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UNION-TRIBUNE

June 15, 2007

Regarding "It's time to stop the name-calling" by Herbert G. Klein (Opinion, June 13):

When he took office, Mayor Jerry Sanders told the people of this city that "San Diego's municipal government has failed its citizens and become an embarrassing and corrupt impediment to progress."

He promised voters he would "tell the whole truth – what happened, why it happened and how it will be fixed." He represented he would change the "operating philosophy" at City Hall, which was one of "delay, deny or deceive."

Unfortunately, the mayor engaged in an embarrassing and corrupt course of action when he allowed a campaign contributor, who had raised thousands of dollars for the Sanders campaign, to construct a building near the city's airport at Montgomery Field in defiance of Federal Aviation Administration safety standards and California state law.

Moreover, the mayor engaged in a corrupt and embarrassing course of action when he deployed the "highest level executive with the necessary expertise on these issues" from the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, along with city staff, to lobby the FAA for changes to the routing of airplanes at Montgomery Field so that the illegal building could remain. In doing so, Mayor Sanders misused thousands of dollars of public funds for the private benefit of a campaign contributor.

When the facts of the mayor's misconduct began to leak out to the public, the mayor engaged in a campaign of delay, deny and deceive.

The mayor delayed turning over pertinent documents for weeks. He denied that he was helping his campaign contributor to circumvent FAA rules. And he deceived by claiming "nothing could be further from the truth" in response to allegations he was misusing an Airport Authority senior staffer to lobby the FAA to allow the illegal building to stay.

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To be considered for publication, a letter must include an address, daytime phone number and, if faxed or mailed, be signed. It may be sent to Letters Editor, The San Diego Union-Tribune, Post Office Box 120191, San Diego, CA 92112-0191, faxed to (619) 260-5081 or e-mailed to letters@uniontrib.com. Letters submitted may be used in print or in digital form in any publication or service authorized by the Union-Tribune Publishing Co.

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Klein addresses none of these facts. Instead, he attacks the City Attorney's Office for doing the very thing Mayor Sanders promised to do: tell the whole truth – what happened, why it happened and how it will be fixed.

Mayor Sanders can still recover and find his way, but he needs to do what he promised. No more delays, denials or deceptions. No more embarrassing, corrupt favors to campaign contributors. Rather, the mayor needs to tell us the whole truth, what happened, why it happened, and how it will be fixed so that it never happens again, as he promised.

MICHAEL AGUIRRE
San Diego City Attorney

Not happy over Hunter's jet support

Regarding "Hunter defends support for jet" (A1, June 13):

Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Alpine, arranges for \$63 million of our money to be given to a local company to develop a product that the military customer does not want. In return, he gets \$36,000 from the company. Incredible!

DONALD WILSON
Carlsbad

Finding glitches in vote machine bill

The voting machine bill is fatally flawed because of the very compromises cited by Reps. Rush Holt, D-N.J., and Bob Filner, D-San Diego, in their June 13 letter.

First, the practice of distributing electronic voting machines prior to the election invites hacking and fraud, no matter how convenient it is for local officials. Second, secret vote counting is the only result of the compromise on intellectual property rights by machine manufacturers. Electronic voting machines allowed in the Holt bill have even been banned by the Republican governor of Florida, who is no stranger to badly administered elections that have eroded the public trust.

Our democracy deserves better. I was elected by 14 votes to a local school board. The governor of the state of Washington was elected by 164 votes. Every voter wants to know that every vote is counted correctly. Electronic voting has proven otherwise over and over again in the past two elections.

With the top-level hiring of a man who supervised two people convicted of vote-rigging in Ohio, and the appointment of a corporate saleswoman for the voting machines we spent millions on in our county, the registrar of voters in San Diego is already compromised. In the minds of many, our sacred right to have a fair election is threatened, and I agree. There is too much evidence to turn a blind eye to the problems with electronic voting.

Filner and the county Board of Supervisors should protect and guard our right to have every vote counted. Why defy voters who demand both transparency and honest public officials administering elections?

SANDY ARSHAM
Ramona

Lost-pants case makes farce of legal system

The judge who filed a lawsuit over his lost pants ("Trial opens in judge's \$54 million lost-pants lawsuit," News, June 13) is obviously a malicious,

unstable person. The sad part is that this type of frivolous lawsuit could make it to court. The frightening part is that a person like this is judging federal cases.

What is happening to our legal system to allow this joke to clog up our already crowded court system? It makes a farce out of our legal system. The case should not have made it to court and Roy L. Pearson, the administrative judge for the District of Columbia, should be relieved of his duties.

TOM WILMOT
La Mesa

State finance director addresses transit 'cuts'

Regarding "Governor wants to shift \$1.3 billion from transit in budget" (News, June 13):

Some transit advocates are arguing Gov. Schwarzenegger's proposed budget "cuts" transit aid. As director of the California Department of Finance, I wish to state the facts do not support that claim. The public transportation account of the state treasury, from which much of the funding and all the operating subsidy flows, received a huge influx of cash in the current year. As a result, the amount available to subsidize transit operations in the current year more than tripled, to \$623 million. Everyone understood that this was a one-time injection of cash. For advocates to say the May budget revision cuts transit funding just because the one-time cash infusion will not be repeated is disingenuous.

State funding for local transit agencies has gone from \$292 million in the governor's first budget to \$1.6 billion in the May revision budget, more than a fivefold increase and a substantial increase by historical standards. It is understandable that advocates, who had been hoping for a massive windfall for local transit agencies, would be disappointed to see the money used for state purposes, but they should also understand the difference between the loss of a windfall and a cut to their funding.

MIKE GENEST
Sacramento

Another summer of 'rowdy drunks' ahead?

Regarding "Panel still unsure on alcohol ban" (Around Our Region, June 6):

Smoking was banned at the beach in, what, a nanosecond. Yet the Beach Alcohol Task Force commissioned by City Councilman Kevin Faulconer is wrapping up its assignment with no alcohol ban in the works. The committee did a great job of postponing any formal action on the issue and gave us yet another summer of rowdy drunks on our beaches.

The issue is a no-brainer from a public safety issue. Our city would save millions by freeing up additional police personal and resources, and park personnel who have to pick up after the revelers. How can a police chief and council member be against a total ban? Do they not care for our safety and quality of life? How many accidents by drunk drivers will it take? How many intoxicated people arrested or carried off the beach will it take?

The councilman has been proactive in other areas and worked for the betterment of the community; now it's time to get on board with this issue. Give us back our beaches and our community.

PENNY CAMPBELL
San Diego

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