

## To Aid Baca Donor, Hawkins Kept WVWD From Instituting H<sub>2</sub>O Safeguards

By Mark Gutglueck

West Valley Water District Board President Channing Hawkins blocked his agency's effort to ensure that safeguards to protect the Mid-Valley water table were incorporated into the plans ultimately approved by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors for a truck stop now being built in Bloomington, information obtained by the *Sentinel* indicates.

Permitting the tainted water from the run-off from the truck stop to



Channing Hawkins

drain into the groundwater will create a circumstance, water professionals say, that will compromise local water quality in such

a way that within the next 40 to 50 years water drawn from wells within the watershed where the truck stop is located will become undrinkable, requiring a cleanup effort that will cost future generations hundreds of millions of dollars to redress.

A primary consideration in Hawkins' move to short-circuit the district's examination of the impact the development project will have on water quality was that the project's proponent was



Joe Baca, Jr.

Nachhattar Singh Chandi, a major campaign donor to Hawkins' employer, San Bernardino County Supervisor Joe Baca, Jr.

The project in question, the Bloomington Commercial Center, is a truck servicing facility now being built at 10951 Cedar Avenue at the southeast corner of Cedar and Santa Ana Avenue in the unincorporated county community of Bloomington, three-quarters of a mile south of the I-10 Freeway.

In some measure because of Singh's propensity and reputation for making generous contributions to the elected political leadership in the

See P 2

## Mental Illness, Deputies' Indolence & Hospital Incompetence End In Guard's Death

A series of unfortunate events set amidst unprofessional action or incompetence on the part of officials with two Joshua Tree institutions led to the death of an elderly security guard for which a mentally-ill man is now on trial.

Adam Ahmed Almoula has not had an easy life. Over the last sixteen months it has grown immeasurably harsher.

His mother, a Native

American, and father, a Saudi Arabian student studying in America, met while they were attending college in the early 1980s. The couple married and Amoula was born in 1983. When his father completed his education, he was purposed to return to Saudi Arabia. His mother, however, was unwilling to leave the United States. Almoula's father returned to his native country, leaving

his wife and young child behind.

The mother and child lived in Yucaipa, where she had been raised.

When Adam was yet a toddler, his mother began to show signs of systemic lupus erythematosus. Over the next several years, her condition worsened. In 1990, when Almoula was seven years old, one morning he awoke and a few minutes later found his

mother dead in bed.

At that point, his maternal aunt, Victoria Keller, took him into her home and raised him.

Adam struggled as a child, living in a circumstance in which his father was lost to him and his mother was dead. Despite the kindness of his aunt, he suffered the indignity of being ostracized by his peers at school, who in reaction to his name and be-

ing informed that his father was a Saudi, called him a sandnigger, camel jockey and diapahead. Some of the students were physically abusive toward him. His self esteem plummeted.

In the midst of the circumstance in which Almoula was being mistreated by some of her other students, his teacher had him tell his classmates of his experience in finding his mother dead. See P 3

## Shuey's Interminable Affinity For Brutality And Larceny Leads To His Untimely End

Robert Allen Shuey, whose affinity for violence and methamphetamine along with a penchant for drug dealing, theft and mayhem left a multitude of ruined lives in his wake, died under mysterious circumstances this week.

There were two conflicting accounts of how Shuey met his end.

One report was he died of an overdose in his house.

A second version was that Shuey's exit from earth was even more violent than his everyday ex-

istence. Unverified at press time was that he was shot in the face from near point blank range while he was at his home in Blue Jay.

In his 30 years, Shuey was charged with 13 separate felonies and more than 20 misdemeanors stemming from 17 different cases/arrests in San Bernardino County alone. He was convicted on seven of those felonies and 11 of the misdemeanors. At the time of his death, two felony charges stemming from a single incident on May 21,

2020 were pending against him, those charges being first degree burglary and assault by means of force likely to cause great bodily injury.

Since turning 18 years old, Shuey was sentenced to prison or jail terms totaling seven years and 257 days.

Among the felony convictions Shuey sustained were for drug dealing, theft, assault, burglary and weapons charges. Several of his misdemeanor charges involved fighting

or assault. At the time of his death, the district attorney's office was considering filing charges, either as misdemeanors or felonies, relating to two physical assaults – indeed severe beatings – he had administered.

Shuey loved to fight and had engaged in far many more physical assaults than he had been criminally charged with. In recent years, he had bragged that he had put over a dozen people into the hospital.

In 2016, an inebriated

Shuey beat a uniformed security guard working the grounds of the Lake Arrowhead Marina, Pedro Chavez, to a pulp, because he said, Chavez was flirting with his girlfriend.

Shuey's savage attack on Alex Opmanis in January 2019 precipitated the July 2019 fatal shooting of Shuey's friend, Sammy Davis. Indeed, Shuey's infamy escalated as a result of his role as a catalyst in the death of Davis, 28. Shuey fled the scene after the shooting. See P 5

## Mayor Warren Chalks Up Another Warehouse, This One In South Fontana

In what was seen as an indicator of whether recently-elected Fontana City Councilman Peter Garcia would show independence from Mayor Acquanetta Warren, the Fontana City Council on April 27 approved the development of a nearly 200,000-square-foot warehouse in south Fontana.

Warehouse development has become a controversial issue in 217,237-population Fontana over the last several

years. Warren, who has been mayor since 2010, has embraced warehouses as a pathway to economic development in the blue collar city, to the point that she has earned the sobriquet "Warehouse Warren." She has made a case that her city's location on the West Coast not too distant from the Port of Los Angeles and near the confluence of the I-10, I-15 and 210 freeways, together with its proximity to Ontario International Airport and

the presence of rail lines that span the city make Fontana an ideal host for warehousing. Warehouses will provide jobs for unskilled and under-educated city inhabitants, Warren maintains.

Opponents to the proliferation of warehouses in the Inland Empire and particularly in Fontana decry the relatively poor pay and benefits provided to those who work in them, the large diesel-powered semi-trucks that frequent

them with their unhealthy exhaust emissions together with the bane of traffic gridlock they create.

Warren's critics say she is less interested in the economic development and job creation warehouses represent than the hefty political donations their proponents provide her.

Warren is an entrenched Republican Party political boss, who commands the unquestioning loyalty of councilmen John Roberts and Phil Cothran, Jr., both

Republicans. Her former ally, Councilman Jesse Armendarez, another Republican, gave up his council seat last year to vie, unsuccessfully it turned out, for Fifth District county supervisor. In the November election, Warren endorsed Peter Garcia, a member of the Fontana School Board who had been a member of the Fontana Planning Commission from 2009 to 2016.

Garcia emerged victorious. Despite See P 12

## Judge Rules Brosowske Did Not Meet Deadline For Residency To Legitimately Run In 2018 Hesperia City Council Race

Jeremiah Brosowske's political career, which less than three years ago initiated with a resounding bang, this week is on the brink of drawing to a close with little more than a whimper.

Judge David Cohn ruled on Tuesday that Brosowske's removal from the Hesperia City Council in 2019 on non-residency grounds was warranted.

In 2018, at the age 27, Brosowske seemed poised to transform himself into an unstoppable political juggernaut destined for San Bernardino, Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

Having established himself four years before as a dynamic Republican Party political operative, Brosowske with the May 2018 death of Hesperia Mayor Russ Blewett appeared to have been handed a golden opportunity, one that put him on the fast track for seeming political glory. Events, some of his own creation, have now overtaken him.

Homegrown in the Victor Valley, Brosowske graduated from Granite Hills High School in Apple Valley and he enrolled at Victor Valley College, where he was elected to the Associated Student Body Council and Senate, serving in the post of parliamentarian and ultimately rising to the position of ASB vice president. He became thoroughly involved in campus politics at Victor Valley College and from there was drawn into what has been a continual life in politics, Republican politics specifically.

In 2013, Curt Haggman, who was about to be termed out from the California Assembly, orchestrated a silent coup to move then-San Ber- See P 3

## Nachhattar Chandi Bought Off County Politicians Before His Final Effort To Get His Truck Stop Approved *from front page*

jurisdictions in which he pursues development projects, he has been able to in effect purchase lax application of development standards that prevent exacting environmental protection standards from being applied to projects pursued and completed by his various companies and limited liability corporations functioning under the umbrella of the major corporate entity he controls, Chandi Group USA.

Singh obtained a job at a gas station at the age of 21 shortly after arriving in the United State from India in 1991. Through hard work, leverage and risk, he acquired a Black Gold gas station in 1994. Having caught on to the way in which business is transacted and the development/governmental regulation system in Riverside County plays out, he parlayed that single gas station into the acquisition of a series of gas station franchises, greasing his way from one project approval to another with generous political donations. At present he has expanded his, his wife Susana's and Chandi Group USA's holdings to include 49 businesses with over 370 employees, including 21 ARCO AM-PM locations, eight Express Tunnel car washes, as well as multiple Del Taco, Subway, Starbucks, Dairy Queen, Burger King, Dunkin' Donuts, and Denny's franchises. Chandi Group owns the Mecca Travel Center in Mecca in Riverside County, the major business office business complex in Indio, where Chandi Group USA is headquartered, and he has constructed a residential compound in Rancho Mirage that cost some \$30 million to build and for which he has now reportedly been offered \$48 million.

A major element of Chandi's success is his willingness to provide extensive amounts of money to politicians, in particular incumbent politicians. He makes his contributions both directly to those candidates' campaign funds, as well as to so-called "Super PACs," political action committees, which bankroll the campaigns for favored candidates and

cover the cost of attacks on disfavored candidates. Chandi put up over half of a million dollars for one such Super PAC dedicated to candidates for national office, which included \$275,000 earmarked to support President Donald Trump in his 2020 reelection campaign. He was also involved in making direct contributions to U.S. Congressional candidates, particularly those in California and Southern California. He was also a major contributor to a political action committee devoted to candidates for state and local office in California. Singh in recent years has become one of the top three donors to elected officials in Riverside County, where the lion's share of Chandi Group USA's de-



**Nachhattar Chandi**

velopment and business activity takes place and most of its investments are lodged. In Indio, the geographical center of Chandi Group USA's empire, Nachhattar Singh Chandi practically owns the Indio City Council, after having made more than \$100,000 in donations to the political war chests of its members.

Chandi started out in life as the son of farmers in the impoverished northern India state of Uttar Pradesh. He resolved, at the age of 20, to come to the United States to make his way in the world. At this point, after spending three-fifths of his life in California, he has come to understand implicitly and explicitly that American politicians are for sale, and that those elected officials will clear the path for virtually any businessman who will provide them with the mother's milk of politics – money – to keep them in office.

More than three years ago, it came to Chandi's attention that the pay-to-play ethos is inculcated into the political culture of San Bernardino County even more than it is in Riverside County. By shifting a portion of his business and developmental focus northward and applying the same tactics of buying off the politicians there, Chandi is looking to sub-

stantially expand his financial empire. One of his first sallies across the Riverside County/San Bernardino County line was a proposal to develop what was represented as an upscale commercial project in the unincorporated community of Bloomington, what was historically an agricultural community which lies immediately adjacent to and just north of the Riverside County border and south of the cities of Rialto and Fontana.

In the 1870s, David Colton, the one-time sheriff of Siskiyou County, took on the enterprise of constructing the westernmost span of what was to be the second continental rail line into California, the Southern Pacific Railroad. Colton made the decision to build that railroad from Los Angeles on a straight line straight out toward Arizona rather than curving it up into downtown San Bernardino. Consequently, the rail line passed through what is today Bloomington. Similarly, when the Interstate 10 Freeway was laid out in 1956, it too was routed through Bloomington. Due west from Bloomington is Ontario International Airport. In addition to the freeway, four substantial east-west boulevards or roadways run through Bloomington – Valley Boulevard, Slover Avenue, Santa Ana Avenue and Jurupa Avenue. As a consequence, over the last 60 years, gradually at first and then with greater rapidity, Bloomington has lost its agricultural identity and has become much more strongly identified with the transportation and trucking industries. The 6.01-square mile community had a population of 25,482 as of July 1, 2020. As an unincorporated county community, Bloomington is larger population-wise than six of San Bernardino County's incorporated cities and towns – Needles, Big Bear Lake, Grand Terrace, Yucca Valley, Loma Linda and Barstow. Bloomington is inhabited by a relatively unsophisticated and largely impoverished populace. The median household income is \$34,106 and the median family income is \$35,936. About 19.8 percent of families and 25.3 percent of the population in Bloomington live below the poverty line. Ethnically, 64.4 percent of Bloomington's inhabitants are Hispanic. The ultimate land use authority over Bloomington resides with the San Bernardino

County Board of Supervisors, all of the the members of which do not reside in Bloomington and who are strongly influenced driven in their decision-making by the application of political donations.

Given all of those factors, Singh perceived Bloomington as an ideal launching ground for his expansion into San Bernardino County. Initially, he obscured the consideration that the project he was proposing was a truck stop. He represented it rather as a commercial project that would be centered around what the company's agents said would be an upscale restaurant. The center would involve retail shops, two fast-food operations and a gas station, they said. In that form, the project initially garnered support and no opposition to speak of. Over time, the project changed. The gas station became a fueling station. The retail shops became a convenience store. The fueling station became a truck servicing operation. Ultimately, the restaurant component was dropped entirely. In its final form the commercial center had transformed into a truck stop.

The general lack of sophistication of the Bloomington population and the ultimate land use authority residing with the board of supervisors conferred on Chandi Group USA two advantages which would allow it to obtain an entitlement to proceed with the project while being bound by the least cost possible in addressing its environmental impacts.

Truck stops or truck servicing facilities involve intense activity which has serious environmental implications. Indeed, typically at such facilities a number of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contamination is present, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, petroleum oil, solvents, volatile organic compounds, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, chemicals, asbestos and lead. Exposure to the types of contaminants present, or potentially present, at trucking facilities threatens the public health, safety or welfare of a community in which it is located and neighboring communities.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act, development projects are subject to environmental certification. Unless a development is determined to be exempt from the California Environmental

### The San Bernardino County

# Sentinel

Published in San Bernardino County.

The Sentinel's main office is located at 10788 Civic Center Drive in Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

A Fortunado Publication in conjunction with

Countywide News Service

Mark Gutglueck, Publisher

**Call (951) 567-1936**

**to learn of locations where the Sentinel is available or to provide news tips**

10808 Foothill Blvd., Suite 160-446

Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

SBCSentinel@yahoo.com

Legal Notice Department 909 957 9998

Message Line 909-276 5796

Quality Act, known by its acronym CEQA, all projects in California must undergo an examination as to their impacts as part of the approval process. Agencies with land use authority – meaning the state, counties or cities – have a degree of latitude in how intensive that examination of environmental impacts and the attendant mitigations of those impacts are going to be.

The most comprehensive examination of those impacts is a full-blown environmental impact report, an involved study of the project site prior to development, an inventory of the project site's contents and configuration including biological and botanical resources, the project proposal, the potential and actual impacts the project will have on the site and surrounding area in terms of all conceivable issues, including land use, water use, air quality, potential contamination, noise, traffic, and biological and cultural resources. It outlines alternatives to the project, an analyses of taking no action in developing the property and specifies in detail what measures can, will and must be carried out to offset those impacts if the project is approved and the development proceeds.

There are less intensive forms of environmental certification, which include environmental statements, environmental studies and various forms of declarations.

As the Bloomington Commercial Center project was wending its way through the planning process at the San Bernardino County Land Use Services Division, Chandi went to work at compromising the political masters of the personnel in that department. He conferred substantial political contributions on

the members of the board of supervisors.

Prior to his election to the board of supervisors in 2020, First District Supervisor Paul Cook was a congressman. In 2018, Nachhattar Chandi provided his congressional election campaign with \$2,700. Chandi's wife, Susana, likewise that year gave Cook's congressional campaign \$2,700.

In 2019, during the run-up for her election to the board of supervisors, Dawn Rowe, who had been appointed Third District supervisor in 2018, was provided with \$2,000 by Susana Chandi.

Most importantly, Nachhattar Chandi targeted the Fifth District Supervisor, since Bloomington lies entirely within San Bernardino County's Fifth Supervisorial District. As 2020 dawned, then-Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales, who had been supervisor since 2004, was on her way out, as the term limits members of the board of supervisors had been subjected to since the passage of Measure P in 2006 from that point forward limited board members to three four-year terms. Chandi took no chances. He provided \$4,700, the maximum amount he could under San Bernardino County's rules with regard to contribution limits, to Dan Flores, Gonzales's chief of staff, who was running with Gonzales's endorsement to succeed her as supervisor. Chandi made another \$2,000 contribution to then-Fontana City Councilman Jesse Armendarez, who was also running for Fifth District supervisor. In addition, he contributed \$4,700 to then-Rialto Councilman Joe Baca, Jr., who was in the race, as well. Chandi's motivation had nothing to

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## Man In Midst Of Psychotic Episode Taken By The Sheriff's Department To The Wrong Hospital Is Then Released Back Onto The Street To Wander Ten Miles Through The Desert *from front page*

This apparent effort to induce the others in his class to empathize with him and cease their verbal abuse redounded detrimentally when one of Almoula's classmates instead told him that his mother's body was rotting in the ground while worms were crawling into and out of her eyes and mouth.

While he was still an adolescent, Almoula was diagnosed as suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.

Another well-intended but possibly devastating blow to Almoula's immediate and long-term

development came about when he was prescribed medicines – anti-psychotic drugs – which he began to take as a teenager.

Almoula never acclimated himself socially, becoming and remaining a loner. He did not move through the normal patterns of adjustment. He did not join the military or receive any post high school education. According to his aunt, he had few friends, and those he did develop relationships with took advantage of him or were cruel to him in some way, which deepened and broadened his isolation.

## Shuey Reportedly Dispatched With A Single Shot To The Head *from front page*

gathering up what some believe as crucial evidence that might have served to exonerate Opmanis. Shuey's involvement in Davis's death came to public light in the aftermath of Opmanis's arrest and the filing of murder charges against him.

The events which triggered the July 11, 2019 shooting went back some six months prior to that. In January 2019, Opmanis, then 27, who had previously made the acquaintance of Shuey through their mutual interest in

dirt bike riding, was at the Dogwood bar in Blue Jay. Shuey, who lived not too distant from the bar, invited Opmanis, who had been drinking heavily, to come to his home. Opmanis at some point vomited while he was at Shuey's house, after which a fight ensued. Opmanis was beaten severely and required hospitalization as a result, losing a portion of his vision in his left eye from the trauma Shuey had inflicted. The doctors treating Opmanis considered it necessary to insert a plate in his head because a portion of his skull had collapsed.

Encouraged by his family, Opmanis filed a civil suit against Shuey. The

When his aunt and her husband moved to the relatively remote desert community of Joshua Tree, he accompanied them there. The atmosphere in Joshua Tree was well suited to Almoula, as he was insulated from people. According to Keller, her nephew was at relative peace on her property, where she had goats and a donkey. Almoula, she said, was kind to the domesticated animals she was raising, and was fascinated by the wildlife that were a part of the natural desertscape, in particular the mojave jackrabbits.

Moreover, Keller said, despite his inability to develop close personal relationships with people, Almoula was compassionate, insisting on the occasions when she would take him into town in Joshua Tree or

Yucca Valley or Twentynine Palms, that they show compassion for the homeless they would encounter there by giving them food.

In his early thirties, Almoula was diagnosed as having schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. His medications were adjusted. There followed a period during which medical professionals sought to fine tune his pharmaceutical panel.

Only Almoula can know the inward effect of the permutations of the medications prescribed to him. Outwardly, those drugs appeared varied in their impact. At times Almoula came across as evened out, an indication that the medications were having their desired or intended effect. Sometimes he became excitable.

Other times catatonic. At times, he transformed into a seeming zombie. It was not uncommon for him to come across as stoned.

The latter effect became problematic when Almoula would venture out into civilization, into town in Joshua Tree or occasionally Yucca Valley or Twentynine Palms. The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement service to all three of those communities, since Joshua Tree is an unincorporated county district and the Town of Yucca Valley and the City of Twentynine Palms, both incorporated municipalities, contract with the sheriff's department to serve as their police departments. Historically, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department does not qual-

ity as the most enlightened police agency nationally, in California or even in San Bernardino County. The county's desert communities have for generations been places where the least well-educated, the lesser sophisticated, the most brutal, the least compassionate, the questionably competent and the laziest of the department's deputies have been assigned. When the department's deputies would encounter Almoula, relying on the department's somewhat unreliable intoxication recognition protocol, they would deem him to be stoned, i.e., under the influence. This, under the department's code, gave the deputies license to beat him or otherwise mistreat

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filing of the suit antagonized Shuey, an avid motorcyclist and gang member with a reputation for stabbing people. During the February-to-June 2019 timeframe, Shuey made repeated threats against Opmanis and his family, on occasion in public places and situations. In reaction, Opmanis obtained a handgun, a Glock 27 .40 caliber, which he routinely carried in his vehicle, a black 2000 Mercedes SUV.

On July 11, 2019 Shuey and another avid motorcyclist, Shane Codman, then 28, had ridden their motorcycles down from the mountain communities first to Corona and then to a "Bike Night" in Riv-

erside, where they met up with Sammy Davis around 6 p.m., in the course of which they were consuming alcohol. The three left Riverside around 8 p.m., riding their motorcycles to return to the mountains. They intended to stop at Goodwin's Market in Crestline to purchase hamburger and beer before going to Shuey's home in Blue Jay for a late night barbecue.

Meanwhile, Opmanis had gone to Goodwin's Market, located at 24089 Lake Gregory Drive in Crestline. An external security camera at Goodwin's Market, operated by Scottsdale, Arizona-based Clear Protection Services, Inc. shows Opmanis driv-

ing into the store's parking lot at 8:49 p.m., and an internal camera also operated by Clear Protection shows him coming into the store at 8:52 p.m., accompanied by two individuals, one identified as Osvaldo Nuno and another known only as Johnny. Davis, Shuey and Codman arrived at Goodwin's Market at 9:02 p.m., as recorded by the store's external security camera, and are seen coming into the store at 9:04 p.m. While Opmanis knew both Shuey and Codman, he had no previous encounters with and did not know Davis, who had spent the better part of the previous decade in prison.

According to an individ-

ual speaking on behalf of Clear Protection Services, the video surveillance system in place at Goodwin's Market consists of several cameras, all of which run continuously and are not triggered by motion sensors or any other devices which interrupt the video surveillance.

The most telling piece of evidence in the case involving Opmanis is the video taken from one of the store's external cameras which shows the parking space where Opmanis's Mercedes SUV is parked very close to the center of its field of perspective. The store's other cameras,

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## Brosowski Pinned His Political Hopes On Being Wedded To Republicans & Developmental Interests *from front page*

San Bernardino County Republican Party Chairman Robert Rego out of the county party's top spot and assume it himself. This better positioned Hagman to make a run for San Bernardino County Fourth District supervisor in 2014. Once he had acceded to the county party chairmanship, Hagman had repeated contact with the then-22-year-old Brosowski, who exhibited an uncommon enthusiasm and energetic intensity in his involvement on behalf of the party. Under Hagman's tutelage, Brosowski was given one challenging assignment after another, which he dutifully fulfilled. According to Hagman, all 14 of the Republican candidates Brosowski worked on behalf of in 2014 won their races. Consequently, Hagman hired Brosowski

at the age of 23 into the post of executive director of the San Bernardino County Republican Central Committee.

Meanwhile, Bill Postmus, who had once been the Republican Party chairman and chairman of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors before he was felled by political scandal which resulted in a conviction on 14 public office corruption charges that prevented him from ever holding elected office in California again, was looking to get back into the political game. Though he could not be a politician/officeholder himself, Postmus was nevertheless looking to create a political machine that could be used for kingmaking. No longer able to hold the scepter, Postmus set about recreat-

ing himself as the power behind the throne.

Postmus did so by going to Wyoming and starting a corporation – Mountain States Consulting Group. He then set up operations in Victorville under the name of Mountain States Consulting. He offered those seeking or holding political office assistance that extended to running or assisting in running campaigns along with fundraising.

Having been laid low because of sloppy bribetaking and engaging in quid pro quos in which the favors he was doing as an elected official in exchange for the money being supplied to him by those with business before the county had become blatantly obvious, Postmus learned from his errors. Mountain States Consulting was set up as a political money laundering operation in which those seeking to influence

elected officials to have them use their power as county or city officials or legislators and take action to benefit them by approving their projects or awarding them governmental contracts or franchises did not need to make direct contributions to those politicians. Instead, they would hire Mountain States consulting to find a way to deliver that money to the politicians for them. Mountain States, of course, would make sure the politicians understood where the money had originated, but Mountain States serving as the cut out provided distance or insulation between the donor and the politician. In that way, the money that made its way to the politician did not look like a bribe.

One of the first people Postmus employed with Mountain States Consulting was Brosowski.

Two politicians Post-

mus had assisted through Mountain States Consulting were Paul Russ, who successfully vied for the Hesperia City Council in 2014 and Rebekah Swanson, who was elected to the Hesperia City Council in 2016.

With the opening created on the Hesperia City Council with Blewett's passing, and Postmus looking to vicariously get back into office through Brosowski, he called upon Russ and Swanson to look favorably on Brosowski's application to replace Blewett. Postmus was also able to get Bill Holland, who was on the Hesperia City Council and who had been immediately elevated to replace Blewett as mayor, to go along with appointing Brosowski. Postmus could achieve this because the stridently pro-development Holland drew his electioneering support from the development

community, which was a major source of the money provided to Postmus for his political money laundering endeavors carried out through Mountain States Consulting.

The one hitch was that Brosowski did not actually live in Hesperia. That was taken care of easily enough, however. Postmus convinced one of his long-time political allies, former Hesperia City Councilman/Mayor Bill Jensen, to allow Brosowski to claim residence at his Hesperia home. Brosowski filled out the paperwork to apply for consideration as Blewett's replacement, competing against Brigit Bennington, Victoria Dove, Russell Harris, Linda Holder, Robert Nelson, Anthony Rhoades, Veronica Rios and Chester Watts. Holland, Russ and Swanson voted to appoint Bro-

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## Water Board President Put A Higher Priority On Keeping His Boss Pleased Than Protecting H<sub>2</sub>O Supply *from page 2*

do with getting behind the one candidate he considered to be best qualified to serve as San Bernardino County's Fifth District supervisor but rather to ensure that whoever won, he would stand in good stead with him.

After Flores was eliminated from the running by finishing third in the balloting that took place in conjunction with the March 3, 2020 California Presidential Primary, Armendarez and Baca went head-to-head in the November 3, 2020 election. Baca prevailed, and was sworn in on December 7, 2020.

Ultimately, under pressure from the board of supervisors, the San Bernardino County Land Use Services Division used the least exacting size-up of environmental issues pertaining to the Bloomington Commercial Center project, a mitigated negative declaration, to give Chandi Group USA clearance to proceed. In a mitigated negative declaration, the panel entrusted with a community's ultimate land use authority, in this case the board of supervisors, undertakes an essentially cursory examination of the project before declaring that any untoward adverse environmental impacts from the project will be mitigated, or offset, by the conditions of approval of the project imposed upon the developer.

Of note is that the documents prepared for the Chandi truck stop project relating to the impact on the water table beneath the project in the weeks and months before the board of supervisors met to vote on the project on April 6 were withheld from the public. County land use services employees, asserting that the county did not own the documents and that they were the proprietary product of the consultant retained by Chandi Group USA to compile them, kept them under lock and key in a file considered off limits to anyone other than select land use services division employees. Efforts by members of the public to see those documents were rebuffed.

With the date for the board's consideration of the project approaching,

West Valley Water District Board Member Greg Young familiarized himself with the initial study for the project, noting it did not provide any detail with regard to how mitigation of polluted groundwater contaminated by tainted stormwater runoff was to occur. In January, he undertook what he described as a "two-month odyssey" in an effort to find out what treatment that stormwater runoff was going to be subjected to. The initial study made no reference to any sort of water quality assurance strategy. Young examined the county's MS4 permit, which pertains to the county's overall and generalized strategy for dealing with stormwater discharge. From this, he learned that a water quality mitigation plan would be a required part of the permitting of the project. His request to see that plan was denied.

The West Valley Water District serves 93,000 residents in roughly 23,000 households as well as commercial and industrial customers in large portions of Fontana and Rialto along with all of Bloomington. Young, as the representative of the Bloomington subdivision within the district, insisted that his elected position with the district entitled him to make an examination of any issues that pertained to the quality of water provided to the West Valley Water District's customers. Met with further resistance, Young persisted, sending a series of three emails, the last of which he said was "rather strident," to county officials demanding access to the water quality mitigation plan relating to how stormwater that would wash over the truck stop was to be diverted and treated.

At that point, Young was permitted to view the documentation under highly restrictive conditions which required that he come to the county land use services office alone and without a cellphone or any device with a camera so that he could not photograph the documents, copy them or attempt to reproduce them in any way, and that he be monitored by a land use services staff member the entire time he was perusing the documents.

Young's examination of the water quality mitigation plan revealed that the county had allowed Chandi Group USA to utilize the least intensive and least

expensive methodology to arrest the flow of pollutants that will emanate from the site once it has been converted to a truck stop. Contained in the water quality mitigation plan was, according to Young, an inventory setting forth the types of pollutants that were anticipated to come off the project site once it was operating as a truck servicing facility, those contaminants being fuel spillage, both gasoline and diesel, petroleum products, solvents or the byproducts therefrom borne by rainwater runoff washing over the vehicles and the pavement as well as the equipment, machinery, fuel tanks, barrels, pipes, troughs and other containers and conveyances at the site. The methodology for handling that runoff was to, in Young's words, "let the native soil" do all the work in terms of stormwater dispersal instead of more stringent mitigation options. The way in which rainwater is to be dealt with, according to the document, will involve collecting that runoff into an infiltration chamber and then simply allowing it to merge into the soil. The water in the chamber, permeated with grease, oil, solvents, gasoline, diesel fuel, radiator fluid, transmission fluid and a host of noxious chemicals that are to get washed into the system are not to be treated.

According to Young, a consultant working for Chandi confidently declared that the water table would remain safe using that methodology, based on the theory that the ground would serve as a filter through which the water would pass but the contaminants would be caught. The consultant, Young said, maintained that "as the run-off goes through all these layers of sand, the contaminants would get captured. This method was proposed quite cavalierly, despite a long history of water contamination in the region from man-made products and chemicals."

At that point, Young said, it was clear to him why the documentation was being hidden.

Young went to West Valley Water District headquarters, where he alerted staff to what the county was on the verge of approving. Staff members appeared to take what he was saying seriously, expressing concern about the potential the untreated stormwater runoff from the project would

have on the long-term viability of the water table beneath Bloomington as a source of domestic water. Young importuned his fellow board member, Kyle Crowther, who served with him on the district's Engineering, Operations and Planning Committee, and the district's acting general manager, Shamindra "Ricky" Manbahal, to consider what action the district could take to ensure more responsible handling of that runoff.

Manbahal acted. On Thursday, March 25, 2021, Manbahal scheduled for the following day, March 26 at 4:30 p.m., a special meeting of the Engineering, Operations and Planning Committee. The agenda for that meeting included an item that called for the committee to "consider requesting [the] County of San Bernardino to implement additional pre-treatment practices for storm/ground water."

To complement that meeting agenda, Manbahal authored a staff report in which he noted that the district had previous issues with regard to the contamination of the district's water supply by perchlorate, an oxidizer in rocket propellants and fireworks first detected in some of the district's wells in 1997. By 1998, Manbahal noted, the district "shut down several wells to avoid exposure to the drinking water supply. The West Valley Water District started to install ion exchange treatment systems in 2005, a fluidized bed bioreactor treatment plant in 2011, and a fixed bed reactor treatment plant in 2016. To date, the West Valley Water District owns and operates eight water treatment plants, six of which are for perchlorate treatment."

Manbahal further noted that "In 2019, the West Valley Water District shut down one well in the Lytle Creek groundwater basin after discovering methyl tertiary butyl ether, a fuel oxygenate exclusively used as a fuel additive, and two wells in the Rialto-Colton basin after discovering 1,2,3-trichloropropane, an impurity in certain pesticides. No other contaminants have been detected above the maximum contaminant levels set by the State Water Resources Control Board."

With regard to the threat posed to the district's water sources by the insufficient treatment of the stormwater runoff from the Bloomington Commercial

Center, Manbahal wrote, "A typical watershed scale stormwater management approach is using a multi-best management practices (BMP) approach to managing the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff. The BMP sequence starts with pollution prevention and progresses through source control, on-site treatment, and regional treatment before the runoff water is discharged."

Manbahal's report stated that "Each multi-best management practices utilizes one or more components that work together to remove pollutants utilizing combinations of processes. The multi-best management practice(s) selected can minimize the rate of runoff by utilizing a hydraulic process, remove bulk solids by utilizing a physical process, remove settleable solids and floatables by utilizing a physical process, remove suspended and colloidal solids by utilizing a physical, biological or chemical process, and remove colloidal, dissolved, volatile, and pathogens by using a biological or chemical process."

The committee had three options, Manbahal noted, those being "1) Take no action; 2) Request [the] county to implement additional pre-treatment measures; and 3) Determine if there's nexus to the county."

In his report's conclusion, Manbahal wrote, "Staff recommends that this item be submitted for consideration, and that the board of directors approve this item and authorize the acting general manager to execute the necessary documents."

In further preparation for the specially-called March 26 Engineering, Operations and Planning Committee meeting, staff obtained a copy of the initial study for the project. Zeroing in on that portion of the study relating hydrology and water quality, an analysis of certain conclusions in the study were made. Highlighted for discussion by the committee was the assertion in the initial study that there would be "less than significant impacts" from the completion of the project or that it would entail "any violation of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements" or otherwise "substantially degrade surface or ground water quality." Staff's highlighting of passages within the document further brought into ques-

tion language in the initial study that there was to be less than significant impact on the environment in terms of whether it would "decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin."

Also highlighted was that efforts to control water runoff to prevent groundwater contamination specified in the report were only temporary ones that would be in place during the construction phase.

That highlighted text was "All individual projects implemented under the county's general plan would comply with applicable federal, state, and local water quality regulations. Currently, the County of San Bernardino follows state standards for water quality and does not have their own specific standards. During construction, the proposed project would be required to obtain coverage under the state's General Permit for Construction Activities that is administered by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Storm water management measures would be required to be identified and implemented that would effectively control erosion and sedimentation and other construction-based pollutants during construction."

Handwritten in the margin was "Post Construction?" That suggested water district staff believed there would be inadequate monitoring and safeguards once the project is completed.

Further highlighted for the committee's review was language in the initial study relating to the county's MS4 permit. An MS4 permit is a document issued by the federal government to a state, city, town, village, or other public entity which allows that jurisdiction to run a series of surface water or stormwater handling conveyances or conveyance systems to discharge that water either into the ground or into a stream, river or body of water. An MS4 permit is issued generally to the governmental jurisdiction for all of its discharge activity rather than any single release of water in a limited or circumscribed geographical area.

The language in the initial study stated, "Compliance with the county's low impact development

*Continued on Page 5*

## Shuey, Rowdy Motorcycling Mountain Communities Ruffian, Killed from page 3

while useful in putting the events of that evening in a temporal order, do not actually capture the shooting itself.

At 9:06 p.m., Opmanis, Nuno and Johnny are shown on the internal and then the external cameras leaving the store. Thereafter, Opmanis puts groceries into his Mercedes. Between 9:08 p.m. and 9:09 p.m., the external video shows Opmanis talking to Nuno and Johnny while they are seated in Johnny's vehicle, which is parked proximate to Opmanis's Mercedes. Johnny and Nuno in their vehicle drive out of the camera's field of view.

The external camera shows Sammy Davis emerging from the store at 9:09 p.m., at which point he lights a cigarette and spots Opmanis. The camera's audio picks up Davis yelling at Opmanis, "It's on you, punk." At 9:10 p.m. on the external video, Opmanis can be seen standing on the running board of his Mercedes and remaining wary of Davis, Shuey and Codman.

At 9:11 p.m., the video shows Johnny and Nuno pull back into the parking lot and park, lights on, behind Opmanis's black Mercedes SUV.

Opmanis remained outside his vehicle looking in the direction of the bikers. Shortly thereafter, the audio on the video captures the sound of the three bikers starting their motors. At 9:12, the motorbikes' engines are rumbling loudly. Between 9:12 p.m. and 9:13 p.m., amidst revving motorcycle engines, the bikers, with Shuey in the lead, begin to move out from the parking lot, crossing in front of the Mercedes. As they pass, Shuey can be seen flipping Opmanis off with his right hand, which causes his motorcycle to momentarily swerve while he is making the hand gesture. This provokes Opmanis, who responds by himself flipping Shuey off. Codman and Davis who were following Shuey out of the parking lot, suddenly turn hard left to come up to Opmanis. Shuey, who had briefly exited the parking lot, then made an immediate U-turn to return to the parking lot, joining the still helmeted Codman, who is in a verbal exchange with Opmanis. Sammy Davis

is at that point parked near the rear of Opmanis's Mercedes SUV. Shuey pulls in and parks in between Codman and Davis, at the front of Alex's SUV. At 9:13 p.m. on the video, Opmanis is surrounded by the three bikers, and he appears to be having a loud and animated exchange with Davis and Codman as Shuey has arrived. Davis dismounts from his bike. Shuey removes his helmet, dismounts from his bike, and approaches Opmanis. Davis is at the rear of the Mercedes at the same time as Shuey takes off his helmet and his jacket. Shuey then dismounts. Shuey and Davis approach Opmanis, it appears aggressively. Codman remains on his motorcycle to the far right in the video camera's field. Market patrons are scattered about, with cars coming and going and other commotion. Opmanis, who is toward the rear of the SUV, makes his way back to the front driver's side door that is open. Sammy Davis at first moves in toward Opmanis, but then circles around the back side of Shuey. At that point, it appears that the assault on Opmanis begins, followed by a crucial 12-second gap in the video that was presented as evidence during Opmanis's preliminary hearing. When the video resumes at 9:14:08 p.m., the physical altercation between Opmanis and Davis is in full swing more toward the rear of the SUV than the front. A shopping cart or carts can be heard rattling violently in the shopping cart corral next to Opmanis's vehicle. Shuey approaches the fight as Davis and Opmanis appear to be hunched over and struggling. The fight between them moves toward the front of Opmanis's SUV. Shuey has his phone out with its light engaged, and appears to be videoing the fight. Two shots are heard. Nuno gets out of the passenger side of Johnny's vehicle, still parked behind Opmanis's Mercedes SUV with the lights on. Nuno immediately returns to the vehicle and Johnny speeds off. Shuey moves rapidly away and ducks behind a parked car. Shuey is crouching down approximately eight to ten feet away from where Davis was shot, very close to the SUV.

After the shooting, Opmanis can be heard attempting to summon help. When Opmanis produces his phone to make a call and Shuey begins moving toward him, Op-

manis yells, "Get back! Get Back!" and gestures strongly to Shuey. Shuey momentarily crouches behind a vehicle.

By 9:17 p.m., a woman, later identified as an off-duty nurse, is seen on the video attempting to administer to Davis. The nurse later reported that Davis reeked of alcohol.

At 9:17 p.m., Codman mounted his bike and rode off.

Shuey remained at the scene for more than four minutes following the shooting, at one point retrieving something from Davis's person or next to him. He then made a hand gesture towards Opmanis, put his helmet on, started his motorcycle and rode away at 9:18 p.m.

Opmanis, who was originally represented by attorney Jeffrey Lawrence, subsequently by David Striker of the San Bernardino County Public Defender's Office and now by attorney Mark Geragos, has pleaded not guilty, asserting he was acting in self defense. Opmanis's trial is scheduled to begin next month.

Davis, like Shuey, had an extensive criminal record, including a 2012 conviction for burglary, a 2011 conviction for receiving stolen property, a misdemeanor conviction for public intoxication, and a 2008 felony conviction for

burglary. Just prior to the shooting, Davis had been released from prison after serving a portion of a sentence for assault.

It was anticipated that Shuey was going to be called to testify during Opmanis's trial. He was considered to be a key witness for both the prosecution and the defense. There have been indications that Geragos and Opmanis's co-counsel, Alexandra Kazarian, intend to make an issue at trial of the severe beating Opmanis had suffered at the hands of Shuey roughly six months before the shooting of Davis and Shuey's participation in the assault upon Opmanis on July 11, 2019 just seconds before Davis was fatally shot to establish that Opmanis had a reasonable fear for his safety that justified the discharge of his weapon.

Shuey was yet facing the charges of burglary together with assault with a deadly weapon resulting in great bodily injury relating to the incident he was involved in on May 21 of last year at 27115 State Highway 189 in Blue Jay. Shuey was arrested by San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department deputies working out of the Twin Peaks sheriff's substation in the aftermath of that incident.

Despite his multiple arrests and convictions,

Shuey appeared until this week to lead a charmed life. Though he had been sentenced to more than seven years in prison, his actual time incarcerated was less than half of that. He was well-served by his attorney, Gary Wenkle Smith, who on at least two occasions kept him insulated from the often rough-edged wheels of justice.

There are indications that the sheriff's department's homicide detail, which was on the scene of the apparent shooting late Monday night, April 26 until late Tuesday morning, April 27, has not identified a suspect in the killing. The department has been tight-lipped with regard to Shuey's death, and did not acknowledge questions from the *Sentinel* relating to it. Word has reached the *Sentinel* that a search warrant for Shuey's residence was obtained in the aftermath of the shooting and executed on April 27.

Among those who knew him and of him, there was a perception that given the nature of his lifestyle, his indulgence in criminality and his tendency toward physical intimidation and violence, Shuey's number was going to come up, probably sooner rather than later. Indeed, that is what appears might have happened Monday night. One of his acquaintances summarized the circum-

stance thusly: "He fucked with the wrong cowboy."

Homicide detectives working the case face the challenge of sifting through a plethora of potential suspects, seeking among the dozens of those who had an animus toward Shuey for the one who might have held a deadly grudge.

Nevertheless, Robert Allen Shuey had friends. He was someone's son and brother. He was someone's father. He was appreciated, at least in one circle. By Thursday, tributes to him were lodged with a website, insideeko.com. One read, "Thank you for your contagious happy adrenaline, your friendship, and those favorite memories plus more you gifted me with while you were here. [I'm] gonna miss you, and wish I had spent more time with you, but I'm grateful for your time [I'll] forever cherish. I Love you little big dawg, you were as real as they make em."

Another said, "Damn man, damn. Love you brother. Breaking into and skating late nights on the ice rinks, mountain biking with you, your pops, and brother, going to your football games or having to go to Joe's soccer games."

"Life is too short," read another. "We all lost another great friend. Robert Shuey you were so loved. R.I.P."

-Mark Gutglueck

## Hawkins Overrode Staff's Concerns About Water Contamination Hazard At Truck Stop from page 4

(LID) ordinance and the San Bernardino County MS4 permit requires capture and treatment of the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, 24-hour storm event. As part of the project's final design review, the project would be required to submit a water quality maintenance plan demonstrating adequate stormwater retention using infiltration basins, bioretention areas, capture and controlled release tanks, or another best management practice. Such best management practices would slow the velocity of water and allow sediment and debris to settle out of the water column, thereby minimizing the potential for downstream flooding, erosion/siltation, or exceedances of stormwater drainage system capacity. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance

Rate Map, the project site is located in Zone X, a designation that is used for areas where there is minimal flood hazard. Given that the project would implement best management practices to capture and retain stormwater on-site, as described above for compliance with the county's low impact development ordinance and MS4 permit requirements, potential impacts related to the alteration of the site's drainage pattern would be less than significant." Noted in handwriting in staff's copy of the initial study was "Chemicals going into the ground!"

Staff's copy of the initial study contained this highlighted passage: "As described above, the project would implement on-site storage of stormwater runoff, as required pursuant to the county's low impact development ordinance, providing an opportunity for debris, sediment, and sediment-bound pollutants to settle out of the water column prior to discharge downstream. The requirements of the county's low impact development ordi-

nance and the applicable MS4 permit are intended to protect water quality and support attainment of water quality standards in downstream receiving water bodies. The project does not involve use of septic systems, pet parks, agricultural land or other land uses commonly associated with high concentrations of nutrients, indicator bacteria, or chemical toxicity. Neither construction nor operation of the proposed project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. No impact would occur. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are identified or anticipated, and no mitigation measures are required." Handwritten into the document at that point was, "What!?"

Indications were that the district's staff was preparing a case to support the West Valley Water District's board of directors if the Engineering, Operations and Planning Committee recommended that the district request the county to implement addi-

tional pre-treatment measures, and the full board indeed elected to follow that recommendation.

Upon learning that the Engineering, Operations and Planning Committee and members of staff were contemplating having the district second-guess the county with regard to its land use decision on Chandi's proposed truck stop project, Hawkins, who is employed in Baca's supervisory office as his special advisor, in the words of one West Valley Water District employee, "went ballistic."

Interrupting Chandi's developmental intent in Bloomington or San Bernardino County was contrary to Hawkins' personal interest on multiple levels.

An immediate consideration for Hawkins is that his employment contract with Baca's office provides him with total annual compensation of \$187,271, consisting of a salary of \$115,086 and benefits of \$72,185. If the agency he heads as an elected board member/appointed president – the West Valley Water District – brought into question the

*Continued on Page 11*

## Getting Conviction Against Mentally Ill Man Who May Not Have Been Guilty Was “Like Shooting Fish In A Barrel”

from page 4

him. It is unknown, precisely, how many of these encounters Almoula had with the department’s deputies. Official San Bernardino County Superior Court records reflect that on four occasions in the last ten years – December 12, 2018, March 24, 2019, June 6, 2019 and December 20, 2019 – the sheriff’s department mistakenly arrested him for being under the influence of a controlled substance. Ultimately, on

August 26, 2019, the court dismissed the cases against Almoula growing out of the March 24, 2019 and June 6, 2019 arrests based upon the district attorney’s office requesting that they be dismissed in the interest of justice because what had been his supposed intoxication was determined to be a byproduct of his medication. Ultimately, this week, on Tuesday April 27, 2021, the court dismissed the case against Almoula that sprung from his December 12, 2018 arrest for being under the influence, again based upon the district attorney’s office’s acknowledgment that the arresting officer(s) was/were mistaken in assuming Almoula was intoxicated on street drugs.

Similarly, over the

years, Almoula’s behavior and comportment has drawn attention to itself, and at least in some instances involved the sheriff’s department overreacting or misinterpreting the circumstance in which Almoula had come to be involved.

Almoula was arrested for misdemeanor battery on November 11, 2002. When the actual circumstances and events were outlined to the court, the charge was dropped on May 7, 2003.

On December 3, 2005, an incident in Joshua Tree resulted in Almoula’s arrest on two felony charges of abuse of an elder or dependent and assault with a deadly weapon other than a firearm likely to result in great bodily injury.

Thirteen days later, on December 16, 2005, at a court appearance without legal representation, Almoula pleaded guilty to the assault with a deadly weapon likely to inflict great bodily injury charge.

On February 4, 2013, Almoula was involved in what was referred to as a circumstance of domestic violence and was arrested by the sheriff’s department on two felony charges, assault with a deadly weapon other than a firearm likely to cause great bodily injury and infliction of corporal injury on a spouse or cohabitant. On May 8, 2013, again appearing without legal representation, Almoula was induced to enter a guilty plea on the infliction of corporal injury on a spouse or cohabitant.

A one-time member of the prosecutor’s office acknowledged that pressing the 2005 and 2013 cases against Almoula was done to assist the sheriff’s department, whose deputies had roughed Almoula up in making the arrests, save face and help the county avoid potential liability. The prosecutor likened obtaining the conviction against the mentally ill Almoula to “shooting fish in a barrel.”

The sheriff’s department and the district attorney’s office did not fare as well in a case that was made against Almoula that grew out of an incident occurring on December 3, 2007, the four-year anniversary of the 2003 incident. On December 3, 2007, Almoula was ar-

rested and charged with infliction of corporal injury on a spouse or cohabitant and misdemeanor vandalism. Those charges were dismissed on May 7, 2008, the four-year anniversary of the misdemeanor battery charge from the November 11, 2002 incident being dismissed.

According to his aunt, describing Almoula as violent is a mischaracterization. He has episodes of psychosis, she said, but emphasized, “He has never been violent toward me or my husband. He has always been very respectful. He never tore up anything. He never stole anything. He cannot socialize. He is okay with my husband and myself. He has

*Continued on Page 10*

## Brosowski’s Political Aspirations Undercut With Judge’s Upholding Of His Removal From Office from page 3

sowski to the council in July 2018. Larry Bird, like Brosowski, Holland, Russ and Swanson a Republican, nevertheless was far less comfortable with the unquestioning loyalty his council colleagues had toward the building industry, and he was not willing to put Brosowski, beholden as he was to developers through his association with Postmus, on the council. He dissented in the vote.

In the fall of 2018, Hesperia was to hold the first by-district election in its then-30-year history. Those who had been due for reelection were Holland, Russ and Blewett. Thus, Brosowski’s appointment was good for just a little more than four months, and he was obliged to run in the November 2018 election if he was to remain on the council. Moreover, his claimed residence was at Jensen’s home. To vie in the race, he would need to find digs in District 2 and run against Holland, or in District 3 and run against Russ or in District 4. As it would be rather poor form to run against either Russ or Holland, who had just voted to appoint him to the council, Brosowski opted to take up residence in District 4. On August 31, 2018, he rented Unit 7 at the Sultana Mulberry Apartment Complex at 16784 Sultana Street in Hesperia after providing a security deposit of \$1,000 and agreeing to pay \$875 per month for a full year.

As luck and timing

would have it, with the election approaching, one of the first votes Brosowski was called upon to participate in as a councilman related to the city covering the road construction costs for a subdivision in Hesperia being built by Frontier Homes and its principal, James Previti. Holland, who was unabashedly pro-development and whose political career to that point had been bankrolled by developmental interests, at that particular moment, less than two months before the election, did not want to give any of his four electoral opponents an opening to attack him for making taxpayer money giveaways to developers. He voted against having the city cover roughly \$2 million worth of the costs for roads to be built to the Frontier Homes project. Meanwhile, both Brosowski and Russ had no qualms about voting to defray the cost of infrastructure that Previti, one of their major donors, would otherwise have to pay for.

At that point, more than a month before the election, there was a break between Brosowski and Holland. Though they had started the campaign season endorsing one another, before it was over they were advocating against the election of each other. Ultimately, in the November 2018 election, Brosowski posted a narrow victory over Brigit Bennington in the Fourth District; Holland outdistanced his three opponents, beating the clos-

est one to him by ten percent; and Russ was ousted by 28-year-old Cameron Gregg.

The Hesperia City Council remained a solidly Republican body, as all five of its members – Bird, Brosowski, Gregg, Holland and Swanson – were members of the GOP. But overnight, the strident pro-development character of the panel had changed. Young Gregg is the son of Kelly Gregg, a close friend of controlled-growth advocate Al Vogler, the widower of former Hesperia Mayor/Councilwoman Rita Vogler. Vogler’s mantra calls for making the development community financially responsible for providing the infrastructure new development will require. Bird is likewise adamant developers and not taxpayers should pay for the public improvements needed to accommodate new development.

Previti, who put up substantial money to support the candidacies of Brosowski and Russ and who spent money in an effort to keep Holland from being elected in the November 2018 race, doubled down a few months later, paying for an effort to have the just-reelected Holland recalled from office. Holland, who was once the model of what the development community wanted in an officeholder, reflexively supporting any development project that came before him, found himself at odds with Previti, and suddenly in the camp of the slow-growth advocates. Ultimately, the Previti-sponsored effort to recall Holland failed. Along the

way, Brosowski, beholden to Postmus, the development community and Previti, found himself in the position of having to support the recall effort. The enmity between Holland and Brosowski deepened.

There was still some talk of Brosowski’s bright political future. As one of Postmus’s protégés, he had access to the money that Mountain States Consulting Group was bringing in and the political machinery that Postmus was amassing. Postmus in his day had been the boy wonder of San Bernardino County politics, having been elected to the board of supervisors at the age of 29 in 2000. There was yet hope that Brosowski might come close to replicating that, and would prove a successful candidate for First District county supervisor in 2000. But that was based on the assumption that the foundation Brosowski had – being a member of the Hesperia City Council – remained intact.

In short order, things were no longer holding together for Brosowski and were starting to starting to fall apart.

His Achilles heel had always been Bill Jensen. Jensen had provided him with the ostensible residency he needed to be able to seek the Hesperia council appointment in 2018 that gave him his status as an incumbent, a power base from which he successfully ran for election in November 2018. It is unknown what prompted Jensen to turn on Brosowski. Perhaps it was his support of the Holland recall. Maybe it was Brosowski’s youth-

ful arrogance, the way in which he conveyed a sense of entitlement to his political primacy. Perhaps Jensen had a falling out with Postmus. Whatever the reason, by the summer of 2019, Jensen was talking, and what he was saying was not favorable to Brosowski. Brosowski, Jensen charged, had never lived at his home, and Brosowski’s claim of residence there to qualify himself for appointment to the council was fraudulent. What was more, Jensen said, he did not believe that Brosowski was actually living at the Sultana Mulberry Apartments either.

Thereafter, Kelly Gregg, Cameron Gregg’s father and the owner of a security company, took it upon himself to set up video surveillance at the unit Brosowski was supposed to be living in at the apartment complex at 16784 Sultana Street. Brosowski’s coming and goings were monitored, including where he went after the city council meetings concluded and where he drove to after leaving his workplace at the West Valley Water District in Rialto. It appeared that he was living with his rather attractive girlfriend in Rancho Cucamonga.

A case was put together that Brosowski was not living in Hesperia, and in September 2019, the city council voted 3-to-2, with Larry Bird, Cameron Gregg and Bill Holland prevailing and Jeremiah Swanson dissenting, to remove Brosowski from the council on non-residency grounds. The following

month, the council, with Swanson dissenting, voted to replace Brosowski with Brigit Bennington.

Brosowski, represented by attorney Chad Morgan, sued the city and city council, seeking to be reinstated. He vowed to “fight for the citizens of Hesperia who elected me in the Fourth District.”

Morgan marshaled evidence that entailed proof, he said, that Brosowski lived at Apartment 7 at 6784 Sultana Street, including Southern California Edison and Southwest Gas bills beginning in September 2018, and Spectrum phone, internet and television bills that began later. Also included were texts between Brosowski and Jensen in the summer of 2018 which suggested that Brosowski might have indeed taken up residence at Jensen’s home.

The matter was considered by San Bernardino County Superior Court Judge David Cohn. Cohn, considering all of the evidence came to the conclusion that both sides in the case met the burden of proof that Brosowski “was and was not domiciled” in Hesperia, including at Unit 7 at 6784 Sultana Street in Hesperia.

A key aspect of the case was timing, according to Judge Cohn. Based upon Jensen’s testimony and sworn declarations, as well as the rental lease Morgan presented, Cohn found Brosowski was not in residence in Hesperia’s District 4 when he took out the nomination papers on July 25, 2018.

*-Mark Gutglueck*









Public Notices

copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/DeputyNotice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk.

CNBB15202106IR FBN 20210003361 The following person is doing business as: TIMELESS CARDS & COINS 2185 W. COLLEGE AVE. APT #3065 SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407

FBN 20210003551 The following person is doing business as: DEB'S THREADS 450 MARTIN AVE COLTON, CA 92324

A Series Of Unfortunate Events from page 6

talked to some people that are around. It is painful to see people who try to take advantage of him. We live far out in Joshua Tree. He feeds the squirrels that are here.

According to Keller, on December 19, 2019, Almoula felt an episode coming on, one which he recognized by experience would not be suppressed by his normal regimen of medicine.

Public Notices

Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: 04/06/2021 hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/DeputyNotice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk.

FBN 20210002825 The following person is doing business as: LA TIENDITA 2215 W 3RD AVE SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407

FBN 20210003046 The following person is doing business as: THOMAS AND ASSOCIATES MARKET-GAND PROCESSING 8291 UTICA AVE #100B RANCHO CUCAMONGA, CA 91730

an effort by Almoula to self commit himself would be ineffective if he simply went to the Hi-Desert Medical Center, and that he would be discharged from that facility without getting adequate treatment.

5150 is law enforcement nomenclature for mentally ill.

They summoned the sheriff's department, Keller said, around 6 p.m. on December 19, 2019, and the deputies arrived around 6:30 p.m.

Public Notices

that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing./CLAUDIA N. THOMAS, OWNER Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: 03/23/2021 hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/DeputyNotice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk.

FBN 20210003258 The following person is doing business as: ARM-STRONG INSURANCE SERVICES 11161 ANDERSON STREET SUITE 105 LOMA LINDA, CA 92354

FBN 20210003201 The following person is doing business as: ALL PROFIT ENTERTAINMENT 77 S WASHINGTON ST SEATTLE, WA 98104

but instead they went to the end of the road and put him into a Morongo Valley Fire Station ambulance, and shipped him off to the Hi-Desert Medical Center," Keller said.

That was at roughly 10:30 p.m. Almoula then set out to go back to his aunt's house, located on Sunburst Circle. The Sunburst Circle turnoff is roughly 1.9 miles west on Highway 62 from White Feather Road, upon which the High Desert Medical Center is located.

Public Notices

guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing./ALEX J. BATES, OWNER Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: 03/26/2021 hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/DeputyNotice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk.

FBN 20210003199 The following person is doing business as: ALPHA LOGISTICS DISTRIBUTION 2069 SAN BERNARDINO AVE APT. #1179

FBN 20210003196 The following person is doing business as: MIND YOUR BEES-WAX 15767 BUCK POINT LANE FONTANA, CA 92336

and he just kept walking. "He was already over-medicated, and they gave him even more," Keller said of the staff at the Hi-Desert Medical Center.

Almoula continued another mile to mile-and-a-half all the way through Joshua Tree and then covered the roughly seven miles between Joshua Tree and the outskirts of Yucca Valley.

Public Notices

true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing./CURTIS L. BRAY, MANAGING MEMBER Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: 03/26/2021 hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/DeputyNotice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk.

FBN 20210003551 The following person is doing business as: DEB'S THREADS 450 MARTIN AVE COLTON, CA 92324

FBN 20210003518 The following person is doing business as: OZS FASHION N SPORTS WORLD 13146 WARM SANDS CT VICTORVILLE, CA 92394

crew. The crew drove him back to Joshua Tree to the Hi-Desert Medical Center. At the Hi-Desert Medical Center, a different shift was in place at 3:30 a.m. on December 20 than the one Almoula had encountered at around 7 p.m. on December 19.

The staff on duty at that point believed the Ativan would have a sedative-effect on Almoula, and they escorted him to a place in the emergency waiting room for him to sit down.

Public Notices

clare that all information in this statement is true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing./MIRZA HASSAN, OWNER Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: 04/05/2021 hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/DeputyNotice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk.

FBN 20210003586 The following person is doing business as: GARMETS OF PRAISE 2492 TORJAN WAY UPLAND, CA 91786

FBN 20210003593 The following person is doing business as: SAYULITA 369 1315 HARDT ST UNIT A SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92408

la again attempted to leave, heading into the hospital's lobby, with Pack following behind him. As Almoula was approaching the entrance to/exit from the hospital, Pack managed to get between Almoula and the door, blocking Almoula's exit.

According to a witness, at one point while he was outside the hospital, Almoula picked up a rock in an effort to fend off a security guard, and then threw the rock at but missed the security guard. It is unclear

## Water Board President Went Ballistic When Inquiry About H<sub>2</sub>O Safety Put Approval Of Major Local Political Donor's Project In Jeopardy *from page 5*

environmental safeguards relating to the Bloomington Commercial Center, that action carried with it the potential of blocking or delaying approval of the project or resulting in Chandi Group USA being required to augment the project with an expensive set of water treatment systems to allow the stormwater to be discharged into the local water table. Such a requirement could tack on added costs of a half million dollars or more that Chandi Group USA would have to bear. Crossing up Chandi, one of Baca's major political benefactors, in that way could very well be seen as an act of disloyalty on Hawkins's part, or at least a sign that he was insufficiently committed to Baca's agenda and was putting a higher priority on his own interests at the water district. As Hawkins serves at the pleasure of Baca, he would run the risk of losing his job if the district took action to complicate the approval of the Bloomington Commercial Center.

A longer-term consideration for Hawkins is the mutual, indeed intertwined, political interest he has with Baca in staying on the good side of the deep-pocketed Chandi. After graduating from Howard University in 2001, Hawkins went to work as a field representative for Joe Baca, Sr., who was a Congressman from 1999 until 2013, representing first the 42<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District and then the 43<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District. It is widely assumed that Joe Baca, Jr. has aspirations of replicating at least some if not all of the political ground covered by his father. Joe Baca, Sr., prior to becoming a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, was both a California State Senator and an Assemblyman. It is further assumed that upon leaving the board of supervisors for higher office, Joe Baca, Jr., who served as a member of the California State Assembly for a single two-year term from 2004 through 2006 and is yet eligible to serve ten more years in the California Legislature, will look, perhaps, toward a return to Sacramento. His name recognition and established political career would also make him, at some point, a logical even-

tual candidate for Congress. Baca is very likely to endorse Hawkins as his successor as supervisor, should he seek higher office. Baca's chief of staff, Ed Chavez, is not a resident of the Fifth District and is therefore not eligible, at present, to succeed Baca. In a circumstance in which Baca makes an effort to take on a legislative role in Sacramento or Washington, D.C. and Hawkins vies for supervisor, Chandi's financial support and that of his employees at Chandi Group USA could be crucial to both of those electoral efforts.

Thus, the contemplated move by the West Valley Water District to at the very least complicate Chandi Group USA's effort to get an entitlement for the Bloomington Commercial Center to proceed carried with it a potential negative political implication for Hawkins he ultimately acted to circumvent.

The *Sentinel* is informed that Hawkins vectored maximum force toward Mandahal, upbraiding him for indulging Young in his move, which involved Board Member Kyle Crowther, in making an issue of the fashion in which the stormwater runoff at the project was to be dealt with.

Manbahal, who was hired as the district's chief financial and administrative officer in August 2019, in December 2019 moved into the role of de facto general manager of the district after 16 of the district's department heads alleged mismanagement and favoritism on the part of then-General Manager Clarence Mansell, and Mansell became a virtual recluse in his own office for the next ten months. Mansell went out on paid leave in October 2020, at which point Manbahal officially moved into the role of interim district general manager. Indications are that Manbahal was and is looking toward succeeding Mansell in the role of full-fledged general manager. Hawkins threatened to dash that prospect forthwith upon learning of the specially-called March 26 Operations and Planning Committee meeting, the *Sentinel* was told, accompanied by intimations that any other staff that embraced the call for having the district request

that the county implement additional pre-treatment measures of the runoff of that water before it is injected into the local water table were likewise risking losing their positions with West Valley.

Manbahal, with Hawkins gunning for him if he did not prevent the Engineering, Operations and Planning Committee inquiry from metastasizing into an interruption of the Bloomington Commercial Center's approval, obtained from Joanne Chan, the district's operations manager, a statement in an email that "The county's measures are in compliance with the provisions of the Clean Water Act."

The county, Chan indicated in the email, as the permit holder was to "monitor discharges and comply with all regulated water quality standards and submit required reports to the Regional Water Quality Control Board." In addition, Chan stated that the "Stormwater pollution prevention plan lists all activities and conditions at the site that could cause water pollution and lists detailed steps the facility will take to prevent the discharge of any unpermitted pollution."

Furthermore, Chan noted that the county was the MS4 permit holder and that county staff should be relied upon to "inspect the site for stormwater compliance. The risk level is determined by many factors, including the type of business activity, the Standard Industrial Classification Code, applicable state permits, hazardous material use, and other factors. The San Bernardino County Department of Public Works determines the risk level for the business based on the following factors, including, but not limited to: hazardous materials used on site, the potential for pollutant discharges, ongoing efforts to implement effective best management practices, site size and location, including proximity to rivers and streams."

Chan said of the water quality management plan for the project, "As required by the Regional Water Quality Control Board, this plan is intended to provide information related to the project's generation and mitigation of water quality pollutants and assessment of hydrological impacts."

At that point, the *Sentinel* is informed, Greg Young, who was the most passionate advocate of the

district taking a stand and holding the county to account, and Crowther, who also had expressed concern about the disposition of the stormwater runoff from the project, elected to drop the matter, given their impression that pressing it might result in Hawkins terminating Manbahal and any other staff members who defied his wishes. The committee tabled the issue.

On April 6, the board of supervisors met and unanimously approved allowing the Bloomington Commercial Center to proceed. The board pushed ahead with granting the project a mitigated negative declaration, glossing over what was for the county's planning professionals an embarrassing, indeed mortifying, moment when the documentation for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act to justify that declaration was examined. To those paying attention, it was clear the Chandi Group USA's consultant had used material that was copied and pasted from a previous document for a different project in Sun Valley, in Riverside County. The board of supervisors ignored that faux pas, doing nothing to have the documentation corrected or examined for integrity, accepting an inapplicable reference as the justification for the action it took.

In the aftermath of the board's vote, the *Sentinel* initiated inquiries with both Baca and Hawkins relating to the environmental implication of the Chandi Group USA's Bloomington truck stop project.

The *Sentinel* sought from each whether they believed the collection of the contaminant-laden stormwater run-off from the Chandi truck stop into an infiltration chamber and then injecting that unfiltered and unscreened water into the water table is a safe and acceptable methodology for dealing with stormwater at that site.

The *Sentinel* asked both Baca and Hawkins if they were concerned with the impact the long-term accumulation of contaminants emanating from the Chandi truck stop will have on the viability of the Mid-Valley aquifer as a future water source.

The *Sentinel* asked Hawkins if he believe it proper for the board of supervisors to have allowed the environmental certification of the Chandi truck stop project to have taken place by means of a miti-

gated negative declaration rather than a full-blown environmental impact report.

The *Sentinel* asked Hawkins if he was in any way alarmed or concerned at the way in which the county withheld the documents relating to the environmental certification of this project, most particularly with regard to water quality impacts, from the public.

The *Sentinel* asked Hawkins if he perhaps did not fully understand or appreciate the potential that the Chandi truck stop will have on water quality in the Mid-Valley.

The *Sentinel* asked Hawkins why he had sought to prevent the district or one of its divisions or committees from looking into the water treatment methodology that is to be used at the Chandi truck stop, and if he was in some fashion requested or ordered by Supervisor Baca to take the action that he did in his capacity as board president to prevent the West Valley Water District from making an inquiry into the water treatment methodology that is to be used at the Chandi Group USA truck stop. The *Sentinel* asked if Hawkins on his own, out of concern that allowing the West Valley Water Board or one of its divisions or committees to carry out such an inquiry might result in his termination with Supervisor Baca's office, acted to prevent an inquiry into the water treatment methodology that is to be used at the Chandi Group USA truck stop.

The *Sentinel* asked Hawkins for his response to those who have suggested that he betrayed the confidence and trust of those who elected him to the West Valley Water District board by preventing an inquiry into the water treatment methodology that is to be used at the Chandi truck stop. The *Sentinel* asked Hawkins why he had not stood up for his constituents and ensured that there were adequate safeguards put in place to protect the groundwater beneath the Mid-Valley in the face of the challenge represented to it by the advent of the Chandi truck stop.

The *Sentinel* asked Hawkins if he had quantified, in monetary terms, the amount of savings that Chandi Group USA realized by not having to create a system to purge the contaminants in the stormwater run-off to be collected

in the infiltration chamber before that water is injected into the water table.

The *Sentinel* asked Hawkins if Nachhattar Singh Chandi's status as one of Joe Baca, Jr.'s primary political donors had any impact on his or the district's stance with regard to the Chandi Group USA's truck stop project. The *Sentinel* asked Hawkins if he was counting upon the financial support of Nachhattar Singh Chandi in any of his future political endeavors.

The *Sentinel* asked Hawkins if there was some benign reason for the West Valley Water District not carrying out an inquiry into the water treatment methodology that is to be used at the Chandi truck stop and if he could express why the district rejected the concept of reviewing the county's action in approving the Chandi truck stop project.

Neither Baca nor Hawkins responded to the *Sentinel's* inquiries.

On April 20, Naseem Farooqi, the West Valley Water District's public affairs manager, who had been detailed to field the questions asked of Hawkins, responded.

"Although in our normal course of business we would not be involved in stormwater management of municipal discharge issues, our staff attempted to acknowledge a question posed by a board member. This is not our field of expertise and it is not the agency's role to permit or prohibit these issues," Farooqi stated.

Through other means, those affiliated with the district sought to unofficially convey to the *Sentinel* that the West Valley Water District does not involve itself in land use decisions made by the county, even when those decisions relate to property that overlaps the district's jurisdiction. It was made clear to the *Sentinel* that the West Valley Water District does not apply for nor issue separate MS4 stormwater or sewer system permits, and that it does not have the role or staffing to analyze if a potential stormwater discharge complies with existing laws and regulations. Responsibility for the Chandi Development project resided with the County of San Bernardino, those sources speaking to the *Sentinel* on background insisted. It was pointed out that county staff members inspect both

*Continued on Page 12*

## Journalistic Efforts Pressing Hawkins On His Willingness To Ignore Truck Stop Impacts On Water Quality Are Unethical, District Spokesman Maintains *from page 11*

commercial and industrial sites for stormwater discharge compliance. The only stormwater discharge permit the West Valley Water District maintains, the *Sentinel* was informed, is a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit from the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board to ensure that the district's water treatment discharges are in compliance with provisions of the Clean Water Act.

Board Member Greg Young, while acknowledging that the district does not have land use authority within its jurisdiction and that in this case the methodology for offsetting any impacts upon water quality were overseen by the county, nevertheless pointed out that the West Valley Water District staff, in preparing its report for the March 26 Engineering, Operations and Planning Committee meeting, had circled in on a crucial shortcoming in

how the county is planning to deal with the stormwater runoff at the Chandi truck stop site.

"Infiltration chambers are a best management practice, but are ones that should be used in conjunction with other best management practices to ensure maximum containment of pollutants," Young said. "The county's practice of using infiltration alone is the exact opposite of what Ricky Manbahal, the district's general manager, described in his staff report. My entire premise is if you are going to use infiltration, it needs to be in conjunction with other types of pre-treatment as Ricky is describing in his report."

The *Sentinel* pressed forward with seeking to get from both Channing and some of the district's senior staff members whether they felt, irrespective of what the county's authority and decision was, that using a mitigated negative

declaration to do the environmental certification for the Chandi Truck Stop project was advisable.

The *Sentinel* also inquired of West Valley Water District Acting General Manager Shamindra Manbahal, Operations Manager Joanne Chan and Water Quality Supervisor Janet Harmon, all of whom are steeped in knowledge and expertise about water, its sourcing and quality in ways in which the members of the county board of supervisors are not, whether they considered using an infiltration tank to collect the stormwater runoff from the project and then injecting it into the water table without first screening out the oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, solvents, petroleum products or their byproducts or other chemicals is an acceptable methodology of dealing with that stormwater.

This provoked Farooqi, who suggested the *Sentinel* was acting unethically in seeking to have Hawkins, Manbahal and Chan respond to the original questions asked of them which they had chosen to not answer.

Emphasizing the contention that the district did not have land use or water quality permitting authority within its jurisdiction, Farooqi said the *Sentinel's* presentation of information in the emails containing those questions was "incredibly inaccurate and misleading. On multiple occasions, the West Valley Water District provided you with detailed and factual information by our licensed engineers regarding our scope of responsibility and authority. Your statement regarding the opinion of the professionals within our water district is inaccurate. As I shared in my previous email, the committee (G. Young, Crowther) decided to take no action. Any further allegations fall very far from the truth."

Farooqi then added a statement attributed to Kyle Crowther, who is the West Valley Water Board's vice president, worded as follows: "In March, we met with staff on this issue and our staff recommended no action needed to be taken based on the fact that the West Valley Water District does not oversee, permit

or prohibit municipal discharges. Understanding that these issues are not within our agency's field of expertise or role, Director Greg Young and I accepted this recommendation."

This was followed by this statement attributed to Hawkins: "This issue was discussed at the Engineering, Operations, and Planning Committee. However, the committee did not elect to forward this item to the full board; therefore, neither I or the full board have been involved whatsoever."

Young said, "As I became aware of the issues and what the county was doing, I reached out to my colleague and fellow Engineering and Planning Committee member, Kyle Crowther. We jointly decided to call a special meeting to discuss the possibility of issuing a letter of concern to the county. However, it was very clear that there was a lot of anxiety from the staff about getting involved into the business of the county even if it may affect us in the future. Since there was so much anxiety about speaking out to the county on a matter entirely in their

jurisdiction, I decided to not push staff and my fellow board members any further on the subject and instead decided to pursue my existing efforts with the Coalition for a Better Bloomington and the board of supervisors."

Young added, "I will continue to speak out against any agency large or small engaged in practices that expose our valuable water resources to potential contamination. I would always welcome any of my colleagues in the entire water industry and West Valley to join me in such efforts to advocate for protecting our groundwater from preventable contamination. The county's lowest common denominator approach to protecting our water should not be allowed to continue without the raising of concern, and we as leaders in our community should be willing to stand up to such a lax practice. I would warmly welcome them to stand with me. This is about more than just Bloomington. This could hurt many communities throughout the county if this continues."

## Another Fontana Warehouse *from front page*

Garcia having been endorsed by Warren, there was a question as to whether he would go along with her headlong pursuit of ever more warehouses in the city. Professionally, Garcia is a scientist with the California Environmental Protection Agency. At present, he is the South-

ern California regional executive manager for the Department of Toxic Substances Control's Site Mitigation Program, in which capacity he is responsible for protecting human health and the environment from hazardous substance-contaminated properties throughout California. He has a bachelor of science degree in biological sciences from Loyola Marymount University.

Some of Warren's opponents hoped that Garcia would defy Warren's expectation that he would go along with her agenda of allowing transportation intensive warehousing to spring up at all order of locations around the 42.4-square mile city.

As it turned out on Tuesday night, however, those people were disappointed,

Over the objections of

more than 30 citizens who weighed in against the project during the public comment portion of the meeting, Warren, Roberts, Cothran and Garcia voted to approve the plans for the 194,212-square-foot logistics and distribution facility, together with a restaurant on 8.68 acres at the southeast corner of Slover and Citrus avenues, directly north of Jurupa Hills High School and south of

the Interstate 10 Freeway.

Opponents of the project believed that Garcia, as a former school board member, would prove receptive to concerns expressed by the Fontana Unified School District relating to the hazards such a facility would represent to the school and students there. That turned out not to be the case.

Councilmember Jesse Sandoval, a Democrat who vied against but lost to

Warren in the 2018 mayoral race but was reelected to the city council in 2020, was the sole vote against the warehouse project.

Project proponent David Wiener, who had previously pursued developing the site into a shopping center, shifted to the warehouse concept after being unable to convince a major supermarket chain to become his tenant there..

-Mark Gutglueck

## 69-Year-Old Security Guard Dead After Mentally Ill Man Left To Wander In The Desert By Hospital Staff & Sheriff's Deputies Has A Psychotic Episode *from page 10*

whether the security guard referenced by that witness was Pack. Another witness stated that Almoula punched a security guard several times. From the sheriff's department report pertaining to the incident, it is not clear whether the security guard Almoula was said to have punched was Pack.

Almoula was detained and arrested by the sheriff's department for assault with a deadly weapon other than a firearm and battery inflicting serious bodily injury and three charges of

being under the influence of a controlled substance.

Pack underwent surgery on his leg and hip. He remained hospitalized for five days after the surgery and was sent home. On January 4, 2020, Pack developed a blood clot and died. The blood clot was considered to be a complication from the surgery he underwent for his broken leg. In this way, the district attorney's office is proceeding with prosecuting Almoula on two charges – PC 245(a) (1) assault with a deadly weapon

other than a firearm with the likelihood of inflicting great bodily injury and PC 192 (a) voluntary manslaughter. At this point, the district attorney's office is not pursuing the charges of being under the influence of a controlled substance against Almoula.

Because of Almoula's mental condition, he was not considered sane enough to stand trial. Under such circumstances, defendants are generally sent to a state mental hospital to undergo evaluation and potential restoration of their sanity to make them eligible to stand trial. Because of the COVID-19 circumstance in the spring and summer of 2020, Almoula was not checked into Patton State Hospital until October. Psychiatrists there experi-

mented with a number of medications in an effort to render him compos mentis, meaning he was capable of understanding the legal proceedings to which he is being subjected. After his return to the custody of the sheriff's department, however, his access to the medications that rendered him fit to stand trial was cut off, and his mental condition has now worsened to the point that he is no longer able to participate in his own defense.

On Tuesday, April 27, he appeared in Department M2 in the Joshua Tree Courthouse before Judge Shannon Faherty. Judge Faherty appeared intent on moving the matter to trial at the earliest possible date.

Deputy Public Defend-

er James Carson, who had recently replaced Deputy Public Defender Isaac Rees as Almoula's legal counsel, pointed out that his client's mental state has deteriorated since his medication has been cut off since he has left Patton State Hospital and is now in the custody of the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department at West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga. Carson asserted that he could not give Almoula adequate representation without Almoula's mental competency being maintained, which he said was not possible if his medicinal therapy remains discontinued. He requested that the court order the sheriff's department to reinstitute the daily administration of anti-psy-

chosis chemical agents to Almoula.

Judge Faherty ordered Almoula's medicinal panel to be reinstated and for Almoula to return to her courtroom on May 11 for a progress review on the restoration of his ability to understand the proceedings against him and participate in his defense.

There is some indication of dissent within the district attorney's office with regard to Almoula's prosecution. Deputy District Attorney Jason Gueltzow was previously prosecuting the case against him. He has recently been replaced by Deputy District Attorney Michelle Bergery.

Bergery did not respond to the *Sentinel's* inquiries with regard to the case.

-Mark Gutglueck