



Mountain Views-Observer

WHERE YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS COMES FIRST - Sierra Madre Arcadia Pasadena Altadena and Monrovia

Week Ending December 21, 2007 Volume 1, No. 18

Sierra Madre And Police Reach ‘Historic Agreement’

“It ends years of discord between the City and the POA,” —Mayor Joffe.

By Dean Lee

Everyone clapped, cheered and shook hands as the city council approved during a special meeting Tuesday night, the first police pay increase in years. The increase is subject, however, to Sierra Madre voters approving an increased Utility Users Tax on April 8, 2008.

The three year Memorandum of Understanding between the city and the Police Officers’ Association (POA) states that the POA no longer seeks voter support of their Initiative and asks instead that the people vote in favor of the city’s UUT Measure. More specifically, they will ask voters to reject the POA Salary Initiative proposal on the same ballot that would have forced the city to increase their pay.

The Salary Initiative would have set the base pay for Sierra Madre police officers to be no less than the amount paid the lowest paid department in the area. The Police Initiative if passed, could leave the city scrambling to come up with as much as an additional \$1.5 million per year. Although the UUT ballot measure will not cover that total amount, it is a source of revenue generation for the city.

The officer’s salaries will increase 27 percent, comparable to what they were asking for in the Initiative, just not as fast says Dieter Dammeier the attorney representing the POA. Even though the Initiative called for the money all at once, Dammeier said they were always willing the work with the city. At a past meeting he said the last thing they were trying to do was take funding away from seniors and youth.

“If it [the POA Salary Initiative] was to pass it would have raised salaries more like 30 percent,” he said. “I think this is a win for both sides.”

According to Dammeier, there was a risk involved in taking the original initiative to the people. He noted that the city had strong concerns that other city functions would be cut such as the library and senior center expenses. “This could you know, go either way”, he said. “This way basically we’re on the same team as the city council to get the Utility User Tax passed to raise up enough revenue to fairly compensate the officers.”

POA President John Ellins said backing off any discussions over benefits helped the compromise. “Our initiative called for officers to receive the median range of the benefits for the surrounding San Gabriel cities, which, with a whole bunch of other things, would have cost the city a lot of money.” He said even though they would still be the lowest paid city around, “We won’t be where we are now, one step at a time.” Dammeier added “that’s a big difference.”

Ellins also explained the increase would help retain and recruit officers. “When you’re looking at a department that’s 30 percent below the bottom of San Gabriel agencies, how are you going to retain and recruit officers when the problem is going to get bigger?”

“We’re going to close that gap to where we might be the lowest, but not 30, maybe 10, eight, two who knows where we’ll be in three years,” he added. “But we know we will never be at this deficit again.”

With the increased UUT a salary boost of nine percent would begin in July, and then increase again another eight percent the following year and again seven percent the next year. This would be more in line with a phase in of the increased utility tax of six percent over three years. It would max out at 12 percent in 2010.

According to the city, the last time a salary contract between the two was agreed on was for the 1998-1999 fiscal year although the POA said they had agreed in 2004 to increase benefits five percent. Ellins said the issue of would again be discussed in 2010.

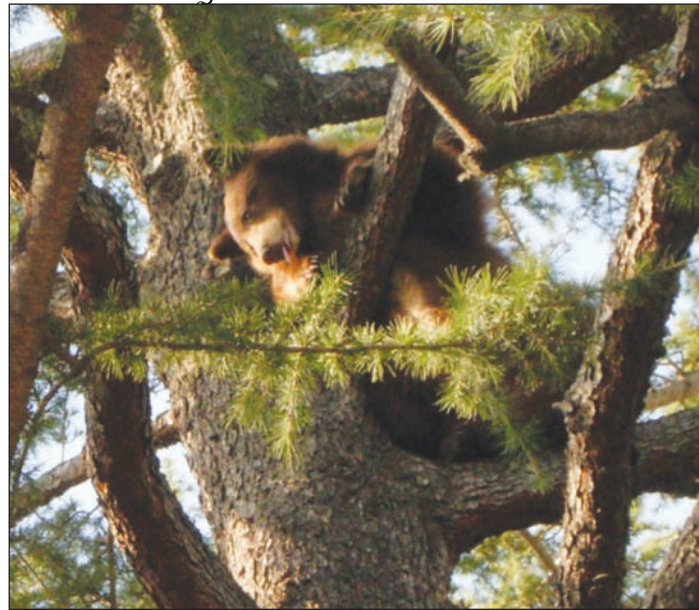
Dammeier said if the UUT does not pass they will be at square one.

Merry, Merry Christmas To All!



Happy Holidays to all from the publisher and staff of The MountainViews-Observer. This artist’s rendering of the Sierra Madre Candle Light Walk was created by Sonny Salsbury exclusively for Leonora Moss. The boutique, which specializes in “Floral Gatherings & Keepsakes” commissioned this along with 11 other drawings, for the Sonny Salsbury Sierra Madre Calendar 2008. Each month features a different glimpse of life in Sierra Madre. Although Salsbury has never lived in the city, his depictions of life in this village are mesmerizing. Leonora Moss is located at 9 Kersting Court, Sierra Madre. Reprinted by permission from Sonny Salsbury

A Very “BEARY” Week Before Christmas A true Sierra Madre Saga



Our bear takes a break from eating persimmons and appears to be glancing at the crowd below. “People, not the bear, caused problems activists say. Photo by Terry Barbour

A three day hullabaloo that started Monday, with a bear reportedly eating persimmons in a local backyard, spilled over to Tuesday with another sighting in close proximity of Sierra Madre Middle School, then continued still Wednesday morning as authorities said they got yet another call about the bear in an unidentified location. It is alleged that after a day of persimmons, the ‘Beary’ as he has been dubbed, decided to taste the honey pears at E. Waldo

“We think it’s the same bear,” said Lt. of Field Operations, Nemesio Arteaga, of the Pasadena Humane Society. “When we asked for the location the person had second thoughts saying the bear was gone, then hung up the phone.”

Arteaga is referring to a call the Humane Society received on Wednesday morning.

Arteaga said their first encounter with the bear ended peacefully late Monday with Sierra Madre police and Humane Society officers asking members of the media and local residents to please leave after taking pictures.

“The minute people leave, it would come down immediately,” he said. “That’s what happened two days ago. It was up in the tree for so long and unfortunately

there were cameras and people that were keeping an eye on it.” He continued, “As it stared to get dark people then shined lights on it and as soon as it started to come down, the lights scared it back up the tree.” The bear ran off shortly before midnight witnesses said.

Arteaga noted that after a number of calls to the Department of Fish and Game Monday, Fish and Game they finally told them they were not going to come out. The bear was first reported at about 3 p.m. he said, and Fish and Game ultimately has jurisdiction over wildlife.

“We don’t take action on the bear,” he said. “If the bear is not threatening anybody we’re not go to try and tranquilize it, we’re not going to try an capture it, we’re not going to do anything. We try and keep it contained until Fish and Game arrives.”

He also said the area was as much the bear’s home as the people. At one time the area was cordoned off by police with yellow caution tape, worsening the problem of onlookers, local activists said. The activists also said this is why, when a bear crosses one of their yards, “they keep it to themselves.” This happens frequently.

Caroline Brown, Sierra Madre Mountains Conservancy member took the opportunity to educate people that Sierra Madre resolution 72-62 designated, a while back, Sierra Madre as a wildlife sanctuary. She handed out flyers that some were unwilling to take. She also said that people should have left their pets at home, as a number of people stood on street corners with large dogs that could scare the bear.

Arteaga said conditions on Tuesday, day two of the city visit from the same bear, obligated them to call Fish and Game back, explaining they now needed help. He said that minutes before children were dismissed from Sierra Madre Middle School at 2:30 p.m., the bear was shot with a beanbag to get it farther up a nearby tree, he said. The bean bag was shot to discourage the bear from deciding to come down while the children were walking home from school. ‘Beary’ was first sighted across from E. Waldo Ward & Son’s Ranch on Tuesday. (cont. page 3)




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WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Pasadena Farmer's Market

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Merry Christmas Sierra Madre

By Rich Johnson



Wow, Christmas again? Already? Didn't we just celebrate it oh, about a year ago? The holidays now seem to come closer together than when I was a youngster. For that matter, at that age the night before Christmas seemed longer than all last year. That's because we were in the Christmas morning camp. My parents insisted we open presents on Christmas morning. DOH! What did your family do? We all had friends who were lucky enough to be in the Christmas Eve camp. They got to open their gifts the night before Christmas. I guess Santa used UPS for those families. Finally, my mom caved in to constant badgering and said we could open one gift on Christmas Eve. But here's the rub: She got to pick the gift. So what did I get on Christmas Eve? Typically socks, a bathrobe, or slippers. There oughta be a law.

Here's my suggestion to young parents. Let your kids open a cool gift Christmas Eve. And let them stay up and play with whatever they open. That way, they won't be waking you up at 5:00am Christmas morning. They'll be sleeping in (probably passed out on their bedroom floor.) My wife and I did that with Alex and Olivia. We pretended to tell them to go to sleep knowing full well they were playing with their new toys under the blankets with a flashlight. We had to shake them awake at 8:30 Christmas morning to open presents.

Of course this reminds me of the three stages of man (or woman:)
1. You believe in Santa Claus. 2. You don't believe in Santa Claus. 3. You become Santa Claus.

There is a wonderful Christmas story centered around World War One. Many of you have probably heard it. But for those who haven't: The war was barely four months old Christmas Eve 1914. World War One was mostly trench warfare and indeed, the Germans were in a trench on one side of a big field and the British were in a trench on the opposite side. At about 10pm the guns stopped firing and the British soldiers could hear the German soldiers singing "Silent Night" hunkered down in their trench. The British started singing the song too in English. When the sun came up the next morning both sides climbed out of their trenches without their weapons and met in the center of the battlefield. They exchanged chocolate and cigarettes. Before you knew it a soccer ball showed up and the enemies spent the rest of the day playing soccer. That night both sides headed back down to the trenches and the next day resumed the war.

Finally, I have asked the Lord to give me a Christmas morning like I used to experience when I was a wee lad. So, if you wake up Christmas morning and discover Sierra Madre blanketed with a foot of snow, it's my fault. I'll be selling snow shovels in Kersting Court. MERRY CHRISTMAS

r.johnson@mvoobserver.com

Sierra Madre's Church of the Ascension Children's Christmas Pageant

Monday, December 24th, 5:00 pm

This Pageant will bring the warmth of Christmas, smiles from ear to ear and Holiday spirit to every heart. Please come join us. There will also be midnight service beginning at 10:30pm. And may we wish everyone the warmest wishes during the Holiday season. Contact the church with any question at 626.355.1133 The church is located at 25 E. Laurel, Sierra Madre,

Remembrances

Jeanne Arline Villien Wynne

11/8/1921 – 12/12/2007

Arline Wynne was born on her family farm in Maurice, Louisiana to Jacques (James) "Jack" Villien and Rose Rachel Martin Villien on November 8th, 1921. The village she grew up in was named after her great-grandfather Maurice Villien who homesteaded the area after the Civil War. Growing up bilingual in a predominately French speaking community was a distinct advantage for Arline who excelled through school and was able to graduate from the Southwest Louisiana Institute (now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) with a major in education at the age of 18.

After graduation Arline taught elementary school in the villages of Donaldsonville and Napoleonville, and at the Academy of the Sacred Heart in Grand Coteau, Louisiana, then a woman's college, before entering Loyola University of New Orleans to study pre-med. At age 21 she met and married Thomas Wynne of Sierra Madre who was studying medicine at Tulane University while enlisted in the Naval ROTC during WWII. She left school in 1944 when their first child, Catherine, was born in New Orleans. After the war she and Catherine moved to Sierra to live with her in-laws, Leslie and Catherine Wynne, while Tom completed his military duty as a medical doctor at various west coast Veterans Administration hospitals.

The family made Sierra Madre their permanent home and their younger children Tom Jr., Margaret and James were all born locally. Though Arline would often volunteer as a substitute teacher at St. Rita's School, she devoted most of her time and energy towards raising her family. Arline also had a keen interest in politics and was not afraid to speak her mind to the city council and served on the campaign committees for various local officials and propositions. For a number of years she was also active in the St. Rita's PTO and the Sierra Madre Women's Club.

Known to family friends as a legendary Cajun cook, Arline would prepare quantities fit for a small army and welcome all share in food, conversation and sometimes fierce debate, all in a spirit of heartfelt warmth and love.

Arline suffered a stroke in 1999 from which she never fully recovered. The last several years she resided in Irvine, California where her younger daughter Margaret and her family could care for her. She was preceded in death by her husband of 59 years Tom (2002) and passed away on December 12th, the second anniversary of her mother's death. She is survived by her daughter Catherine Wynne of Captain Cook, Hawaii and her daughters Tracy and Jennifer; son Tom Jr., his wife Mary Jo and children Tom III and Alice of Sierra Madre; daughter Margaret Wynne, her husband Karim Fellahi and daughter Kheira of Foothill Ranch, CA; and son James Wynne and his son Jack of Sierra Madre.

Services were held on Friday December 21st at St. Rita's Roman Catholic Church in Sierra Madre.

Louise Bernice Barbour, 92

Louise Barbour, 55-year resident of Sierra Madre, passed away December 17, 2007 in Pasadena, CA. Born in Oakdale, California, she was preceded in death by her husband of 37 years, Francis Bird Barbour (who died in 1981). She is survived by their children, son Terence and daughter-in-law Debra Barbour (of Sierra Madre, CA), daughter Judy Barbour (of Garden Valley, CA), and son Dennis Barbour (of Isleton, CA); along with four grand-daughters - Sari Philipps (Tempe, AZ), Shannon Barbour (La Jolla, CA), Carl Barbour (South Pasadena, CA), and Julia Barbour (Sierra Madre, CA); and three great-grandsons (Jake, Luke and Sam Philipps). Having earned a Bachelor's Degree in English from the University of Oregon, Louise was perhaps best known in the local community for her 20 years of volunteer service at the Sierra Madre Public Library and Pasadena Red Cross. While raising her family, she worked in administration for Pasadena High School, Blair High School, and the Pasadena Unified School District. However, her passions for reading, sports, bingo, and crossword puzzles lasted her lifetime. A devoted wife, loving mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and dear friend, she was also a cherished soul whose cheerful spirit and warm heart touched many lives and will be deeply missed.

The family requests that donations in memory of Louise Barbour be made to the Friends of the Sierra Madre Public Library, 440 West Sierra Madre Boulevard, Sierra Madre, California 91024.

Coffee With Joffe Peace In Our Time?



Mayor Enid Joffe

Whatever your religious denomination, the holiday season is the time of year that we wish for Peace on Earth and Goodwill for All. So, it is fitting that, this past Tuesday, the Sierra Madre City Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Sierra Madre Police Officers' Association (POA), ending years of strife between the City and the POA. Just in time for Christmas!

Opinions vary on how long it has been since the City and the Police Officers mutually approved a contract, but it seems to have been at least a decade. Ironically, something so significant was witnessed, not by a standing-room-only crowd, but by a few hardy souls who braved the rainy weather. Hopefully, everyone else in town was snuggled up in front of the TV screen watching this historic vote, because, in my view, the three year agreement with the POA ranks as one of the most important accomplishments of this City Council.

The MOU gives the POA an average salary boost of 9 percent increase starting July 1, 2008. This would be followed by an average 8 percent increase the second year and 7 percent the third year. Other provisions of the agreement include:

- An increase in health benefits
- A fiscal emergency provision that allows the city to suspend salary increases if city revenues decline by more than 3% in one year.
- An opportunity to re-open discussion of the POA's request for improved retirement benefits in 2010.
- An end to litigation between the POA and the City

Thanks to Councilmember Kurt Zimmerman who was part of the negotiating team with me and to Police Officers Association President John Ellins and POA Attorney Deter Dammeier. All of us viewed these negotiations as a last ditch opportunity to put our past differences aside and work together for a common goal. Special thanks are owed to the city staff, especially Elaine Aguilar and Michelle Keith for burning

the midnight oil to run the numbers.

The entire MOU is conditioned on the passage of the proposed Utility User Tax (UUT) ballot initiative approved by the City Council on December 18th. Without approval of the measure, the POA agreement is null and void and we will all go back to our previous adversarial positions.

The proposed UUT measure resulted from the in depth work on the City's finances done by the Citizens Advisory Committee. This fine group of volunteers spent hundreds of hours over the past four month period taking a deep dive into the city's current financial picture and future needs. Their conclusion was that a new funding source was needed to finance salary increases for the police and to ensure the continuation of paramedic services. Even the recommended solution, an increase in the utility users' tax, would not be sufficient to meet all of the city's longer term needs or even cover the costs of the POA's proposed Prioritized Public Safety initiative, if it should pass.

The good news is that, as part of the MOU, the POA agreed to write their ballot argument to support the City's Utility User Tax initiative and related Advisory Measure and discourage residents from voting for the POA's Prioritized Public Safety measure.

With this accomplishment to close out the year, I feel ready for the holiday season and excited about the possibilities in the new year. Happy Holidays to all the residents of Sierra Madre and the best of New Years to us all. Hopefully we will all be recovered from our revelry in time for the next Walk with the Mayor on January 12th 9AM, Kersting Court.

Mayor Joffe welcomes your comments and questions. She can be reached at ejoffe@ci.sierra-madre.ca.us or 626 646-3458. She is always happy to meet for a cup of coffee.

BEAR (cont. from page 1)

"What ultimately happened was that the woman's whose house the bear was behind, finally came home," he said. ".....school was letting out so we had to get the bear back up the tree to keep the area safe." Arteaga noted, however, that in most cases they do not use beanbags.

"I have personally never fired one," he said. "There isn't a need."

Fish and Game stayed hours until the bear eventually came down. Scared again, it ran up another tree, he said. After waiting it out again, the bear ran north and they lost sight of it. Arteaga said most likely, had they tranquilized the bear, it would have then been tagged and relocated. He said this particular bear and not been tagged before.

Arteaga said the now infamous bear was a typical 400 pound bear. He was asked if a "mother bear" could come looking for it? "No, this probably is mom."

The bear was also a topic of light-hearted conversation at a special Tuesday night city council meeting. Some suggested the bear might make an appearance during public comment. He probably now has a right, like everyone else, to speak on public safety, someone said.

Council member Don Watts later said, "Maybe we could get an endorsement from the bear," referring to arguments written by Council Members John Buchanan and Kurt Zimmerman in favor of the increased Utility Users Tax. D.Lee/MVO

Rejoice! This Holy Night! Christmas Eve at St. Rita Catholic Church

This will be a joyous night rich in music in store for all attending this holiday celebration. Extra joy for the parish because a trio of the church's talented members has arranged the beautiful Christmas music. "We are blessed by the professional gifts of these musicians," says Music Ministry Director Steve Gunther. "The idea for this Christmas Eve service developed three years ago out of a desire to create a unique and glorious celebration worthy of this holy night, and to have it musically shaped from within the church membership makes it all the more meaningful."

The program, which is free to the public, is a musical program preceding Christmas Eve Mass. Len Hundshamer, Captain of the Los Angeles Police Department's North Hollywood Division, may not seem like your typical music arranger, but the impression is misleading. The 33-year veteran cop has a deep musical streak that starts with his saxophone and leads straight to his fresh and adventuresome arrangements. Hundshamer brings solid credentials to the task, having extensively studied orchestration under Emmy Award-winning Hollywood composer Alf Clausen, known best for his work on "The Simpsons." Len also honed his skills in the Film Scoring Program at UCLA, counting film composers Elmer Bernstein, Jerry Fielding, John Williams, Jerry Goldsmith and Henry Mancini among his influences. Born and raised in the San Gabriel Valley, Len and his wife, Cathy, have lived in Arcadia for 23 years. They and their two daughters, Susan and Jill, have been an integral part of the St. Rita parish since 1984.

Jennifer and Robert Bowen, in contrast, are quite new to St. Rita's. The husband and wife met at the University of California at Santa Barbara, where he was a first-year grad student teaching her Musicianship Section. They began dating the following year and Robert, with the precise timing of a musician, proposed marriage to Jennifer on her graduation day. They married the next summer and promptly went different directions for graduate study: she to the University of Michigan and Robert to Princeton. Jennifer got a Master of Music degree in the Harpsichord while Robert, already armed with his Masters from UCSB, earned a PhD in Composition at Princeton. Their son Wesley was born in 2003. The family moved to Diamond Bar last year when Robert was hired to head the Music Theory department at Mt. San Antonio College. Jennifer quickly found a job as well. Her sister, Amber, is a member of the St. Rita choir. When the post of accompanist suddenly opened up, one phone call from Amber filled the position. Jennifer has played the 10:00 a.m. Mass now for a year and a half, regularly creating liturgical arrangements along the way.



Steve & Jennifer

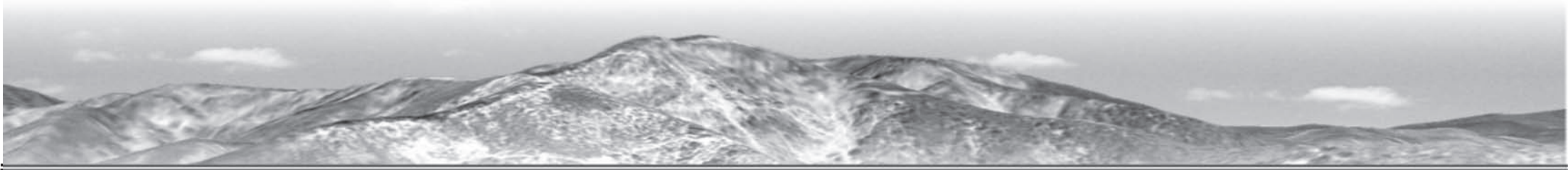
Jennifer laughs as she says that she and Robert could be considered "quite the odd couple," musically speaking. She explains, "As a harpsichordist, I am interested in 'old music,' and as a composer, Robert is interested in 'new music.' But harpsichordists in centuries past were expected to improvise over a bass line, which is exactly what jazz pianists do today, so the elements of each end up in the other. Robert grew up with the sound of jazz in his ears; even today a subtle jazz influence is present in his music." And thus the three arrangers bring unique musical backgrounds to their original arrangements. Gunther, who has deftly led and inspired the St. Rita's Music Ministry for 19 years, is overseeing and conducting "Rejoice! This Holy Night!" The concept of the musical part of the evening is his, and it holds prayerful meaning for him. "I have always been fond of St. Francis of Assisi, who created the first nativity scene out of his deep love for Christ's Incarnation and out of his desire for people to understand and experience this holy mystery," he says. Gunther goes on to emphasize that all are invited to enjoy Christmas Eve at St. Rita's.

St. Rita Catholic Church 318 North Baldwin Ave. Sierra Madre 626-355-1292

10:00 p.m. - "Rejoice! This Holy Night!"

10:30 p.m. - Christmas Eve Mass, Fr. Richard Krekelberg, Celebrant

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MountainViews-Observer PASADENA

City Council Implements Water Conservation Plan I

From Staff Reports

The Pasadena City Council Monday night adopted water conservation plans that is just short of fining over-users, but city staff predicted such enforcement could be next if a 10 percent reduction is not met in the near future.

Afterwards Council member Steve Madison made recommendations, later rejected by staff, that any plan focus on a more directed campaign, singling out a few of the most water consuming activities. He said, "Like turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth," the following plan was adopted.

1. Refrain from hosing or washing sidewalks, walkways, driveways, parking areas and other paved surfaces;
2. Refrain from cleaning, filling or maintaining levels in decorative fountains, ponds, lakes and similar structures unless a water recycling system is in use;
3. Refrain from serving drinking water, unless at the express request of a customer, in all restaurants, hotels, cafés, cafeterias and other public places where food is sold, served or offered for sale;
4. Promptly repair all leaks from indoor and outdoor plumbing fixtures, including sprinkler systems;
5. Refrain from allowing water to run off landscape areas into adjoining streets, sidewalks, parking lots and alleys;
6. While washing vehicles, refrain from allowing water to run off into adjoining streets, sidewalks, parking lots and alleys;
7. Refrain from watering lawns and other landscaped areas more often than once every three days;
8. Refrain from watering lawns and other landscaped areas between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.;
- and
9. Refrain from filling or refilling swimming pools.

Madison said he felt singled out having, what he said, was the only district with "lakes." Others on the council also said the plan could be streamlined. Council Member Sid Tyler commented that outside use, such as landscaping, consumed the most water, up to 65 percent. He also said the city should work with the most aggressive water consumers in the city such as PCC, Caltech, large home owner and others.

Wednesday, a maintenance worker at PCC cleaning off sidewalks with a high powered water house, said he was unaware the city had declared a water emergency.

According to the city "A federal court ruling that restricts pumping activities in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta has caused MWD to draw from its reserves and consider restricting the amount of water each of its member agencies, including Pasadena, will receive in the future."

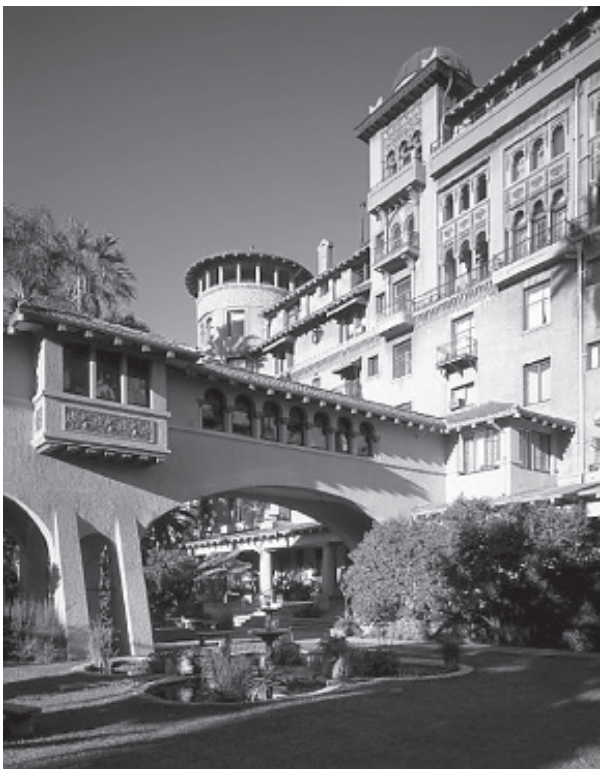
About 40 percent of Pasadena's water supply comes from natural underground aquifers, which are currently about 60 feet below historical norms; about 60 percent of the water supply is imported from the Metropolitan Water District, according to a Pasadena spokesperson.

Acclaimed Musicians Set To Perform at Castle Green

By Teresa Baxter

Renowned jazz musician David Pritchard will be performing a special concert on Tuesday, Jan. 8 at 7:30 p.m., along with his Acoustic Guitar Quintet. The event will take place in the historic Ballroom of the Castle Green located at 99 S. Raymond Ave., in Pasadena, as part of the ongoing series "Salons at the Castle presents..."

The Salons at the Castle are concerts or performances that take place on the premises with the proceeds raised going towards keeping the remarkable building restored. A small portion will also go to the Light Bringer Project. The Light Bringer Project is a nonprofit Pasadena-based cultural arts organization that has served Pasadena and Los Angeles County since 1990. The

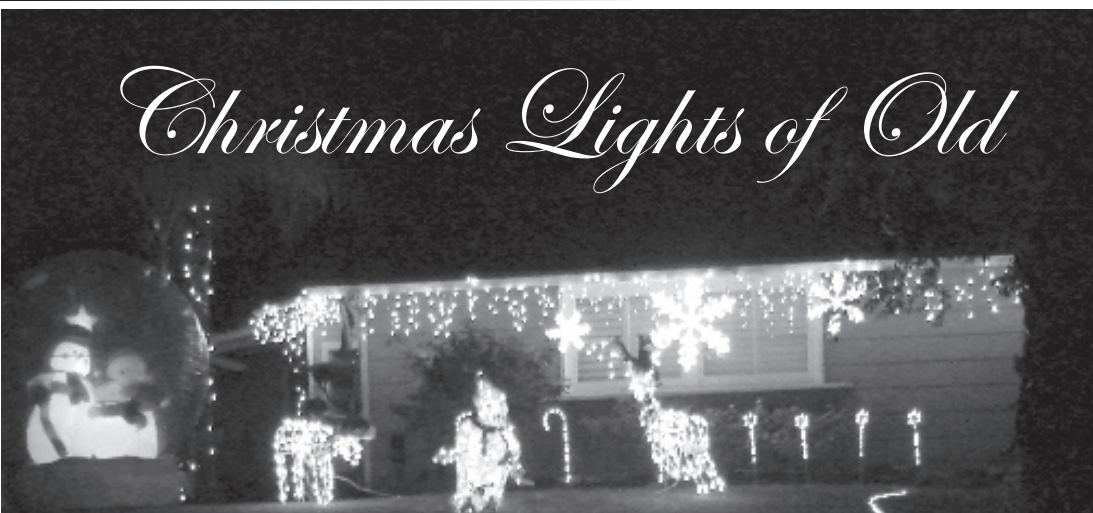


Castle Green

organization was founded by local residents who became interested in the role the arts, architecture and design have played in the growth and development of their community.

"Normally, the Castle is not open to the public—only during

their performance with virtuosic playing, striking in passion. The band will be previewing selections from their upcoming CD "Vertical Eden". Billboard Magazine has said, "There is a spaciouness and forward movement to Pritchard's musical designs that make his



Reminiscent of the lights of Luna Park in the Coney Island of old (the new prevalence of white lights - which has grown on me - adds to this resemblance), the lights of Hastings Ranch are magical.

An over-used word, this is true, but in this case, it does apply! Santa, elves, reindeer - all the mythical creatures of Christmas make an appearance on the lawns of Hastings Ranch once a year. The "Ranch" is to be commended for their diligence in keeping this tradition alive. It's a lot of work! Several families make it a team effort and after days of work, their lighting displays are ready. Thankfully unchanged after years of effort, the displays find room for new originality each year. I saw, for instance, an old VW Van converted into a Christmas display in one driveway.

The lights completely capture a magical winter fairy land in one of the best Art mediums ever invented -- Christmas lights!! Like "Lite-Brite" pegs in a black peg board, the lights glow out from the dark and create halos of light and color. Some of my favorite colors are blue and green.

Ok, we don't really have "Winter" here (as Scrooges from back East are quick to point out) but listen, having lived through "real" winters, I can tell you that the iconography of winter can be enjoyed, snow or no, and the joy of the winter scenes in Hastings Ranch are equal to the displays in snow country.

I was fortunate enough to take a tour on a rainy night under some of the best "viewing" conditions -- the rain making the lights shine brighter and give off bigger halos in the moist air and cast their reflections on the black, wet pavement. I completely enjoyed it. Part of the joy of the Hastings Ranch lights is the location. Located in the foothills of the San Gabriel mountains, the "Ranch" offers a beautiful view of the entire Southland; its streets not only curve, they ascend - making each new discovery of lights seem happened upon.

How many children have had these lights pressed indelibly on their memories as a big part of their holiday? I know my nose was pressed just as vividly to my parents' car window so that now, as an adult, I can enjoy the lights for what they are and for what they meant to me as a child - Christmas! Photo S. Henderson/Story V. Hoge

Both Sides Claim Measure D Victory

By Dean Lee

A Superior Court Judge Monday struck down arguments against Pasadena's Measure D, updating the city's Utility Users Tax, siding with city staff that claims were false and misleading, although the other side says the real argument lies in what the court left untouched.

Wayne Lusvardi, Chairperson for Citizens for Responsible Government, said after the ruling, what they were really concerned about was not whether the Measure "forced" an Internet tax on "access," but rather what was actually being taxed, i.e., "usage."

He said his group was pleased that a clear statement, "Taxes could be applied to email, web surfing, computer gaming, file downloading, text

messaging and any other activity resulting from a transmission of "voice, data, audio, video or any other information," was left in. This proved Measure D "allows taxation of Internet usage," he said.

According to City Attorney Michele Beal Bagneris, the court ruled that all claims that Measure D would tax Internet access, would invade personal privacy, tax junk email and allow government interference with the Internet, were misleading.

In a statement release by her, she said "The public policy of the law is that ballot materials are to inform, not misinform or mislead, voters about the measures they must decide,"

The city first asked that wording implying that the measure would "force"

be changed to "allow" taxation of access to the Internet. But after the city passed an amendment on Dec. 10. that, "the legislative intent was a tax on charges for telephone communications and not to apply to charges for internet access," statements by Lusvardi were asked to be removed fully.

Stricken was, "However, Measure D would force the City of Pasadena to assess and collect Internet taxes from you as soon as the current temporary Federal ban expires or is overturned by a new Congress."

Also removed was, "Measure D gives the City the right to 'audit' your private phone and Internet records at any time, requiring phone companies to hand over your private phone records (cont. page 5)

'Improving Life Through Arts' By Teresa Baxter

Pasadena's local television news program, "Crown City News," will be presenting several uplifting stories focusing on how people have changed their lives by incorporating artistic principles into their daily routines. Arts and Entertainment Reporter, Anthony Smiljkovich, will host a half-hour special to be broadcast during the last week of December, on Charter cable channel 56.

Smiljkovich had interviewed and videotaped local artists in action as they prepared for and performed a wide variety of concepts and art shows, when the notion of improving life through art began to take shape.

"When I began reporting arts and entertainment stories I had no idea how many ways people's lives were affected by art," said Smiljkovich. "So I started asking people specifically how art improves their lives and the collection of stories practically produced itself."

One segment features dancers from the group Instruments of Praise, a faith-based organization. Another segment will feature an interview with Mark Lund, founder of the world's most recognized figure skating magazine and one of the judges on FOX's "Skating with Celebrities". The show will also feature a list of local resources for getting involved in the arts throughout Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley.

The "Improving Life through the Arts" special edition of CCN will air on Charter cable channel 56 on Monday, Christmas Eve at 6:00 p.m. with repeat shows on Wednesday, Dec. 26 at 2:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., and again on Monday, Dec. 31 at 6:00 a.m.

Log on to the website, www.crowncitynews.com, for more information about airtimes.

Freeway Air Space Cited As Parkland

Councilmember Margaret McAustin asked city staff Monday night about the feasibility of building a park capped over the 210 freeway. Similar ideas have been done she said such as Freeway Park in downtown Seattle.

"What you would be doing is essentially building a tunnel, so there are a lot of problems to solve," City Manager Cynthia Kurtz said. "It wouldn't be impossible and we could certainly look into that."

Kurtz also said the Environmental Impact Report alone would cost as least \$1 million, "that shows you the scope of the project," she said.

According to Kurtz, the AQMD would also have to be involved with ventilation as well as other government groups, adding that the Metro Gold Line would pose a problem. McAustin said she thought the city should always be looking for more parkland and this was an unexplored opportunity. Austing asked that a report be brought back to the council sometime early next year.

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Getting Ready For The Big Day



Volunteers continue to work diligently putting together the Sierra Madre Rose Float Association's entry for the Rose Parade. Next week is the big count down, also known as Deco Week. WE NEED YOU! From December 26th through the 31st the finishing touches will be applied to the float. Volunteer hours are:
Wednesday - Sunday
12/26 - 12/30
9 am to 11 pm or later
Monday - 12/31
Noon till 9 pm
For more information call 626-355-7005.

How Many Ways Can You Say Merry Christmas?

Look throughout the paper and see if you can recognize Merry Christmas in a variety of different languages, one of which may be your own!

SIERRA MADRE KIWANIS GIVE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLIDAYS

Just in time for the holidays, the local Kiwanis Club, lead by President Hank Landsberg, sent out some real stocking stuffers. Contributions were made to the following:


Sierra Madre School:	\$300 towards their auction fund raiser
SM Middle School:	\$200 for science lab equipment
Alverno High School:	\$500 for new Spanish textbooks
Sierra Madre Girls Softball:	\$200 for general expenses


Buone Feste Natalizie

Kellemes Karacsonyi unnepek

Hyvaa joulua

Shinnen medeto. Kurisumasu Omedeto





Sierra Madre Fire Safe Council

TIP OF THE WEEK

From Caroline Brown

It is raining December 18, 2007. It is important to remember that this rain makes fire fighting easier for our dedicated fire fighters but does nothing to change dead brush to green. This spring more brush growth will result and removal for "defensible space" around hillside homes will be an ongoing task. Now is the time to continue removing dead brush, it is merely wet on the outside and will burn after the famous southern California winter sun returns.

There was no break in the "fire season" of 2007. As recently as December 16, 2007 there was a small, quickly extinguished, brush fire in the Covina Hills that started off the San Bernadino freeway. This was caused by a mechanical failure in a trash truck. The homes at the top of those hills were lucky: no wind, low temperatures, high humidity.

Our next Fire Safe Council meeting will be January 7, 2008 in the City Council chambers. We will meet each first Monday of the month and not on alternate months as had recently been announced. We need to hear from you as to what information you would like as we expand our topics to include multi-hazard preparation.

For more information contact us at 355-0741 or 355-9350. Please e-mail us at smfiresafecouncil@hotmail.com as we want to have contact with as many Sierra Madre residents as possible.

We have a pallet of Thermo-gel fire protection kits available on consignment via a distributor in Arizona. It arrived during the height of the fire storms in October/November. Call 355-0741

MEASURE D (from page 4)

without your knowledge or consent. Who you call or text and the web sites you visit could all wind up in the hands of City employees."

The city council had also debated a number of times what was to be audited and who was to do it.

Councilmember Sid Tyler asked Bagneris and City Manger, Cynthia Kurtz, in November if the audits were of the tax collectors or the people paying the tax. Both said it was up to the council to decide and even though there was concern over auditing customers, the city did not change language in the measure to reflect that fact.

According to Bagneris it is illegal for the city to snoop on resident's phone bills.

A last minute change had Superior Court Judge Robert H. O'Brien hearing the case. According to Citizens for Responsible

Government, O'Brien heard little testimony but appeared to favor them by asking about the city's intent by amending the UUT after the deadline for filing the rebuttals.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of city clerk Jane Rodriguez. Monday was the deadline for submitting ballot arguments for printing. Rodriguez implemented O'Brien's orders immediately, according to the city.

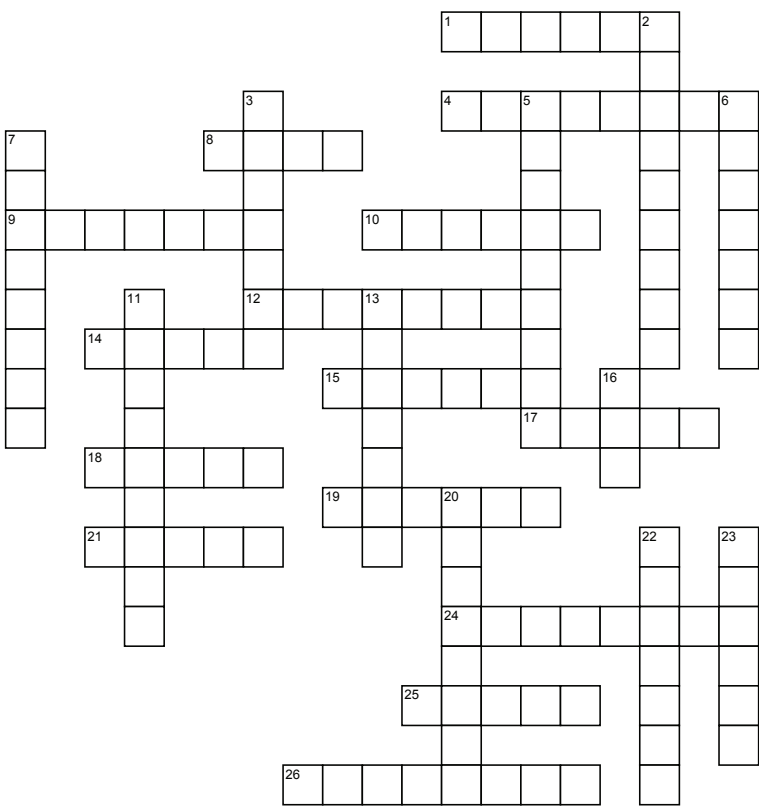
Citizens for Responsible Government said they plan to also immediately launch a campaign as the ballots are mailed by the city to all registered voters. They are calling it the "The Internet Tax Trap," they said.

Lusvardi also said the city never disputed the statement, "Measure D is a dishonest attempt to 'modernize' the City's telephone tax while at the same time sneaking in language allowing the City to tax Internet usage." The statement was filed with the city Nov. 19 he said.

Puzzle For You

Happy Holidays Everyone

No Matter What Language You Speak, This Is A Wonderful Time Of Year



ACROSS

1 For some, Christmas has this many days
4 - Their flag has a big red dot
8 Claus and Cage both share this first first name
9 - Mrs. Loren is
10 Hanging on the front door
12 We stuff and hang these
14 - They live in Holland
15 If we are wise we will use efficient ones
17 Little helpers
18 A girls name or type of song
19 - In Frankfurt they speak this
21 The number of days Hanukkah is celebrated
24 Sometimes whole neighborhoods do this
25 - The luck of the _____
26 - They too suffered through genocide

DOWN

2 Christmas Trees are
3 They also speak Swedish
5 - Natives of Portugal
6 - They always have time for tea
7 Rudolph
11 - Also a type of goulash
13 Santa's entry to the h
16 The night before
20 - Not Cantonese but _____
22 - A very popular language
23 - For a while the fries went from this to Freedom

Answers To Last Week's Crossword

A	C	V		S	R	I		D	A	M
T	R	I	P	E		H	E	R		S
E	A	S	E	L		E	P	A		P
	N	A	R	N	I	A		Q	U	E
			T	I	C			T	N	T
A	N	T		N	E	G	A	T	E	D
D	I	E	G	O		R	A	Y		S
A	C	N	E			I	R	S		A
P	H	O	T	O		M	O	O		U
T	E	N		P	F	E	N	N	I	G
			S	I	C			O	L	E
	S	A	L	A	A	M		A	N	I
B	I	G	O	T		Y	E	T		E
A	D	O	B	E		N	O	T		R
D	E	N				A	N	Y		A



One Of A Kind: *Featuring unique homes & gardens and the people who create them*

Photos and Story By Chris Bertrand

Arcadia Holiday Decoration Awards



935 W. Foothill displays a nearly full size, Hollywood-style Holstein cow in its nativity scene.

Arcadia's holiday tradition ratcheted up the fun this year with a brand new lighted, handmade sleigh, reindeer and manufactured snow to add to the caravan of Santa and well-wishers who hand out the decorating awards. Connie Schacatano of the mayor's office designed the new rig. Then Kip Mc Clain, a 20 year veteran of the Public Works Department, took it from paper to reality,

including a handmade sleigh fashioned with custom runners. As Mc Clain quipped, "How many other people get to build Santa's sleigh... at work?"

Eileen Hubbard, Arcadia Beautiful Commission chair says this kind of program is contagious, building civic pride neighbor by neighbor. Residents see their neighbors making efforts to decorate their homes for the Christmas season and beautify the landscapes. Volunteer commissioners research their assigned neighborhoods, looking for exemplary lighting and decorations to make the season bright. They make their lists and check them twice. But I digress. From that list, 15 winners are chosen.

Santa Claus, Arcadia's mayor and a bus full of commissioners and city employees take to the streets amid flashing lights and holiday tunes, to distribute congratulatory yard signs and a token gift from the city. Everyone seemed delighted, especially the little ones, and a happy time was had by all. Winning families hauled out grandma, children, grandchildren and neighbors for pictures with Santa and the mayor. One homeowner turned the tables, and had cider and cookies prepared for the Santa Brigade.

Beautiful, sophisticated lights twinkled at mansions. A small house on Forest literally hummed with lights, animation and coordinated music covering almost every surface. Big and small, they were all beautiful, but I had two personal favorites.

The first was Trudy Marshall's Foothill Boulevard nativity scene, populated by a nearly life-size Holstein cow amid the sheep, shepherds and Magi. A Hollywood prop maker/ friend made the first cow, knowing Trudy had grown up on a farm, and would likely enjoy the addition. She later ordered a calf to round out the display.

My second favorite was Valentines Liquors. In addition to the very nice light display outside, they created a special chair for Santa out of red and white Coke cartons. Santa (Ryan Rutherford) was busy hearing the wish lists of store customers while the owner snapped pictures.

Drum roll. And the winners are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 915 Fairview Avenue | 321 W. Palm Drive |
| 85 West Longden Avenue | 330 Forest Avenue |
| 327 Oxford Drive | 1049 Merry Oak Lane |
| 1470 Caballero Road | 935 West Foothill Boulevard |
| 515 North Old Ranch Road | 71 North Golden West Avenue |
| 876 San Simeon Road | 1720 South Santa Anita Avenue |
| 1421 South Fifth Avenue | 1101 Panorama Drive |
| 924 South Baldwin Avenue | |

Congratulations, and thanks for making my Christmas a little more fun! PS: This is a great list to grab when doing your own holiday decoration drives about town!

Know of an interesting building, home or garden that might be of interest to our readers? Contact Chris at C.Bertrand@MVObserver.com today!



Valentines Liquors was the only business to receive a decorating award.

Arts & More

It's Just BUSINESS

A New Weekly Column covering business in Northwest San Gabriel Valley

By La Quetta M. Shamblee

Good for Your Soul, Great for Your Taxes! *Year-End Charitable Giving*

There's just enough time left in the year to maximize the tax benefits of donating cash or property to a "qualified organization." Property, in this case, is defined as any donation that isn't cash. Your final display of generosity in the form of a check or online contribution will provide much needed support for your charity of choice. Nonprofit organizations are sincere in expressing that "every dollar counts." Donations of stock may be even more ideal if you've given all the cash you can spare for the year. If your investments have done well, you can pass along some of the windfall without feeling the impact of an out-of-pocket disbursement.

Unused or obsolete items of all sizes taking up space, or adding to unsightly clutter in your home or garage, can be converted into valuable inventory at Rainbow's End, Arcadia Thrift and Welfare or other local thrift stores. These nonprofit operations make it easy to convert unwanted or unneeded "junk" into another person's treasure, with the exchange of cash going to support a neighborhood charity. A growing number of organizations accept donations of used automobiles, running or not. If the charity sells the auto, the deduction is limited to the total amount of the proceeds from the sale. Prior to 2005, the fair market value was allowed as a deduction, and still applies when the charity retains the donated auto to use for its programs. A popular resource to determine the fair market value of autos is the *Kelly Blue Book* website (www.kb.com).

Be sure to obtain written documentation from the charity for any donation of \$250 or more. For donations of less, you will need to retain a cancelled check, credit card statement, or receipt from the charity showing its name, the amount and date of the contribution. You must complete Form 8283, *Noncash Charitable Contributions* for donations of property valued at more than \$500. More detailed recordkeeping regarding how and when you acquired the property is required for donations in this category valued from \$500 to \$5,000. A written appraisal from a qualified professional is required for contributions of property valued more than \$5,000.

"Qualified Organizations" can be found in IRS Publication 78. It is available at many public libraries and is also accessible online at www.irs.gov (Type "charities" into the SEARCH box). Deductions for charitable donations may be recorded on IRS Form, Schedule A *Itemized Deductions* that is filed with the 1040 "long form." The 1040A and 1040EZ "short forms" do not provide for that benefit. Although an individual may donate as much as they wish, IRS guidelines place a limit on the maximum that may be deducted. Currently, contributions up to 50% of adjusted gross income (AGI) may be claimed on each annual return, and amounts that exceed that threshold may be carried forward for up to five years.

To review or download more detailed information on charitable contributions and the potential tax benefits, visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov (Type "Publication 526" into the SEARCH box) or call the automated ordering service at 1 (800) 829-3676.

Living Nativity with Petting Zoo At Good Shepherd Church

A Living Nativity petting zoo will follow a Children's Christmas Pageant at one of three Christmas Eve services at Church of the Good Shepherd in Arcadia. At the pageant, costumed youngsters will portray legendary Nativity figures. The Cherub, Carol and Youth Choirs will sing, and the Reverend Melissa Roux MacKinnon will bring the Christmas message at the 5 p.m. family service.

Animals such as donkeys that were present at the first Nativity—and some that were not—will be in the petting zoo in the church courtyard. Parents and grandparents may want to bring their cameras for the "photo op" as youngsters enjoy the petting zoo that opens at 6 p.m.

The traditional Christmas Eve worship in the chancel at 9 o'clock will feature the Chancel Choir with magnificent choral and orchestral music. The Reverend Dr. Philip Bertolo Wood will share the Christmas message and lead the Ritual of the Candles.

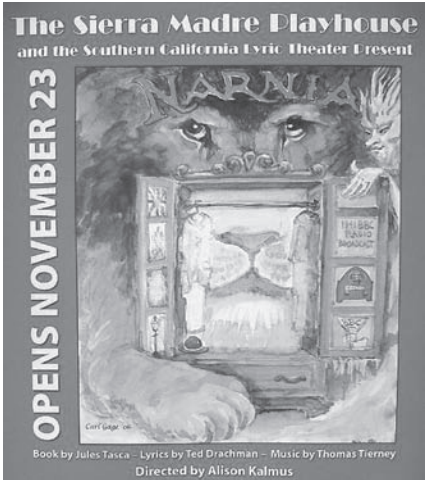
A "midnight service" offering Holy Communion will begin at 11 p.m. in the chapel, and will conclude at midnight with candles and a closing carol in the courtyard.

Tim Durkovic directs the Chancel and Carol choirs, Janice Clark the Youth Choir, and Diane Lucas the Cherub Choir.

The Church of the Good Shepherd, United Methodist, welcomes everyone at the Christmas Eve services on Mon., Dec. 24. The church is located at 400 W. Duarte Road, Arcadia. Phone the church office weekdays 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at (626) 447-2181 for more information.

THE MUSICAL "NARNIA" IS THE HOLIDAY SEASON SHOW AT SIERRA MADRE PLAYHOUSE CLOSES DECEMBER 23

-- Review by Despina Arzouman



ADMISSION: All seats \$20
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ONLINE TICKETING:
www.sierramadrepayhouse.org

The theatre and she told me that everyone was singing occapela for the entire second half. But you know, everyone was so into their part, I didn't even notice the music was "missing." The entire show was just simply splendid!

I would love to mention all the actors' names here because they were all so splendid: Don Savage (Narrator), Jon Medina (Peter Pevensie), Sarah Gilman (Lucy Pevensie), Tiffany Brevard (Susan Pevensie), Keith Harmel (Edmund Pevensie), Kenneth Woods (Professor Digory, Aslan, Father Christmas), Nina Silver (Jadis, Mrs. Macready, White Witch), Chris Loop (Mr. Tumnus), Barry Schwam (Dwarf /Sound Effects), Mary House (Mrs. Beaver), Stuart James Galbraith (Mr. Beaver), Philip D'Amore (Fenris Ulf), Corey Lynn Howe (Dryad, Unicorn, Hag, Zombie, and other voices), Johnson Lo (Fox, Dog, Specter, Boggle, and other voices), Chris Loop (various voices), Sean Peterson (various voices). Bravo to everyone. It was wonderful. Thank you all for working so hard and to share your efforts with us all!

NARNIA will be playing until December 23rd at The Sierra Madre Playhouse, located at 110 W. Sierra Madre Blvd, Sierra Madre, CA 91024. For Ticket information call (626) 355-3502, or go to www.barneysltd.com

This holiday treat should not be missed. Who would've thought to create a theatrical musical presentation of a BBC radio program for stage? Jules Tasca and Thomas Tierney, that's who! And Director Alison Kalmus' know-how was reflected throughout everyone's performance. Alison chose to direct Narnia as this year's holiday show because of its charming themes of loyalty and redemption, and because she believes musicals are so fitting for the season.

The play was based on the novel "Narnia, The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe" by C.S. Lewis. However, this production brought into view "how" theatrical performance used to be brought to life through our hearing perception -- through radio broadcast -- before television, and at a time when not everyone could attend live theatre performance. So, because this was a "radio program" (and oft did have live audiences), everyone had to embody the presence of their character without the necessity of wearing any particular costuming. And the casting was perfect! Everyone was suited to their role.

In addition, we all got to experience how the sound effects were (are) effectuated in a radio show. And, to my surprise, there was even the musical instrument called the "Theraman" which most of you probably remember hearing being used for sound effects in the 1950's science fiction movies. Everything was all brilliantly executed.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to me, there was trouble with the sound and music equipment during the second half of the program. I saw Alison as I was departing the theatre and she told me that everyone was singing occapela for the entire second half. But you know, everyone was so into their part, I didn't even notice the music was "missing." The entire show was just simply splendid!



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Ed

Alverno, Arroyo Pacific Academy, La Salle, Maranatha, Pasadena High School, St. Francis, Sierra Mesa Middle School, The Barnhart School, The Gooden School, Field Elementary, Sierra Madre Elementary School, Bethany Christian, St. Rita's, Wilson Middle School, Odyssey Charter School, Norma Coombs Alternative School, Weizmann Day School and the PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



In Giving, We Receive...
Santa Arrives Early At La Salle For Local Families

By John Blackstock

Pasadena, CA –On Saturday, December 15 Santa Claus arrived early as 37 families with Bienvenidos and over 40 foster children from Hillside, enjoyed a holiday celebration and took home Christmas gifts from Santa. Hillside and Bienvenidos are local groups working with children and families in need.

This Christmas season the entire La Salle community participated in their 11th annual Adopt-a-Family Christmas Party. Mr. Brandon Birr '03, Service Project Coordinator, with the assistance of the Student Life team, orchestrated the efforts of La Salle students, faculty, staff and parents. Countless hours of preparation went into the Adopt-a-Family event that culminated in a family luncheon, a visit from Santa, bingo, games and sports contests for the children.

“For the past 11 years the entire La Salle community has enthusiastically embraced the Adopt-a-Family program,” said Mr. Birr, Student Life “Student participation on the event days was outstanding,” he continued.



Last weekend, dozens of students wrapped hundreds of gifts specifically requested by these families in need. These gifts were loaded into each families cars midst the gleeful squeals of many of the children. Santa truly has come early.

Mr. Ed O'Connor, Director of Student Life, explained that 13 years ago La Salle worked with Saint Vibianna, the Cathedral of Los Angeles at the time, but many students felt they wanted to do something closer to Pasadena where they could interact with those families they were serving in our area. Consequently, Mr. O'Connor contacted Hillside Home for Children of Pasadena, which sponsors several family programs and in 1997 the Adopt-a-Family Christmas Party officially became part of the La Salle experience.

As temporary as the gift drive and party may be, the warm feelings of giving they create lasts well beyond the holiday season. “The experience of making a difference in people's lives around the holidays continues to have an effect on faculty and students as they spend time with their own families,” commented O'Connor.

PUSD Dispute Erupts Over Interim Project Manager Position

By Teresa Baxter

The word impropriety, which is defined as conduct that is not considered correct, moral, or appropriate in a given context was used by several Pasadena Unified School District Board Members in regards to the special meeting that took place last Tuesday concerning the creation of a consultation position that would pay funds not to exceed \$98,500 made available from a PUSD Mandated Cost Account.

The controversy arose when it was recommended that the PUSD Governing Board approve a contract with Kristin Maschka for consulting services in the area of project management skills, skills in planning for and conducting successful meetings, and implementing and sustaining changes successfully.

Apparently, in an arrangement made prior to Superintendent Edwin Diaz's appointment with PUSD, Maschka was part of a package deal that gave funding to a PUSD contingent on the fact that she would be employed as a consultant. It was brought up that she currently works for one-third of the salary that was being proposed for the new position.

Public comment from the audience questioned her qualifications, lack of experience in the educational field and the procedure that was not implemented in seeking a more qualified person to fill the position. During open discussion, board member Renatta Cooper reiterated the same concerns.

“This is an amazing amount of money for six months of work without a resumé,” said Cooper. “We should be looking for the best in the country, let alone the state.”

Diaz stated that he was basing his recommendation on the work performed by Maschka under his supervision. The Board mostly agreed that faith was put behind

Diaz's vision for the future of PUSD, with some dissention vocally expressed by Cooper and Board President, Esteban Lizardo.

In a previous meeting, when the issue was first brought up, two board members chose to be recused from the approval proceedings based on their decision to disqualify, or seek to disqualify themselves, from participation in a decision on grounds such as prejudice or personal involvement. With research, both came to the conclusion that prejudice or personal involvement did not apply. It was then brought to attention that Maschka was also involved in the campaigns that led to the election of certain board members. Then, Board member Ed Honowitz spoke up in support of Maschka when he said that people sometimes see impropriety when there is none, due to a lack of facts. An unconfirmed fact was mumbled from the attendees that Maschka is a co-worker of Honowitz's spouse.

Thus, the words “impropriety” and “recused” shadowed the special meeting held by the PUSD Governing Board and the voting of the new consultant position.

“It is not an appearance of impropriety,” said board member, Scott Phelps. “[Maschka] publicly criticized the Board for hiring the interim superintendent, [Maschka] initially stood before us and made misleading statements about the performance of the district at [Clark's] farewell. There is impropriety, no one's creating it, and at the same time the Superintendent asked for this service, that's how I make this decision. But it's real, not imagined, it happened—I was here.”

The Board approved the position for Maschka in a vote of 5-2, with the “no” votes coming from Cooper and Lizardo.

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Alverno High School
200 N. Michillinda Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 355-3463
Head of School: Ann M. Gillick
E-mail address: agillick@alverno-hs.org

Arroyo Pacific Academy
41 W. Santa Clara St. Arcadia, Ca,
(626) 294-0661
Principal: Phil Clarke
E-mail address: pclarke@arroyopacific.org

Bethany Christian School
93 N. Baldwin Ave. Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 355-3527
Principal: James Lugenbuehl
E-mail address: jml@bcsllions.org

The Gooden School
192 N. Baldwin Ave. Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 355-2410
Head of School: Patty Patano
website: www.goodenschool.org

LaSalle High School
3880 E. Sierra Madre Blvd. Pasadena, Ca.
(626) 351-8951
Principal: Patrick Bonacci
website: www.lasallehs.org

Norma Coombs Alternative School
2600 Paloma St. Pasadena, Ca. 91107
(626) 798-0759
Principal: Dr. Vanessa Watkins
E-mail address: watkins12@pusd.us

Odyssey Charter School
725 W. Altadena Dr. Altadena, Ca. 91001
(626) 229-0993
Head of School: Lauren O'Neill
website: www.odysseycharterschool.org

Pasadena High School
2925 E. Sierra Madre Blvd. Pasadena, Ca.
(626) 798-8901
Principal: Dr. Derick Evans
website: www.pasadenahigh.org

Pasadena Unified School District
351 S. Hudson Ave. Pasadena, Ca. 91109
(626) 795-6981
website: www.pusd@pusd.us

St. Rita Catholic School
322 N. Baldwin Ave. Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 355-9028
Principal: Joanne Harabedian
website: www.st-rita.org

Sierra Madre Elementary School
141 W. Highland Ave, Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 355-1428
Principal: Gayle Bluemel
E-mail address: gbluemel220@pusd.us

Sierra Madre Middle School
160 N. Canon
Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 836-2947
Principal: Gayle Bluemel
Contact person: Garrett Newsom, Asst. Principal
E-mail address: gbluemel220@pusd.us

Weizmann Day School
1434 N. Altadena Dr.
Pasadena, Ca. 91107
(626) 797-0204
Lisa Feldman: Head of School

Wilson Middle School
300 S. Madre St. Pasadena, Ca. 91107
(626) 449-7390
Principal: Ruth Esseln
E-mail address: resseln@pusd.us

Pasadena Unified School District
351 S. Hudson Ave.
Pasadena, Ca. 91109
(626) 795-6981
Website: www.pusd@pusd.us

TRISH'S TRUTH

By Trisha Collins

Christmas time has officially arrived! All around it's “beginning to look a lot like Christmas”. Just one glance will tell you that the Christmas spirit is everywhere, hanging in the air like glittering moon light.

With this “season to be jolly”, comes of course the Christmas decorations. Ah yes, the mistletoe, the holly, the colorful Christmas lights, and sparkling reindeer. But most importantly of all, the Christmas tree! Who could forget the Christmas tree, lighting the homes of the world with the unforgettable Christmas spirit and cheer. Funny, but it seems that just having a decorated Christmas tree in your home gets you in the “mood” to break out in song and bake cookies for Santa. There's nothing like glittering lights and ornaments to get “The Grinch Who Stole Christmas” on and the Christmas stockings hanging, bulging with gifts. But who actually created this tradition of the classic “Christmas Tree”? Whose idea was it to put a

It's the Season To Be Jolly

pine tree in our homes and string it with popcorn and lights?

It's been said that the origin of the Christmas tree actually began in the 16th century, about 500 years ago, in Germany. Instead of rainbow lights, popcorn, and ornaments, the Germans used apples, pretzels, and paper flowers for decorations. It's also said that Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, adorned his Christmas tree with lit candles to reflect the stars at night. Looks to me like it would reflect a major fire, since lit candles and wood don't seem to mix very well, but I'm sure his tree looked very nice, all the while. Several centuries later, the tradition traveled to America, becoming a near instant sensation. Easton Pennsylvania and Lancaster, Pennsylvania both claim to have the “First Christmas Tree in America”. No one really knows for sure, but we do know that whoever had the first started a legacy, because in 1998 alone, Americans spent roughly \$1.5 billion on Christmas trees.

Personally, I love the real, natural trees. If picking out the perfect one isn't the best part, it's got to be

bringing the beauty home. From placing it in the right spot in the living room, to testing out last year's lights, I love it all. Decorating the Christmas tree is practically an event. My mother and I take putting all the ornaments up seriously. Every one had got to be in the right spot, evenly distributed throughout the tree, and color coordinating with all the other decorations. Once the magnificent tree is decorated, there's always time to sit back, turn off all the lights, and soak in the glowing, sparkling tree. It's great, just wonderful. And you can't beat that timeless Christmas-tree-pine-cinnamon-stick-smell. That one tree no only makes your house look like Christmas, but smell like it too! I feel that you can't get all that from a fake tree that you bought from the store. Sure, you might save a few dollars every year, but that natural Christmas tree feeling is priceless.

A Christmas tree does more than just provide a place for your ornaments and bells to rest, it provides memories for holidays and years to come.

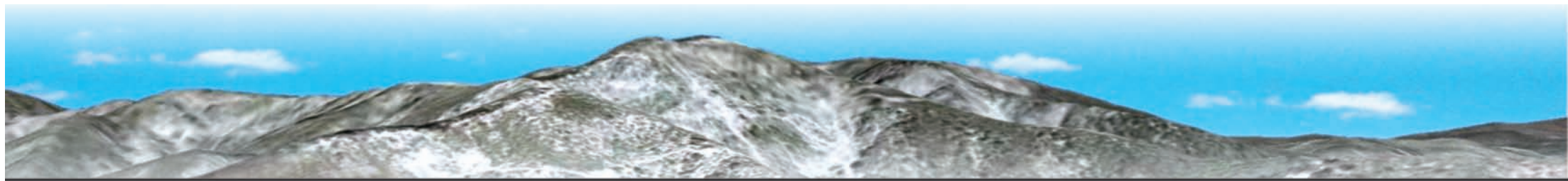


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MountainViews-Observer (Mountain View News) has been adjudicated as a newspaper of General Circulation for the County of Los Angeles in Court Case number GS004724: for the City of Sierra Madre; in Court Case GS005940 and for the City of Monrovia in Court Case No. GS006989 and is published every Friday at 37 Auburn Avenue, Suite 7, Sierra Madre, California, 91024. All contents are copyrighted and may not be reproduced without the express written consent of the publisher. All rights reserved. All submissions to this newspaper become the property of the MountainViews-Observer and may be published in part or whole. Opinions and views expressed by the writers printed in this paper do not necessarily express the views and opinions of the publisher or staff of the MountainViews-Observer. MountainViews-Observer is wholly owned by Grace Lorraine Publications, Inc. and reserves the right to refuse publication of advertisements and other materials submitted for publication. All letters to the editor and correspondence should be sent to: MountainViews - Observer 280 W. Sierra Madre Bl. #327 Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024 Phone: 626-836-5100 Fax: 626-836-5103 email: mvobserver@aol.com

MountainViews-Observer

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The traditions of the community newspaper and the concerns of our readers are this newspaper's top priorities. We support a prosperous community of well-informed citizens. We hold in high regard the values of the exceptional quality of life in our community, including the magnificence of our natural resources. Integrity will be our guide.



Member

O P I N I O N



Susan Henderson

Dear Santa - What I Really Want and Need

want (v): *to have a strong desire for*; need (v): *necessary things*

Dear Santa:

Remember when I sang that song to you, All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth? Wow. That was a long time ago.

The first time I was too little to know that the grammar was incorrect. The last time, well, we don't need to talk about that do we? I will say however, that these last two front teeth are really pretty flexible. They pop right in and out. Thanks a million!

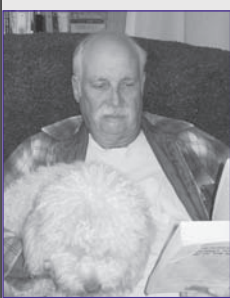
Now that the teeth are permanent and all other needs have been fulfilled, I'd like to talk about the things I really want. Here's my list.

1. You gotta work on this greed thing. People fight over what someone else has. It doesn't matter whether it's land or money.
2. Be careful that you don't burn a hole in your sack, but please take all of this hatred away. Why do we have to just look at someone and decide that they are not worthy of our respect because they are different?
3. While you are at it, how about silencing all the wicked voices for a while. Can you give our ears a rest? Can you fix it so that if you don't say something nice, no sound would come out? That would be great. Then maybe we could hear the wonderful sounds of nature again.
4. Speaking of nature, can you talk to someone so that the earth just swallows up those that abuse it? Or would that be another form of pollution?
5. Bring plenty of peace with you. Peace as in not war, but most importantly, peace of mind. We have so many troubled people all around us. I should probably say, can you do something about all these people with issues? There, now you understand what I am saying.
6. And last, but certainly not least – can you bring a double dose of love?

That's my list. Just six things. Now please Santa, don't go through this list and try to find out one thing I really want. Just give me everything. Trust me, it's needed.

Merry Christmas Santa.

P.S. – Here's a question I've been wanting to ask you for a really long time. How's your stomach doing? I used to leave you beer and cookies and you always ate them. BEER and Cookies? Yuk!



Stuart Tolchin On....

LIFE

The True Meaning Of Christmas

Give The Gift Of Your Own Caring

I am a lifelong Jewish agnostic or atheist (depending on the state of my own confidence) who has always enjoyed talking with religious people and people from other cultures. Sometimes the discussion of difference allows me to understand that there are often pretty universal similarities that are just being expressed in different ways.

This column is centered around the concept of altruism, the desire to help others without any expectation of materially benefiting from the helping. Is this natural or are human beings selfish from the beginning and help others only from selfish motives either to benefit close relatives who share their genes or to get some immediate reward?

I started focusing on this subject after a conversation with my neighbor and my wife concerning the meaning of the sacrifice of Jesus who "died to save us all." "What's the big deal?" my neighbor said. "What's the sacrifice, he knew he was going back home to God – where's the sacrifice?"

My wife, Catholic school product that she still is, despite recent disillusionment, patiently explained that the sacrifice of Christ was His choice to remove Himself from the divine heavenly sanctuary and come to earth and live the life of a mortal man. My neighbor asked you mean like in Superman II where he gives up his superpowers? My wife and I had forgotten the movie. My wife explained that in order to understand the problems of mortals it was necessary to live as a mortal and suffer the pains, betrayal and doubts and loneliness of our lives. As He lived a mortal life and exhibited the inevitable destruction of the physical body He, through His words and deeds, demonstrated that our Faith could survive even though our physical body could not. He lived to reveal to us the true path. "Oh," my neighbor and I said.

I wondered about the question, is altruism possible only for God-like entities? Does it go against man's inner competitive nature? Is the biblical pronouncement to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" only an ideal, or perhaps a restatement of the law of Karma asserting that you get back what you put in? My wife and I received a lovely Christmas card depicting a Yurok Indian Brush ritual-dance designed to make the dancer aware of the one and only Yurok law – "be true to yourself, meaning giving your best to help a person in need."

Surprisingly everything I read now seemed to speak of altruism. The book about

economics, *Freakonomics*, had a quote from Adam Smith, whose Wealth of Nations discussed the theoretical foundations of capitalism. I had thought capitalism was based on the recognition that man is basically greedy, and competitive and that this energy could be used as fuel to empower an entire society. Surprisingly, the quote from Adam Smith involved the innate honesty of mankind "how selfish soever man may be supposed there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it."

I picked up the current issue of Discover magazine. On page 63 is an article describing the presence of hereditary factors within man and chimpanzees that manifest themselves in the tendency to offer help without any expectation of being benefited by the helping. Below this article is an article describing loneliness as "a warning sign much like physical pain which contributes to what it means to be human" (or perhaps chimpanzee-like) "by making us care for other people and want to reconnect when we're disconnected."

I had written this whole column and decided to end with a seasons greeting referring to several different cultures. A Hindu student lived for a year or so with our family and I remembered him celebrating a holiday at or around Christmas time. I looked up the holiday, it's Diwali, which is celebrated in Bengal by the worship of the goddess of strength – strength is defined as a positive attribute for one to have but it must be used to protect others from harm and used only in good and pure deeds.

Altruism again, enough already! The message is everywhere. Let's be helpful to one another because to do so is in our inherent nature (biologically hardwired for the younger generation). It feels good – if you can't find a model for a caring person try looking in the mirror to see the face of one. In accord with my altruistic tendencies, I have written this column just for you. I hope it reaches you and touches you. Please let me know.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Belated Blessed Diwali -- Or not. In the end it's always a matter of your choice.

By the way, if you choose to eat only a plant-based diet you benefit the planet more than if you decided to drive a Prius instead of your old gas-guzzler.

S.Tolchin@mvobserver.com

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

(I remember as a child how my brother and I spent Christmas Eve. Before going to sleep we would leave out cookies and milk for Santa Claus in case he was hungry when he came to our house. Then once we were tucked into bed, my mother would read to us Clement Clarke Moore's poem "The Night before Christmas". Please accept this humble offering as my Christmas gift to you all.)



Hail Hamilton

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

by Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap,
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!

Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,

So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my hand, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes -- how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!

His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!

His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook, when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.

But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

LEGAL NOTICES

TALABARTERIA M.G.
1631 Leafdale Ave
South El Monte, CA 91733.
Full name of registrant (s) is (are) Maurilio Gandara and Imelda Eguia 1631 Leafdale Ave South El Monte, CA 91733. The business is conducted as: CO-PARTNERS. I declare 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.) This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on Nov 30, 2007. The registrant (s) has (have) commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 11/30/2007.
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490707MM File No. 06-20072664001 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
The following person (s) is (are) doing business as: 360 CREDIT SOLUTIONS 16406 Millstream Ln Cerritos, CA 90703. Full name of registrant (s) is (are) N & F GROUP, INC. 16406 Millstream Ln Cerritos, CA 90703. The business is conducted as: A CORPORATION. I declare 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.) This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on Dec 05, 2007. The registrant (s) has (have) not commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above.
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490708MM File No. 20072665368 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
The following person (s) is (are) doing business as: R.L CONSTRUCTION 1109 E. Mecead Ave West Covina, CA 91790. Full name of registrant (s) is (are) Rudy Robles Lancaster 1109 E. Mecead Ave West Covina, CA 91790. The business is conducted as: AN INDIVIDUAL. I declare 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.) This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on Dec 05, 2007. The registrant (s) has (have) commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above 03/16/1988. NOTICE-The Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of

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490709MM File No. 20072656903 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
The following person (s) is (are) doing business as: RICOS FAMILY RESTAURANT 4052 ½ Central Ave Los Angeles, CA 90011. Full name of registrant (s) is (are) Camelia Rico 4052 ½ Central Ave Los Angeles, CA 90011. The business is conducted as: AN INDIVIDUAL. I declare 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.) This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on Dec 04, 2007. The registrant (s) has (have) not commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above. NOTICE-The Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or common law (See section 14411 at seq. Business and Profession Code) First filing: 12/08; 12/15; 12/22 and 12/29, 2007 490709MM

490710SJ File No. 20072636781 STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME
The following person (s) has (have) abandoned the use of the fictitious name: BURBANK WIRELESS 2005 W. Olive Blvd Burbank, CA 91505. The name of registrant(s) is (are) Eddie Khodaverian 539 E. Angeleno Ave #104 Burbank, CA 91501. The business was conducted by: AN INDIVIDUAL. The fictitious business name referred to above was filed on 03/26/2007. Original File #20070696694. I declare 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.). This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on Nov 30, 2007. The registrant (s) has (have) ended to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 11/30/2007
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490711MM File No. 20072665351 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
The following person (s) is (are) doing business as: SISTERHOOD PROJECT PROPERTY MGNT. 1986 Sanborn Wy Pomona, CA 91766. Full name of registrant (s) is (are) Benita Revies 1986 Sanborn Wy Pomona, CA 91766. The business is

conducted as: AN INDIVI-DUAL. I declare 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.) This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on Dec 05, 2007. The registrant (s) has (have) NOT commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above.
NOTICE-The Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or common law (See section 14411 at seq. Business and Profession Code) First filing: 12/08; 12/15; 12/22 and 12/29, 2007 490711MM

490712MU File No. 20072664010 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
The following person (s) is (are) doing business as: ARMA CLINICAL TRIAL RESEARCH 502 W. Holt Ave Pomona, CA 91768. Full name of registrant (s) is (are) Alex Roshanaie 502 W. Holt Ave Pomona CA 91768. The business is conducted as: AN INDIVIDUAL. I declare 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.) This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on Dec 05, 2007. The registrant (s) has (have) not commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above.
NOTICE-The Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or common law (See section 14411 at seq. Business and Profession Code) First filing: 12/08; 12/15; 12/22 and 12/29, 2007 490712MU

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Letters To The Editor

Alverno High School

Dear Editor:

This letter is in response to a recent story highlighting Ann Gillick of Alverno School. She had noticed the neighborhood lawn signs protesting the school's plans for expansion. Her* article mentions details of the plan along with a list of the many positive things that the Alverno Students have done for the community during the '06-07 school year.

Please understand that the neighborhood doesn't doubt the positive influence of the Alverno Student Body. Our concern is with the current administration and how they schedule and handle events that are not school related. The statistics on students' volunteer efforts was interesting, but even more fascinating would have been a recap of exactly how many weddings, film shoots and non-Alverno events they have held on campus during that timeline. The Conditional Use Permit ("CUP") on file requires that the property be used as a Day School, not as a banquet facility or Hollywood backlot.

The Alverno students have no idea what takes place when they are not present. The late night events with related noise and traffic have negatively impacted our peaceful neighborhood. Yes, we moved next to a school, so that is all we are asking; Alverno just be a school. Most private education facilities have extremely strict guidelines on the frequency of both school and non-school activities which are held on evenings and weekends in consideration of the local neighborhood. Alverno's administration seems to have no concept of limits. Their current CUP does not allow any of these types of events. Do you know of any other private school that has a full page on their website dedicated to film, wedding, and special event booking?

What are we to expect when a new multi-purpose building with warming kitchens is added? More events....How about a regulation soccer field?...More events.... The current administration continues to exploit the Villa and the property at every available opportunity without regard to the core intended use---that of a day school for girls. As neighbors we weren't happy about putting up lawn signs, but the administration continued to turn a deaf ear to our requests for cooperation, so we had little choice. That's the real story.

Signed: A concerned neighbor on Wilson Street

**Editors Note: Head Of School Glick was not the author of the article that is referenced above.*

HEY SPORTS EDITOR:

That's the best damn story I've read in a long time. Sports Illustrated or ESPN should pick this story up. In fact, I'd send it to Fox Sports here in L.A. . Let them know you'll write the same story for them or produce a segment on him for TV when the Spring season rolls around. It has all the elements of the wonderful underdog and lovable loser that plays for the joy of the game. pb - Sierra Madre via e-mail



Vrolijk Kerstfeest en een Gelukkig Nieuwjaar!

SENIOR HAPPENINGS...

By Pat Birdsall

FYI: Door-to-Door Deception

They seem innocent enough, these young people who knock on our doors. They claim to be students trying to earn enough money so their school team can attend playoffs in another state, for instance. They sometimes say that they live just around the corner and that their mom knows you and suggested that you would be willing to help. They are usually “selling” magazines that you will never get, especially if you pay cash.

The October, 2007, AARP Bulletin warns us about a company called Quality Subscriptions, which is part of United Family Circulation. They have drawn more than 80 complaints nationwide to the Better Business Bureau for falsely selling magazines door to door.

I know this scam is alive and well in Sierra Madre. Our Police Chief, Marilyn Diaz, suggests calling to report individuals you suspect might be trying to dupe you and others. (626) 355-1414.

Recipe of the Month

Cranberry Bread

- 2 Cups all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg, well beaten
- 2 tbs melted butter
- 2 tbs hot water
- ½ cup orange juice
- ¼ cup grated orange rind
- 1 cup fresh or dried cranberries
- ½ cup chopped nuts

1. Preheat oven to 325 F. Grease a 9-by-5 inch loaf pan or 3 mini-loaf pans.
2. Combine flour, salt, baking powder and baking soda. Add sugar, egg, butter, hot water, orange juice and grated orange rind; stir until moistened. Fold in berries and nuts. Spoon into pan and bake 50 minutes (or 35 minutes for mini-loaves). Cool; wrap and refrigerate or freeze. Relish

~ For Your Funny Bone~

Just before Christmas, an honest politician, a generous lawyer and Santa Claus were riding in the elevator of a very posh hotel. Just before the doors opened they all noticed a \$20.00 bill lying on the floor. Which one picked it up? Santa of course, because the other two don't exist!

~Helpful Hint~

This is one I tried this week and I can tell you that it really works. I had a sweatshirt and a blouse that had grease stains on them that didn't come out in the wash. I was ready to put them in the rag bag when I remembered the Murphy Oil Soap. I rubbed some into the spots and laundered as usual, and voila! Good as new.

~He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree~
Roy L. Smith

Blood Pressure Clinic Returns! The Sierra Madre Paramedics will do blood pressure readings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 10:30-11:30 AM

Free Consultation with Pasadena attorney Geoffrey Chin- 2nd Thursday of the month- 10:00 AM- Noon-Appointments are a must. Call Susan Clifton at (626) 355-7394. Conflicting court schedules can occasionally cause cancellations.

Activities: Unless listed differently, all activities are at the Hart Memorial Park (Senior Center) 222 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre

Lunch Program: Monday-Friday- Call (626) 355-0256 to reserve the day before. Suggested donation \$2.00 for seniors, others - \$3.75.

Monday: Free Strength Training Class with Lisa Brandley 1:00- 1:45 PM
Tuesday: Bingo: 1:30-3:30 PM .25c per card Yoga: 5:00 PM- Instructor, Andrea Walsh- \$5.25 for seniors
Wednesday: Open
Thursday: Game Day- 1:30- 4:00 PM Poker, Scrabble, Cribbage, Chess, Checkers, Backgammon, Pinochle, you name it. Yoga: 5:00-6:30 PM- For seniors and others who want to go slowly (can be done in a chair) Instructor: Andrea Walsh \$5.25 for those 50 & over- \$7.00 for those under 50. To register call (626) 355-7394

Friday: Ping-Pong- 2:00-4:00 PM- Not tournament, just for fun. Aerobics for Active Seniors- 3:00- 4:00 PM at the Community Center- 611 E. Sierra Madre Blvd.- \$34.00 for an 8 week course Instructor: Bonnie Smithson Call 355-5278 to enroll.

Saturday: Senior Club for those 55 and older- Brown bag lunch at 11:30AM Bingo: 12:30 PM .25c per card

Meals-On-Wheels: Meals are delivered to homebound seniors through the YWCA Intervale lunch program M-F with frozen meals for the weekend. \$2.00 suggested donation per day. Call Susan Garcia at (626) 960-3773

Monthly Excursions:

December 20: Candlelight Pavilion in Claremont- Christmas show and lunch \$59.00
January 17: Morongo Casino & Outlet shopping \$20.00
February 21: Griffith Observatory- Details to be announced
For reservations call Susan Clifton at (626) 355-7394 or stop by and see her at the Hart Memorial Park House- 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM- Monday-Thursday

Looking Up

With Bob Eklund



Photo by Aaron Dominquez

Christmas At Mt. Wilson (and Palos Verdes)

Humason is the son of Milton Humason, well known for his work in taking the photographs of galaxies that enabled Edwin Hubble to prove the expansion of the Universe.



This photo was taken around 1920 by Photographer Edison Hoge of the Mt. Wilson Observatory in the snow mentioned in this article. Edison Hoge was the grandfather to contributor Virginia Hoge of the MVO staff.

food was gone and hope was fading, a relief team reached the Observatory. Strong arms helped Edison carry Hannah and her baby across the face of the mountain, down a trail, and out to safety. Although this happened before I was born, my parents often told me the story, and I tell it now to you so that it will not be forgotten.” — Marjorie Pettit Meinel

“I LIVED IN THE COTTAGE directly below the 6-inch instrument with my parents, Milton and Helen Humason, from 1917 to 1921. Dad and I found a Christmas tree near the trail that led to Strain’s Camp (where the Observatory wells are located). On Christmas morning, Dad (then the 60-inch night assistant) returned from work by way of the cottage roof where he tramped about and shook some sleigh bells. I was convinced that it was Santa Claus for sure! Not wanting to scare Santa away, I waited a few minutes before jumping out of bed. There, under the tree was my present—a little steam engine with a boiler and alcohol burner that really ran. In the afternoon we went sledding on Jones’ Hill (in back of the 100-inch). A fellow just doesn’t forget a Christmas like that. Because the tree was too large for our cottage, Dad cut it off some 4 feet above the ground. From this 4-foot remainder, two symmetrical shoots developed and grew vigorously. I was janitor at the Observatory during the summer of 1933 and recall noting this substantial double tree at that time.” — Bill Humason

RETURNING FROM A CHRISTMAS PARTY near Palos Verdes’ sea-cliffs last Sunday at sunset-time, I was stunned by a sight I’d never seen before: a vast constellation, not of stars but of huge birds, passing overhead. There must have been at least 300 of them, flying in a tight, V-shaped formation about a hundred feet above the cliff-edge. A local bird-watcher parked nearby told me they were pelicans, and that they flew this way to their nesting-places every night at sunset. She said the use of DDT had almost wiped out the pelicans here some 50 years ago, but since the banning of this chemical the birds have come back in strength. If the magnificent flock that flew over me is any indication, I can attest to the truth of that—and add one more item to my gratitude-journal.

If you’d like to learn more, you can contact Bob at b.eklund@mobserver.com.



The Mountain Clymer

By Kim Clymer-Kelley

STOP THE PRESSES!

Alert the media...this just in...a bear has been sighted two blocks from the Angeles National Forest!!! Monday afternoon (December 17, 2007...mark it on your calendar) at the corner of Grandview and Mountain Trail there was a bear in a tree!!! If it had been in a tree just a couple blocks away in the forest, it would not have made the evening news, but this tree was here in town...which apparently makes it a media event. This bear is one of several bears which roam the Sierra Madre Canyon almost nightly, sometimes strolling right across the front porches and decks of some residences or casually meandering down the middle of the road checking out the trash. When sighted by a canyon resident, it may make for a few moments of conversation the next day, or maybe a phone call to a neighbor so that they can take a peek out the window, and if they happen to have a camera handy, they might be lucky enough to snap a photo. Bears are very cool. Being in their presence makes for a very memorable experience. Even after my many (sometimes often very close) encounters with them while roaming the forest, I still find it worthy of mentioning to someone whenever I have the privilege of running into one, but I hardly think that a bear roaming the streets or sitting in a tree of a foothill community could be newsworthy at this point.

I am not sure why it was necessary to call the police about such a sighting; it almost never yields very favorable results, particularly for the bear. One thing that I have learned about bears is that they want nothing to do with humans. They want food...if you have it and they want it really badly, you could possibly be in trouble...if they have food and you try to take it from them, you will definitely be in trouble...if you get between a mom and her cub, you might possibly be in trouble too. Otherwise, their primary objective is to get away from you as quickly as possible (which is why this bear was probably in the tree to begin with...my little schnauzer, Cody, has even treed a bear before). If this particular bear had been left alone...if the people involved had spotted it, admired it from a distance, removed all temptations from the yard...trash cans, small children, and pets...maybe snapped a quick picture to remember the experience, and then gone about their business (as the bear was trying to do), the bear would have come down from the tree and wandered off, probably sooner rather than later. But if you call the police, the media (especially on a slow news day) will pick up the information on their police scanners and descend on the poor thing as though it were King Kong on the Empire State Building. In this case the call to the authorities brought the police who taped off the street...animal control officers parading around with rifles as though they were patrolling the streets of Baghdad...helicopters circling closely overhead...several media satellite trucks...half the population of the town with their dogs...and cameras and spotlights staring the poor creature in the face. The noise and commotion was incredible. It became a real circus. The bear was trapped in the tree for hours, scared half to death. Fortunately, the bear had more sense than the people involved and stayed where he was. If he had come down with all of those people around, he would have been shot for sure. The “animal control” people had the tree surrounded, rifles cocked and ready, and were just itching to bag themselves a bear. With infinite patience the poor thing just waited out all of the attention and when everyone disbursed, he came down and literally headed for the hills. With any luck he may have made it home in time to catch himself on the 11 o’clock news.

The whole scene was totally avoidable but fortunately, the outcome ended up the same as it would have had the police not been called. The bear did what it

would have done had no one ever seen him...he wandered home when he was ready. Unfortunately, all too often, these avoidable situations end up in disaster for the animal involved. If the people just understood that if left alone, these animals almost never harm a thing...they are just living their life in what they perceive to be their home. Usually they are just hungry and in search of food...that is one of the main attractions of our neighborhoods. If one lives in a foothill community, it is necessary to keep all temptations as well confined as possible, in order to protect both the animals and the people. To keep temptations to a minimum, do not put trash out until the morning that it is picked up and keep it stored in a tight container in a garage or other secure enclosure if possible. Rinse cans and jars of all food before putting them in the trash and keep garbage bagged and inside until trash day. Bring pets indoors at dusk. Doing these few simple things will help keep animals from finding your yard the most interesting one on the block. If there is nothing they are interested in, they will find somewhere else to go, and not waste their time in your yard or neighborhood.

If a wild animal ends up in your yard, do not call the police or animal control unless the animal is an immediate threat to you or your property. An animal strolling by or sitting in a tree or sniffing around your property is not an immediate threat to anyone and just needs to be left alone to leave on his own...an animal which is trying to tear the door off your house and does not respond to your attempts to scare him off needs to be dealt with more harshly. Most wild animals are very intimidated by loud noises and large threatening objects...such as moving cars, blaring stereos or car horns, noisy groups of people or big barking dogs...they prefer peace and quiet. You can easily get an animal to leave your yard by exposing him to any of those things.

If it does become necessary to get the police involved, the police should make it their first priority to just keep people and media away and only call animal control if the animal appears to be sick, injured or aggressive. The incident that occurred last Monday got way out of control. Instead of keeping people completely away from the area and allowing the animal to come out of the tree and leave on its own, the police allowed a huge crowd and the media to gather which only served to prolong the incident and totally traumatize the bear. They called in animal control when what was really needed was people control. That is what allowed the incident to get so out of hand. The officer who was interviewed on the news seemed to have a very level-headed and accurate perspective on the situation. He understood that the bear was a local resident and would head back home if left alone. It is too bad that those in charge of handling things did not seem to be acting with his insight as their motivation. When police get such a call, they should quietly go check out the situation and inform the people who called that they need to stay inside or leave the property until the animal leaves and then keep an eye on the situation until it resolves itself. Most people who have lived in the area for awhile understand that these animals do not pose a threat if they are left alone and that we are the ones who have chosen to live in their territory and that we need to recognize that fact and respect them and their home. If someone is not able to do that, then they should not have chosen to live in the foothills where these animals reside.

I urge everyone in our community and other foothill communities to do their best to help prevent an incident like this from ever happening again. I have seen far too many incidents like this end very sadly...I am grateful this was not one of them.

Next week: Calamity Jane (part 2)...sorry for getting side tracked, this seemed too important not to address.

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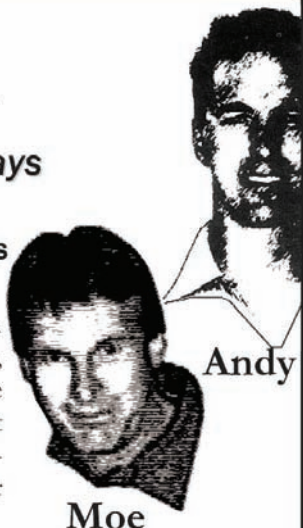
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Jeff's Pics

The Book Reports

By Jeff Brown

Fair Game: My Life as a Spy, My Betrayal by the White House

by Valerie Plame Wilson (2007)

On July 6, 2003, four months after the United States Iraqi invasion, ex-ambassador Joseph Wilson's historic op-ed, called "What I Didn't Find in Africa," appeared in *The New York Times* contradicting President Bush's contention that Saddam Hussein had tried to buy nuclear bomb quality uranium from the African nation of Niger. A week later, writer Robert Novak revealed in his newspaper that Wilson's wife, Valerie , was a CIA agent. This public disclosure of her secret led to a special prosecutor being chosen to investigate the leak, and eventually Lewis Libby, Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff , was indicted for obstruction of justice and perjury over the leak. Libby was sentenced to 30 months in jail, but never served, as the president commuted that sentence. Much was written about this incident, but Valerie herself has been silent, until she felt she could now speak. Valerie retired from the CIA in 2006. She is the daughter of an Air Force colonel, and the sister of a U.S. marine. She wants to set the record straight, as well as writing an amazing history of her training and experiences, her covert status, her fight against terrorism, and her life. Joseph and Valerie are now pursuing a case in civil court regarding the leak. On asked why she is doing this she says, "We are keeping this going in this book and in law suits because of the treasonous act of betraying my covert identity, threats to my family and loss of career character assignments. We want to get at the truth of the matter. We were promised in Libby's trial that both Mr. Libby and the Vice President would testify and they didn't. We want to make sure that the senior officials responsible are held to account for their actions and that future government officials do not disregard the public trust and unfold political vendettas." A well-written and important book!!



Highly Recommended:

How to Do Everything Right and Live to Regret It

by Fay Angus (Sierra Madre Resident)
Like Rembrandt and his paintings, Fay Angus's writing is rich with a sense of her deep humanity. There are eight chapters, each being an essay about a particular area of life. With wit, wisdom, and a wide range of personal, historical, social, literary and religious references, she both tells us a great deal about her life and at the same time fills her pages with wisdom, beautiful writing and wonderful stories.

Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA

by Tim Weiner (2007)
A must read for anyone interested in American intelligence by a Pulitzer Prize winning writer.

Protect and Defend

by Vince Flynn (2007)
The new page-turner by the best post 9/11 political thriller writer!!!

Time to Kill

By John Grisham (1988)
Grisham's first and best book, not to be missed! Great on unabridged audio!

Book pics are available at Sierra Madre Books (836-3200)

For comments or recommendations, email jeffpics1@gmail.com

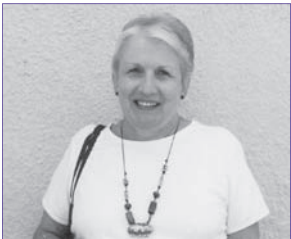
Scene One - Take One DVD Review

Greta Garbo Film Festival at Home!!

Here are a few of her best films, which are some of the best films ever made, even though some are silent. Wonderful love stories and great leading men such as John Gilbert, John Barrymore, and Robert Taylor. Enjoy!!! All available at Netflix.



- Camille(1936)
- Ninotchka(1935)
- Queen Christina (1933)
- Grand Hotel(1932)
- Anna Christie (1930)
- A Woman of Affairs (1928)
- Flesh and the Devil (1926)
- The Temptress / The Mysterious Lady (1926)



BIRD'S EYE VIEW

By Pat Birdsall

I was going to suggest that there be a law against leaving one's outdoor Christmas lights up all year. I have since changed my mind. Maybe these people are onto something... retailers started putting up Christmas displays before Halloween! I couldn't believe my eyes. I know we all say that it seems to be earlier every year, but it truly does. Hearing "Little Drummer Boy" on October 29th was truly revolting. Could the Easter Bunny be far behind?

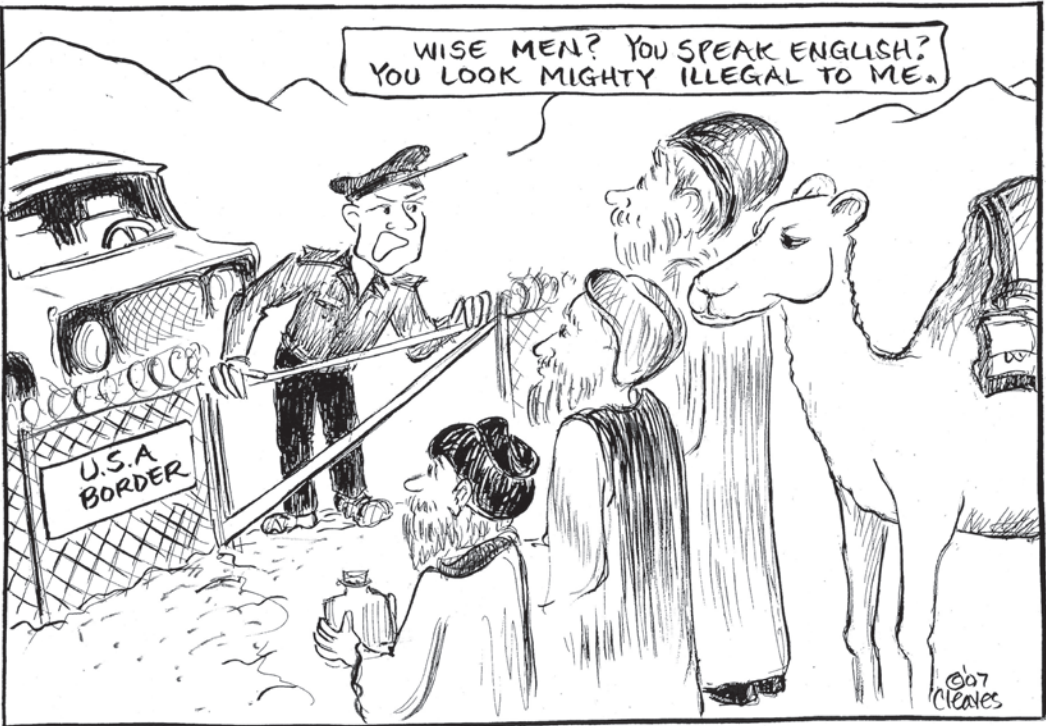
The Christmas lights left hanging really stand out about mid-July, especially the "natural" looking white icicles that folks were practically pummeling each other to get a few years ago. They were all the rage and in short supply, or so a marketing company led us to believe. I think that must be the same company that handles the Tickle-Me-Elmo account, but, I digress. They are certainly not in short supply now, they are everywhere. An absolute plethora...

The bright sunshine of July does not showcase these "natural" white icicles as well as the cover of darkness ala Gloria Swanson's character in Sunset Boulevard. I can relate... as can the latest fad... Yard inflatables. How's that for a Madison Avenue classification? Yard inflatables! Frankly, I don't think that they look great at night, but during the day they look much, much worse. They resemble a few politicians after the ballot count. Deflated...the potential disaster for the environment after they have fallen out of favor is probably a story for another day.

I am certainly not bah-humbugging the holidays, but sometimes bigger is not always better. Take the "After Thanksgiving Sales." They merit serious consideration as Winter Olympics events. Good grief people, how much money do you save getting up at that ungodly hour? Obviously, I am missing the deeper issue here. We are also strongly encouraged to make our credit card balances bigger; it's so easy...just swipe the card and hope that the balance can be paid off by Christmas next.

It's time to take the holidays away from the marketing departments across this country of ours and return to the concept of "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men..."

-Reprinted from December, 2006



Kung His Hsin

Nien bing Chu

Shen Tan

From the Inside Out



An Ongoing Series of Personal Points of View on Health ...
By Mary Carney

Christmas Memories

So, what's for Christmas Dinner? When do we eat? What's for Christmas breakfast? Will we eat before - or after - opening presents? And, once the presents are opened, then what do we do?

Memories, memories. At home in Pennsylvania, everyone stayed upstairs until we all - including parents and aunt - were washed and dressed, with beds made. In solemn procession we marched downstairs, led by Daddy, left thru the dining room to the kitchen, passing the hallway with the view into the living room - carefully blocked by two angled closet doors. Mandatory breakfast was cold cereal, toast and home-made jam - but one Christmas, when I was wildly excited, Daddy began to slowly eat his cornflakes one flake at a time ... oh, the agony!

Finally into the living room ... First the stockings, filled mostly fresh fruit with an orange in the toe. Back then, fresh oranges were a real treat. One by one, opening packages in rotation, appreciating each one before the next could be given and opened. Careful with the wrapping paper, we prudently saved it for next year. And then? Well, some paper did get torn, so Daddy'd light the fire in the fireplace with it, and keep it burning all day.

Christmas dinner (as did every special meal) was always served on the good plates, with crystal goblets, candles and real lace tablecloth - and began with a home-canned tomato juice aperitif. Next a capon, carved at the table, with stuffing (we're a no onion family), home-grown peas or beans from our freezer, mashed potatoes, molded cranberry/walnut salad. Dessert? Always home-made from scratch, no chocolate (Daddy was allergic), around 1 pm.

And then the long afternoon ... card table went up with the new 1000+ piece puzzle, out came the crochet hooks to help Auntie finish my parents' wedding gift afghan (finally finished when I was about 13). Soft music from records in the corner. Curl up in front of the heatilator fireplace with a book. A heatilator is an open space behind the wall façade, but outside the actual metal firebox itself, with four vents. The bottom vents bottom provided cool air intake from the floor, and the two at the top of the fireplace vented firebox-warmed air into the living room. This was a real mid-winter lifesaver after an ice storm caused a two week power-outage - the fireplace-warmed living room, downstairs half bath, and oven-warmed kitchen let us survive - and we slept on the living room floor in front of the fire.

Supper? Either an oven baked fluffy omelet, bacon, home-canned peach half salad with peanut butter in the center - or hotdogs toasted over that fire. Our lives revolved around growing, preserving, preparing and eating good food from our 15 x 100 foot garden, stored in our freezer or, for home-canned vegetables and fruit jams, in the basement storm cellar under the front porch. Daddy's home-cured hams and bacons hung from the 50 degree basement's steel I-beam, until we'd haul one upstairs, slice off what was needed, then back down again. We had an arrangement with a farm - yearly we purchased a half beef and a pig, and Mom and Dad went out to help with the butchering. A 30# can of fresh lard also sat downstairs, our source for all shortening needs during the year.

May this Christmas be a celebration of love now, and hope for the future - and may all your meals be deliciously, lovingly and freshly prepared from the best foods available.

© Mary Carney at m.carney@mobserver.com

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TABLE FOR TWO

By Peter Dills

Should I Stay or Go? *First Impressions*

Okay, in the past week I tried three restaurants that were new to me. So my grading is simple... Will I return? Two of the three I probably will.

Let's start off with the Pataya Café - - - Thai Food described as exotic and authentic. A friend that owns a restaurant nearby swears by it. I visited the restaurant for lunch and my watch said 2:03; sure enough the server said I missed the 2 PM Lunch special deadline. Again, I must repeat, Uncle Peter, that's me, pays his own way. I put my order in the hands of the server and she suggested the Pad Thai noodles with chicken. I have had the same dish at other Thai Restaurants and ... shrug... Nothing special here. I think I interrupted everyone's lunch. 1525 E. Colorado Blvd. (626) 356-0404

★ ★ 1 ½ Stars

Panera Bread - - - a brand new restaurant right next to Islands in Hastings Ranch located at the home of the old IHOP. Clean inside, wait in line to order your food and then a server brings it to the table. I think this restaurant is a chain. I ordered a half salad and sandwich. The Salad was pretty good, the sandwich was just okay but too much bread for me, and the deli meats were nothing taste-tempting. However, I did like the salad and the place has a nice vibe. Free wi fi for you geeks on the run!! 3521 Foothill Blvd. Pasadena (626) 351-8272

★ ★ ★ 2 ½ Stars

A fellow writer suggested that I stop by for a glance at UGO'S - - - The New Italian Deli at 74 W. Sierra Madre; a very small deli with plenty of high-end cheeses in the case. On my visit I had the San Daniello Sandwich (\$8.95) - Proscuitto with fresh mozzarella - a pretty simple looking sandwich but with a good taste. I promised the owners of the deli that I would return to try their Caesar Salad; after all, I am the self-appointed Sheriff of the Caesar Salad. Incidentally, the Caesar Salad is about as Italian as I am; it was invented in Tijuana, Mexico. 74 W. Sierra Madre Sierra Madre (626) 836-5700

★ ★ ★ 2 ½ Stars. We'll review again later

Will I return?

Pataya Café... If I get a flat tire in front

Panera Bread... Yes, I will return, seems interesting and sometimes there is wait at Islands.

UGO's ... Let's get a taste of more menu items, I will be back.

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SPORTS

Back Page Journal Time For The “Commish” To Cash Out



By Brad Eastland, Sports Editor

Well, the Mitchell Report finally came out last week. Youknow-that probe headed up by former senator George Mitchell (hired by baseball commissioner Bud *Selig) designed to expose all the steroids cheats in baseball? Did you read it? Basically, it blamed the Steroids Era on everyone from players to trainers to owners to bat-boys to the second gunman on the Grassy Knoll. Everyone except baseball commissioner Bud *Selig, that is.

I have a different view. After looking over the report, and looking at it as a prism through which to view the entire Steroids Era and the “Era of Crummy Feelings” it has spawned, it seems to me that only one thing about this fuzziest, dreariest, most confusing epoch in baseball history is clear.

Bud *Selig must no longer be allowed to be Commissioner of Baseball.

I don’t care if he resigns, is fired, is impeached, is offered early retirement, or is placed into the Witness Protection Program, but whatever the method he must, *must*, be cashiered.

How else can baseball move on? The top dog always has to take the fall if his regime is corrupt, is laughable, and is a disgrace; it has always been that way, throughout history and in every walk of life. It’s called accountability. When a major corporation is caught with its pants down, the CEO disappears. When a movie studio fails to make money or puts out a poor product, the studio head steps down. It’s expected. It even happens to heads of state. When the Republicans screwed up the Watergate thing in ‘74, Nixon had to take the fall. So he resigned rather than be impeached. He had to, or no one would have ever trusted the system again. (And because he left, and left without a fight, the Republicans were only asked to vacate the White House for four years, whereupon in 1981 they moved right back in and stayed for twelve years more.)

Same in sports. When a football team makes losing a habit, the coach is canned. You don’t fire the players. You get a new coach; a new “commissioner” for your team, as it were. Take the Yankees. You may recall they blew it again this year... so did they get rid of slumpers A-Rod and Jeter, or any of the overpaid pitchers who couldn’t get the Indians out in the ALDS? Of course not. The manager had to eat it. So Joe Torre was essentially shown the door.

It should be the same with *Selig. *Selig should be made to pay for presiding over the era which contained the biggest baseball scandal since the Black Sox. He was clearly the chief enabler of this era, fawning away like everybody else over those absurdly muscular sluggers Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa, as they “saved” baseball in ‘98 with their suspicious and questionably long home runs, with *Selig always looking the other way whenever whispers of steroid use eddied in his comical, over-sized ears. He knew. This is a former owner of a team, the commissioner of the sport, the ultimate insider, *of course* he knew! But over the years he’s always said he kinda sorta didn’t, which makes him kinda sorta a dope or a liar. Or at the very least a hypocrite.

It can be argued that *Selig is in fact the greatest hypocrite in sports history. This is the guy who acted like there was no problem and said there was no problem even though he enabled the problem and looked the other way because baseball was finally raking in big money again because of the problem and so he marketed and encouraged the problem and then a few years later when it suddenly really was a problem he simply about-faced himself and declared it was a problem and then hired investigators to research the problem so that he could blame other folks besides himself for the problem and seek to ruin their careers and maybe even put

demeaning *asterisks next to the names of these players who had merely accepted his gracious enabling of their problem with the *asterisk thus labeling them as guilty forever so that maybe the problem would just go away and he could still get to be commissioner and maybe even come to be seen, incredibly, as the man who solved the problem and cleaned up the sport. Sheesh....what a con man.

So then why do sports writers and TV talking heads and baseball media hacks around the country continue to give this guy a free pass??? Well, not me. I say *Selig must go.

It’s a funny thing: when *Selig tries to claim that he knew there was steroids but “had no idea” the magnitude of the problem, I can’t help thinking of Reagan and Iran/Contra. In case you’ve already forgotten the Iran/Contra affair, briefly it was that thing back in the 80s when America sold arms to Iran (our avowed enemy) in exchange for getting our hostages out of there (which didn’t work) so that we could in turn use the dough to finance a counter-revolution in Nicaragua (totally illegal). It was a big scandal, there were investigations and trials and congressional hearings and firings and suicides and scapegoats and everything. Reagan, of course, claimed that he didn’t know anything about it. Didn’t know anything about a gigantic military cabal to sell arms to an enemy country. To get our hostages back. To finance an illegal war in Central America. Sure. The President of the United States. Of course he later admitted he did know. Except that he said it didn’t have anything to do with hostages (a lie). But hey, it doesn’t matter. Either he knew and let it happen, or he didn’t even know what was going on in his own administration.

Which means he was either the main culprit or he was totally clueless and incompetent.

That’s exactly the way I feel about *Selig. Either he’s the main culprit, or he’s totally clueless and incompetent! There’s no other possibility. He’s guilty either way. Either way, it makes him wholly unqualified to either police the sport as its commissioner or represent the sport as its commissioner. I say let’s get rid of him.

Baseball is a sport that needs to be cleansed; not so much cleansed of steroids, but of the stench of hypocrisy and bad stewardship. To effectively move into a new era, baseball needs to rid itself of the trappings of the old. But how can baseball fans ever trust the sport again, in the post-Steroids Era, as long as the #1 villain of that era still runs the asylum?

“Baseball is America’s pastime because of the trust placed in this sport by its fans.” No more eloquent words were ever spoken. Nothing would go further towards preserving that trust than *Selig stepping down. If he means what he says, that is.

Because the quote belongs to *Selig himself.

I’m talking to you now, Bud. If you resign, baseball gains a ton of credibility. You’ve always said that nothing means more to you than “the integrity of the game”. If that’s so, I say nothing would send a stronger message to baseball fans than your stepping down. You would essentially be saying, “Whatever happened, I was in charge, it was on my watch, and I think for the integrity of the game and to more effectively turn the page I should step aside and let a new commissioner lead us into the next glorious era of baseball,” or something heroic like that.

You can do your beloved sport a great service, Bud, simply by realizing you need to go. C’mon, man. Help us out. B.E.

P.S.---And if all this isn’t enough, surely the best reason to get rid of this guy is his hair. Surely he possesses the worst haircut in American sports. Agreed? He should be cashiered for that crime alone. I, for one, just can’t stand to look at it anymore....

**Let’s hear from you good people at b.eastland@mobserver.com if you agree that Bud and his bad haircut should disappear....*

Little League Spotlight: Frankie Garriola

By Brad Eastland

Frank Garriola, age 11, is a baseball nut.

But at least he comes by it honestly. Because his 45-year-old father was also a baseball nut when he was a kid. And still is.

“I grew up liking, or should I say worshiping, the Yankees,” admits New York City native Scott Garriola, who was actually born right smack in the Bronx, not too far from Yankee Stadium itself. Not surprisingly, he infected his son with the Yankee bug: “I started liking the Yankees because of my dad,” young Frank confirms proudly.

Frank’s mania for baseball is easy to spot, as he spent much of his recent interview with this reporter trying to hit dozens of miniature plastic Wiffle balls pitched to him by his father. “C’mon Frank, you’re not swingin’ right---stay back, loose hands, and drive through it.... and don’t pull your head,” Scott barks, then throws. The next pitch is whistled right back and just past the elder Garriola’s ear. “That’s better,” he drones.

At four-feet-ten and only 86 pounds, young Frank---“Frankie” to his friends---is not particularly big for an 11-year-old. But what he lacks in size he more than makes up for in energy and ability. A versatile, multi-position player and a consistent hitter, young Garriola has always been thought of in and around Sierra Madre Little League circles as one of the best players on the circuit. The proof?: When he was only eight he made the leap from “Farm” to “Minors,” making him the only 8-year-old in the entire Minors division. By age ten he was already in the “Majors” and was an instant All-Star. (In fact, just last year, Frank was a proud member of the Sierra Madre 10/11 year olds All-Star Team which became the local District 17 Champion for this area.)

“He’s always had a passion for the game,” crows the senior Garriola, pride clearly rippling through his rich Italian baritone. “I’m just glad he’s passionate about something. Better baseball than videogames,” he adds, echoing the sentiments of 21st-century fathers everywhere....

Like all the greats, Frankie took up the game at an early age. Three. “I liked it right away,” he says.

Frankie’s best position is shortstop. Not surprisingly, his favorite player is future Hall of Fame Yankee shortstop Derek Jeter. But unlike Jeter, young Garriola also plays second base and even pitches a little bit, when he gets the opportunity. When asked why he likes shortstop so much, he replies, “I like to field grounders, and I like to dive for the ball whenever I get the chance.”

He also goes to Major League baseball games whenever he gets the chance. Frank and his dad typically attend as many as a dozen Dodger games a year. “I’ve even been to Yankee Stadium a couple times,” Frank chips in with a cheery, buck-toothed smile.

Every ballplayer has a signature “best moment” that sticks in his head and won’t go away. Here’s Frank’s: “It was a ‘walk-off’ hit. I was in the Minors in 2006, I was on the Yankees, we were playing the Angels, we’re down by one, it’s the bottom of the last inning, runners on second and third, and I hit a high liner over the left fielder’s head and both runners scored and we won the game. Not only that, the win put us in the playoffs!”

One gets the feeling that it won’t be the last walk-off hit for this kid.

In the end, Frank’s love of the game is a basic, uncomplicated affair. Asked what it is he likes so much about baseball, he replies, as-a-matter-of-factly, “I like hitting the ball, catching the ball, and running all the time.”

If only our politicians possessed Frankie Garriola’s genius for simplicity and candor....

Note: The MountainViews-Observer will be running these “spotlight” features for the next six months or so. If you know of a local Little Leaguer with a good story to tell, go ahead and email us at: b.eastland@mobserver.com



Frank and Scott Garriola

Photo By B. Eastland/MVO