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PLAYING CATCH UP IN GLENDALE

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I've been swamped this summer and largely off-line. As promised, here's my attempt to "catch-up" on a few matters that popped up in my absence.

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Glendale Mayor Dave Weaver sure doesn't seem concerned about reelection next year, as his actions continue to show utter contempt for the same ethical and populist concerns that were supposedly his top priorities when he first won office almost a decade ago.

Given a standard election year, Weaver would have been bounced from office during the municipal election of 2005. There would have been three seats open with four year terms. Given his fourth place finish, Weaver would have faded away. But he got lucky. A colleague whose term ended in 2007 resigned office early, leaving a fourth place seat open in 2005.

Of course, Weaver assumed an abbreviated term, and so faces another election next year. One would think that he might have been chastened by his dwindling support at the polls over the years. But squeaking out wins and falling behind newcomers seems to have only emboldened him.

Some wags have opined it's the fact that he continues to win enough votes to return that makes Weaver so disrespectful of voters and more brazen in his abuses of office. But I suspect the truth is that his close dance with so many scandals and subsequent escape from them has convinced him he really is just as gosh-darn important and vital to the city as he has long hoped. Falling support only "proves" how many people are out to get him.

Weaver's role in the years-long, ongoing scandal that surrounds efforts to build a city float for the annual Rose Parade continues, and whether the specifics have involved unpaid taxes, donations pried from developers and others with city business before Weaver, myriad falsehoods surrounding accounting and oversight, abuse of his position to obtain special treatment from the city – the list goes on and on – Weaver belligerently presses on. (SCROLL DOWN for several columns since 2004 about some of the lowlights)

He howls about conspiracies against him, chalks up his having been caught to his countless, devious enemies, and soon thereafter steps into an even bigger pile of shit than the one he's just escaped.

I confess there's a sick fascination for an investigative journalist who has been covering politics for 20 years to see a councilman caught red-handed taking big campaign contributions IN CASH, filing false reports as to who handed him the money, then watch as the guy makes out that the whole thing is a minor misunderstanding his enemies are trying to misconstrue.

Among just some of the latest, local activist Barry Allen has uncovered proof that Weaver has unilaterally directed several city departments to provide free services to another of Weaver's bizarre personal projects, the "Miss Asia USA" contest (another effort that will supposedly bring the world's acclaim to Glendale).

After directing that the for-profit effort he's become an agent for receive free use of city facilities, free police services, and so much more, Weaver's most productive response to revelations of his imperious gift of taxpayer funds has been to assert that Allen is obnoxious and smug. As if it were the least bit relevant to Weaver's almost countless and always growing list of misdeeds, Allen is obnoxious and smug.

Some in City Hall have told me they suspect Weaver is absolutely convinced that, no matter how narrow the victory, his core of supporters will always be enough to return him to office. So, they theorize, he needs only to keep doing what he's been doing – and to continue urging others to run for office along with him in 2007. As was seen in 2005, a few credible challengers chewing up some votes and spreading out the support only serves to benefit entrenched incumbents.

Yes, others have told me Weaver's behavior reveals he simply won't run for reelection. Perhaps he's only taking contributions now to build up the funds he'll need to pay lawyers in his case now before California's Fair Political Practices Commission?

I'd say that's unlikely. Within his first six months in office and ever since, Weaver has repeatedly made it clear he's hard up for cash. He openly said he wanted recent council raises because he needed and deserved the income. When he chased appointment to the Airport Authority he publicly said he needed the income that seat produces, too. And to remind you, one of Weaver's previous scandals was failing to report personal loans taken from prominent citizens who were then appointed to city committees. He can't afford to leave office!

Why his supporters haven't been a tiny bit nervous about a public official who keeps proclaiming his need for cash is beyond me. But some of his most ardent supporters have told me they will stand by him forever because they're convinced he's honest, he's beset by political enemies, and because "at least he's not Armenian."