



Steve Tobia, Publisher

Ask the Questions Before You Decide

When it comes to political campaigns, "spin" and distortion of the facts have become the standard play of so called "political consultants and strategists" who are hired to win at any cost. Sadly, many voters don't take the time to ask the critical questions and challenge the "Paid For" political ads and direct mailers.

As many of my readers know, my sons and I founded *MVN Magazine* based upon personally experiencing a false "spin" campaign against my previous company that mainstream media blindly reported. It took a five year lawsuit and over \$2 million in legal fees to win the intentional defamation lawsuit. In the end, credibility and truth were restored. However, it left me with a determination to fight for a change in how mainstream media reported on spoon fed "spins" from political operatives.

In every instance of sensational news, there is always another side to the story. In my opinion, questioning those who try to "spin" facts, asking questions to determine intent and motives, and looking at the "bigger issue" is the first responsibility of journalists.

Over the past year or so, *MVN Magazine* began to investigate the group calling itself Arcadia First! who appeared to be conducting a well orchestrated political campaign to stop Caruso's proposed Shops at Santa Anita. What we learned was that this group was a well funded "Astroturf"

political group funded by Westfield to stop their competition. From the beginning of our investigation, we called upon Westfield to stop its deceptive and deceitful campaign and to communicate why they oppose new competition. In my opinion, they should explain their business rationale and not hide behind a front group spinning everything but the true business facts. *MVN* also called upon Westfield and Caruso to work together for the benefit of the community. Caruso took the advice and sent letters to Westfield seeking to work together; Westfield, however, chose to continue the battle.

And when it comes to paid advertising in *MVN*, we have never declined ads from either party. In fact, last year Westfield purchased nearly \$30,000 in paid ads from *MVN* in support of their campaign as did Caruso. Neither of these groups influenced our editorial decisions or coverage of facts. Since November, Westfield has chosen not to advertise with *MVN*. That is their decision. They have the right to purchase ads and send direct mail that are specific to their opinions.

Ultimately, paid advertisements from either Westfield or Caruso will not change our editorial position and coverage of the facts. We hope that Westfield will begin to communicate with the community on their true intentions and concerns and stop hiding under the false "Astroturf" that they are laying over Arcadia.

