



MY BEST SHOT

by Lisa Ross

www.lisaross.com

UNINVITED GUESTS: CYBER, POLITICAL VIRUSES

Like an asteroid hitting earth, two events collided one day last week with a similar uninvited jolt to my small world.

One was the early morning appearance of the ubiquitous computer virus A. Kournakova that indiscriminately sent itself to everyone on my extensive email list, friend and foe, past and present.

The other was a phone call after a three year hiatus from former Del Mar Heights resident rabble-rouser Peter Navarro, rising from the political dead to discuss his intention to run for the District 6 City Council seat just vacated by Valerie Stallings.

Where are Ghostbusters when you need them.

Both events reverberated around the city and stressed my telephone and email inbox to the max with reactions ranging from empathy to accusations of complicity to helpless confusion about just what to do. A kind of morbid curiosity buzzed on both fronts.

I heard from people I had not talked with in years—such is the real torture of viruses that invade Outlook files and feed political rumor mills. I spent the day in plausible deniability—a state of mind I had not experienced since working as Navarro's press secretary during the 1996 Congressional race. Except this time, the denial was of the Freudian type—this can't be happening.

I spent my day assuring folks that I was not responsible for either bewildering happening—the virus came from a building industry consultant, unintentionally, and Navarro redux from people who desperately want things shaken up in City Hall, especially in regards to ballpark financing and managing the energy crisis. An economist, a well-known energy policy expert and a bare-knuckle politician, Navarro fits their bill on all three fronts.

Among the other ten running in the April 17 special election are some fully capable friends—including attorney Kim Cox, who wants to build power plants instead of ballparks, former Stallings staffer and planning board chair Gary Rotto, who has declared war on neighborhood Big Box malls, and County Supervisor Chief of Staff Steve Danon who would underground utility lines and promote clean water programs. The other big-ticket candidate is Michael Pallamary who lost to Valerie Stallings in 1995.

Although the 6th District might seem light years away from Carmel Valley and Del Mar, Pacific Beach, Claremont, Mission Bay and Mission Valley are really just down the road. More importantly, whoever wins this race will be taking the place of our most reliable vote on behalf of environmental and neighborhood character protection.

The emergence of Navarro as a candidate, with his big name recognition among voters, has profoundly changed the dynamics and likely the tenor of the race. A scrappy managed growther, he's the anti-Christ to many entrenched San Diego interests. This will be a bruiser if he makes it to a run-off—and a gold mine fundraising opportunity for his opponent.

Publicly, the other candidates are keeping their upper lips stiff, optimistic that Navarro's high negatives gained during previous Mayoral, Supervisorial and Congressional races will knock him out of the ballgame altogether. In a race with an expected turnout of only 25,000 voters, anything can happen. But, no one could doubt that Navarro became the story in the 6th.

Paradoxically, Mayor Murphy, in running as an outsider in November, set up the dynamics for a plausible Navarro run by fanning anti-developer and anti-ballpark sentiment in a campaign I characterized at the time as "Navarro-lite" against arch-insider, County Supervisor Ron Roberts.

As the political world turns, Murphy could get his worst nightmare—the real thing.