



“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

News Service Vol V

Week of December 27, 2009

www.vanguardians.org

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WELCOME TO A NEW YEAR AND A NEW DECADE 2010

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



A SPECIAL NOTE TO ALL ELECTED OFFICIALS – The movie, INVICTUS, is a must see for every official who should relate to how Nelson Mandela (played by Morgan Freeman) used his talents to pull together a divided nation even though he was warned that his technique, his strategy would cost him the Presidency of South Africa. City Councils within the Vanguardians jurisdiction, have tried unsuccessfully to divide and conquer; the time has come to encourage people to work together rather than look at perceived differences, to attain a goal of harmony for our extended community family.

Vanguardians is here to help educate and inform the public; to encourage them to become engaged and involved with government; to use the tools granted the public by higher authorities; and to use non-violent advocacy to achieve those goals.

Thank you to all those who financially support us; and those who volunteer their time...people from all over the world who work with us to make our constituencies better.

Dr. Richard Espiritu works tirelessly and fervently to aid and advocate the disabled community. Herbert Molano, whose commentaries are designed to inform and educate not only the public but, as well, government officials. Bruce Philpott who has been relentless in designing a new model for public safety, one that is being embraced in other parts of Southern California.

We, all of us at Vanguardians, are here to help. [ED]

WHITE HOUSE FORUM: Vanguardians Board Member Dr. John Kraft was selected by White House Staff to convene a COMMUNITY FORUM ON JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. If you are interested in participating or attending this critical program please email info@vanguardians.org with your contact information. There are two morning meetings scheduled at the Alhambra Library on January 7th & 8th.

THERE ARE LIES AND THERE ARE DAMN LIES: Fire Department was not truthful on a form provided to the State Fire Marshall whereon the GFD indicated there were no injuries in the Chilton fire. A press release from the Glendale Fire Department indicated that there were two injured firemen. Further the Fire Department bi-monthly newsletter also stated that a firefighter was injured in the Chilton Fire. When Vanguardians requested the document that was filed with CalFire by the GFD they were told by the City Attorney that there was no such document. What should City Management do? It is time for accountability from the GFD management where, from 2002 to 2009, the costs rose from \$23,000,000 to \$50,000,000. It is time to change the culture of fire management.



There is little or no discipline under Civil Service especially when Management has the same protection from being accountable. Normally managers are ‘at-will’ employees meaning they serve at the will of their employer who can discharge them if they don’t merit continued employment. Civil Service is not a merit pay system. It promotes based on seniority not on merit. California is locked in on Civil Service which has become the bane of good, accountable government. You are encouraged to read the scholarly work of Katherine Naff of San Francisco State University, *Prospects for Civil Service Reform in California: A Triumph of Technique over Purpose?* The treatise can be found on www.vanguardians.org

SAVE MONEY WHEN TRAVELING BY CAR: Traveling over the holiday period? [Click here for a list of Speed Traps.](#)

CREATING JOBS: Jobs available: TV ad sales positions in Burbank and Glendale. Bilingual is a plus. Contact info@vanguardians.org with TV in the subject line.

GLENDALE COURT: The State is preparing to spend [\\$124,000,000](#) to rebuild the Glendale Court House while at the same time, the LA County Superior Court is targeting it as one of the court houses that will be [closed](#) during these austere times.

Federal Stimulus Money for street repairs, GWP upgrades frees up money for salaries and benefits. The SBA publication can be found on the Vanguardians website, www.vanguardians.org

WHIP IT OUT: With your generous financial help we can have a more involved and engaged public, a public that is aware of, not only the problems, but the solutions. Whip out that check book and send your contribution to Vanguardians, POB 11202, Glendale CA 91226 or go to our webpage, www.vanguardians.org to make a contribution by credit card. All contributions dated on or before December 31, 2009, will be attributed to the 2009 tax year. Thank you to those who have already sent their contributions.



JOB OPENING: The following Democrat candidates have filed their intention to run for the 43 Assembly District seat vacated by Paul Krekorian:

- 1) Adrin Nazarian, Chief of Staff for Assembly member Paul Krekorian
- 2) Mike Gatto
- 3) Andrew Westfall

NO FRIDAY BUSINESS BREAKFAST New Years Day

Join us for the first meeting of 2010 on January 8th

We have helped direct people to the appropriate resources, empowered them to engage with their local government, and from those who have attended, given them hope and some good humor. It is an excellent way to start the weekend.

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 ON HOLIDAY

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

From the Publisher... NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS



It has been an exciting holiday season for me when I reflect upon the politicians I have met and the locales of the events. Among the people I spoke with were Congressman Adam Schiff, State Senator Carol Liu, Assembly Member Anthony Portantino, Assembly Member Mike Eng, PUC Member Mike Peavy, Pasadena City Council Member Chris Holden, Alhambra Council Member Gary Yamauchi and numerous others including some that are considering a run for the 43rd Assembly District.

The only Glendale elected official I met, twice actually, was Joylene Wagner who sits on the School Board. That surprised me as I had watched the last Glendale City Council meeting where Drayman, Quintero and Friedman decried the efforts of the contracted city lobbyist and how important it is for the City Council to meet with State and Federal elected officials with their hands out. The Council didn't surprise me. Their well orchestrated and choreographed dance during the last meeting of 2009 was quite obvious. Even to the noise about not supporting arts and culture. Glendale gets slapstick comedy instead of art. Whatever works for Mayor Drayman. Remember his affair with MONA. I digress.

As I spoke with these folks I articulated Vanguardians 2010 resolutions and am committing to sharing them.



Weaver and other CCM

- Municipal utilities to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Commission
- Form 460 (Candidate/Officeholder) Contributions and Expenditures be filed bi-monthly within 15 days of the end of the period instead of twice a year.
- That the State provide a mandated Public Record Act compliance training for all local agencies
- That each public agency publicly post in each public building the location of the keeper of the records
- That all Statements of Economic Interest, form 700, be filed with the FPPC and placed online there for the public's review
- That the Brown Act for open meetings eliminate the permissive closed sessions and reduce the mandatory one.
- That the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) be expanded to include operating as a local ethics commission for all agencies with a population with less than 5,000,000.
- That the prerogative of speaking before a legislative body before or after a staff report should be the decision of the speaker not the Chair of the meeting.
- To complete the audit of the 2007 and 2009 Glendale Council 460 forms; to determine compliance with the Political Reform Act and to file complaints where there is compliance
- Increase the number of Vanguardians chapters



Hopefully 2010 will bring answers to questions that hang heavily over every city:

- Why do firemen have 24 hour duty shifts and get paid to sleep?
- Why do firemen get unlimited overtime?
- Why does the City charge for Emergency Medical Service (EMS) when fire suppression gets a free ride?
- Why does a Battalion Chief get a driver?
- Why do fire managers get overtime pay?

BARRY ALLEN

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: OPAQUE TRANSPARENCY IN THE EYES OF THE BEHOLDER



The fight to create and maintain an open government has been a tough struggle fought by politicians and bureaucrats since the dawn of the republic. But no entity has fought to preserve transparency as hard as the independent press. So it is with some real trepidation that I find the rationale given by Michael Teahan's, in his column ("Names don't need to be named" GNP December 23, 2009), dismissive of the very laws he pretends to support.

Nearly every year it seems, there is a struggle, between the public and the administration in Washington with regard to accessibility to records. Sometimes the prolonged fight is between congress and the Administration that often gets resolved by a Supreme Court ruling.

It's been the same in California. It took a California Supreme Court decision in 2007 to require local government to open up the salary and compensation records of public service employees. We all owe a debt of gratitude to The Contra Costa Times who fought against the city of Oakland to open up payroll records. The general public was shocked to see the abuse of salary and overtime pay many employees had racked up.

It's no different in Glendale. The growth in the city's payroll expense in the past ten years far outpaces the inflation rate and the growth of the local population. The city's workforce demographics report show increases in the number of middle management that would dismay the general public. Between 1998 and 2008 their numbers increased by nearly 40% yet it seems that every major construction project the city initiates, winds up with huge cost over-runs in the millions of dollars.

The role that some members of the general public have taken, is the role that we've expected of councilmen – to provide fiscal oversight of the city's expenses and control of runaway projects. Those of us who've followed the city council's weekly proceedings feel that oversight is the exception rather than the rule.

The city's expenditures in total payroll and pensions and benefits have far outstripped the tax revenue the city has brought in nearly every year for the past ten years. The city has then jacked up the electricity rates to nearly the highest rates in California. To balance the general fund, the city then transfers the excess income above its costs to prop up its general government budget. We all wound up paying exorbitant electrical rates and so do our schools



But it takes a determined effort to get at the information from the city of Glendale that, often, is published freely by cities like Burbank and Pasadena, for example, the number of full-time equivalent employees.

Mr. Teahan, is aware of the impact of these disclosures. I've presented them at the HomeOwner's Coordinating Council while he was presiding. It is extremely disingenuous for him to then bring up straw-man arguments about trash cans, label the search for information as "digging for dirt" then go about denigrating the efforts of those who demand accountability in government.

Why the GNP found Mr. Teahan's essays worthy of a column is beyond my comprehension. But I have a clear recognition that Mr. Teahan is the last man I'd want to see holding any public office. **HERBERT MOLANO**

[ED – Documents in support of Mr. Molano's column can be found at www.vanguardians.org]

COMMENTARY II: THE DECADE OF DEBACLES - THE DECADE OF SHAME

Historians will have plenty of choices finding a tag with which to name the first decade of this millennium. The decade of defrauding America would be especially relevant. Virtually each year of this past decade stands out for its virulent attack on the common man. And for each nationally recognized act, there was an equivalent damaging one at the local level.

The presidential election of 2000 was fraught with what is likely the most undemocratic disenfranchisement of minority voters ever recorded since the enactment of the voting rights act. The Florida vote was an ominous sign for the start of the decade.

The energy crisis of 2000 and 2001 revealed one of the most pernicious and systematic frauds on the general public perpetrated by an industry since the savings and loan debacle of the 1980's. But Enron's deep connections to the Bush Administration and to countless California legislators, revealed a trend of blatant political corruption perhaps not seen since the gilded age of railroad tycoons.

At the local level, in Glendale and other local municipalities, public safety unions pushed hard to increase their pensions by 25%. Glendale, was among the first to adopt the 3% at 50 pension change that allowed fire fighters and police to retire at age 50 with up to 90% of their last salary. Today, we see the impact of that change throughout cities in California who can no longer bear the burden of similar pension agreements where contributions skyrocketed over 300% since a decade ago.

For many, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 demonstrated unambiguously the warning that president Eisenhower gave on the Military Industrial Complex on his farewell address to the nation. Vice-President Cheney's close links to Halliburton and their no-bid contracts in the billions of dollars was not lost to many not blinded by political partisanship.



Similarly, in Glendale, the fire fighters pushed for removing the private ambulance service to create their government-run monopoly. A private service that cost the city taxpayers nothing for more than a decade, began a long steady climb in the last few years that now consumes more than four million of the city's revenues each year.

In 2005 hurricane Katrina laid open the big lie at the Big Easy - New Orleans. The massive flooding revealed shoddy workmanship and contractor corruption of the flood walls. The massive damage and lost lives were compounded by even more inept leadership at FEMA during the rescue operation.

During 2005 a massive fraud in the mortgage industry was fueling the rapid artificial rise in home values. Translate that into higher property tax revenues that allowed city unions to extract huge increases in pay and benefits. Glendale councilmen raised pensions for general employees by twenty percent. The stealth ordinance was overlooked by the press and the general public. This year, we are feeling the impact of that atrocious decision as the city guarantees a 7.75% return on pension investments even if CALPERS investments falter.

In 2006 at the peak of the housing bubble, Glendale top management pushed for the four-year employee safety contracts that locked in year-over-year pay increases of up-to six percent. This year, with deflation at over 2% the net increase to police pay exceeds an 8% effective annual raise.

In 2007 the collapse of a bridge over the Mississippi River highlighted the national inattention to infrastructure maintenance and investment. The average life of a paved road tops at about 20 years. Locally, in Glendale, out of 350 miles of roads, the city should be reconstructing about 15 miles per year, yet less than two miles get reconstructed, and for the 2009 fiscal year, it was less than one mile. But neglect of the city's infrastructure wasn't limited to what you can visually observe.

In 2007 the city of Glendale took up emergency action on the fragile state of the Dieterich reservoir, the city's largest, which serves nearly half of the GWP customers. According to the urgency request, corroded pipes and valves would've caused the loss of 57 million gallons of water and flooding would have occurred. At the time, the city's water utility fund had dwindled to 1.5 million dollars. By September of 2009 further inspections showed more signs of imminent failure of the main intake and outflow pipes installed over sixty years ago.

The summary of the decade in Glendale can't be complete without mentioning the legal cases on sexual harassment and debauchery at various city departments disclosed during court proceedings. How a city council can be neutered by the city management and city unions can't be explained by campaign endorsements or campaign donations alone. This past decade highlighted to me what most residents are not exposed to - A cozy relationship between the developers, contractors, councilmen and some in the city staff who very likely helped make the deals a

profitable reality for them. In Glendale, this was the decade of defrauding the taxpayer. Let's hope it won't take the FBI a decade to look into what is very likely pervasive malfeasance inside city hall. **HERBERT MOLANO**

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

Total Number of Current and Active Glendale Foreclosures as of Dec 23, 2009 are: **897**

Thanks to Christian Arbid for the up-to-date information

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.



CHRISTMAS IS WHEN I WANT IT: Zoning Administrator Edith Fuentes was chastised by members of the public for doing her job, conducting a hearing on December 23, a regular workday. What is with some of these hare brains? They ought to be applauding her for doing her job. SA [ED – The hearing was postponed.]

HIZZONER: Why do you call Drayman, 'Mayor Drayman'? JP [ED – Actually CCM Drayman runs the Council meetings while CCM Quintero sits there not saying much. Drayman speaks on all the issues, especially those he has scripted. He dresses better than all the others and has the glazed look of a monarch.]

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCE: I was one of those that feared an Armenian majority on the dais. There was Manoukian, Najarian and Yousefian. They seldom voted as an Armenian bloc. Today there is a new bloc (I like that Vanguard calls them a troika) consisting of Drayman, Friedman and Quintero. I have never felt so disenfranchised. They have emasculated Najarian and the people by providing no swimming pool for Pacific Park; fees have gone up; employee costs have gone up and a system of zoning administration that was working, has been unnecessarily changed. There are more meetings behind closed doors, like in the Zarian times. At least with three Armenians, the decisions were much more balanced. GK

STOP BEGGING: This has been a very bad year for me financially. It is difficult to provide the necessities for my family. Yet the Fire Department keeps begging me for more money to buy children's gifts. They make more money than me and most of the others I know that live in Glendale. If each of them gave \$1000 out of the \$150,000 they are paid, there would be \$200,000 to buy toys. JB

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.--Aldus Huxley

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

3  **Public**  **Information**
"Just the facts"

WE AIN'T TALKING: A request for writings between the CoG and MV Transportation (MVT) (Beeline Operator) resulted in 3 letters from MVT and none from the City even though passengers have been hospitalized due to the failure of the operator to maintain the buses. It appears that the City is withholding information.

WHO ME? According to the manager of the Career Survival Group (CSG) in Burbank, Assistant City Manager Bob McFall is a principal in the business that, according to their website, has Glendale Fire as their client. McFall didn't show the relationship or income on his Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) 700 form. Scott Howard is as well, according to the same source, a principal but did show income from CSG on his SEI. The City Attorney (CA) denies that any money was spent on services from CSG. The CA's credibility is questionable as they have claimed documents didn't exist when they did. Our legal staff is determining if complaints should be filed with the Bar Association and the FPPC.

ROLE MODEL: Mayor Drayman claims his business in Montrose is closed. Yet on November 17th he declared business was good. If it is closed he still uses it for storage, a use that violates zoning restrictions. Drayman also wasn't prompt with his Montrose BID assessments having paid penalties for late payment.

[Glendale Unified School District 100K Club, Fiscal Year 2008-2009](#)

[GUSD Contract for Employment of Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael F. Escalante](#)

CALIFORNIA COURTS ALLOWING GREATER PUBLIC ACCESS

BY PETER SCHEER -- The courts in California are often criticized for being out of step with the rest of the country. A willingness among judges to deviate from national orthodoxy is not necessarily a bad thing, however. Just this week the administrative arm of the California Supreme Court adopted a rule providing public access to administrative records of all state courts, making California the first state to adopt a legally enforceable "freedom of information" mandate for its judiciary. Although records filed in adjudicated legal proceedings (civil suits and criminal prosecutions) have long been open to the public, the public has had no comparable right of access to the judiciary's administrative records--that is, the types of records that courts, in their administrative capacity, possess in common with, say, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Franchise Tax Board, or any other government agency. Until now. ([Read more](#))

COURT RULES CA COUNTIES MUST DISCLOSE--by name--retirees pension payments

In a case filed by the First Amendment Coalition, the Modesto Bee and the California Newspaper Publishers Association, a California Superior Court has ruled that county governments, upon request, must disclose--by name--their retirees' pension payments. The Superior Court for Stanislaus County reasoned that the public interest in access to government employees' pensions outweighs the public interest in protecting the confidentiality of that information. In 2007 the California Supreme Court ruled that government employee' salaries--including employee names--are public records that must be disclosed under the Public Records Act. Since then, governments have split on the issue of access to the pensions of government retirees. Yesterday's Superior Court decision is the result of litigation undertaken to clarify that pension information must be made public. ([Read More](#))

[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

City offices will be open for business on Monday, December 28.

City offices will be open regular business hours on Thursday, December 31.

City offices will be closed on Friday, January 1.

All City offices will re-open during regular business hours on Monday, January 4, 2010.



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
- We need 2 working laptop computers with Windows XP. Letter for tax purposes before 12/31.

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

YEAR-END IRA GIFTS ARE STILL POSSIBLE

On December 31, 2009, we would like to encourage donors who are 71 and over to donate to us through your Individual Retirement Accounts, or IRAs. It works like this. Those who are the right age (technically, 70½ and over) inform their traditional IRA administrators that they wish to make a "qualified charitable distribution" to your nonprofit. You may have to fill out and fax back a simple form; Your IRA administrator cuts the check and sends it directly to Vanguardians.

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.

It is impossible to defeat an ignorant man in argument. [William G. McAdoo](#)

"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

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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.



Fire had nine retirements. In keeping with its averages between full service and disability, about half chose to take the tax-free route of an early retirement. Disability retirements in the public safety system are about 50% fraudulent. The Boston FBI just opened a crime investigation of the Boston Fire Department under evidence it is running a criminal enterprise by filing bogus disability retirement claims. Also nice to see how loyal the full service types are. They all retired when their 90% was reached, not a day later. Five of the nine this time retired earlier, one with just 13 years of experience.

Sam Engle was called into Drayman's' office and was beaten up for giving Vanguard information about the use of his store in Montrose. He told Sam that everything was ok. This is during the period when Drayman will make the decision about the reorganization of City Departments. Sam could go the way of Jess Duran and Edith Fuentes. [ED – The issue is, when elected officials don't follow the law because they think they are above it, that there needs to be another agency that investigates wrong-doing by City Officials, information that can only be obtained by public record request or from a City Official if you are the trained attack-dog. Drayman claims his business is doing well during these austere times (11-17-09 City Council), yet he claims he went out of business in June of 2009 although he told Engle that he stores records in his place of business which is a violation of CR zoning. Further, he was never issued a zoning use certificate. The ZUC was issued to a non-existent corporation. The question should be, "Should elected officials be allowed to abide by the laws they choose?"]

Distraction, brought on by technology, has created an addled citizen one that so consumed with texting in their vote to American Idol that they forget to vote or worse, why they were voting in the first place. **MICHAEL LEVINE**

One man with courage makes a majority. Andrew Jackson.

Forgive your enemies, but never forget their names. John Kennedy

The men who create power make an indispensable contribution to the Nation's greatness, but the men who question power make a contribution just as indispensable, especially when that questioning is disinterested, for they determine whether we use power or power uses us. **John F. Kennedy**, *Amherst College, Oct 26, 1963*

6 THE ILLUSTRIOUS CITY COUNCIL is exhausted after their bobbing and weaving about answering the hard questions, they are resting.

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

["Proposition 34 has allowed far too many ways for officeholders, candidates and special-interest contributors to legally circumvent its contribution limits," commission chairman Ross Johnson told the Los Angeles Times last month.](#)

VALLEJO, Calif. -- [The Vallejo City Council](#) Tuesday evening considered a five-year plan to emerge from its current bankruptcy. The 90-page plan by Interim City Manager Robert F.D. Adams and Finance Director Robert V. Stout is replete with charts, graphs and data that identify available resources and policies the city hopes will lead to budget sustainability. The city filed for bankruptcy in May 2008.

The plan addresses the millions of dollars of liabilities that exist because of "unsustainable changes in the pension benefits formula" and "our extravagant and unsustainable promises for health coverage to employees and retirees," Stout and Adams state in their report on the bankruptcy workout plan to the City Council. [Click here](#) to learn what happened at the meeting.

Los Angeles Times: In a landmark court settlement proposed Tuesday, Caltrans agreed to spend \$1.1 billion over the next 30 years to repair and improve state-controlled sidewalks, crosswalks and park-and-ride facilities so they are accessible for people with disabilities.

The settlement, filed at the federal courthouse in Oakland, was a major victory for civil rights activists, who have been battling for years with the transportation agency to provide equal access to public rights-of-way for the blind and those who use wheelchairs, canes or walkers.

Advocates said they hoped that the agreement would become a national model for resolving disputes between the disabled and other state and local governments.

The class-action lawsuit that sparked the settlement has been closely watched by local officials and powerful municipal organizations, such as the National League of Cities and the League of California Cities. The groups have long contended that such lawsuits unnecessarily burden financially strapped cities that are already struggling to comply with federal and state access requirements. [Settlement agreement.](#)

Los Angeles Times: L.A. County deputies earn massive overtime, report says some of the extra work violated county rules and may have hindered the deputies' performance, the report from Auditor-Controller Wendy Watanabe's office says.

A new study, "**Evasions of Campaign Finance Laws, and a Model Law to Block Them,**" can be found at the www.vanguardians.org home page.

Email info@vanguardians.org to subscribe to the Weekly News on issues that impact Glendale. **The media with a voice; the organization that gets results you want; we encourage and support advocacy, involvement and engagement with government. Vanguard is intended for personal use by recipient and forwarding without change to recipient's personal email list. Vanguardians is a 501C3 charitable non-profit corporation Contributions are tax deductible.** Vanguardians does not use commercial fundraisers. **To ensure you receive Vanguard,** please add our email addresses info@vanguardians.org, vanguardweekly@gmail.com and ba@fieldworks.net - to your address book or Internet Service Provider safe list. **Annual subscription for email \$50, by US Mail \$75, Newsstand \$2 per issue.** Copyrighted materials used with permission. ©2009