

Who is Arcadia First!

Who Are They Really Putting First? *By Steve Tobia*

In our continued attempts to provide the residents of Arcadia with factual answers about the intentions of Arcadia First!, *MVN Magazine* requested they answer these questions, but in accord with their usual operating procedure, they failed to do so. As local residents continue to discuss the pros and cons of both Westfield and Caruso, we ask they read over these questions and consider why Arcadia First! (whose name claims to put Arcadia first) would refuse to answer these questions.

Steve Tobia
Publisher, *MVN Magazine*

"You have already made up your mind regarding this project, having already endorsed it. You further show your bias having selected as your person of the year an individual who does not live or even own a business in this area and in these misleading questions. Given this, it is not in Arcadia First!'s interest to engage you on this issue. If you are truly looking for an investigation, we suggest you research the racetrack's pursuit of slot machines and expanded gambling as a part of the Caruso/Magna Mall. When we see these articles, there will be some suggestion of balance in your publication."

Bernetta Reade
Executive Director, Arcadia First!

MVN Magazine's Questions to Arcadia First!

Issue

In a City of Arcadia Staff Report dated February 27, 2007, regarding Westfield's proposed expansion, staff states, *"...during the campaign process for Measure N, literature distributed by Westfield stated, 'Measure N is a safeguard that Arcadia's strict sign ordinances will apply to all Arcadia's businesses-including Westfield Santa Anita...'* Despite what this campaign literature stated, the measure clearly applied only to the Racetrack property and not other properties."

Q: Did Arcadia First! know at the time of the election that Westfield's sponsored ballot measure excluded its own mall properties and was specific only to the proposed Caruso project?

Q: Has Arcadia First! taken a position on Westfield's proposed 100,000 sq. ft. expansion? If so, please explain.

Issue

In addition to the *Star-News* and Core Media's *Arcadia Weekly* newspaper, *MVN Magazine* also distributes, free of charge, over 1,000 weekly papers throughout Arcadia at community locations including the U.S. Post Office, community center and major retail locations; an additional 1,800 copies of *MVN* are mailed directly to homes in specific neighborhoods for a total weekly distribution in Arcadia of nearly 3,000 copies. According to media industry data, all three media companies would have an equal share of the Arcadia market.

Q: Why does the Arcadia First! website exclude articles and editorials published by *MVN* pertaining to the Westfield/Caruso controversy?

Issue

Kevin Tomkins, president of the Rancho Santa Anita Resident's Association, wrote a letter to Arcadia First! dated March 15, 2007, in response to a direct mail piece and newspaper ads that appeared in other media that were paid for by your organization that attacked his board's decision to endorse the Caruso project. Specifically, he states, *"Arcadia First! and Westfield, however, are rarely concerned with the truth or accuracy...While every member may not agree with our decision, our board was well within its rights to make this decision and endorse The Shops at Santa Anita....there clearly was no violation of By-Laws or the City code."*

Q: Does the executive committee of Arcadia First! require 100% of its 4,600 members to vote on every board decision?

Q: Does Arcadia First! support the notion that any governing body should require 100% concurrence with every resident or member before taking action?

Issue

Arcadia First! states that it operates under an "Executive Committee" and generally lists examples of members.

Q: Who specifically serves on the Executive Committee and their affiliations?

Q: Is Arcadia First! a registered non-profit organization within the State of California?

Overwhelming Community Support for Caruso Project

More than 800 Arcadia residents attended a meeting, on Monday, March 19, of the Arcadia City Planning Commission to discuss Caruso Affiliated's proposal for The Shops at Santa Anita, an upscale outdoor shopping and dining center. Monday's meeting was the final opportunity for the public to make comments to the Commission before they vote on whether to recommend to the City Council approval of the project. An overwhelming majority of those in attendance supported Caruso Affiliated's proposal as demonstrated by a show of hands. Supporters who spoke in favor of The Shops at Santa Anita included representatives of the Arcadia Firefighters Association, Arcadia Unified School District, and the Arcadia Chamber of Commerce.

"We're grateful to the hundreds of Arcadia residents who came out to support The Shops at Santa Anita," said Rick Caruso, founder and CEO of Caruso Affiliated. "This project is truly a partnership between us, Santa Anita Park, and the people of Arcadia who have taken the time to give us their feedback and help make our proposal a great one for Arcadia."