

## Four Vie For 9th District City Council Seat

By **GEORGE ECONOMIDES**  
Publisher

**T**he largest field since the 1994 primary has entered the Long Beach City Council 9th District race. Four individuals are squaring off to represent the North Long Beach area, which stretches from above the 91 freeway to South Street, and borders on several cities, including Bellflower, Lakewood, Paramount, Compton and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.

Over the past several decades, the district has had problems with crime, blight, a transient population, a high home foreclosure rate, and a lack of business and retail services (currently, there is one bank for about 55,000 residents, no community meeting facility, and not one stand-alone coffeehouse). But recently, through action of the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency and the North Long Beach Project Area Committee, improvements in some areas have moved forward and plans are in the works to develop several corridors. Still, the district is faced with many challenges.

The last three primary elections have shown a very low voter turnout after 1994's had reached 30 percent with eight candidates in the running. Since then, according to city clerk records, turnouts have been 13.9 percent in 1998, falling to 11.2 percent in 2002 and 17.8 percent in 2006. However, the number of registered dropped significantly from 2002 to 2006, going from 19,143 to only 16,921.

There are several interesting twists to this primary: the incumbent, Val Lerch, is termed out but is running a write-in campaign; the 2006 loser by just 132 votes, Steve Neal, is back for another try; a former staffer and close advisor to Lerch, Dan Pressburg, wants to unseat his former boss. The fourth candidate is Brad Shore, a 25-year employee of American Airlines who happens to be a psychotherapist.

It is doubtful one candidate will receive 50 percent plus one vote to win the seat in the primary, so the top two vote-getters will face off in June. Lerch's name cannot appear on the April ballot, however, if he finishes first or second in the primary, his name must be listed on the ballot for the runoff.

In kicking off its 2010 election coverage, the Business Journal is devoting considerable space to presenting in depth interviews for most of the April 13 primary races. In order to be considered a viable candidate, one must raise a minimum of \$10,000 for a district race or \$40,000 for a citywide race. In two-person races where one candidate is unable to meet that criteria, interviews will not be conducted.

The February 16 issue of the Business Journal will feature candidates running in the 7th District council race.



### Val Lerch

After nearly eight years in office, Val Lerch is vying for the 9th District City Council seat once more. Lerch was elected to the Long Beach City Council in 2002 and reelected in 2006. He was named vice mayor by his in 2008 by his colleagues. The incumbent is running as a write-in candidate, an option for termed-out councilmembers who wish to remain on the city council. According to his campaign Web site, [www.writeinvallorch.com](http://www.writeinvallorch.com), Lerch hopes to "continue to represent the interests of the Top of the Town."

Lerch, who turns 58 later this month, currently operates a property-management consulting firm in Long Beach. He graduated from adult night school at Wilson High School in 1973 and earned three certificates from the University of West Los Angeles in legal and corporate studies. He spent 12 years of active duty and 12 years in the reserves with the U.S. Coast Guard, from June 1969 to March 1993. Lerch married his wife, Janet, in 1971.

He has served as vice chair of the North Long Beach Project Area Committee (PAC) and helped found the North Long Beach Community Action Group (CAG) in 1992. He was previously vice chair of CAG and vice president of the North Long Beach Neighborhood Association DeForest Park Chapter.

According to Lerch, he helped produce the first structurally balanced budget for Long Beach in 20 years, creating more than 300 new jobs in the 9th District; he removed blighted retailers and other stores; he conceived the idea to build Fire Station 12, helping with fundraising efforts; and he significantly reduced crime in the area. Lerch sat down with the Business Journal to discuss his write-in campaign and address the issue of term limits.

**LBBJ:** In 1992, Long Beach voters passed Measure G overwhelmingly, calling for a limit of two four-year terms for councilmembers. Do you feel you are going against the will of the people by running for a third term?

**Lerch:** Absolutely not. The will of the people in 1992 also said there was a possibility of a write-in campaign and made provisions for a write-in campaign.

Twice now [Beverly O'Neill's successful write-in campaign in 2002 for a third term as mayor, and Jackie Kell's unsuccessful attempt at a third council term in 2006], the city [voters] said we understand that there might be a candidate out there that we want to retain, we want to go on, who has the best interests of the city, so we are going to give this capability of doing that.

In May 2007, there was a special charter amendment [and] the citizens voted that if a write-in candidate comes in first or second in the primary, then his name can be on the ballot [for the runoff]. Those things are actually the citizens of the city confirming that

the write-in process is okay with them.

**LBBJ:** So, by running a write-in campaign, we assume that either people came to you and said, “Val, we don’t want you to leave,” or was this purely your decision?

**Lerch:** It was “Val, we don’t want you to leave.” And overwhelmingly, when I analyze this, if I didn’t think I could win or if I didn’t think I had the support of the community – and I am confirming that day after day, every time I am out there walking – I’ve got a list of “yes, yes, yes” that’s becoming unbelievable to me. People in the community, and people in the business community in particular, came to me. At the time we knew that Steve Neal was going to run again, and with Steve Neal going on that council, it changes the politics of this city. And it is not favorable to business.

**LBBJ:** Is there a personal reason you’re running? For example, is there a project you started that you want to see finished? Let’s face it, eight years is a long time, and many councilmembers say, “I’ve had enough . . .”

**Lerch:** As you know, I am not a politician. I am a guy who wants to make a difference in my community. I love this community. I love my community where I live.

I see the alternatives [to my reelection] being disastrous for this city in the long run. So the love and compassion for this city is the main thing. But also, the first week that I was in council, I had Fire Chief Terry Harbor sitting at my desk, and I said, “Chief, Station 12 is outdated. We need to find a new Station 12. We need to move it out of the neighborhood. We couldn’t find a way [to fund it], couldn’t find a place. Next month, we are putting a shovel in the ground and beginning construction on Station 12. The doors are going to open on Station 12 – if I don’t win this reelection – six months after I leave office. Those are one of the projects I want to make sure is finished.

**LBBJ:** Do you feel that in the time you’ve been on the council – especially in the last four years – that there’s been significant progress in the 9th District? Can you give us some examples of positive things that have been done during your term beyond the fire station?

**Lerch:** Remember, I built and financed the North [Police] Station. I found the money for that. There was no money in the General Fund. And again, I went to redevelopment and because of my connection with those guys, I got the police station built up there [Atlantic and Del Amo in the 8th District].

It took me four years to first of all find out where the bathrooms were on the 14th floor. It took me that long – and everybody else about that long – to learn the process. It took me that long to figure out who you go to and where you go to and where do you find this funding and where do you find that and all that kind of stuff. So, the first four years was setting up for all this stuff to happen, and the last four years we’ve had tremendous progress.

Target was going to be leaving the area – they were going to close down their store at South [Street] and Downey [Avenue], leave that building vacant there. . . . Eventually, we convinced them . . . to go to 68th Street and Cherry Avenue and build a state-of-the-art store, which is doing gangbusters. That is a very big, tremendous – the first new retail store outside of Downtown Long Beach to be built in 20 years. . . . It kept \$400,000 and added another \$200,000 a year in retail sales tax [revenue for the city]. It kept the 400 jobs that were going to leave the district and added another 200. So I kept 600 jobs in there alone.

[There’s also] the new Big Saver. One of my commitments to the community was that I was going to build a full-service grocery store. The only grocery store we had in the 9th District was

a Food For Less and a whole bunch of little mercados. I promised everybody that we would build a full-service grocery store. Two months ago on Thanksgiving, we opened the door on Big Saver on Artesia Boulevard and created another 110 jobs in the community.

**LBBJ:** Is this Big Saver the type of grocery store that the residents want?

**Lerch:** It is absolutely.

**LBBJ:** Is it similar to like an Albertsons?

**Lerch:** It is a smaller model . . . Big Saver is a full-service, very clean, smaller model. It works well in the neighborhood and it is a bilingual grocery store. Forty-two percent of the [district’s] population is Latino. You can go in there and you can literally buy filet minion or chicken lips. Next to the ham – the other day when I was in there – there was a cow’s tongue. . . . Bimbo bread and Wonder bread are side-by-side.

**LBBJ:** Would you welcome a Wal-Mart?

**Lerch:** Absolutely. I am the one that led the charge – the reason why I have [candidate] Steve Neal in my face today is because on November 3, 2005, I helped the [Long Beach] Chamber overthrow the ordinance to ban Wal-Mart. And the next day, across the union blogs was: “Lerch is the weak link on the council and has to come out.” I didn’t have an opponent until then. They went and found Steve Neal sitting in my neighborhood and spent \$120,000 trying to put me out of office . . .

**LBBJ:** And they almost did it. You won by . . .

**Lerch:** 132 votes. But considering that they spent \$120,000 against my \$30,000, it was a hell of a victory for me.

**LBBJ:** One of the complaints we’ve heard from residents and your opponents, is that there is no place to have a meeting in the 9th District?

**Lerch:** I am working on it. I still have a breakfast place. It is called Chil Tepe . . . We are still meeting there.

**LBBJ:** How come there isn’t a freestanding coffeeshop in the District, like It’s A Grind or Starbucks? More than 50,000 residents and not one coffeeshop in the whole district.

**Lerch:** Restaurant row off Artesia and Atlantic has been accumulated. We are in the process of putting, on the back end of restaurant row, an In-N-Out. We are talking with Applebees. We already know that It’s a Grind or Starbucks is going to go into there.

Artesia and Atlantic is restaurant row, and I have insisted on that from the very beginning.

**LBBJ:** Artesia and Atlantic? Isn’t that a high-crime area?

**Lerch:** No. Well it was, until I bought and tore down Rocky’s Liquor and the adult bookstore and the hotel – all happened on my watch.

**LBBJ:** In addition to “restaurant row,” what ideas do you have for new projects?

**Lerch:** We are looking at the old Robert Shaw site – Long Beach Boulevard and the 710 Freeway on Victoria – to develop that into some type of industrial use. It is a huge piece of land. I could immediately, tomorrow afternoon, put another retail there – that fast – but I am holding out for some type of industrial application there. . . . So we are working with M.C. Beck, the owners.

Also, my biggest project – and the one I want to happen more than anything else – is the 850 acres of unincorporated industrial land up against North Long Beach. We have put a petition to the county to take over that land and bring it into the city.

**LBBJ:** What about progress on Atlantic and South?

**Lerch:** On Atlantic and South we were well into the process, and one of my opponents decided to make an issue of an old

dilapidated theater – the Atlantic Theater – and slow the whole process down.

Interesting, [candidate] Steve Neal, four years ago, stood in front of the Atlantic Theater and sent out a flyer saying, “Lerch has done nothing to remove the blight from this community. This building needs to come down.” And then [candidate] Mr. [Dan] Pressburg and his historical society friends decided to . . . try to get a historical landmark out of it. So here . . . we had these two different sides, so I came in and said yes to the hybrid [save the facade and demolish the rest of the building].

**LBBJ:** Why is former district staffer Dan Pressburg running against you?

**Lerch:** I’ve worked with Dan Pressburg for the last 12-13 years. I do not believe he is the man who should be running the North Long Beach 9th District.

**LBBJ:** What’s your relationship with other councilmembers?

**Lerch:** I am known at many times as a swing vote. I am known as the voice of logic. I have an on and off working relationship with [8th District Councilmember] Rae Gabelich on stuff up in the community and up in the district. We are pretty well on the same page. Some of her stuff where she sides with [Councilmember Tonia Reyes] Uranga is a problem with me, and we know that, we recognize that. I am developing a relationship with [1st District Councilmember] Garcia.

**LBBJ:** When you say relationship, is it the kind of thing where you can walk into somebody’s office on the 14th floor – whether it is Garcia or Gabelich – and sit down and talk about an issue. Or do you wait until council meeting time to talk about issues with other councilmembers?

**Lerch:** Oh no, I talk about the issue.

**LBBJ:** Has a councilmember endorsed you?

**Lerch:** No, and I have asked them not to. My policy has always been that a city councilperson should not endorse another councilperson. There’s no political gain to that, and there’s a lot of pitfalls.

**LBBJ:** Are there councilmembers who have endorsed other candidates?

**Lerch:** Yes, Tonia. Tonia supporting Steve Neal is so transparent.

**LBBJ:** How do you get along with the mayor?

**Lerch:** I get along well with the mayor. We chat. We have lunch or dinner once a month. We don’t always agree on things, and the mayor and I get into this sometimes, but for the most part we have a good relationship. . . .

**LBBJ:** We have a tight city budget . . . the revenue most likely is not going to be there. Are you willing to cut employees if necessary? What options would you look at?

**Lerch:** Without having the facts in place right now –

**LBBJ:** Would you cut police officers?

**Lerch:** No, to the contrary. My personal belief is that if we don’t get a handle on staffing levels right now, what we are going to have in two years is going to be disastrous for this city. Disastrous for North Long Beach. Disastrous for the Westside. Is the Eastside going to feel the effect if we don’t have competent staffing in police department? Probably not. But we will feel it in the Northwest.

**LBBJ:** So would you furlough employees more days or what would you do?

**Lerch:** If we have to cut people, we do. I believe we need to keep core services going: that is public safety first and foremost . . . , secondly is public works, and then the cream is maybe parks and recs and libraries. Those are the things we have to keep: infrastructure, public works and public safety.

**LBBJ:** What about pensions? Can’t we cut pension costs?

**Lerch:** Not unless we renegotiate the entire contract. And I would be willing to do that –

**LBBJ:** What about the employees paying more into their pensions?

**Lerch:** Absolutely, I have been on board with that since the very beginning.

**LBBJ:** How are you doing with fundraising?

**Lerch:** As of last night [January 20], I am at \$30,000. I think I need at least \$45,000-\$50,000.

**LBBJ:** What is your biggest challenge in this race? Are you mailing pencils out to people?

**Lerch:** Pens. The pens are going out next week. They say, “Write in Val Lerch.”

**LBBJ:** What’s the law about write-ins? The spelling has to be exact, right?

**Lerch:** No it does not. I’ve had long conversations with the city clerk and the city attorney. We are going to look at voter intent. If they put “Val” down; if they write “L-U-C-H,” there is pretty good voter intent.

My biggest obstacle is to get people to fill in the little box and write-in my name.

**LBBJ:** Voters have to do both: fill in the box and write-in your name?

**Lerch:** Yes.

**LBBJ:** Steve Neal’s Web site states that Neal “. . . has long been considered a natural successor to the incumbent councilmember.” What’s your reaction to that statement?

**Lerch:** The man has done absolutely nothing in North Long Beach. I have purposely had six clean ups within two blocks of his house, and he has never come out to one of them. One time I said, “Steve, why don’t you go to the Coolidge Neighborhood Association meetings on the third Tuesday of every month?” And he says, “Well, you know, my church is in Chino, and that happens to be the night of our prayer, and that is my priority.” That is what he told me face-to-face. He thinks that, because he came in a second with the backing of the unions [that he is the natural successor]. The unions naturally see him as the frontrunner of the challengers. He is the guy to beat and I know that, and everybody knows that. Actually, I am the guy to beat, and now he is the guy I have to beat. ■

## Steve Neal



Steve Neal is familiar with city council elections. He ran against Lerch in 2006, losing by just 132 votes. Neal says that battle against Lerch prepared him for this year’s election. According to his campaign Web site, [www.steveneal.org](http://www.steveneal.org), Neal claims he has long been considered the natural successor to

Lerch for the 9th District seat.

Neal works for United Way as executive director of the Labor Community Services Food and Emergency Program, a nonprofit that serves more than 500,000 people annually. He is a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and A. Philip Randolph Institute. He also serves as the assistant pastor at S.E.A.M. Faith Family Church in Chino, where he attends services with his wife, Katonja.

As director of the AFL-CIO Community Service Department at the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, Neal is the pro-

union candidate in this race. Through his position, the 49-year-old says he has worked to create critical programs for employed men and women. According to his campaign site, [www.steveneal.org](http://www.steveneal.org), Neal creates coalitions with labor, community and religious organizations. In his interview, Neal says that sitting on the city council would fall into the same line of work.

**LBBJ:** So this is your second time around. What's different?

**Neal:** I'm much better prepared. I have a much better understanding of what it takes. I've learned some valuable lessons last election.

**LBBJ:** You came close, though.

**Neal:** I came very close. I ran in 2006 to prepare for this. Knowing that 2010 was going to be an open seat, I was trying to get out in front of the situation we have now. I was expecting four to six people to file for this seat. And not only that, but I actually thought I could win four years ago as well. But either way, it was a win-win for me because it got me some name recognition in the district. I actually have a base and I found out what it takes to run a campaign.

**LBBJ:** City finances are a key issue. What do you think the city should do if revenue falls short? If you had to vote to cut services, cut employees, cut whatever, what would you do?

**Neal:** That's a very difficult situation and something that we're probably going to be faced with. I am somewhat opposed to cutting services, and then at the same time, cutting employees is just as bad. I think you have to balance it. For me, I would need to see everything. I need to know where the money is and then look at where there are duplications of services. Are there places where things are being duplicated? It's a very difficult thing for anyone coming onto the council. People ask, 'Why would you run for council now?' Throughout the region we're faced with dire economics, and I think Long Beach is positioned to be a leader in the regional economy once we straighten up our own.

**LBBJ:** Do you support furloughs? Aren't you a union-backed person?

**Neal:** I am a union-backed person. I have very strong beliefs in the collective bargaining process. I am for the most part against furloughs. I run a nonprofit, so budgeting and those kinds of things I'm not unfamiliar with. But, you need to have the information. I'm also an assistant pastor of a church, so same thing. In general, I am against furloughs.

**LBBJ:** Being a union-backed candidate, and possibly being on the city council, the unions are going to press you and say, "Don't you dare cut our salaries or furlough us anymore." Then the citizens are going to say, "Wait a minute. Neal is over here cutting senior programs and kids programs." It's a tough spot to be in.

**Neal:** I think you may have to do a combination of both. I think you have to do it in a way that creates the least amount of discomfort to your workforce and to, again, the services that the people need.

**LBBJ:** So is it safe to say you're willing to looking at everything, whether it's services or employees?

**Neal:** Yes. I think you have to be in this position. I can't go in and say I'm never going to do A, B, C or D because that would be irresponsible on my part. I just don't operate like that. I would have to see and look at everything and then try to come up with the most equitable way of handling the situation.

**LBBJ:** Usually, when a candidate is labeled pro-union, that means they may be anti-business. What's your position?

**Neal:** I am pro-business, I'm just not pro-business at the expense of the worker. I think that's the best way to say it.

**LBBJ:** So you support project labor agreements?

**Neal:** I'm in 100 percent support of project-labor agreements. I personally believe, had we had some more progressive policies at City Hall, Long Beach could have been in the running for a football stadium.

**LBBJ:** Were you raised here?

**Neal:** I was actually raised in the Compton/Carson area, but I've been in Long Beach since 1982. I worked for Channel Telephone from 1982 to 2000 when I went on the staff at the United Way. I ran the union that provides your phone service here. I was part of the Communications Workers of America local. But I've been in the community since then. There was a 10-year period when I purchased a home about a mile from where I am now, from where I was in Compton. I sold that in 2002 or 2003 and moved back to Long Beach.

**LBBJ:** So when you ran four years ago, you were a resident of the district for a little while.

**Neal:** Oh yes. That was my first time living in the 9th District. I have lived in other districts in the city, but I moved into the 9th in 2003.

**LBBJ:** Anything in your background that could come out that would make people say, "Uh oh, this guy's a bad guy. Don't vote for him?"

**Neal:** Nothing at all. Nothing like that for me. I did the typical 20-year-old stuff, but I've been involved with my church . . . I've been a minister since 1996.

**LBBJ:** Is that in Long Beach? Carson?

**Neal:** Actually, our church is in Chino. You've got to go where the Lord sends you.

**LBBJ:** That's quite a way away.

**Neal:** It is, but part of my role at the United Way is coalition building. So I build coalitions with labor, with community-based organizations or with clergy.

**LBBJ:** Do you feel there's been progress in the 9th District during the past four years under Lerch?

**Neal:** Yes, there has. I do think he's done a decent job over the last four years.

**LBBJ:** So what needs to be done?

**Neal:** I think the groundwork has been laid. I'd like to see more development come. I'd like to see more local businesses come in. Government isn't responsible for business creation, but government is responsible for [creating] an atmosphere to make it easy for businesses to survive. One of the complaints that I've heard from small business owners, restaurant owners, is that the city nickel and dimes them on certain things and it's not as easy to own a business here.

**LBBJ:** You mean with permits and licenses?

**Neal:** Yes. And I think we need to look at how that's done. Again, I'm not being privy to all of the information and I'm going off of the hearsay information of friends that have started businesses and complained about the process. I think we have to make it conducive and attractive for people to want to own businesses."

**LBBJ:** Why is it difficult for businesses to open in North Long Beach? It's the area where the fewest retail and service businesses in the city. We track new businesses. You get some manufacturing, you get some wholesale, but the services that people need don't generally open in North Long Beach. What's the reason? Is it crime?

**Neal:** I wouldn't say that. I mean, there are pockets that have heavier crime than others. But I don't believe that it is crime. I don't know if it is the amenities. I don't think it could be transportation; the bus routes are all good. It could be – and I'm just thinking off the top of my head – the way that the corridors and

the existing things that are there are maybe not conducive to the kind of usage that someone wants. And then, maybe we haven't been actively pursuing it. To Val's credit, he did do a good job over his last four years. I campaigned on that four years ago about the lack of businesses and I will give him credit for what he's done, but I think we have to go beyond that to draw those kinds of services in.

The residents of North Long Beach would love to do business in North Long Beach instead of driving all over the city or going into surrounding cities. Compton's built a very nice facility on the corner of the old Compton/Alameda car lot, where people in North Long Beach can go to a restaurant, a bank, those kinds of things. Those kinds of services would do well up in the North.

**LBBJ:** How many banks are there in the 9th District?

**Neal:** In the 9th? The Farmers & Merchants [on Artesia] is the only one.

**LBBJ:** What is your biggest challenge in this race?

**Neal:** My biggest challenge? It's probably that there are two other people in the race.

I think my biggest challenge, and the biggest challenge for any of us, is turning the people out to vote. I've been walking and talking to voters since August, and one of the reasons I fared so well four years ago is that my campaign was a grassroots campaign. I believe in door-to-door, face-to-face contact with the people who matter. People have always said, 'You're not visible.' Visible where? Visible at events in downtown, or visible with the people who are actually going to go out and vote? Participating in events downtown and those kinds of things are great for fundraising, but does that translate into someone pulling the slot at the polling place? When I look at my campaign, that's where I choose to devote my time to. I think that's the one thing that's helped me, and I think that's the reason that we were able to increase voter participation. We're banking on that for this time.

**LBBJ:** Do you have union members walking for you?

**Neal:** Absolutely.

**LBBJ:** How are you doing with campaign funds? How much have you raised?

**Neal:** I have raised around \$20,000. My goal is to raise somewhere around \$75,000 to \$80,000.

**LBBJ:** How much of the \$20,000 is union money?

**Neal:** Probably half.

**LBBJ:** Wasn't nearly all union money four years ago?

**Neal:** It was. That's the base of my support. The people that I know, work in organized labor. It may not be an individual union raising money, but most of the people I associate with either work for or work in a union. Once I left General Telephone, it gave me the opportunity to work with all the unions in Southern California. So, that's really my base."

**LBBJ:** Do you know the mayor?

**Neal:** Yes.

**LBBJ:** Have you sat down and talked to the mayor?

**Neal:** I have not.

**LBBJ:** Do you know any councilmembers?

**Neal:** Yes. I have a relationship with Tonia [Reyes-Uranga], Robert Garcia, with Gerrie Schipske and with Patrick O'Donnell.

**LBBJ:** Councilman Garcia pushed and got an Equal Benefits Ordinance. Do you support gay rights? You're an assistant pastor. What about Prop 8?

**Neal:** With Prop 8, I believe that marriage is an institution instituted by God. And that being said, I don't think that man has the ability or the right to change that. Now, to go back to the ordinance that Councilman Garcia moved, if that is a lifestyle that people choose and they have made a life for them-

selves in that manner and they are living together, cohabitating, I do believe that they should have benefits. But when it comes to marriage, I have to go with the stance that I believe is supported by scripture.

**LBBJ:** Do you go to City Council meetings?

**Neal:** I haven't attended as many over the last year. I try to go to at least one a month.

**LBBJ:** Do you ever attend redevelopment agency meetings? Planning?

**Neal:** I haven't gone to the redevelopment meetings.

**LBBJ:** On your Web site it says you "had long been considered the natural successor to the incumbent." Who has considered you the natural successor?

**Neal:** I've been very active in the North. I am very active. I have been a behind the scenes guy, and Val always attacks me on not seeing me at this and not seeing me at that, but I've served on the board at the Y. I've served on some education coalition, some good job and healthy community coalition. I've been in the background trying to organize and help move, really, a progressive agenda. There are a number of groups and folks – and you will see that as my campaign takes off – who are coming out to support my candidacy. This is from community people in the 9th District."

**LBBJ:** What about individuals from the North Project Area Committee? If you are the "chosen one," have they endorsed you?

**Neal:** The North PAC is pretty much Val's.

**LBBJ:** What about the churches up there?

**Neal:** I'm working with the churches and the minister's alliance. I think that's where people will see the variety in my campaign. The one thing about saying my campaign is supported by unions . . . That's true, but the thing about my union members is that they're parts of all other aspects of the community.

**LBBJ:** Are you in favor of doing more for the homeless?

**Neal:** Absolutely.

**LBBJ:** You know it's a big issue in Long Beach. Would you build more shelters? What would you do?

**Neal:** I do have a proposal; it's not really drafted out into a proposal yet, but I would like to see more shelter and housing built for the homeless.

**LBBJ:** Do you have shelters in North Long Beach?

**Neal:** Not to my knowledge. A lot of the homeless in North Long Beach are under the bridge or under the freeway.

**LBBJ:** So you have a plan you're drafting?

**Neal:** I do. I have a plan. I have a grant writer. It's a big part of the United Way's mission. I am a United Way employee and one of the big things we do is help with homelessness. They have some very good programs in Los Angeles and I'd love to see some of those instituted down this way as far as permanent housing; moving homeless away from shelter situations into permanent housing.

**LBBJ:** So what exactly do you do for United Way?

**Neal:** I tell everybody that I have the best job at United Way. I am their liaison to organized labor, so I interact with them and help them fundraise through labor. I used to run the Verizon campaign; that's how I landed in this position. When I used to work for GTE, now the Verizon company, we had a joint labor management campaign that raised annually about a million dollars for the United Way.

**LBBJ:** What about having our first African-American president? Does that help African-American candidates running for office anywhere in the country? Is that a plus?

**Neal:** I believe it is.

**LBBJ:** Is he doing enough to put people to work?

**Neal:** He walked into a very difficult situation.

**LBBJ:** Here we go, blaming the past.

**Neal:** No. I'm just saying I think it's similar to what anyone is going to walk into on this current council. We're going to walk into a budget deficit that we did not create, but that we'll have to deal with and I think he's in a similar situation. For me, being a numbers person, it's hard to say what you'll do until you get to that place. In theory, I'd like to say I'm going to do A, B, C and D, but you won't know that until you're privy to all the information at hand. As an assistant pastor, I believe I'm going to make the decision that will best serve not only the residents of the district but the larger community at hand. ■

## Dan Pressburg



Dan Pressburg, a former staffmember of incumbent Councilman Val Lerch, is now running against him for the 9th District seat. According to his campaign Web site, [www.workingfamilies4pressburg.com](http://www.workingfamilies4pressburg.com), his concept of "people before politics" means focusing on a safer community, jobs and education. Pressburg says district residents can hold him accountable to his promise to the community, quality of life issues and the future of the children. Pressburg hopes to encourage residents to live within their means and enact the development plan created by the community for the community.

As a banking professional, Pressburg, 60, consults with banks and credit unions. He was in the U.S. Air Force from 1969 to 1972, spending most of his military career in Southeast Asia.

He has served as vice chair of North Long Beach Project Area Committee (PAC) for nearly five years. Pressburg is currently vice president of the North Long Beach Community Action Group and president of the North Long Beach Business Association. He graduated from the Neighborhood Leadership Program and has organized and participated in tree plantings and graffiti removal in the district. Pressburg also helped create the first community garden in North Long Beach and helped establish the first Pocket Park. In this interview, Pressburg discusses his relationship with the incumbent and his reasons behind running against Lerch.

**LBBJ:** How long did you work for Councilman Lerch?

**Pressburg:** Officially, almost three years.

**LBBJ:** And that was from . . .

**Pressburg:** He was elected in 2002. I was there until 2005.

**LBBJ:** You were obviously very close.

**Pressburg:** Yes.

**LBBJ:** Did you stay close after you left in 2005?

**Pressburg:** Yes. I helped run his next campaign.

**LBBJ:** That was in 2006.

**Pressburg:** Right.

**LBBJ:** So something between the 2006 campaign and last year happened and made you want to run against him.

**Pressburg:** Yes.

**LBBJ:** What was that?

**Pressburg:** The idea that the voters have more than four times voted against term limits and said that's the way we should do it. I think, at this point, we need government reform. We need to shrink government a little bit. We need to concentrate on our business quarters and we haven't got there yet.

**LBBJ:** So part is because you feel he's going against the will

of the people on term limits.

**Pressburg:** Yes.

**LBBJ:** So you've always taken a stand for term limits.

**Pressburg:** I've taken a stand for the taxpayer that has voted one particular way and that has been to go for term limits.

**LBBJ:** So is there any other reason, other than term limits, that you decided to run? Is there something that happened that upset you? Did he hit you over the head? Did he take away a commission appointment? Did something else happen?

**Pressburg:** Well, there are a few of those things I'm sure in the background somewhere. There's not too much you can say or do to me that I don't consider water running off the duck's back pretty much. I don't take things personal. Things have to be done based on an issue. It's not a personality thing. I think I'm qualified for the job, and therefore I didn't want to sit around another four years to go after this while somebody says they want to complete something that supposedly they've started. Most of the events that have occurred in North Long Beach have been through the [North Long Beach] PAC. They haven't been direct action. I was the vice chair for almost five years. So that's what that's been about. We need to have a better focus, we need to enact a strategic plan [and] we need to protect those dollars.

**LBBJ:** So you're saying you don't think there's been progress in the 9th District under Val Lerch over the past eight years?

**Pressburg:** I can't say there hasn't been any progress; of course there's been.

**LBBJ:** Just not enough to suit you?

**Pressburg:** Just not enough to suit me. I think we can do better.

**LBBJ:** Do you have a free-standing coffee shop up there?

**Pressburg:** No. The closest thing we had to a coffee shop was a Granny's Donuts.

**LBBJ:** How about a bank. Isn't there only one within district boundaries?

**Pressburg:** The only bank that we have that's close and local is Farmers & Merchants, and that's closing down to become a senior housing project.

**LBBJ:** F&M closing down? When's that going to happen?

**Pressburg:** Probably in the next year or so to become senior housing over by Ramona Park.

**LBBJ:** So you're not going to have any banks in North Long Beach after that closing. Where do you go? Bixby Knolls?

**Pressburg:** I was going to say that.

**LBBJ:** Wasn't Lerch instrumental in bringing in Target?

**Pressburg:** Target was moved from South Street to Cherry Avenue. I don't know if you want to say he was instrumental in moving it.

Let me tell you what happened. The Target on South Street closed. In that process, when they were talking, it was suggested that it would be moved over to Cherry Avenue because of the proximity to the freeway. We had a vacant building called the Home Base building, and so it made it a much easier move for them to move into that site because it was well equipped. It made it easy and it was not as close to the Lakewood [Shopping Center] site. Now, the people who live on South Street, like yours truly and some other people, don't use that [Cherry Avenue] Target as much. They go somewhere else.

**LBBJ:** They go to the Target or Wal-Mart in Lakewood? Do you spend your tax dollars in Lakewood?

**Pressburg:** No. Why would I want to do that?

**LBBJ:** Just asking.

**Pressburg:** Why would I want to do that?

**LBBJ:** What about Big Saver?

**Pressburg:** Big Saver was a private entity deal, and that was on the old Twelve Strike property. He needs to get his facts straight as far as that goes. Number one, that was a private entity. That was done through the estate of Rex Richmond and Patty Richmond, and it was not done through the council.

**LBBJ:** So it was not done through the council office?

**Pressburg:** No.

**LBBJ:** So he can't take credit for that, but he did.

**Pressburg:** I know. I figured he probably would. Things that happen during his term, I expect him to jump on board. This is late in his term.

**LBBJ:** Would you do the same thing?

**Pressburg:** Probably not because I don't believe that's my makeup.

**LBBJ:** If a Wal-Mart wanted to come into the 9th District, would you support that?

**Pressburg:** I probably would, yes.

**LBBJ:** It's non-union.

**Pressburg:** I realize that.

**LBBJ:** Did anyone come to you and say "We need you to run?"

**Pressburg:** There were a lot of people in different areas of town – Ramona Park, in Grant – that asked me to run and if I was going to run. For the longest time I was considering it because I have some health issues. Once I got a clear bill of health, then I had to start gearing up, which was about four or five months after everybody.

**LBBJ:** Are you walking the district?

**Pressburg:** Yes.

**LBBJ:** What kind of response are you getting?

**Pressburg:** I'm getting a good response. The biggest response is that I have a contract with the community and that I'm planning to stick by that. It's kind of like a checklist, but it's more or less something you can hold me accountable to and it's something I can complete in four years. I'm not looking up the road. I'm looking at what I can do in four years.

**LBBJ:** Speaking of community, do you feel you've been more involved than the other candidates over the last 10 years?

**Pressburg:** Way more, as far as not only in my community but all across the city.

**LBBJ:** Did you help develop a plan for North Long Beach? Are you part of a group that sort of got together and said "We need a vision?"

**Pressburg:** Before Val got elected, there was Jerry Shultz. There were a lot of things that we did from the first pocket park to all kinds of little different things; Val, me ... actually there was a bunch of us. When the North PAC was formed, that's when we started developing the plan for North Long Beach that needed to be enacted. My biggest concern was I did not have a lot of trust in the city because over the years, whatever we started to create we would watch filter down elsewhere. Sometimes it would be just outright "grab the money."

**LBBJ:** Are you talking about redevelopment money?

**Pressburg:** Redevelopment money and occasionally other dollars. I watched our corridor die. I watched Atlantic Avenue go down the tubes the moment that redevelopment started saying, "We're going to do all of these things." But what I noticed that we did first, I don't know if it's right or wrong, is the fact that we took care of the entire infrastructure. And I've always thought of that as a capital expense. Now it's great that we have some fabulous looking alleys and some good looking streets with medians on them. . . . The idea is, though, we want some bricks and mortars for some businesses. You asked the question, "Where's the coffeeshop?" That's the same question that everyone's been asking now for 10 years.

**LBBJ:** No coffeeshop, no nice sit-down or family-style restaurant, no community meeting facility. So why do you think that is? Is it because retailers don't like the demographics? Maybe retailers think there's too much crime? Or is it the city's fault?

**Pressburg:** I don't know if you can sit and point the finger and say "No it's you, City of Long Beach." But I think there's been a lack of constructive [ways of] seeking out businesses. When Bixby Knolls wanted a Trader Joe's, and Trader Joe's told them twice they didn't want to come, what do you think Bixby Knolls did?

**LBBJ:** They did a letter-writing campaign.

**Pressburg:** They did a letter-writing campaign. They had people go down there and talk to Trader Joe's, and eventually they sweetened the pot enough to where they came in. Now it's a performance store. I don't get why we can't do the same thing.

**LBBJ:** Have you tried?

**Pressburg:** I've tried.

**LBBJ:** Why do you support saving the Atlantic Theater?

**Pressburg:** I will tell you all about that one. That's been my issue for six years. This is not all about saving the Atlantic Theater; this is about two different thoughts about redevelopment. Saving the Atlantic Theater is the focal point for this. Number one, Long Beach likes to go in and just plow it under and say, "Here developer, do what you're going to do." The developer comes in, he runs over budget, grabs the money and he's out of town.

By using adaptive re-use, by using their [RDA] own tools and their essentials, they can make this somewhat of a green building, to save it. There's three ways to do this. I've talked to [Val] from the very beginning. You can save the façade and the front entrance way and build directly behind it. You can save the whole building and redo the interior; there are grants to be able to do that to lessen the expense though the Getty and several other museums that will allow you the dollars that would save you money. And you can tear down that funky furniture store which is adjacent to it and wrap around the library above and create two different venues for it.

**LBBJ:** So why not bulldoze it?

**Pressburg:** The cost for demolition.

**LBBJ:** The cost for demolition must be less than redoing the whole interior.

**Pressburg:** Granted, you're absolutely right. It will probably cost \$400,000 to do that.

**LBBJ:** Why do you want to save the theater? It's old. No one uses it.

**Pressburg:** Granted. It's a warehouse space. You can use it for any number of things. You can use it for business, you can use it for pleasure, you can use it for classrooms, any number of things. It's been standing there for 60 years. It can qualify as a number of things. The only reason is to utilize something rather than just plowing everything under like they've been doing.

**LBBJ:** I can understand saving historical buildings.

**Pressburg:** That is a historical building, believe it or not.

**LBBJ:** But it hasn't been designated a historical building.

**Pressburg:** The reason why it is not is because you have the city as an owner. The city will never do that. This is the habitual deal with the City of Long Beach. They buy the building. In less than five years that building is an eyesore. It's so bad you don't want it. They degrade it.

**LBBJ:** How much money have you collected for your campaign?

**Pressburg:** Around \$20,000.

**LBBJ:** How much do you need?

## Brad Shore



Brad Shore, 52, is a boardmember of the North Long Beach Project Area Committee (PAC) and member of the North Community Action Group. He is a flight attendant for American Airlines and a part-time psychotherapist at St. Mary Medical Center. He has been a member of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants union for 25 years.

According to Shore's campaign Web site, [www.bradshore.org](http://www.bradshore.org), his top priorities are quality of life, public safety, small business development and retention, and youth and jobs. Shore claims his experience at American Airlines has helped build his character, dedication, commitment and loyalty to employers and consumers. He says he would be a good addition to the council, and his master's degree in counseling helps him share compassion and understanding for those in need.

Shore founded a social group in 2001, which raises funds for local nonprofits, and has served on several nonprofit organization boards. He is a member of the First Congregational Church. Shore wants to make the 9th District a community by focusing on creating more bike lanes, putting together a farmer's market, hosting concerts at local parks and bringing in a major chain grocery store. In his sit-down with the Business Journal, Shore discusses how getting his name out to the voters is his toughest challenge.

**LBBJ:** Are you getting any union support?

**Shore:** Yes. I have the endorsement of my union at American Airlines, which is the APFA. It's the union I've belonged to for the past 25 years.

**LBBJ:** Any other union endorsements?

**Shore:** So far I've interviewed with ILWU [International Longshore & Warehouse Union] and, in a way, I was pleased with the result. They at least held off. My thought was, because of [candidate Steve] Neal, who, in my opinion, is really a union organizer . . . I was thinking they were going to go with Neal on that [endorsement], but I did well enough for them to hold off. They're just leaving it an open endorsement.

**LBBJ:** Oh really? So that's like a win for you?

**Shore:** It really is. I view it that way.

**LBBJ:** Let's talk about the city's financial situation. There have been furloughs, some layoffs, cuts in services. If you were elected, you're going to have to make some tough decisions. Are you willing to cut employees if necessary?

**Shore:** Yes, if necessary. I think it's a last resort, but I think if you have to you have to. Being in the union all these years prepared me for that because we've had layoffs at American Airlines. . . . But you try everything you can to avoid that, obviously.

**LBBJ:** So let's say you had to make a decision between cutting some senior programs or laying off five employees.

**Shore:** That's a tough one for me because I work with seniors at St. Mary's with the geriatric senior population. I have two jobs: American and St. Mary's. In a situation like that, first of all you would have to study how many people are involved in the program, who it's serving. . . . that's kind of a black-and-white scenario that you're giving me. But if it came down to saving somebody's job versus a program, I think the program would probably have to go first. Sometimes there's a lot of gray area that you can play with in these things, but sometimes when it's black and white like that, you have to look at somebody's income over the program.

**Pressburg:** I would love to be at \$45,000.

**LBBJ:** How would you address the city's financial crisis? What would you do?

**Pressburg:** With all budgets, there are opportunities to adjust. What we have done traditionally is a traditional municipal budget. What that does is it gathers information, and it pays, pays, pays. And that's all it does. What it does is if you're falling under budget, it tells you to spend to the end of the budget. If you started with a premise at zero and spent as you needed, you would reign it back in. Starting with a zero like that would be what I call a zero based budget.

A zero based budget is used throughout the world. It's used in New Zealand and other places that are not suffering like the rest of the world. It's also done in Phoenix and Dallas and places in the United States. All of those budgets, miraculously, are all in the black because they spend based on need. We do not do that. We over spend. We spend out. First thing is, yes, I understand that you're going to forecast; that's what people do with their budgets. They're going to forecast out and they're going to expect revenues to come into that. When that doesn't happen and you have vacant positions, that is when you do your mid-term adjustments. We haven't done that; we don't do that. So that's number one that I would try and take a serious look at is mid-term adjustments.

**LBBJ:** If you have to reduce employee costs, what are you going to do? More furlough days? Cut cops? Cut firefighters?

**Pressburg:** I don't want to cut cops and I don't want to cut firefighters. I think part of the things we could actually do is I would go after alternative means of revenues, and one of those alternative means would be just to set up like they have on the East Coast, a port authority form of governance for the police department, which would move police over to the port where they would be affordable and it would free up dollars.

**LBBJ:** But would you cut employees?

**Pressburg:** I probably would cut employees, to be honest with you, depending upon how each of their jobs overlaps. I wouldn't start at the bottom. I wouldn't be looking at the general employees.

**LBBJ:** What would you say is your biggest challenge in this election?

**Pressburg:** I think in any election, it's always the same, and that is getting your message out to the people and having them believe what you're saying and then following through with what you're going to do. In previous elections, I haven't seen that out of people.

**LBBJ:** Steve Neal's Web site states that Neal ". . . has long been considered a natural successor to the incumbent councilmember." What's your reaction to that statement?

**Pressburg:** Oh boy. I read that too, and I had a nice chuckle over it. If Steve Neal had some contact with the people . . . I mean, just because he figures he should have beat Val because he didn't do a good job on his absentee ballots last time, otherwise he would have beat him; I don't know if you'd call that being a "natural successor." Natural successors to any council position are the people that do the work in the community. If the elections were tomorrow and I lose, I'm still going to be in North Long Beach. I'm still going to be doing stuff in the community. I'm still going to be working with all the media. I'm still going to be working there. I'm still going to have all of those good relationships. If Steve Neal does not win, he disappears for four years and then he comes back out. ■

**LBBJ:** What about increasing the furloughs. Maybe employees are taking one or two days a month, with one day equal to five percent of their pay. So maybe a third day is added. Do you think employees would rather do that?

**Shore:** I think right now, we have to think outside the box because of the economy. So, yes, that is an option. That would be a reasonable option.

**LBBJ:** Have you been following the pension issue?

**Shore:** Yes.

**LBBJ:** That's come to the forefront now. Obviously, pensions are a big issue with all unions. The city could save a lot of money if employees paid more of the pension cost. So would you be willing to take a look at that as opposed to layoffs or cutting programs?

**Shore:** Yes. I'm paying more of my pension cost [at American Airlines]. As a union member, I've been having to contribute more, so I'm used to that. Also, I think we need to not have automatic increases just built into future labor pension agreements. I think we need to look at that and stop that. We need to point out, just to learn from it, [that] Lerch, I think, is responsible for a lot of the pension spikes over the years that cut us to the bone. So now we have nothing left to play with. Not to get Lerch's back for that specifically other than to learn from that what that caused in a bad economy now.

**LBBJ:** Are you sure about Lerch's vote on pensions? He took office in 2002.

**Shore:** It was one of his first [votes]. And I'm not exaggerating when I say that it was like one of his first meetings as a sitting council member.

**LBBJ:** That vote was a big deal. If you talk to councilmembers who were seated at that time, they're going to say they were misled about the costs by then-city auditor Gary Burroughs.

**Shore:** You'll notice that Lerch will get defensive about it sometimes if he's asked, because he'll say that he was literally sworn in and then at his first meeting they had the vote come up. And I understand that had to be tough, you know, you're just seated and then you have to vote.

**LBBJ:** But councilmembers can ask questions or ask for more information, or to delay a vote. Or even abstain. They have options.

**Shore:** Right. It's your vote. I mean, you have that choice.

**LBBJ:** Do you agree that a lot of development, a lot of progress in the 9th District during the past four years?

**Shore:** No, I wouldn't agree that there's a lot of development in the 9th. No. I think it's horrible. I think we're suffering out there. There's tons of blight, there's tons of vacant storefronts, we don't have concerts in the park, we don't have community gardens, we don't have a major chain grocery store, we don't have a major chain family restaurant, [and] we don't have a coffeeshop. There's been some redevelopment money that finally has come out there after it was used in the 8th [District], because so much of our funds went to the 8th first in Bixby Knolls. Now, finally the Atlantic Village there on Atlantic Avenue has been getting some work. But no, I wouldn't agree with that at all. I think we've been ignored, I think we're suffering. I feel the opposite.

**LBBJ:** Is your number one criticism of the incumbent the lack of development, or is there something else?

**Shore:** I would say, probably, public safety and business development. With public safety, he's said he was going to uphold two sworn officers per 1,000 population. We don't have that. I think it's 1.77 and he's always wanted to maintain two. So that's number one, with public safety.

**LBBJ:** But if we have financial problems, how can we hire more cops.

**Shore:** It depends. Having financial issues and a difficult budget doesn't mean you can't hire more cops. I don't necessarily see that. It's a matter of priorities. Also, I think business development has been abhorrent. Given our district, right by the 710 and the 91 [freeways], bordering up to Paramount and Compton and other communities, we could be like a mini-hub right there where we're located. And it's actually quite the opposite. I don't know what he's done with any small business enterprise out there, I don't know what he's done with neighborhood development zone programs. I don't see it. I see a big to-do when he opens the Big Saver, which is still, again, not a major chain grocery store. And I don't want to harp on that too much other than when you live in a district where I have to drive to the Vons in Bixby Knolls to go to a major chain grocery store, it is an issue out there."

**LBBJ:** If Wal-Mart wanted to move into the 9th district, what would you say?

**Shore:** I would want to talk to them about the size of the store, the location. I would have no issue with them moving in, in terms of what they offer and in terms of bringing business to the 9th. I'm assuming it's minimum wage for most of their workers, I'm not sure about that.

**LBBJ:** Minimum wage. Non-union.

**Shore:** Would I hope inside, on a personal level, that they would perhaps pay more? Yes. I don't think they have to be union, but I would hope they would pay a living wage for their people. Now, with that said, if they want to put something up in the 9th, would I in any way fight that or not help them? Hell no. We need the jobs out there. I think it's a common-sense approach. A lot of the questions I get at the forums are very black-and-white. That's fine to ask them that way; I think that's the reality of it. But the approach, in terms of making decisions, you have to look at the gray area. Use that common-sense approach and taking both sides. I mean, yes, I wish that they offered a higher living wage. . . . We're almost desperate [in North Long Beach]. I'm telling you, drive out there. There are vacant streets. You'll see vacant storefronts. You'll see a lot of blight.

**LBBJ:** We understand there's one bank in the 9th District.

**Shore:** There is an F&M up there. Artesia and Downey I believe.

**LBBJ:** More than 50,000 residents and several thousand businesses and only one bank. Do you need another bank?

**Shore:** Yes, and I don't think they've [banks] been given the incentives to come out there and set up shop in the 9th.

Lerch will say, "I stand by my record." Well, what's your record? What have you done? There's a Target. It's not a strong record, I think, for our district. Back to those quality of life issues – meaning concerts in the park, farmers' markets, community gardens, more bike lanes – we're overlooked in that sense. Anywhere else in town you can go and have these things, and yet in the 9th we just don't have it."

**LBBJ:** Why is that?

**Shore:** Because we haven't had councilmembers in the past who have fought for us in that way.

**LBBJ:** You don't think there's a stigma with North Long Beach due to crime?

**Shore:** Why would there be a stigma?

**LBBJ:** We're just asking.

**Shore:** There would be a stigma because no one is correcting the stigma, or educating people, or working to change the image and working to make people feel safe out there. We want people to go out there and buy homes and stay and be part of neighbor-

hood associations. We have three neighborhood associations, I believe. They're not promoted, they're not helped along. Three are active right now. They each get about, and I'm guessing, maybe 10 to 12 members per meeting per month. So out of almost 60,000 residents, you have three associations that are active, that have maybe, let's say 15 [people each]. So you have 45 people out almost 60,000 who are active in the 9th. I mean, literally.

**LBBJ:** What about the Project Area Committee? The North Long Beach PAC?

**Shore:** We have a good PAC.

**LBBJ:** Have you been to their meetings?

**Shore:** I go to almost all their meetings. I'm also on the board of directors for the North Long Beach Community Action Group.

**LBBJ:** Have you met with any of the councilmembers?

**Shore:** Yes

**LBBJ:** Is anybody endorsing you?

**Shore:** No. I've met with almost all of them and I haven't really sought their endorsements.

**LBBJ:** Have you met with Mayor Foster?

**Shore:** Informally. I had a meeting with Becky, his assistant, but not with Mayor Foster directly.

**LBBJ:** How will your professional experience, working with American Airlines and St. Mary's, help you as a member of the city council? How would you balance those jobs: working two jobs and being a councilmember?

**Shore:** I think it's a great mix because you have my 25 years of a blue collar job with the airline, where I'm union and I understand that as a union member. Then, in 1997, I had to go back to school and use my brain at some point. I had to get my master's and do something with this [points to his head] because I wasn't using it with American Airlines in that regard. So I went back to school and got my master's in psychology in 1997. I knew I wanted to work part-time in the counseling field and I didn't want to give up my airline job. So I've made it work, in terms of getting my masters and then finding part-time work in the counseling field. I think it's a good mix because I understand what happens in both respective areas. At St. Mary's, it's not union. I could be fired in a minute. It's a totally different feel there. One thing I've learned there, obviously, with the counseling job, is working with the senior geriatric population. I've learned about advocating for seniors.

In regards to the second question, when I'm in council, I'll probably have to retire from American Airlines. There's no way I'll be able to work two days, Thursdays and Fridays currently at St. Mary's, fly a trip a week, which I'm currently trying to do, and then council. I will do an early out. It's not even really an early out, it's just a retirement with American Airlines, and I'll keep the St. Mary's job. There's no way I could do all three.

**LBBJ:** What is your biggest challenge in this race?

**Shore:** I think it's name recognition right now. It's getting my name out there. Some of the voters won't pay much attention until the week before election day. So, it's hitting those voters to try to let them know who I am and what I stand for and that I'm a homeowner. . . . I'm trying to walk as much as I can because that's what will win this race in the long run. The face-to-face contact, and they're talking to me. They're so thrilled that someone has taken the time to knock on their door.

**LBBJ:** It's difficult to handicap the 9th because of the write-in effect. It's pretty much an unknown in a low voter turnout district. Steve Neal's showing four years ago, however, gives him better name I.D. than you.

**Shore:** And I think it's scary for people . . . let me just put it this way with Neal. I mean, I agree with you that he ran before, so his

name is out there and all of that. But, here you have someone who is involved in no way in any of those [community] activities in the 9th [mentioned earlier], who has union support outside of Long Beach, who bussed in walkers last time to walk for him because there's no walkers in the 9th who can walk for him because nobody knows him. He's not active in the 9th. To me, regardless to whether I'm running or not, that would frighten me that somebody can do that.

**LBBJ:** But it works.

**Shore:** Yes, it's effective. I'm not denying its effective. But it's frightening.

**LBBJ:** Steve Neal's Web site states that Neal ". . . has long been considered a natural successor to the incumbent councilmember." What's your reaction to that statement?

**Shore:** My reaction would be to guffaw. Based on what? And who said it? When? That's sort of like him coming up with his own little campaign ploy. Of course he's going to report that because he, in his mind, because he ran in the past.

**LBBJ:** Is there anything else you'd like to discuss?

**Shore:** Just that I want you to know that I support business. I think as a moderate Democrat who understands both the union side and the business side of it, I think I'm going to be a good blend, a good mix for our city and for North Long Beach. I get the issues. I get working with the gray area. I have a lot to offer. Once people get to know me and see where I stand on the issues, and that I'm educated but I'm also passionate at the same time, I'm going to make a good go of it. ■