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## ***AN OLD DOG'S LATEST TRICK***

*A tri-Cities trouble maker reminds us why it was nice to see him leave in 1997.*

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"Bob Garcin just never stops being a sneaky bastard, does he?" That's just one of the messages I recently received.

For those who don't recall, Garcin is a former Glendale city councilman who, for almost two decades, was a Glendale appointee to the nine-member panel overseeing Bob Hope Airport for councils in Burbank, Glendale and Pasadena.

Over the years I've often written about Garcin, who was never shy about making outlandish, offensive statements. When I reported that, as an airport commissioner Garcin used taxpayer funds for limousines, massages, and for his family to travel with him first-class to resorts, he hooted and boasted about the great time they'd had. Then he declared the taxes and federal funds he spent weren't taxpayer cash, and said how he spent airport money was no one's business. He declared the Airport Authority had no constituents and was accountable to no one – not even the councils appointing its members.

He was among those 15 years ago advocating massive expansion of what is now Bob Hope Airport. Phase one would have boosted the airport from 14 gates to 19 gates, and phase two to 27 gates. But he was also the man who, at council meetings, on radio, and in newspaper interviews kept a straight face as he denied there were expansion plans, belligerently blasting anyone saying otherwise as a liar. He was willing to admit there was a plan to "relocate" the existing terminal, and that was only for safety reasons.

Garcin caterwauled when the Airport Authority was accused of holding a secret meeting that violated state laws prohibiting such sessions without cause and advance public notice. He even snarled that his wasn't a public agency, and that, like a corporation, it could do whatever it wanted.

On each point, and so many others, Garcin was ultimately proven to have been... well, full of crap. State officials disagreed with him. Federal officials disagreed. Judges disagreed. Garcin couldn't get much right, but still reveled in tweaking critics with his outrageous claims.

In the municipal elections of 1995 and 1997, Burbank elected council members committed to blocking airport expansion, and their years-long record of court victories and public support further irked Garcin. Burbank's efforts to cajole Glendale's council into learning about airport



*Bob Garcin in 1997. The Carlsbad resident is endorsing in Burbank's election.*

issues and what their appointees were up to finally succeeded, and Garcin was soon shown the door.

At first, Garcin threatened to run for Glendale's council and wreak revenge, a prospect that made me just giddy. A win may well have been disastrous for the city, but it would have kept me in material for four years, or until a recall, whichever came first. But finally demonstrating uncharacteristic awareness of how he was regarded even in his own city, Garcin withdrew his threat, and he toddled off to Carlsbad, where he remains today.

Unfortunately, Burbank's local newspaper, one emblazoned with the city's name, but clearly written elsewhere, didn't know all that history when it recently received an announcement from Garcin. As has been the rule almost as long as the newspaper's masthead has existed, virtually no one on staff today was around a decade ago. And as has been the case at that paper of late, few working for it seem to spend a lot of time researching the olden days.

If a certain husband and wife team of candidates now running for council, or the one council member endorsing them, hasn't told the newspaper something, it seems the newspaper rarely knows whatever "it" is.

The announcement from Garcin was a stunner. In its prominently placed "Political Landscape" column, the newspaper announced "Local Leader Endorses Philip Berlin." What followed was a solemn endorsement of a Burbank council candidate from Garcin.

Phil Berlin is the husband in the Mr. & Mrs. team that recently made it into a runoff election for Burbank's two open council seats. And now he's been endorsed by Garcin, best known for years as someone showing nothing but naked disdain for Burbank's residents.

My answering machine and e-mail box were promptly filled by old-timers who spied the article.

Never mind that Garcin hasn't been a local leader for years. The Berlins seem to tell the local paper almost everything it knows, and it hasn't missed any opportunity to publish positive mentions of them, or their council supporter. But the trio seems not to have tutored the newspaper on Garcin.

It was an endorsement! How could the Berlins object?! Why even bother to ask them about it? Better to maintain the appearance of independence, beat the next deadline... and SURPRISE them!

Alas, in Burbank an endorsement from the airport-expansionist Garcin is a bit like a conservative Republican presidential hopeful bragging they're endorsed by Ted

Haggard, the TV preacher caught buying meth and employing a male prostitute.

One can't help but notice today that the Berlins' lists of endorsements don't include Garcin, not even in small print. They only list that handful of folks who've written so many letters supporting the Berlins and attacking their opponents, letters faithfully published in the same local paper (reportedly as most uncomplimentary letters are ignored).



*Philip Berlin, probably NOT smiling about Garcin's endorsement.*

In short, it was another stunt from Garcin, one wherein the newspaper served as his dupe. Oh, to have been a fly on the wall when the Berlins and their council member pal dithered over whether they should call attention to the endorsement by angrily rejecting it, perhaps also embarrassing the friendly newspaper, or ignoring Garcin and hoping no one noticed.

Fortunately for the Berlins, I suspect that, just like at the newspaper, few voters today know or remember Garcin. He's never failed to overestimate the weight of his words.

It's ironic that the Berlins themselves have eagerly exploited voter ignorance throughout their campaign for less-than-commendable purposes. But in this case, it's likely Garcin's latest was noticed only by a handful who read the story, most of whom called me while laughing and choking out, "Oh, he's still a bastard!"

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