



“Accountability”
The Government Watchdog

Learning from the past is our responsibility

Enhancing the present is our mission

Providing for a better future is our vision

Vanguard

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Week of November 29, 2009

www.vanguardians.org

818 243 1502

PLUNDER!

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



INCREASE IN CRIME: The Police Department weighed in on Medical Marijuana Dispensaries saying they bring crime. The former Chief of Police Randy Adams didn't say that about the Americana. Since the opening of the Americana larcenies have increased (larcenies includes shoplifting). The increases do not include warned and released by Police or Private Security. The issue, as has been reported in Vanguard is that PEOPLE bring criminal activities. The fact that Council used that issue as a distraction, assigning innumerable man-hours to writing restrictive ordinances, will not deter the growing fiscal abuse by the Council. The chart shows the year and the total number of larcenies.

2005	2006	2007	2008	Sept. 2209
1814	1909	1870	2168	1404

HOLIDAY SHOPPING PROTECTION: CalPIRG released its annual "Trouble in Toyland" report, which lists dangerous and toxic toys consumers should avoid when shopping for children. The report and more information are available at [this site](#).

EXCITING FIREWORKS ALL OVER \$50,000 at the Arts & Culture Commission meeting where the issue of, "Art for the Sake of Art," or "Art as a business Generator" was raised. Commissioner Aramazd Stepanian spoke fearlessly while the City Attorney took the meeting away from the Chair spouting the Brown Act, as if he knew what he was talking about, to shut up Commissioner Stepanian, no puppet be he.

NOT IN MY BACKYARD The City had Artificial Turf sewn in at City Hall. According to the carpet installers it will only need to be watered quarterly.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS: Once again Chevy Chase Country Club is available at a bankruptcy sale. Located in an upscale area of Glendale this prime property purchased now will save the City the additional expense in purchasing it from a well-known developer whose plans would include condominiums and affordable housing that would not be palatable to the area residents. The property could become another cash cow enterprise fund like GWP and would prove to be a perfect venue for film shoots and banquets. The City of Oxnard can show how to manage one so that it is a real cash cow.

I CAN HEAR IT NOW...MAYOR QUINTERO saying that mid-Brand has a new economic generator...Goodwill donation and thrift center where the last two generators were to be vocational training schools in the Dorn-Platz property at 240 N Brand. Of course we all heard Mayor Frank tell the world that Porto's and Panera were the driving economic force on mid-Brand. The City Council is exhibiting schizophrenic behavior, first by wanting that area to be an entertainment center, then a complement to the Alex Theater and then to whatever is the concept de jour. What do we have besides vacancies: Nail shops, beauty supplies, nail shops, 3-4 print/copy stores, dying restaurants, Giggles and gym? There is a big disconnect with this Council. Kick out the urban planners and give Caruso a piece of the action and downtown could have a renaissance. BA

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, Council will conduct a performance evaluation on the City Manager in closed session on December 1st. Then retain an expensive law firm to take on AIG for their refusal to pay out on the City's negligence in the Gladys Street fiasco.

Vanguardians is expanding into other communities. If you know people who want accountable government in their area, ask them to call Barry Allen at 818 243 1502

December 4 FRIDAY BUSINESS BREAKFAST
SEE YOU AT FOXY'S AT 7AM WITH A DISCUSSION ON LAWSUITS

Vanguard is published independently by *Vanguardians, Inc.* Advocating for Accountability— Our vision is to live in a community where all people can enjoy accountability, integrity, effectiveness and responsiveness from our government.



LAUREL MILLER IS ENJOYING THE HOLIDAY WITH HER FAMILY

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

From the Publisher... [POLICE ARREST 52 DEMONSTRATORS](#)



Saturday morning before Thanksgiving. Pauline and I were in our hide-away when I see the morning edition of the Vanguard of Davis, written by my colleague David Greenwald, drop into the inbox. I read with amazement about the building takeover by UC Davis students in protest of the 32% fee hikes designed to keep impoverished students out of higher education and force them into working at McDonalds.



That set off a morning discussion.

Pauline said: "It's about time students stood up and protested.



Me: They'll get arrested and have criminal records and will be unemployable even at minimum wage jobs.

Pauline: Then government will be able to justify more prisons, jails and correctional employees.

Me: It is a shame that so much is spent on corrections officers and firemen; payroll, benefits and pensions; when



that same money could be spent on education.

P: I remember when students didn't worry about those consequences of protest demonstrations. Remember the Kent State Massacre in 1970 when protesters were shot and killed...

Me: And in 1989 almost 20 years later, the vivid picture of the student standing in front of a column of military tanks in Tianemen Square. Now in 2009, twenty years later another less deadly confrontation.

P: An Assembly member is pushing legislation that would raise money for education by taxing oil.

Me: That is the problem more fees and taxes instead of cutting expenses that are killing initiative and motivation. Write more laws to put people in jail or prison; then hire more prison guards; prohibit the cleaning of open space that would prevent brush fires so more firemen can be hired.

P: That is money that can go for education

M: The most menial jobs require fingerprinting and because of that, unless he worked at a minimum wage job, Bernie Madoff was never fingerprinted until he was arrested."

I see a similar intimidation at legislative meetings where, if one says something against the local establishment, he or she will feel the retribution; In LA the overpaid council pays no attention to the speakers; In Glendale they chase them off, play with their texting or go into the backroom or have animated conversations with staff. The State Legislature fears the backlash of cutting off contributions by not writing corrective legislation such as, 'no text messaging' when a legislator is in a legislative session. Further intimidation comes from armed police officers at legislative sessions to keep the people at bay while giving little demigods the opportunity to silence dissent by having armed officers prepared to throw them out like the first baseball at the beginning of the season.

Those tyrants are just adult bullies under the aura of politics. Maybe their fingerprints should be taken and compared against a database of the self-righteous who have created an atmosphere of fear of

government. The real leaders are the Molano's, the Espiritu's, the McKnights, the Krafts, the Mohills, the Fields and so many more who are willing to distinguish themselves from those that give up under fire. These are the people that are taking the charge for generating knowledgeable, engaged future generations.

I quote David Greenwald, "For those who worried about the future leadership of this nation, worry not, this generation is just as capable as our own of battling authority." David, that is why we have to encourage them to become engaged with the government. BARRY ALLEN

Coming: Deifying Public Safety; Divide & Conquer; To use a JD word... 'dumbheaded'; A prison town;

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

"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: COMMENTARY: JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS - THE DARK SIDE GLAD TIDINGS



The official holiday season of good will is upon us, and there is no better time than this for those with a steady full-time job to share some of that good fortune with those who found themselves on the short end of these harsh economic times. And harsh it has been.

Recently I requested information from the Glendale Water and Power (GWP) on the number of residents who received late notices on their utility bill. I found that throughout the past year for every four invoices sent, there was one with a late warning.

That is an ominous situation for many. Water and electricity are the most basic commodities that a city can provide its residents, and though the city can be proud of safe water and reliable distribution of both the water and electricity, we must include affordability as just as important. To many people, it doesn't matter if there are fewer brown outs, if their electricity is shut off.

Last fiscal year, around 10 percent of the invoices was followed by a 48-hour warning of a pending shut off. I wonder how many families are struggling between putting food on the table and keeping the lights on.

This past month, in October records show that 4,286 families in Glendale received such a dire warning. Few events in life can be as dismal as having your electricity shut off. I can't imagine the pleas from residents to GWP when desperate residents ask to keep the lights on for the holidays. That problem is an opportunity for major policy from our city council derived from empathy.

It is my suggestion that the city of Glendale create an emergency ordinance to provide relief to any family who received just such a notice in October. The relief can take the form of a moratorium on shut offs for the months of November and December. The cost to the city for each month of this moratorium will be \$430,000 According to a report from the GWP the average bill to low income families is nearly \$200 every two months.

The city can recover some of those costs, by providing a onetime 50% discount to any resident who pays that portion of their bill before January 6th. There is a financial justification for this. A study last year, conducted by the city of Azusa, found that of utilities in southern California, Glendale had the highest electrical utility rates nearly 40% higher than in Los Angeles. But that quoted rate only compares the operational portion of the GWP. Comparing total electric bills side-by-side, Glendale's effective rate is 80% higher than that of Los Angeles.

I'd like to suggest some additional ways in which the city employees could promote good tidings to those hard hit by the economy. It would be a great gesture for all city employees who earn over \$100,000 per year to donate at least one shopping bag of food to the charitable food pantries every week for the remaining of the year. Those earning between \$50,000 – \$99,000 could donate two full shopping bags. Those earning less could donate at least one bag. Given that Glendale has nearly 2,500 employees, it would provide relief to about half of those who have a demonstrated need – The 48hour shut off notice.

If the general public matches that gesture, no resident should be faced with the dilemma of putting food on the table or keeping the lights on this holiday season. Let's send good cheer those who haven't been so fortunate as we have been this past year. **HERBERT MOLANO [ED- www.vanguardians.org has the documents for your review]**

COMMENTARY II: HOW PUBLIC EMPLOYEE UNIONS PILLAGE, SPOIL, AND SACK THE TAXPAYERS

The abuse perpetrated by public employee unions is finally getting the level of public awareness it deserves. Last Wednesday Steven Greenhut, author of Plunder! How public employee unions are raiding treasuries, controlling our lives, and bankrupting the nation was interviewed locally by Larry Mantle on KPCC.

The book exposes the abuses that many public unions have perpetrated with assistance of many politicians who sold their soul for their campaign money and support. The sweetheart deals that Greenhut exposes in Orange County and throughout California is a mirror image of what has taken place in Glendale.

The gimmicks these unions have imposed on Glendale taxpayers is nothing short of highway robbery on their way to retirement. Few bigger frauds have been perpetrated on Glendale's taxpayers than the 3% at 50 retirement computation that David Weaver and Frank Quintero approved in 2001. Their utter ignorance of public finances left them at the mercy of the city manager who promised them that the pension computation change would not cost the city anything.

3% at 50 means that a fire-fighter or policeman could retire after 30 years with 90% of their last salary as their pension. The 50 means that they can retire as early as age 50 and receive that pension, adjusted for inflation, for the rest of their lives. For many, that is a gift of taxpayer funds in the millions of dollars each.

During the KPCC radio show, Nick Beradino, general manager of the Public Employees Association of Orange County made some claims and comparisons that left me aghast. He wanted to compare those public pensions with the outrageous plunder of many big corporate CEO's. Imagine that! It takes the comparison with some of the worse evil-doers the nation has had to justify their own plunder. By comparison, the outrageous public pension benefits are child's candy. The comparison implies that we should be thankful for being robbed, because by comparison, we could've been robbed and knifed in the process.

Greenhut book exposes many of the abuses many of us have reported about Glendale's own men in uniform. It exposes the claims during the last year of employment 50% of employees about to retire claim a dubious disability so they won't have to pay their full share of taxes. It exposes the gimmicks approved by city management of last-year special assignments and special pay-boosting gimmicks that gets their last year's pay calculation to swell just before their retirement calculation kicks in.

Plunder! should be a mandatory reading for anyone seeking to run for public office and the voters should get straight answers from anyone running. We must know their position of this outrageous abuse of the public trust.

I have a generous option for anyone who's worked 30 years under the protection of civil service with the generous vacations, benefits and exceptional working schedule. No employee should get in retirement, more than the average income the average working family makes. We must disengage the formula that ties pension to the last year's salary. It only adds incentives to corrupt the promotion and pay structure.

I am, for one, sickened by the abuse our city councilmen have permitted right before our very noses. All employee contracts need a comprehensive dismantling of that pension structure, and all negotiations with the public unions should be held in public and televised. These close-door agreements stink to high heaven. Enough of the back-room deals! **HERBERT MOLANO**

<http://www.scpr.org/programs/airtalk/2009/11/25/are-public-employee-unions-bankrupting-the-nation/>

COMMENTARY: ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



The homeless population has another ally in Sacramento with the creation of Sacramento Copwatch in August of his year. Josh Cadji, the young founder, began the program with the abused homeless population in Sacramento in mind.

It's no secret the homeless have been dragged through the dirty trenches of dislocation, harassment, and constant uprooting through political fancy under the guise of altruism, but it's the gumshoes that has Cadji concerned.

Cadji, "Sacramento has a sizable homeless population, and homeless people are most vulnerable to rights abuse and physical violence on behalf of cops, so they need people out there who can watch the police."

The abused homeless demographic was the main reason Copwatch was created in Berkeley in 1990 due to vicious police harassment.

Copwatch isn't just limited to protecting the rights of the homeless, but police - citizen encounters in general.

With the recording of police activity and the creating of a watchdog presence comes responsibilities, not least of which is educating the community about Copwatch and seeking their cooperation, which is outlined by a set of principles.

The stated principles of Copwatch are to increase police accountability, educate the public about their rights, reduce police violence, and providing information to those who may not otherwise receive it, such as affordable representation through the National Lawyers Guild.

Just recently Cadji held a 'know your rights' training at Loaves and Fishes building as part of a weekly meeting for Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC), whose members include Safeground Sacramento a homeless advocacy group.

Gaining volunteers for Copwatch has been a slow process, now Cadji is beginning to hold regular cop watch shifts on the weekends. Cadji determines which areas to patrol and meet up before hand in a neutral area so people can meet each other and discuss the shift and operating procedures.

Volunteers of Copwatch are armed with cameras and persistence alerting police officers to their presence in police suspect situations usually with Copwatch T-shirts and of course a video camera.

Cadji doesn't limit his Copwatch shifts to once a week, "I personally monitor the police whenever I see them in public... simply stopping and watching a police scene, the cops are a lot less likely to be brutal with the detained individual."

Justin Smiths [ED – Civilians protecting the homeless from the police, reminds us of a brilliant plan to rid the City of

FROM AN OLD FRIEND THAT DUG THROUGH THE ARCHIVES TO FIND THIS GEM...

The city of Glendale has been spending more than it has taken in for many years, forcing it in 2002 to long-term borrowing that has now exceeded \$331 million. The city contemplating increasing taxes and fees, but it should be reminded that no city or state has taxed itself into prosperity.

The city has not realistically projected revenues or the costs of service delivery, blaming its problems on a short-term hitch in the overall economy. The fact is the city has grown its employee numbers disproportionate to its general population by a factor of six to one since 1998 with salary and compensation and pension packages again heavily disproportionate to the private sector, at an added cost of \$50 million per year. These added costs now require severe cut backs in programs and services.

The problem is not with revenues but spending, yet city management and council continue to seek new sources of revenues.

The City needs a policy that states the city can't add on-going programs or services without identifying the sources of money to cover them. An example is the Pacific Pool. It will cost about \$600,000 annually and the city should have to identify where the annual costs are coming from.

Glendale's high utility rates are reflected in the defaults up 61%.

According to GNP article 4-22-09, commercial vacancies are at 16.3%, higher than county average of 13.8% and may rise as high as 19% when a new 186,000sq. foot property at 207 Goode Ave is completed.

Treasurers' investment portfolio is at \$440 million, down from \$600 million several years ago.

City council has allowed staff to adjust fees and permits by up to 5% each year without prior approval based upon the cost of living.

Prediction: Since some services are not popular enough to get their own funding streams, voters will be asked to approve a city-wide assessment district for either the fire department or for public safety, including police, fire and paramedic services.

95% of the cost for the Pacific Park Pool is being paid by money from the federal Community Development Block Grant program, money that is normally earmarked for non-profit organizations that service the poor. **An Old Friend**

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

Sacred cows make the best hamburgers. Abbie Hoffman

Public Officials are manufacturers - many make excuses - some make trouble - only a handful make things happen



CHRISTIAN ARBID is a Real Estate Broker and Loss Mitigator. If you have questions about Foreclosures, Short Sales, Saving Your Home, Loan Modifications, email him 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 Nov.r 27, 09
are: 933

IndyMac: A Group of Liars - Coming in the Next Edition of Vanguard **Christian Arbid**

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](#)

"Power corrupts the few, while weakness corrupts the many" -Eric Hoffer, 1902-1983

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](#)

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

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.



CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Your piece on the conflict of interest is outstanding -- very professional, to the point, laden with facts. This is the kind of stuff that should call people to action. The fact that the GNP isn't all over a story like this baffles me (actually, it tells me what

I really don't want to hear.) Your new pass-out concept keeps the message directly in the public view -- of course the public always has the Friday breakfast opportunity, but many can't or won't avail themselves of that opportunity for whatever reason. Moreover, the physical act of personally handing out gives your face a one-on-one humanity that communicates to people's intellects and hearts like nothing else can. What's the chance of your starting to get your experiences into a series of articles (or vignettes of book chapters) into a, say, *Time Magazine*? That could accelerate some serious investigations and possible clean-up. Certainly, the regional publicity could fire up a lot of people to expand genuine reforms exponentially. If you haven't already started thinking about this (and I can't believe that you haven't), please do. Take care, JS [ED – Wait 'til you see the new online news media.]

GIVE THE MONEY BACK WITH A CAVEAT: Glendale and all the other recipients should give back smart meter largesse from the Fed and tell them this money should be earmarked for LIFE (Laser Inertial Fusion Energy) and focus on fusion power where 10 gallons of water can have the same yield as a supertanker of oil. Unfortunately cities are so desperate to get more money, they have no interest in the longevity of the US. Yes, Mr. Mayor, the Sun will rise tomorrow and maybe shine a little less on you. Your attitude of follow the money is not in the best interests of Glendale. You and your colleagues bow to the money interests such as the employee unions. You beg borrow and steal from the quality of life to keep the mothers' milk of politics coming your way. You and your ilk are not the best for Glendale. Thankfully Vanguard is here and allows the free speech that we are entitled too. SA

SAFE IN GLENDALE: Many were glad to see your mention of the big problems they are experiencing in Burbank with their police department. We call Glendale home but do business in Burbank and this is something that is eating at us all as we've watched that police department crumble.

Glendale PD may have its own issues from time to time, but thank goodness nothing of this magnitude. Burbank could learn a lot from the way Glendale does business. They are very transparent because people like you hold them accountable for us. I feel very safe in Glendale; I wish I could say the same for Burbank. I hope the fine officers there don't get me wrong, I think they are excellent officers and they do a great job. It's the way the organization itself is going awry that causes this uneasiness.

Maybe Burbank needs to talk Randy Adams away from the job he took in that small city he went to. DN

TROLLING FOR STATION FIRE VICTIMS We are thankful for watchdogs. How else could we cope with vultures like a certain local attorney who is also on the GCC who runs an ad in the GNP trolling for Station fire victims to represent after lavishing praise for the job our overpaid first-responders did in watching from their lawn chairs while our mountains burned to the ground and below. Reprehensible and a new low in public service. By way of digression, why don't our elected officials buy the bankrupt Chevy Chase Country Club and hand out free memberships to themselves and our other so-called heroes in public safety and government. After all, the asking price is a measly \$6.5M--chump change for these high-rolling big spenders. Happy Turkey day to them and Happy Thanksgiving to you. WG

YEA FOR NAJARIAN: I want you to know that I was back at my yearly privilege of working at the Salvation Army today and witnessed an event I would like you to publish. Former Transportation Commission Member, former Mayor, Current City Council Member and Chairman of the MTA Ara Najarian was serving turkey dinners before I went inside at noon and was still serving dinners when I left just before 2 pm nearly an hour after the photographer had left the building. Personally that made me very happy. I did not recognize other notables that may have been serving and CM Najarian made no effort to be recognized for his effort. In addition he was very efficient and often got to the table with plates before the people coming in were seated. I applaud his work today and look forward to others in Glendale to follow his lead. I can only hope you had a pleasant Thanksgiving. Carl Atkinson

When the people fear their government, there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty.
Thomas Jefferson

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.--Aldous Huxley

I am a legislator. I write the laws therefore I can wrong them. Throckmorton P. Aardvark III

3



Public



Information

"Just the facts"

A number of requests were cleared and some very important ones will require a Writ of Mandate to compel the City to turn over documents they want to hide from the public that shows how they have been squandering tax money.

[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

Tuesday, December 1

2:30 pm CH Glendale Housing Authority 548-2060; Redevelopment Agency 548-2005; **Joint Meeting:** Proposed Development of the Hyatt Place
6:00 pm CH City Council 548-4844

Wednesday, December 2

Zoning Administrator – 9:30 am, MSB548-2140
Parks, Recreation & Community Services Commission – 3:00 pm, CH 548-2000
Planning Commission – 5:00 pm, MSB 548-2140

Thursday, December 3

Committee for a Clean & Beautiful Glendale – 8:30 am, MSB 548-3700
Design Review Board #1 – 5:00 pm, MSB 548-2140

Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.
Thomas Jefferson

Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom; and no such thing as public liberty, without freedom of speech. Benjamin Franklin

Live so that you wouldn't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town Gossip. Will Rogers

4 *Vanguardians*

- 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.
- 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

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On some positions, Cowardice asks the question "Is it safe?" Expediency asks the question "Is it politic?" And Vanity comes along and asks the question "Is it popular?" But Conscience asks the question "Is it right?" And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must do it because Conscience tells him it is right. (1968)
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

"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

5



the Insider

is a report 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. [ED – A shocking tale out of LA County where a County employee was escorted out of the building for completing an assignment instead of going home. Another employee reported that because of that action they were only going to exactly what is required of their job as they fear retribution if they speak to the supervisors superior. Fortunately Vanguard provides this space in its publications to dedicated government workers.]



Sex gets you ahead in this City government. Peccadilloes are hidden and covered up to use by top management to assure 'playing the game'. A department head was caught with his pants down several years ago. A Councilmember was caught twice harassing a female employee and coming onto women other than his wife and mother of his children. The issues in the police department happen because of top management role modeling. This is one area that CM Starbird is clear of;

with the exception of telling a Council member to stay away from City Hall except on Tuesdays and suggesting another top official take a vacation. Peyton Place should be the new name for City Management. [ED – This is not something Vanguard covers but it is something that is bothering the rank and file and, from other resources, creates an unwholesome work environment. It is possible that the City Manager paid 'hush money' to keep these issues quiet and from becoming public.]

6 Text Message Intercepts...On a Tuesday...

[ED – This section is being expanded. Messages will be monitored on a daily basis and the report will include texting while off the dais that refers to City issues. Brown Act violation reports will include transcripts of the messages.]

A people that values its privileges above its principals soon loses both.--Dwight D. Eisenhower

"Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to **skid in sideways - Chardonnay in one hand - chocolate in the other - body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "WOO HOO, What a Ride"**.

Opportunity is missed by most people, because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.--Thomas A. Edison

7 NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD

GLENN COOK: Government and the 'B' word

Plummeting revenues. Crippling liabilities. Gutless, politically expedient leadership. Greedy unions that insist on maintaining fiscally unsustainable salaries, benefits and pensions. They drove airlines and automakers into bankruptcy. Can the city of Las Vegas and Clark County governments be far behind?

The city and county are taking on more water than they can possibly bail. Officials piled worse news on top of bad during meetings of the City Council and County Commission this month, warning of future budget deficits that could force massive layoffs and service reductions.

The city's woes are far more urgent. Tax revenues for the current fiscal year were expected to drop 2.5 percent, but instead they've fallen off 18 percent. Last week, City Manager Betsy Fretwell announced 19 layoffs and the elimination of 54 vacant positions. Las Vegas is quickly burning reserves to preserve the rest of its payroll, and is bracing for the possibility of a \$40 million budget hole next fiscal year.

No one expects the local economy to recover for years. And yet the city and county keep handing out generous annual pay raises to public employees, even as tax collections tank and the local cost of living falls. They write millions of dollars worth of checks to retiring workers, who get to call it quits well before they're eligible for Social Security or Medicare, cash out gobs of unused sick and vacation time and collect taxpayer-funded pensions for the rest of their lives.

Elected and appointed officials will shrug their shoulders and claim their hands are tied by their contracts with bargaining units -- they can't eliminate pay raises, cut salaries or reduce benefits unless the unions agree. But now they can -- if they file for bankruptcy.

The city of Vallejo, Calif., did just that in 2008 under the very circumstances Las Vegas and Clark County currently face. Public employee contracts negotiated during flush times had created a payroll dominated by six-figure salaries, sweetened benefits and enhanced pensions. When the real estate crash gutted home values and the city's tax collections, Vallejo couldn't meet all its obligations. **Rather than give back some of their largess, Vallejo's unions told their indentured servants on the City Council to quit whining and raise taxes. [ED – Emphasis added.]**

Instead, the council took the extraordinary step of filing for Chapter 9 reorganization, making Vallejo, with a population of about 120,000, the largest California city to declare bankruptcy. Foremost among the city's requests in the case: blowing up all of its public employee contracts and writing new ones from scratch.

In March, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Michael McManus made the unprecedented decision to grant the city the authority to void all of its union contracts. His ruling held that federal law limits the ability of employers to reject union contracts only in Chapter 11 bankruptcies, which cover reorganizations of private-sector companies. McManus ruled that government workers do not enjoy such protections under Chapter 9, which covers municipal bankruptcies.

The ruling is a beacon of hope for beleaguered taxpayers who labor to provide for themselves while supporting a higher standard of living for unionized public employees -- and getting fewer services in return. Vallejo got what the city of Las Vegas and Clark County desperately need: flexibility and a fresh start.

Bankruptcy is not without painful consequences for governments and taxpayers. A Chapter 9 filing would crush city and county credit ratings and make it more expensive to borrow and build infrastructure. But if the city

and county wipe out all their reserves maintaining the status quo, their ratings will suffer anyway. And there are more fiscal storm clouds on the horizon.

PUBLIC CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS: San Jose's city budget has been ailing for nine years, failing to respond to annual doses of service cuts and employee givebacks prescribed by the City Council. Now Councilmember Pierluigi Oliverio claims to have diagnosed the problem as a chronic case of "unionitis" and recently on this page called for opening the city's negotiations with its labor unions to the public. ("San Jose labor negotiations should be public," Nov. 4). The problem with this proposal is that it does not go far enough. Let's open all the city's contract negotiations to the public. Union leaders are happy to negotiate with the city publicly as long as the rules apply to all the city's business dealings. A massive infusion of sunlight into all the city's secret negotiations, backroom deals and closed-door confabs would go a long way toward cauterizing the wounds responsible for the hemorrhaging of our municipal treasury.

CALPERS COSTLY IN OC: As we continue our trek through the CalPERS database of public retirees today with **two** more OC agencies - which have a hefty **60** retirees who get pensions greater than **\$100,000 a year**. In general, the most well-paid retirees have been public safety types - police and fire chiefs, followed by city manager types. Most are men.

The cities we look at today follow suit. They are:

- **Newport Beach**, which has **38** (the top dog being former police chief **Robert McDonell, \$221,554.56**)
- **Orange**, which has **22** (former city manager **David Rudat, \$162,312.84**)

Shattered Glass San Diego Reader - The **City** is broke, with a recent suggestion by some advisor to **consider bankruptcy**. Where is the pro/con list? Would any sane person **consider** this ...

Frosting on an already-sweet pension deal OCRegister - OC's former treasurer, Bob Citron, whose bizarre investments led in 1994 to the largest municipal **bankruptcy** in America, receives \$92,900 a year in ...

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