities also due to the Flower Street rail crossing. It is in the millions of dollars.
5. Why did GWP have to absorb all Street Lighting cost that used to be under Public Works.
6. How much bond Money is left and what does GWP plan on using it for?
7. Why is GWP buying electrical equipment that uses Sulfur Hexafluoride gas which is one of the six green house gases being regulated by the EPA and California Air Resource Board for its Glorietta Sub Station?

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS AND YOU WILL FIND OUT WHY YOUR RATES ARE HIGH BM [ED See #5]



We get calls: Re Frank Quintero. I don't care if he closed his company 5 years ago. He lied on his statement of economic interest in 2004. A lie is still a lie until he corrects it. I will not vote for him if he has the audacity to run for the Assembly. I will see you on Friday to review all the records. Thanks for sending me the economic interest form. I don't know what gets into these guys once they get elected. [ED The SEI 700 is required of elected officials and others. Some people are upfront, like Ara Najarian, and others assume no one looks at them. Dave Weaver 'forgot' to sign his one year. Vanguard caught it and there was egg-on-the-face of workers in the City Clerk's office for accepting the document without the required signature.]

Did you read that Virgil's has been sold? How can they do that without the permission of the Council and the Historical society? I tell ya, if it was up in Montrose, the Montrose Mayor, Drayman would have put a stop to the sale. It is treason. I will never shop there again!



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 the 818 area code unless noted otherwise

Monday, July 13

Commission on the Status of Women – 6:30 pm, CH 548-4844

Tuesday, July 14

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

Wednesday, July 15

Zoning Administrator's Hearing – 9:30 am, MSB 548-2140
 Building and Fire Board of Appeals – 2:00 pm, MSB 548-3200

Thursday, July 16

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

Friday, July 17

Friday Night Movies in the Park: "Hook" – Shown at Dusk at Pacific Park, 501 S. Pacific. 548-3785

Saturday, July 18

Glendale's 16th Annual "Cruise Night" – 5:30 pm, Brand Boulevard – in the heart of downtown Glendale. 548-6464

3



Public Information

Almost \$267,000 was spent on outside legal services for the Civil Service Commission hearings and appeals from January 2005 through March 2009. This was for 15 hearings and does not include the cost of City Attorney time.

City Attorney response to request for performance bonus information: We continue to object to your request for the names of the recipients of merit bonuses on the same grounds as previously stated. Below is the information provided by the City Attorney. The data below shows the information since City Manager Starbird has been in office.

Dept	98-99	99-00	00-01	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	Total
City Manager		2	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	2	21
CDH	1		1	1		2		8		3	16
Finance	1		2	1	1	1	4	1	2		13
Fire	2	1	1		4	4	5		1		18
GRA		2	3		2	4		2	1		14
GWP	2	1	3	1	1	2		1		1	12
HR	2		3	1							6
IS		3	3			5	1	1			13
Legal			1	2	2	2	2	1	2		12
Library	1	1	3	1	3	1	2	1		4	17
Parks			1		8				1	1	11

We estimate that \$1.3M has been spent on City Employee performance bonuses during the Starbird decade.

The City still refuses to provide names and specific amounts.

The City Manager can award up to 5% of the wages to the selected employee.

Were payments made to silence complaints or for political purposes. The public has the right to know according to the Attorney General

Planning	2	1	2	1	2		3	4			15
Police			3		2	2				1	8
Public Works	1	2	2	3	3			1		1	13
Total	12	13	29	12	31	26	20	23	10	13	189

4 *Vanguardians*

- Vanguard Friday Breakfast Club had a powerful, energetic group at Foxy's. There was quite a discussion on Mayor Quintero and the perjured form 700; the performance bonuses given by the City Manager, where the City Manager will go when he retires [ED – Yes we'll check on the Caruso job offer.]; and a discussion about the gas hedging in ME and AZ. It was a lively discussion. Each week we add a few new faces and have returning warriors. Become one. This is an excellent opportunity to share opinions about quality of life issues.
- All issues of Vanguard are archived at www.vanguardians.org
- A reminder: If you see blue underlined words that is a link to more information on that article.
- Get breaking Glendale News by signing up for an RSS feed at www.vanguardians.org.
- Great opportunity for you to place your ad or link on www.vanguardians.org
- Vanguardians needs a donated car or van in running condition. Blue Book donation value
- The Vanguard editorial advisory panel reviews and often comments on each edition. Let us know by email if you would like to be considered for the advisory panel.

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the Insider is a digest of information from 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.



Looks like the first step for a City reorganization will be the contract increase for design services, 5e on the 7/7 Council agenda. Just that the Council doesn't know it yet.

Several management publications identify specific traits of poor management. A couple that stand out are a love of secrecy and a love of procedures. Sound familiar? These are two of the cornerstones of the Glendale School of Management. Another favorite, an addiction to consultants! Anyone remember the \$100,000 Matrix Report that was thrown in the trash? How about the concept of "a bias against action"? How many hearings does it take to get a project through planning? Or how about getting the cell site ordinance written? Or getting computer systems installed and working? Currently, Glendale is not where it should be and is blind to where it should be going.

6 *Humor or Not*

Outside the Bristol Zoo, in England, there is a parking lot for 150 cars and 8 coaches, or buses. It was manned by a very pleasant attendant with a ticket machine charging cars £1 (about \$1.40) and coaches £5 (about \$7). This parking attendant worked there solid for all of 25 years. Then, one day, he just didn't turn up for work.

"Oh well", said Bristol Zoo Management - "we'd better phone up the City Council and get them to send a new parking attendant . . ."

"Err . . . no", said the Council, "that parking lot is your responsibility."

"Err . . . no", said Bristol Zoo Management, "the attendant was employed by the City Council, wasn't he?"

"Err . . . no!" insisted the Council.

Sitting in his villa somewhere on the coast of Spain (presumably), is a man who had been taking the parking lot fees, estimated at £400 (about \$560) per day at Bristol Zoo for the last 25 years. Assuming 7 days a week, this amounts to just over £3.6 million (\$7 million - or \$280,000 every year for 25 years)!

And no one even knows his name.

7 News Briefs from the neighborhood

[Of the estimated 1.15 million firefighters](#) in the U.S., 72% are volunteers. Their departments can be found in small towns and large cities, in isolated areas of Alaska and New Mexico, on Indian reservations, even abroad. Since March 2008, 10 volunteer firefighters from New York State have helped to lead the fire department at Camp Phoenix in Afghanistan. More than 20,000 of the nation's 30,200 fire departments are all-volunteer. In Massachusetts alone, there are about 120 fire departments made up entirely of volunteers. In fact, most small and midsize communities in the U.S. rely primarily on volunteer firefighters.

Comment by Bruce Philpott: If all of the paid fire departments in the state of California staffed their engine and truck companies with one reserve or volunteer firefighter, taxpayers would save about \$ 1 billion per year. It has the added benefit of developing stronger community ties with a strong sense of pride, etc., but as long as the fire union is as powerful as it is, only those cities and counties that are driven by economic necessity will be so inclined to support these programs. Having studied many municipal budgets, by utilizing fire reserves judiciously, many cities now teetering on insolvency would be able to reduce their General Fund expenditures to a level that is, once again, sustainable. But, as the Los Angeles Area Fire Chiefs wrote in their publication back in 1998, "paid firefighters have become addicted to overtime". That addiction, coupled with the fire union's political power, has directly resulted in driving fire reserve and volunteer programs into extinction while contributing significantly to the demise of balanced municipal budgets. Each position that is staffed with a volunteer or reserve (who perform as well as the career ones) saves local taxpayers about \$200,000 per year. Ten reserves equals savings of \$2 million. For cities like Glendale, Pasadena and Burbank, 100 fire reserves would more than balance their budgets. Yet Burbank has demonstrated that it would rather shut down an entire fire station to help it balance its budget than to develop a community fire reserve corps. All politics is local and until the citizens and taxpayers realize how bad their city's financial picture is, there will be no change. Most local politicians have no idea about this opportunity. They only want to get the fire union's endorsement for their reelection bids. Citizens and taxpayers come second to this priority.

My prediction is that within one or two years, many more cities, driven by economic necessity, will be left with no other choice but to follow the examples of the lead cities, who will demonstrate the financial and performance effectiveness of reserve programs. Card carrying union firefighters love to state that reserves or volunteers are not able to perform as well as their paid counterparts. It's always nice to remind them that there are several all-volunteer fire departments in this country that have higher performance ratings than 95% of all paid fire departments.

[US Senate prepares to add staff salaries to Internet](#) "There's no question about it that any time you make records more accessible it's much harder to get away with abuses," said Jock Friedly, founder of LegiStorm, a Web site that publishes salary information and financial disclosures of congressional staff aides. "A little bit of embarrassment will go a long way to fixing some of the problems."

[This article well describes the intent of the fire union](#) to eradicate all volunteer/reserve/auxiliary fire programs, and all because of the all-mighty dollar.

THIS JUST IN: Is this the beginning of the end for Prop 13? A former UCLA chancellor asked the California Supreme Court today to declare that the state constitution's requirement of two-thirds legislative votes to raise taxes is invalid. The legal theory of the suit, which names the Legislature's chief clerks as the technical defendants, is that when voters passed Proposition 13 in 1978, cutting property taxes and requiring a two-thirds vote for tax increases, it was a "revision" of the state constitution rather than an "amendment."

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