

# THE MT. WILSON OBSERVER

WHERE YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS COMES FIRST

Friday, February 2 - February 8, 2007 Volume 2, No. 5

## ALL DOGS BIG AND SMALL



It was a walk in the park last Saturday for dogs and their Sierra Madre companions. Photo By Lynda Ott-Albright

## CITIZEN (n): BUDDY



Photos by Jacqueline Truong

There were not enough words of praise for Sierra Madrean Buddy Switzer, 78, at Friday's Chamber Event. More than 100 admirers came to pay homage to "the coolest man in town." Even Mayor John Buchanan admits that he "can't keep up with Buddy" who runs runs 4 miles a day, 3 times a week with one day a week of tennis. Buddy was accompanied by his wife of 56 years, Donna Mae.



Photo by Jacqueline Truong

## A Day Of Testimony In Memorial Park Stabbing Case

By Susan Henderson

Despite sometimes overwhelming emotions, testimony began in the Preliminary Hearing of the three men accused of stabbing a local teen in Memorial Park on December 1, 2006.

The men, Richfield Chang, 24, of the El Sereno area of Los Angeles, Marvin Chang, 18, of Monterey Park and Ryan Swender, 18, of Pasadena have all been charged with Attempted Murder and Assault with a Deadly Weapon. In addition, Swender has been charged with issuing terrorists threats. If convicted as charged, each could face in excess of 25 years in prison.

The hearing was held at the Pasadena Courthouse with Judge Fred Fujioka presiding. The purpose of a preliminary hearing is for the court to determine whether or not there is sufficient evidence to proceed to trial. The format is similar to that of an actual trial. Both the prosecution and defense present witnesses and evidence to support their

claim. The prosecution hopes to convince the court that the case has merit and that the defendants should be held to answer. The defense hopes to persuade the court that the evidence is insufficient and that the charges should be dropped.

In this matter, most of the witnesses and the victim are minors. Ages of witnesses range from 14 to 18 years old. Many are acquainted with Defendant Swender but, based upon the testimony provided at Monday's hearing, the witnesses who have testified did not know the other two defendants.

At Monday's hearing, the victim, who was viciously attacked, testified. He showed extraordinary courage in facing the men accused of stabbing him. Also on the stand was the Pasadena Police Detective who provided corroborating evidence on the identification of defendants Richfield Chang and Marvin Chang.

What has not yet been revealed is the motive for the attack. Deputy District Attorney Kathryn Ratliff may present

the prosecution's theory when testimony resumes on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

The hearing was continued because most of the witnesses had final exams this week.

One witness, who was initially considered to be a suspect, will be appointed an attorney by the court when he returns.

Although the proceedings are quite serious at one point the entire courtroom laughed when one of the teenagers was asked if he had called some of the witnesses at the scene "B\_\_\_\_s" for not doing anything to help. He answered quite seriously, "I agree with that statement but I didn't say it."

Both Changs are still in custody. Richfield Chang has a Department of Corrections No Bail Hold, indicating a violation of parole from a previous felony case. Marvin Chang remains in custody on a \$1.5 million bail. Swender posted a \$1 million bail in December and is out of custody.

## Help Save Sierra Madre's Police Force

**Volunteers Needed to Gather Signatures for Public Safety Initiative**

Our police have been without a contract for four years. This initiative requires Sierra Madre police officers to be paid at least as much as the lowest paid department in Los Angeles County. It also prohibits the city from contracting out our police force without voter approval.

Saturday, February 3 at 10 a.m.

The Woman's Club at 550 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.

If you'd like to help and cannot attend, call Officer John Ellins at (626) 808-5998

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## OFF AND RUNNING



Bob Harrison, father of 5 PUSD students, immediate Past President of the Pasadena Educational Foundation and owner/partner of Green Street Café is running against incumbent School Board Member William A. Bibbiani. More than 115 supporters gathered at his campaign launch on Sunday. For more information on his candidacy go to: [www.getthobonboard.com](http://www.getthobonboard.com).

For more on the School Board election, go to page 5.

Florist Donna Embree  
Story Page 9

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# Weather Wise

5-Day Forecast for Sierra Madre, Ca.

Longitude W118.0, Latitude N34.2



Friday:	Sunny	Hi 70s	Lows 40s
Saturday:	Ptly Cldy	Hi 70s	Lows 40s
Sunday:	Ptly Cldy	Hi 70s-80s	Lows 40s
Monday:	Ptly Cldy	Hi 70s-80s	Lows 40s
Tuesday:	Ptly Cldy	Hi 70s	Lows 40s

Forecasts courtesy of the National Weather Service



## Citizens' Datebook



## City of Sierra Madre February Events

- 1 - All-America City Application Committee Meeting - 9:00 am - Wistaria Room
- 1 - Senior Community Commission - 3:00 pm - Council Chambers
  - 1 - Best Used Book Sale - 3:00 pm - Library Basement
  - 2 - Best Used Book Sale - 10:00 am - Library Basement
  - 2 - City Hall Closed
- 3 - Sierra Madre Mountain Conservancy - 8:30 am - Council Chambers
  - 5 - Preschool Storyhour - 10:00 am - Library
- 5 - Centennial Children's Art Show Meeting - 1:00 pm - Wildflower Baking Co.
  - 7 - Preschool Storyhour - 7:00 pm - Library
- 7 - Cultural Arts Master Plan Meeting - 6:00 pm - Wistaria Room
  - 8 - Chamber Breakfast Meeting - 7:30 am - Hart Park House
- 9 - All-America City Application Committee Meeting - 9:00 am - Wistaria Room
  - 9 - SMTV3 Fundraiser - Live TV Taping - 4:00 PM - WB Studios
  - 9 - Travelers & Collectors - 7:30 pm - City Hall
- 10 - Huntington Library Arts Trip - 9:30 am - Huntington Library
  - 10 - A Day in Troy (Teen Excursion) - 8:00 am - USC
  - 12 - Preschool Story Hour - 10:00 am - Library
  - 12 - Fire Safe Council - 7:00 pm - Council Chambers
- 13 - All-America City Rally Committee Meeting - 4:30 pm - Wistaria Room
  - 13 - Regular City Council Meeting - 6:30 pm - Council Chambers
  - 14 - Preschool Storyhour - 7:00 pm - Library
- 14 - Community Arts Commission Meeting - 6:30 pm - Council Chambers
  - 15 - Planning Commission Meeting - 7:00 pm - Council Chambers
  - 16 - City Hall Closed
  - 19 - City Hall Closed
- 20 - All-America City Steering Committee Meeting - 5:00 pm - Wistaria Room
- 21 - SMTV3 Programming Committee Meeting - 8:00 am - Wistaria Room
- 21 - Tree Advisory Commission Meeting - 7:00 pm - Council Chamber
- 21 - Friends of the Library Board Meeting - 7:00 pm - Hart Park House
  - 21 - Preschool Storyhour - 7:00 pm - Library
- 23 - Centennial Opening Night - 6:30 pm - Alverno High School
- 24 - Healthy Family Fun - Kickball - 9:00 am - Sierra Vista Park
- 24 - Sierra Madre Little League Opening Day - Sierra Vista Park
  - 26 - Preschool Storyhour - 10:00 am - Library
- 26 - Community Services Commission - 6:00 pm - Council Chamber
- 27 - Regular City Council Meeting - 6:30 pm - Council Chamber
- 28 - All-America City Rally - 6:00 pm - 258 E. Alegria Ave.
- 28 - Library Board of Trustees Meeting - 7:00 pm - Conference Room
  - 28 - Preschool Storyhour - 7 pm - Library

The above Calendar of Events has been provided by the City of Sierra Madre. Please confirm meeting dates by calling 626-355-7135



## Roy Roams' 91024

### Hello Arnold

A proclamation from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger just came in honoring retired Lt. Stephen Abernethy.

### Is Phyllis Chapman the Inspiration for Brenda Starr?

It could happen - someone could collect all of Phyllis Chapman's tales of our city and make them into a book. In the meantime, the Historical Society of our city already has a book in the works for the city centennial. Author Michelle Zak (who wrote the Altadena history book) photographer Jeff Lapidis and editor Elizabeth Pomeroy are working on the birthday edition, according to Chapman. Our town's historical journalist will stay with newspapers for the time being.

### Sock Puppet Theatre

We couldn't believe this golden opportunity for the Puppetry Festival in Northeast Los Angeles to be held in June. The festival organizers are looking for puppeteers, and those who are versed in the history of puppets.

We don't know if they are interested in sock puppets - but we have our very own home grown troupe right here in Sierra Madre. This is just too exciting. Right there on that website endorsed by the city's most influential people (MIPs) are dozens of sock puppets. They use the modern version of the art form: cyber puppetry.

We don't know who these artists are, so perhaps the owner of the website can contact them and let them know right away of this opportunity. Last we looked, that was Miguel Perez, also known for his performances on Shakespeare. Miguel - and all other puppet enthusiasts - please contact The Arroyo Arts Collective at [puppets@arroyoartscollective.org](mailto:puppets@arroyoartscollective.org)

The Arroyo Arts Collective will also have an open show in the Acorn Gallery, called Puppets on the Wall. Organizers hope artists from all media will create work especially for this show. They will also consider short films involving puppets. Also, they need one person to give a presentation on the history of puppetry.

Here's what the organizers are hoping for: "It would be wonderful if this presentation had a hands on component (Example: A puppet petting zoo?)" Indeed!

## WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

### Café 322

A Delightful Sunday Evening:  
Sing Broadway and Opera Favorites.  
Pianist Danny Guerrero & Friends  
322 Sierra Madre Blvd.  
Sierra Madre (626) 836-5414

### Farmer's Market

Every Saturday  
8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Artisan chocolates, fresh flowers, honey, fruits, vegetables and fresh baked bread. Menudo & tamale stand.  
PHS parking lot  
2925 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.

### Beantown

45 N. Baldwin  
(626) 355-1596  
Friday: Logan Loats  
Saturday: Dan Kip & Friends

### Saturday, February 3

Scuba Class from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
Ages 12 and up  
Sierra Madre Pool (626) 355-5278

### Be Jeweled

Friday, February 9 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Opening Night - Premier Jewelry Exhibition  
Creative Arts Group  
108 N. Baldwin Ave.

### Lucky Baldwin's

Saturday, February 10  
Belgian Beer Festival  
8 a.m. to 1 a.m.  
21 Kersting Court  
(626) 355-1140

### Monday February 12

Container Gardening with Lisa Beach  
6:30 p.m. at Memorial Park Hart Senior Center  
Beach is staff member of the Los Angeles County Arboretum  
For Dinner (\$8) please call (626) 355-0660  
Without dinner, program begins at 7:30 p.m.  
Sponsored by Sierra Madre Garden Club

### Rose Float Fundraiser

Tuesday, February 13 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
The Only Place in Town  
110 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.  
20% off your check to the Rose Float Association - Must bring flyer.

### Save the Date

### Saturday March 31

Huck Finn Fishing Derby  
7 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Derby  
12:30 to 4 p.m. Family Fishing  
Sunday April 1  
7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Family Fishing  
Camp & Derby: \$45 up to 4 kids  
Family Fishing: \$10 per family, or \$6 per person  
Call (626) 355-5278

### SIERRA MADRE 100 AGO AT SIERRA MADRE PUBLIC LIBRARY

During the month of February, the display case at the Sierra Madre Public Library will feature artifacts and ephemera from Sierra Madre circa 1907, the year of the city's incorporation. The display is one of many events planned in Sierra Madre as part of the city's 2007 Centennial Celebration. Everyone is invited to take a look back at Sierra Madre, "nestled against the mountains," through photographs, documents, postcards, and brochures from the time when the telephone number for City Hall was "Black 34." Bills paid a century ago and William P. Caley's card as the city's first Marshal are among the items on display. Find out what books Sierra Madreans read and what entertainment they were enjoying at that time.

All materials are from the Sierra Madre Historical Archives Collection, jointly owned by the Library and the Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society. The Sierra Madre Public Library, located at 440 West Sierra Madre Boulevard in Sierra Madre, is open Monday through Wednesday from noon to 9 p.m., Thursday and Friday from noon to 6 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For further information on programs and services please visit the Library's web site at [www.sierramadre.lib.ca.us](http://www.sierramadre.lib.ca.us) or call (626) 355-7186.

### SIERRA MADRE PUBLIC LIBRARY EVENTS

### TRAVELERS AND COLLECTORS SERIES

Adventures On The Black Sea: The Ukraine by Don and Janet Heins

Friday, Feb. 9, 2007  
7:30 pm  
City Hall Chambers

Admission: Free

For information call:  
626-355-7186  
or go to:  
[www.sierramadre.lib.ca.us](http://www.sierramadre.lib.ca.us)

### Driver's Ed Class in Sierra Madre

If you are 15 years and older winter is the perfect time to take Driver's Ed. The class costs \$280 which includes the 30 hours of required classroom time and the 6 hours of behind the wheel driving. The classroom portion takes place in Sierra Madre's Youth Activity Center for four consecutive Sundays starting February 25 through March 18 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information or to register, contact the Community & Personnel Services Department at 626-355-5278.

Saturday, February 3 at 9 a.m.

### Sierra Madre Mountain Conservancy

Winter meeting of the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy in the City Council chambers.

Sixteen regional conservancies will share their Open Space acquisition programs and accomplishments. Public welcome to attend.

For information, call (626) 355-9350



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# The Wild West

With Kyle McClure

## FLAG FOOTBALL

Because, apparently, teaching middle school is not painful enough just by itself, we have a tradition at my school where every year the teachers play a game against the 8<sup>th</sup> grade flag football team. We re-organize the whole bell schedule, shaving minutes from each class period and from the morning "Snack" break so that we can all spend 75 minutes in the middle of our day participating in, or laughing at, a light-hearted friendly game that, oh yeah, also happens to be the most serious thing in the world.

The teachers don't lose. Well... they lost once way back when you had to hold real still to have your picture taken. But ever since then, the teachers have dominated the 8<sup>th</sup> graders year in and year out.

This seems to have led to some resentment in the student body. The kids are holding a grudge. In the weeks before the game they heckle and taunt us. They refuse to follow instructions or do homework. They threaten us with physical harm, saying things like, "We are going to get you," or "I am taking you down." Sometimes they also say things that have to do with the upcoming game itself. They'll claim that the 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be victorious and that us teachers will be forced to hang our heads in shame and cry cry cry. I usually deal with this type of hurtful language by assigning lunch clean-up and long after-school detentions.

The 2007 student/teacher "Superbowl Flag Football Extravaganza" took place last Friday on our field. I classify it as a "field" mostly by process of elimination. There are no trees. There is barely any cement. It's not a building or a valley or a mountain range. It is possible that it's a gravel pit, based on the small stones that I am still pulling out of my hands and back. But because it is on a school campus and is used for flag football games, "field" is the best I can do. Anyway, that's where

we played the game after the school band played the national anthem all loud and enthusiastically.

In regular football everyone wears pads and helmets and gets to bash into each other at top speed and try to tackle the guy with the ball. Flag football is a little different. In flag football no one gets to wear pads or helmets and everyone gets to bash into each other at top speed and try to pull the pants off of the guy who has the ball. It is the perfect game for 13-year-olds. But it is less than ideal for fragile grownups, who need to worry about the fact that the only things between their teeth and someone else's elbow are lips - if they keep their mouths closed. So yeah, flag football kind of hurts. Actually it really hurts, both during and after. In fact right now, a week later, I have scabs on my knees and the muscles on the front of my neck are really bothering me. I didn't even know I had muscles on the front of my neck. Thank you for teaching me that, large and scary 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

I do not have much practice writing play-by-play sports action. But I don't think that this will be too problematic here because I can pretty much sum up what happened over the course of the game in these few words: when the 8<sup>th</sup> graders had the ball they scored - over and over and over. When the teachers had the ball, they gave it back to the 8<sup>th</sup> graders - over and over and over.

Yes, we lost (really really badly) for the first time in, like, 94 years. It was beautiful, if you happen to be 12, 13, or 14 (Look! There's your science teacher laid out flat on his back, gasping for air).

I am not trying to make any excuses, but let me just say that we were missing some key personnel this year. Large teachers. Teachers who actually know how to play this game. But OK, fine, good. We are helping these young athletes build some self-esteem. Detention for all of them.



## Transit Services Could Face Drastic Cutbacks

By Dean Lee

The suggested elimination of the Gateway Commuter Coach service to make way for expansion of the city's popular Dial-A-Ride is the latest effort to provide residents with better local services. The Community Service Commission met jointly with the Senior Community Commission on Jan. 24 to discuss these recommendations.

The ad hoc committee making recommendations will be made up of five members including a Service Commissioner, a Senior Commissioner, City Council Member Joe Mosca, and two resident commuters.

Community and Personnel Services Director Michelle Keith said "We are eliminating our direct express service. There are still alternatives out there people can use via the bus routes."

Senior Commissioners then asked for a breakdown of the funds saying they wanted to know the size of the shift that was being proposed.

Keith said that an independent committee would make all recommendations and not city staff.

Both committees then voted, separately but unanimously, approving the formation of an ad hoc transportation sub-committee although many of the senior commissioners were absent and the votes were taken before any public comment in stark violation of the State's Brown Act regarding open meeting laws.

Keith gave a brief overview of the city-funded transit services explaining which ones were well utilized like the Dial-A-Ride. One idea was to expand Dial-A-Ride to cover non-medical appointments.

"If I'm getting this right, and I'm assuming you're talking about non-medical - who only goes to the mall on, let's say, only Friday?" asked Heather Allen, a commuter. "This seems very restrictive to me."

She also specified the findings of a survey given to local residents last spring about their views on current and future local transit problems. The study revealed a number of serious concerns over the elimination of Saturday Dial-A-Ride services two years ago making it all but impossible for many seniors and disabled persons to get around on the weekends, many said.

Keith said the Saturday services were cut only after a county wide drop in transportation funds resulted in giving commuters a choice between cutting weekday services or Saturdays. An overwhelming number of people agreed to end Saturdays, she said.

Allen also asked if Laidlaw, the current Dial-A-Ride service provider, would be contracted through 2008 at which time Keith said no.

"We are required to go out for an open bid both because the current bid will be well above \$25,000 and because Laidlaw has exhausted all of their extensions," Keith said. "But we would expect a bid from them just like everyone else. We can't even start this process until the recommendations from the ad hoc committee."

She also said that the study showed a need to update the city's website and to distribute new local transit brochures replacing the 18 month-old outdated ones. "This should include accurate time schedules and stops," she said.

The city's survey was conducted by well known San Gabriel Valley transit planners Patti Post & Associates. The survey had been done just prior to LA County's proposed plan to eliminate all MTA bus service through the city - something that did not occur after concerned residents fiercely opposed the idea.

City Manager John Gillison was instrumental in the MTA changes, but during the hour long meeting he sat quietly in the back of the chambers.

## City Looks at Revising Utility Bills

By Katina Dunn

City officials said this week they are looking into revising utility bills so that they will show what is being charged and at what rate.

"Right now we have a call into our accounting software company," said Karin Schnaider, Director of Administrative Services. "It will depend on the capability of the accounting software. We also have calls in to other cities to see what they are doing as well."

A couple citizens have sought refunds on overcharges, and one has begun litigation against the city.

City policy allows for a refund of one year on city errors, but no more. Resident Vern Hensel was overcharged for 16 years, and is owed \$6,200, without interest.

Hensel wrote via email Tuesday that "the city's main strategy appears to be pretty simple, to keep costs down by limiting credits to one year. Fairness to the residents is a low priority."

City Manager John Gillison sent Hensel a Claim For Damages form, although Hensel said he has not threatened to sue the city. "Gillison implied to me that the Claim for Damages form is only necessary for residents to submit if they are suing the city, and we have not done that to date," Hensel wrote via email.

Richard Meaglia has filed a lawsuit against the city for \$3,300 in overcharges on his water bill over a two-year period from 2003 to 2005. Meaglia, who is an attorney, also said that city attorney fees to Colantuono and Levin for handling his case have now surpassed the money owed him.

"My guess is they've spent about \$6,000 so far," said Meaglia. "There's a city arrogance about this." Meaglia said he appealed to the previous city council, before last April's election, and received no reply.

Bruce Inman, the Director of Public Works, said Tuesday that Athens Services has been directed to make that change on the bills for solid waste disposal. Changes in the water bill would come from the city.

Last year, Athens Services began billing residents themselves, to "relieve the City's very limited staff from the substantial effort associated with joint water, sewer and refuse billing," according to a letter written to the mayor, council members and city manager in June of 2006, by Athens Services executive Vice President Dennis Chiappetta. "This will ensure there are no future billing concerns," Chiappetta wrote.

The city owed Athens \$84,000 to be recouped over a year beginning July 2006.

"It's all squared away now," said Dennis Chiappetta, Executive Vice President of Athens Services. The 50 cents added to each bill to make up for a year's worth of undercharges will drop off residents' bills in June, he said.

"John worked very diligently with us to resolve the matter," said Chiappetta of City Manager John Gillison. The amount of money owed the city by people who didn't pay their full refuse bills is incalculable, said Chiappetta.

Because of the city's one-year limit on refunds, Athens was only reimbursed the \$7,000 per month for one year.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Anyone interested in assisting with the signature gathering for the Public Safety Initiative should come to the meeting on Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10 a.m. the Woman's Club at 550 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.



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### LIVE ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR

Fri. Feb 2-	Jazz Vocalist VR Smith
Sat. Feb 3-	Dave Amelee Sextet
Sun. Feb 4-	Opera to Broadway
Fri. Feb 9-	Vocalist Julie Kelly
Sat. Feb 10-	Bobby Bradford's MO'TET
Sun. Feb 11-	Opera to Broadway
Wed. Feb 14-	Sensational Vocalist Judy Platt
Thur. Feb 15-	Preston Smith
Fri. Feb 16-	Pianist Joy Mayer
Sat. Feb 17-	BLUES!!! with the Marcy Levy Band
Sun. Feb 18-	Opera to Broadway

322 West Sierra Madre Blvd. Sierra Madre, CA 91088

## Police Chief Addresses Youth Issues

By Katina Dunn

Police Chief Marilyn Diaz has held two meetings with local parents recently; one privately with parents of children-at-risk, and another meeting for the public held at Sierra Madre school.

Police responded immediately to last December's near-fatal stabbing of a teen in Memorial Park. After the incident, the police station was inundated with calls and visits from residents.

Now, said the chief, interest seems to be waning; however, this is not the time for the city's parents to let down their guard. Just two weeks after that stabbing incident, a teenage girl involved in the Memorial Park incident was hospitalized for alcohol poisoning. "People get busy - jobs, families and other activities," said Diaz, who cautioned that watchfulness should not let up. Internet behavior should also be monitored.

Indicators of a teen at risk include:

- Poor grades
- Truancy
- Lack of Respect for Public and Private Property
- Vandalism
- Alcohol and Drug Use
- Malicious Mischief

Diaz has also been working with Sierra Madre School Principal Gayle Bluemel on solutions. At the school meeting, Diaz said Officer Dave Nardoni told the audience of about 35 parents "The primary message I have for parents is to spend time watching your kids. Know what is going on." Diaz said parents should know who their children are with and where they are going. "Verify," she said.

The Chief also said city administrators under the direction of City Manager John Gillison have stepped forward to oversee these actions regarding the city's youth:

- The city is working on a truancy ordinance which it does not have.
- Children-at-risk qualify for employment at \$8 per hour during spring break at the Bailey Canyon Improvement Project. Up to 8 youths ages 14 to 24 will be hired. The deadline is March 1<sup>st</sup>. For more information, contact Alexis Braun at (626) 355-5278.
- Parents who need assistance locating a variety of resources should contact Elisa Weaver, Deputy Director of Community Services at (626) 355-7135.
- Pasadena Police Community Youth Advisor Program offers paid part-time job opportunities for college students to counsel other youth and coordinate activities for Police Activities League (PAL). Youth under 18 are also welcome to join in the Police Explorers Program of Pasadena. Call Community Services (626) 744-4551.
- LEADS - Licensing Education on Alcohol and Drugs. Sierra Madre is the regional site for quarterly education meetings for area business owners. Corporal Esther Doyle is in charge. Recently, young "decoys" were sent into businesses in Sierra Madre to buy alcohol, and nobody would sell to them.
- Sierra Madre Police are monitoring those on parole and probation, to ensure they comply with conditions of release. Two recent searches of homes of parolees yielded weapons and drugs.
- Possibilities of after-school programs at Memorial Park are being studied by Michelle Keith, Director of Recreation and Personnel.
- New signs in the parks will clarify hours the parks are open.
- A new Police Explorers program should begin by June, for teens 14 to 18 years of age. Sgt. Keith Abbott will run the program, which was funded by a donor who gave \$2,000 in seed money.
- Volunteers who want to help the police department should call Sgt. Ruben Enriquez at (626) 355-1414.

### 300 West Salon

Men & Women of All Ages

Teri at  
(626) 483-2270  
Dave at  
(626) 355-7243

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in  
Town!

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Claudette, Frokie  
&  
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## Sweets on the Street

Sample delicious chocolates while shopping for Valentine's Day gifts and cards in Sierra Madre!

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3rd**  
10 am - 5 pm

**HAPPY HOUR**  
Champagne & Chocolates  
3 - 5 pm

**PARTICIPATING SHOPS**  
(Look for the balloons)

Angels Everywhere  
Attitude!  
Charlotte's Fine Jewelry  
Eastwick Village  
Harmony Day Spa  
Iris Inerique Boutique  
La Bella Rouge  
Leonora Moss  
Once Upon a Time  
Provisions  
Savor the Flavor

## SIERRA MADRE POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of Sunday, January 21st, to Saturday January 27th, the Sierra Madre Police Department responded to approximately 244 calls for service.

### Sunday, January 21st:

2:45 PM - Petty theft, 400 block Grove Street. A resident reported the theft of a hand painted address tile from her front yard. The tile was last seen Friday 1/19 at around 5:00 PM and discovered missing Sunday 1/21 at around 2:30 PM. The loss was estimated at \$50.00.

### Monday, January 22nd:

11:23 AM - Vandalism, 141 West Highland Ave. An employee of Sierra Madre School called to report a broken window in the teacher's lounge. The damage occurred between Friday 1/19 and Monday 1/22. The total estimated cost of repair is unknown.

### Tuesday, January 23rd:

3:35 PM - Theft of vehicle, 100 block Esperanza Ave. A resident called to report her 1993 green Toyota Camry stolen. The car was last seen Tuesday 1/23 at 8:00 AM and discovered missing that afternoon at 1:00 PM.

### Thursday, January 25th:

11:10 AM - Grand theft auto, Highland Ave and Michillinda Ave. A resident call to report he was following his friend's stolen car. Officers responded to the area, stopping the car and arresting the driver. The arrested driver was transported to the police station for further investigation. The stolen car was recovered and returned to the owner.

### Friday, January 26th:

6:06 PM - Grand theft, 500 block West Orange Grove Ave. A resident called to report that two packages delivered by UPS were placed on her front porch and later stolen. One package was delivered 1/23 at 10:58 a.m. contained a Maxim post light; the other package delivered 1/25 at 10:28 AM contained an Olympus camera. The total loss was valued at \$665.00.

### Saturday, January 27th:

6:25 AM - Commercial burglary, Thai Sierra Madre, 85 West Sierra Madre Blvd. Officers were called to business regarding the front door glass smashed. The business owners arrived and reported \$68.00 stolen. The case is currently under investigation.

7:56 PM - Vandalism/Graffiti - Sierra Madre Search and Rescue, 1901 Stonehouse Rd. Officers were called to the headquarters building regarding graffiti letters sprayed on a wall.

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## Fire Safe Council TIP OF THE WEEK

From Caroline Brown

As reported last week, it is important to evaluate the fire history in your community and talk to your neighbors about their experiences with fire evacuations.

January 24, 2007, a cabin in Big Santa Anita Canyon burned to the ground, perhaps ignited from an over heated wood burning stove along with approximately an acre of brush. However, brush clearance, mandatory around cabins in the canyon, was cited as instrumental in keeping the fire from causing greater damage. Referring to the lack of Santa Ana wind conditions, Stanton Floria, Forest Service Fire Information Officer, stated that "... the consequences could have been much worse."

Sierra Madre has been evacuated from fires moving east to west several times, with fires starting in east of Highway 39 at the Bradbury/Azusa border in 1981, on Monrovia Peak in 1953, on Chantry Flat road several times, most recently December, 1999. Similar to last weeks cabin fire, in 1975, a house and one acre of brush burned in Sierra Madre Canyon. It was at night, the smell of burning chaparral awoke the neighborhood, the fire was contained quickly, the weather cooperated.

Since the formation of the California Fire Safe Councils, following the disastrous Oakland Hills Fire in 1991, neighborhoods and communities have joined to form local chapters. We encourage your participation at our monthly meetings.

The next Fire Safe Council meeting will be February 12 at 7 P.M. in the City Council chambers. For information call: 355-9350 or 355-1182 or e-mail us at: [snfiresafecouncil@hotmail.com](mailto:snfiresafecouncil@hotmail.com)

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

## The Race For Change: 2007 PUSD School Board Elections

By Susan Henderson

On March 6, 2007, voters will select candidates to fill three seats on the Pasadena Unified School District's Board of Education. There are a total of nine candidates to fill the three positions, with only 1 incumbent among them. All are running on a platform of change.

William A. Bibbiani, who was first elected to the school board in 2003 will be vying for a second term on Seat 4. Both Prentice Deadrick, who held Seat 2 for four years and Pete Soelter who sat on Seat 6 for eight years did not seek re-election.

There are four other board members whose terms will not expire until 2009. Scott Phelps was elected to his first term in 2005. The others, Ed Honowitz, Mike Babcock and Steve Lizardo are each completing their second, four-year term.

After an extremely contentious year which culminated in the retirement of former Superintendent Dr. Percy Clark, Jr., the appointment of an interim superintendent Dr. Darrel Taylor and the selection of Edwin Diaz as the new district head, maintaining the achievements of the last five years will still be a challenge.

Those elected in March will join Diaz and the other board members in trying to maintain the district's academic improvements and will also be expected to continue moving the district in the right direction.

In the report issued last year, 19 of 32 schools scored over 700 on the API with 27 schools showing overall improvement.

The candidates are:

Seat 2 – formerly held by Prentice Deadrick

George Leow - Retired Teacher
Mark Mastromatteo - Small Business Owner
Renatta Cooper - Educator

Seat 4

George Lewis - Business Owner
Bob Harrison - Business Owner
William A. Bibbiani - Retired School Administrator (Incumbent)
Milena Albert - Public Servant/Parent

Seat 6 – formerly held by Pete Soelter

Roberta H. Martinez - Community Volunteer
Tom Selinski - Businessperson

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(626) 798-8901  
Pasadena

Sierra Madre Elementary School  
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St. Rita's Catholic School  
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(626) 355-9028

Bethany Christian School  
93 B. N. Baldwin Ave.  
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Odyssey Charter School  
725 W. Altadena Dr.  
Altadena, CA  
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www.odysseycharterschool.com

## Ask Chris Questions about your pets?

Chris Jurebie works at the Wildlife Way Station and is a Board Member of the Southwestern Herpetologists Society. He knows a lot about pets.



Leave your question at (626) 355-2737 or email [deuxamispub@aol.com](mailto:deuxamispub@aol.com)



## PCC Helps Students Receive College Aid With "Financial Aid Saturday"

Pasadena City College will help students understand and apply for college money as the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid hosts "Financial Aid Saturday," Feb. 3, in the PCC Campus Center Lounge.

The event, which begins at 10 a.m., is designed to help students and their families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and answer questions about local, state, and federal aid, the Board of Governor's Waiver, and becoming a student at PCC.

Financial aid professionals will provide an overview and estimate the family's eligibility for a Federal Pell Grant and state Cal Grant programs.

For more information, call (626) 585-7287 or (626) 585-7401.

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with Jeff Brown

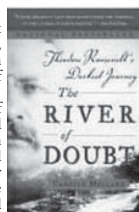
### The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey

by Candice Millard

This is the true and exciting story about Theodore Roosevelt's trip down an unexplored, remote, and dangerous part of the Amazon river in South America called "The River of Doubt" after he lost the 1912 election.

Candice Millard also gives us a glimpse of some American Presidential history and Roosevelt's personality. Accompanying him is his son, Kermit. Also with him are Colonel Candido Rondon, Brazil's greatest explorer and champion of Indian rights, and George Cherrie, a New England naturalist and explorer.

The expedition is ill planned and deadly. There are enraged Indians with poison arrows, anacondas, disease, piranhas, hunger, and uncertainty about where the river leads. Roosevelt almost dies. Millard adds geographic facts about the Amazon, it's native people and jungle life. This is a tale of a great adventure which takes us back to the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when exploring was in vogue.



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## A WORD FROM SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT PETE SOELTER

Dear Editor

As a retiring member of the PUSD Board of Education, I would like to encourage all of us in the Altadena, Pasadena and Sierra Madre communities to be actively involved in this year's local elections. Here is what I will be looking for in local candidates:

1. New voices and visions. The old ideas of the past haven't worked and we don't need to go back to those now.

2. Those that have their own children in our public schools, whatever governmental entity they are running for. It is essential that those wanting to improve our community be imbedded in it and I believe it is impossible to truly improve our schools as an outsider, whether at city hall or the school board.

3. Those that can work well with others in a positive, collaborative manner. There have been too many divisive and negative voices in all our local entities over the past several years. It should be possible to disagree without being disagreeable.

Please read the election material carefully, go to a debate and be involved in building a positive future for our community.

Thank you.

Pete Soelter

*Peter Soelter has been a member of the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education since 2001.*

## High School Senior Education Awards

By Phyllis Chapman

The Sierra Madre Civic Club announces sponsorship of its 2007 Education Awards.

Applicants must be:

- \*A senior in high school and
- \*Be a resident or employee in Sierra Madre or
- \*Have one parent working in Sierra Madre or
- \*Have a relative who is a member of the Civic Club

\* Provide two letters of reference - one from a teacher or school administrator and one from an adult leader from applicant's volunteer activity or employer

The Awards Committee considers a student's volunteer activities, interests, talents, hobbies, accomplishments of recognition and educational and career plans.

Applications are available from high school counselors or Awards Committee Chair Amy Putnam at (626) 355-4198.

The application deadline is March 1, 2007 and awards will be announced Thursday, May 19 at the Civic Club's General Meeting held at the Senior Center in Memorial Park.

*The Monetary Education Awards are part of the Club's philanthropic support of young people, which is one of the Club's priorities.*

# THE MT. WILSON OBSERVER

## OPINION

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We honor the traditions of the community newspaper and place our readers above all other concerns. We deliver local, state and national news every week. 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.

The Mt. Wilson Observer welcomes your Comments, Letters To The Editors and Stories. Please send your submission to:

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 Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024  
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[deuxamispub@aol.com](mailto:deuxamispub@aol.com)



## Amazing Disgrace

By Stefan Bund

I was shocked this Friday to learn how tightly Sierra Madre is gripped by the development and building industry. Applications for building large, upper income housing projects are moving through our City's development approval process, with the hopes of avoiding public environmental review (EIR), and the likely mandate of 2-30-13.

Despite how clearly citizens have stated their case against the urbanization of Sierra Madre, our officials have been powerless to halt the massive projects before the April 17 vote on 2-30-13, which will likely halt those projects.

insurgency of local property owners, downtown. They are trying to clear these massive projects before the April 17 vote on 2-30-13, which will likely halt those projects.

These projects will change Sierra Madre. They will create hundreds of new residents here, and pump our downtown full of new traffic. It will also mandate us to build new affordable housing here in the future, if the new buildings are sold to upper-income residents.

State law requires affordable housing to be constructed so that residents who are middle income can purchase the properties. According to our City Attorney, Michael Coluntuono, who testified during the initial DSP Study Session in 2006, Sierra Madre currently satisfies California requirements for providing housing and rental space to middle income residents. But new condos, built en masses, will upset the balance.

This author doesn't have a problem with building, and I don't have issues with property rights. It's an issue of principle.

If you want to permanently alter the density of Sierra Madre, don't try to sneak it under our noses. And in the case of City Manager John Gillison, it's particularly unacceptable. He is at the end of his contract here, and is sneaking in these projects as favors.

I have to be clear about this. If these two structures - the Howie's market site (72 dwelling units and 194 parking spaces) and the skilled nursing facility (55 dwelling units, 150 parking spaces) - are accepted into this city without a formal public review, which includes an EIR, I will personally go down to City Hall and protest our city's management. I will not stand beside idle, while some out-of-towner sells my city up the river.

I am drawing lines in the sand.

I personally guarantee any City official who tries to sneak these projects into this city, that things will not be the same, should they tread on this city. Not for me, and not for them.

I will personally guarantee any public official who fast tracks any building project, before the 2-30-13, that they will be held permanently accountable, for the duration of their professional lives, for any mishandling, or fast talk during this period.

## Numbers Don't Lie

by David Smith

"Housing Glut Gives Buyers Upper Hand". This was the headline of



an article in the January 25, 2007 edition of the *Wall Street Journal*. Interesting. A market that was referred to as the "real estate boom" 15 months ago and a "cooling market" 8 months ago, is now described as a "housing glut".

The article provided data for 28 major metropolitan areas, including Los Angeles, where the inventory of homes for sale increased by 59% in 2006. The most distressed markets are Miami and San Diego, and the cause is the massive condo glut.

In San Diego, there are now "more than 10,000 condos available for sale in new building, projects under construction or properties being converted". Condo prices declined by 15% to 20% in 2006, with the article stating "it's hard to measure price changes because sellers often give incentives such as free upgrades or help with

closing costs that aren't reflected in the price".

In the January 16, 2007 press release from Dataquick, the main source of real estate market data for California, Dataquick's President is quoted as saying: "We are watching the San Diego market carefully, sales and price trends there have tended to lead the region." With the 100 to 150 condos proposed for downtown Sierra Madre, you might say the cancer that is destroying the San Diego real estate market is attempting to metastasize and spread to our community.

Sierra Madre does not exist in a vacuum. Its small town character belies the fact that it is a component of Los Angeles County and the Southern California Region. However, as an independent entity, we have the power to prevent the real estate crisis that's moving north from San Diego from entering our community.

During the real estate crash in the early 1990's, several areas of Los Angeles were not seriously affected. Sierra Madre was one of them. Possibly the least affected area, however, was the Hollywood Hills. That came from two factors. First, the entertainment industry did not suffer from the financial losses that hit areas around military bases and defense related

industries. Second, and more importantly, The Hollywood Hills were built out decades ago, and further large-scale development is impossible.

I research everything I write in my columns, thoroughly. And in all my work I have never found any data or expert opinion that would support an argument for high-density housing projects in our downtown. All these projects will do is degrade our quality of life, depress home values and hurt homeowners. And homeowners are the vast majority of residents in this community. However, I can easily see how these high-density housing projects would help downtown property owners, developers, and the local real estate agencies. So, would City Council members, Buchanan, Joffe, Mosca, and the rest of the clique supporting these projects please show all of us what they are basing their position on.

Visit [www.sierramadresaga.blogspot.com](http://www.sierramadresaga.blogspot.com) for archives of David Smith's columns.

## RHNAplasty

By Susan Henderson

**RHNA(n):** Regional Housing Needs Assessment; **-plasty (noun combining form):** cosmetic surgery

RHNAplasty. That's exactly what this town needs. RHNAplasty. We need to be surgically extracted from the contrived threat of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. And this surgery shouldn't be considered elective. If must be mandatory for without it, this town faces life threatening conditions - or at least years more of arguments among residents.

Week after week you have heard some city council members gasping over the state's mandated housing requirements. You've been hearing about how this city must comply. You've been told, especially by those who oppose Measure V, that we are "mandated to build affordable housing" as if Arnold were going to come down himself and shut the town down.

Well, that simply isn't true. Don't get me wrong, I am definitely not against affordable housing, it is just wrong for people to create a crisis that doesn't exist in order for their pals to make more money.

Developers love the 'mandates' because they can increase the density of their projects. Pro-development activists love to throw around the term 'affordable housing units' so they can make you feel guilty if you object. In both cases, the intent of the RHNA and affordable housing elements are being manipulated for profit.

To quote the official website of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

"The RHNA is not a mandate to construct the full number of housing units assigned a region".

Ok, so the government has said we all need to pitch in where we can because of the very real housing

shortage. But SCAG doesn't make Sierra Madre responsible for a shortage of affordable housing in all of LA County. It creates a set of numbers, which have been questioned by many, that says basically, "if you can do this, we would appreciate it." Ok. Fine. It's not a requirement, but let's see what they want us to do in Sierra Madre:

According to the *Housing Element Compliance and Building Permit Issuance in the SCAG Region April, 2006* - here's where Sierra Madre stands:

**Sierra Madre**  
 RHNA Total Construction Need 89 Units  
 New Units Permitted thru 6/2005 95 Units  
 % of Total Construction Needs Met 107%

So, where is all of this talk about being out of compliance coming from?

It's good that our Sierra Madre leaders are so conscious of abiding by the law. We wouldn't want to be like these cities who are out of compliance - (they either haven't submitted a housing element or they have but haven't built one unit of affordable housing):

Out of Compliance: (partial listing)

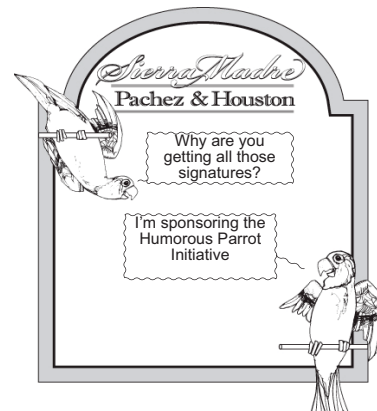
Beverly Hills  
 Hidden Hills  
 La Cañada Flintridge  
 La Habra Heights  
 Malibu  
 Palos Verdes Estates  
 Rolling Hills  
 Rolling Hills Estates  
 San Marino.

No we wouldn't want to be like them at all.

What I don't understand is how we are so worried about a housing mandate that hasn't imposed a fine on a city like Sierra Madre ever and yet we didn't seem to be worried when we paid \$25,000 in fines for not complying with enforceable state finance laws.

Yes, we definitely need a RHNAplasty and a good accountant!

\* Building permits issued





# Letters To The Editor

## Regarding Joe Mosca

As an 11-year resident of this wonderful town - and an avid follower of what are seemingly hot topics as of late - I'm amazed that somebody actually thinks that Joe Mosca is worth praise. Simply put, Joe has turned around 180 degrees from his campaign promises and is basically regarded as a turncoat by most people I talk with here in Sierra Madre - be it people at Starbucks, Beantown, Only Place in Town, Cafe 322, Village Pizzeria or other great shops and restaurants in town. Good luck to you Joe. People like you move up quickly in the world of

politics. In this month's *Rolling Stone* magazine, there's a huge article about politicians such as yourself - but on a bigger scale. If that's what you want, then go for it. I just ask you to remember the great number of people that are waking up to the problems in this town, myself included.

Most importantly, I remember talking to Joe in person a while ago when he was walking up our street soliciting votes. I distinctly remember his passion in the way he described how this town should reconsider the pro-development movement - as well as

other considerations that were hot topics at the time. His passion stayed with me all of the way to the voting booth - which I now regret to admit. I ask that Joe give my long-winded comment here a moment of his time...if no reaction or a bad one - I'm sorry to say that it wouldn't be much of a surprise given the current circumstances. But, if it helps to re-evaluate your position, even a little, then it was worth persuading my wife and 2 dogs to wait for a walk downtown and enjoy a wonderful breakfast this morning, and much more. Thanks for your time. *Derek Sample*

## Empty Arguments

David Smith's editorial, in the Jan. 18 edition, was filled with holes and empty arguments. We are not "awash in empty, available homes" in Sierra Madre. Current inventory of homes on the market is between 13 and 17! And, in total, Sierra Madre only sold 107 homes in all of 2006. That was just published in the LA Times. So what is David Smith talking about? And we are certainly not "awash" in moderate-income homes, which the state has mandated that we provide. That's why we are in such danger of falling out of compliance with our housing element. In general, housing is at a premium in Sierra Madre and that's why the median single-family home price is at \$849,000. As for the "revenue windfall for the government" from property taxes, again, Mr. Smith is obviously misinformed. Property taxes provide most of our annual revenue and yet we are still unable to pay our employees equal to other cities and are constantly under threat of losing services. We can't fix the roads or our trees, restore our library, equip the Recreation Center or Senior Center or solve so many other financial problems.

We only get to keep seventeen cents out of every dollar of property tax and only selling 107 homes do not exactly give us a "revenue windfall." Where is David Smith getting his information? Finally, just what is it that our City Council or Administration has done "in favor of the developers?" Name one thing. As I remember it, they just imposed among the highest developer fees in LA County on all development downtown. Like \$30,000 per condo? That doesn't sound like they're "placing the interests of Sierra Madre homeowners in peril." It's just the opposite. How are they "throwing caution to the wind?" So what is Mr. Smith's point besides just making false allegations and empty arguments? The property owners in Sierra Madre have the right to build on their property and make a profit just as any other businessperson has in any other place in this country. That's what capitalism is all about and that's what's known as the American Way. Shouldn't that also be the way in Sierra Madre?

Sincerely,  
*Kathy Childs*  
Sierra Madre Resident

## Why yes, Memorial Park is a beautiful asset.

In response to Hail Hamilton's article and Bette Solomon's letter of support. I'm sorry Bette, but what exactly is it in Mr. Hamilton's column that you are in support of?

Mr. Hamilton, your article seemed to be entirely lacking in substance. What are you proposing, just that we "seize any person acting in violation of this chapter" and "confiscate any property" that these hard working day laborers may have. Is this because they have so much and we have so little? Come on now, these are the people who are aiming to support their families through honest, hard work. Shall we just jail them all?

In Ms. Solomon's letter she mentions Pasadena. Well they have tried a novel approach to the laborers by offering a place that they can congregate and be dispatched without being an annoyance to the more fortunate members of the community. Are either of you willing to consider this option?

If not, is there anything of a positive nature that you can propose? Again, these are people who are willing to work hard for money, rather than in addition to, receiving assistance from the government. Yes, I said addition. I am a realist, sure many of these people are surely receiving some form of assistance from our government, paid for with our taxes. So now this begs the question...if we are already subsidizing their existence, do we not want to utilize their skills and low cost labor? I say Yes. I know that they would not be there if so many residents of our community were not hiring them, so there must be others out there who see this the same way. They work to feed, clothe and house their families and in return we have laborers willing to do work that we or others are not willing to do.

So in summation Mr. Hamilton, next time you pretend to offer a solution, try actually offering one. Our tiny jail is unlikely to hold all the persons you would like to seize.

Lastly, I love Memorial Park and this community and would love to see the park patrolled and kept free of all harmful crime. But isn't it silly that we are making a bigger deal about day laborers than the fact that one of our youths was nearly stabbed to death there recently? Instead of being a rabble rouser by giving out all the names of our elected officials so that people on both sides of the issue can call and be bothersome at any given time, why not call for a community forum to discuss possible solutions to "your problem". By the way Bette, one of the things I love the most about Sierra Madre is that it is not Arcadia!

Just a note with a solution, *Johnny Thuen*

## RE: IS MEMORIAL PARK UNFRIENDLY TERRITORY?

Mr. Hamilton, thank you for sharing your thoughts regarding our local park being used as a day labor site. I found it unsettling that your Citizen Complaint was only the second such event to be brought to the attention of our city officials. I can assure you there are several of us that see this as a violation and for years nothing has been implemented to address this matter. I believe that most folks assume nothing will be done if they did complain. I don't find it appealing while driving across Sierra Madre Blvd nor do I suspect most folks do.

My thoughts are with all these special interests groups threatening law suits across the board, we tend to turn the other way. As a town, we need to step up to the plate and start addressing this matter and not continually ignore this issue which has been ignored for way to long, nor shall we be accepting of responses from city officials to pacify your complaint with the lack of "man power or limited resources."

Sincerely, *Mary McKinnon* Sierra Madre, CA

## No Guts

Susan, I have yet to subscribe to your paper, so where do I get off suggesting how you publish it?

But here goes: arsonists almost burning down Lizzie's Trail Inn is huge, horrible news, a shock story surely warranting more space than two paragraphs buried back on page 4. And the incidents deep inside your page seven column are equally horrendous; they deserve to be hard news on page 1. Have you filed a report with the coppers? Approached the publisher of the "Mountain Views" -- whatever it is -- for a defense of his insults, plus nailing him for quotes? And why not NAME all those ex mayors, interview them, hold their feet to the fire, make them accountable to their own statements and positions, account for the statements, accomplishments and failed policies which had led to the poisonous atmosphere Sierra Madre rotting today.

This is what a real, responsible, newspaper does. Make enemies, maybe, but give us the news. A pussilunious press is what got us into Iraq. Too many older, failed, Sierra Madre rags have printed front pages cooing about the rose float, or citizen of the year, or other puff pieces. Because you seem to be able to write like a real writer, I suppose I expect more from you. p.s.: I'm not steamed, just passionate! *js*

If you would like to send a letter to the editor for publication, you may do so via fax - 626-604-4548, email - [deuxamispub@aol.com](mailto:deuxamispub@aol.com) or U.S. Mail - 280 W. Sierra Madre Blvd. #327, Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024. Please include your full name and telephone number for verification. All materials submitted become the property of The Mt. Wilson Observer and are subject to editing.



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# Looking Up

With Bob Eklund



Photo by Jean Boenish

as much as I am. But until March 20, we might as well enjoy the second half of winter. Let's savor, while we can, bright winter stars, the sound of rain to go to sleep by, and an occasional frosting of snow on the slopes of Mt. Wilson.

## ON GROUNDHOG DAY

It was a dash of February sun  
That broke in on my thoughts and drove me out  
To see if grass and garden had survived  
The chilling and the darkness of the year.  
High noon, the highest there could be  
In such a month, lay diamond-bright  
On withered odds and ends of garden stalks.  
I might have turned without a second look  
And missed the rich reward I stooped to find—  
The last gold leaf of fall lay shining still  
Beside the year's first leaping daffodil.

Poem "On Groundhog Day" © 2007 Robert L. Eklund

## Meet Mr. Groundhog

Today, February 2, is GROUNDHOG DAY. If you listened to the news this morning, you probably heard that if the groundhog sees his shadow today, there'll be six more weeks of winter. This weather superstition, brought over from England with the colonists, is expressed in these lines from The Country Almanac, February 1676:

*Foul weather is no news; hail, rain, and snow  
Are now expected, and esteemed no woe;  
Nay, 'tis an omen bad, the yeomen say;  
If Phoebus shows his face the second day.*

"Phoebus" is an allusion to the sun god. Sunshine at the beginning of February, when rain was to be expected, was thought to mean a topsy-turvy winter—with more cold weather to be expected later on. Actually, whether Groundhog Day is sunny or cloudy, there will be "six more weeks of winter." This is because February 2 is approximately 6 weeks from March 20, the spring equinox or the first day of spring.

February 2 is one of four "Cross-Quarter Days," because it is the midpoint of a season—in this case, the winter quarter. It's the date when, by the calendar, you are halfway through winter. You probably are looking forward to spring



Nice Poem, Bob!

## Vista Is Here by Paul the Cyberian



Microsoft's latest Operating System, Vista, is available for you to purchase as of midnight Monday. Let's look at what you'll face if you want to upgrade or buy a new computer with Vista pre-installed.

Check with the Vista Upgrade Advisor program available at Microsoft.com to ensure that your existing machine is ready for upgrade before making any purchase. If your machine falls short, i.e., does not have the required memory or disc space, bring it up to spec before proceeding any further.

Vista's basic requirements are 512MB of RAM and an 800MHz CPU, but don't expect many bells and whistles at this level. In order to get the most from Vista you need to exceed the program's basic requirements.

Vista's basic hard drive requirement is 20GB of free space, which is a lot in absolute terms, but very little given how cheap large drives have become. Because of this, if your budget is limited a new hard drive may be the most cost-effective upgrade you can give your aging computer to make it Vista-capable.

Once the hardware is sorted, there are some other crucial things you need to do before upgrading. Firstly, you need to clean and backup your existing system.

Cleaning up involves deleting old data that is no longer needed, but also uninstalling any programs that you no longer use. Having fewer old programs around means less potential for incompatibility issues should you choose to upgrade.

Backing up your data is essential, even when you're not upgrading, so make sure you have a current backup before you upgrade. Remember, data that is not backed up is not data that you want to keep.

However, depending on your current operating system, and which version of Vista you have, the upgrade installation option may not be available to you. For example, Vista Home Basic can only upgrade XP Home, not XP Pro. Additionally, only XP can be upgraded to Vista. Users of Windows 2000 and Windows 98 (yes, they still exist) must do a completely new installation.

The good news with Vista is that if you do decide to upgrade rather than do a fresh install, the results should be a lot cleaner than with previous operating systems.

I feel that the upgrades needed, should you choose to do so, are well worth the effort to use the new OS. Good Luck and Good Night!

Questions? Contact me at  
p.carpenter@themtwillsonobserver.com

## WorkForce with Madeline

**Q:** I'm going back to work after a hiatus of 3 years to raise my son, Noah. My mother will be caring for Noah while I'm at work. The problem is I have several interviews coming up and Mom will not be getting back from vacation for another 2 weeks. Would it be okay to bring my son to an interview? He's very well-behaved.

**A:** Leave Noah home. Find a reliable friend or neighbor to watch him. Even a well-behaved 3 year old can be distracting. If I were interviewing someone who brought a child with her, my first thought would be, "Is this person also going to bring her child to work?"

In addition, leave behind your best friend, grandmother, and golden retriever. You might find it comforting to have them with you, but this is about you and no one else.

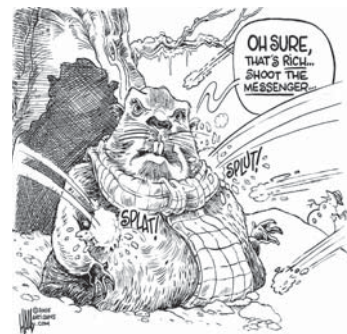
**Q:** Several weeks ago, a reader wrote to you saying her boss takes credit for her achievements. You said a good boss will recognize the contributions of his/her team. I guess I don't have a good boss. My recent appraisal was not bad but certainly did not give me the credit I feel is due me for my project ideas and follow-through. What should I do?

**A:** Arrange a meeting with your boss. Be professional not confrontational or emotional. Don't be afraid to say what's on your mind. Tell your boss you feel you are not getting enough credit for your contributions although you really enjoy your job and have learned a lot from working with him/her. A little praise can go a long way.

Before your meeting, record all your data in order to present a compelling case. If you came up with an idea, be prepared to discuss this. If you thought of a way to implement a concept, elaborate on this. Bring your notes and refer to these as need be.

Good luck and let me know how this works.

Direct your questions to Madeline at [comptype2@aol.com](mailto:comptype2@aol.com) or 888-489-8372 (8 AM - 6 PM, Monday - Friday).



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## MANUAL OF STYLE

### Bouquet Boutique

Donna Embree married into one of the premier flower families of Sierra Madre, working out of a beautiful home on Carter Avenue.

Embree's mother-in-law, Emily, was one of the original florists of the city, a business she ran out of the Carter address for more than 50 years. They worked on about 300 weddings a year, Embree says. Although most of the family moved out of the city, all the Embrees continued with floral design - Embree's by Martha, Sarah Embree, Embree's of Chino and Embree's of La Cañada.

Emily the matriarch is retired in Phoenix, and Donna continues on in Sierra Madre, keeping her focus on weddings, parties and churches.

Her specialty is bridal packages:

The personal flowers - bouquets, corsages, boutonnières and petals for flower girls.

The ceremony site flowers - large sprays on columns or garlanded arches and gazebos.

The reception flowers - head table, guest table centerpieces and cake.

All of this should be planned at least 6 months in advance. The date 7-7-07 is already booked. Embree says she offers her brides personal service which includes at least three meetings. "The bride feels she has to go over these things," she says. "I'm not stingy with my consultation time."

After the wedding announcement, the

process usually begins with the colors of the bridesmaid's dresses.

Embree said Martha Stewart became an influence in floral design, with her elegant bunches of garden flowers. Bridal bouquets became simple and streamlined, clusters of roses and not much else. Stems are now wrapped in ribbons without lace, long ribbon streamers or trailing sprays. Also swept away are leather leaf ferns, baby's breath and mums.

Roses are the most popular flower, although orchids are also in high demand. Embree suggests brides search the internet for arrangements that please them, and print the photos.

The latest bouquet style is the "Breakaway Throwaway" bouquet that



Photo by Jacqueline Truong

separates and scatters in little sections after the bride tosses it out to the crowd.

Donna Embree (626) 355-2019 at [www.donnaembree.com](http://www.donnaembree.com)

## BIRD'S EYE VIEW

By Pat Birdsall

### Welcome Back Pat!

### Can You Hear Me Now?

Well, I have actively stopped looking for my Neptune Society pamphlets... Okay, okay, a bit melodramatic. As those of you who happen to stumble upon this little column of mine know, I have been ill. Frankly, I have never been so sick in my life.

Superstition comes into play a bit... I went through the motions of making quasi-resolutions for 2007. You know the ones, "I will lose weight; eat more fruit and vegetables, exercise, yada, yada, yada."

Well, I am here to tell you that the gods have heard the same insincere refrain from me for 60+ years, and do you know what?... I think they finally had enough... I felt like I was grabbed by the throat and thrown into a brick wall. I swear I heard voices hissing, "Can you hear us now?"

Day after day went by with no marked improvement in my health. The only thing happening (and it seemed at quite a rapid pace) was the "whiter shade of pale" progression of my tresses. God forbid, if I was going to cash in the chips, it certainly wouldn't be with white roots. Being a woman,

I did manage to muster just enough strength to get to my hairdresser's. I left after receiving Lucy Ricardo red and a haircut. I still felt awful, but looked marvelous! After a few days, marvelous turned into looking like Nick Nolte's mug shot photo. I could have given him a run for his money. Good grief did I look awful!

One Saturday afternoon, I found an ad for convalescent care on my doorknob. I was the only one on my block who had one. I looked up in the sky to make sure vultures weren't circling overhead.

Could Forest Lawn representatives with their briefcases be far behind?

I am slowly feeling better, and want to thank so many people. As Katina wrote, Joan Spears and Caroline Brown helped me immeasurably. I couldn't have gotten very far without them. Thanks to my son for doing grocery shopping and feeding my animals. To my neighbor for her concerned phone calls, and to Dr. Paul Neiby for printing and mailing Senior Moments for me. Also thanks to my fellow Kiwanians for their cards and phone calls, as well as many of you who also called and sent cards. You have no idea how appreciative and touched I am. It is so nice to have friends who don't care if my views don't gel 100% with theirs; but care about me anyway.

Well, I'm off to the kitchen to get some fruit and veggies...does that sound sincere?

## What's Up at Hart Park House

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10 a.m. to Noon

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By Katrelya

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# SPORTS

Sierra Madre Sports Network predicts:

## THE SUPERBOWL

(Nothing Scientific - Dreams of The Bean Town Crowd)



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David Leming  
Chris Thomas  
Emma Kelly  
Alan Kelly  
John Dudich  
Sully Williams  
Nilo Evangelista  
Jay Tea  
John Fay  
Harry Hugasian\*  
Jack Dunn

\*Harry's vote is definitely biased. He played for the Bears from 1955-1956.

Anyway, we'll see who's smiling on Monday!



REUTERS/David Gray  
Switzerland's Roger Federer reaches for a shot during the Men's singles final against Chile's Fernando Gonzalez at the Australian Open in Melbourne January 28, 2007.  
Read More in View From The Couch (left)

## Jaguars Go Wild

## Halverson, Capra and Issa Top Scorers

By Larry Bortstein

Alverno High School's soccer team has won all five of its Horizon League games this season and outscored its five league rivals, 37-0. The Jaguars' scheduled match with Holy Family of Glendale of Tuesday was cancelled because of the wet and cold conditions. Counting a re-scheduling of that game, Alverno will have three matches before they storm into the CIF playoffs.

This is a heady destination for a team that was 0-9-1 after its first 10 non-league games, in which the Jaguars scored only seven goals, while surrendering 46. But Coach Ken Berry can explain that.

"We're in Division VI and we played a lot of Division I and II teams and, frankly, we couldn't compete with them," Berry said. "In our league, we've been dominant."

Berry was grateful for the day off Tuesday. A resident of the San Fernando Valley, he commutes 100 miles to the Alverno campus in Sierra Madre and to the classes he attends at Cal State Northridge.

In their most recent game, the Jaguars defeated Bishop Conaty-Loretto of Los Angeles, 7-0, last Thursday with freshman Jessica Capra knocking home three of the goals. Capra now has eight goals this season.

Senior Merete Halverson leads Alverno with 16 goals. Sophomore Ameenah Issa has six and junior Christine Lopez has five. Halverson and Lopez also scored against Bishop Conaty - Loretto. Clearly this is a well-balanced lineup of upperclassmen and underclassmen.

Jena DeMonica scored for the Jaguars, as well, and excelled on defense. So did goalkeeper Paige Hunter, Logan Felix, Doris Almore, Brianna Del Real, Lauren Sanchez, Le Ling West, Olivia Uranga and Mia Mediano.

The Alverno seniors are DeMonica, Felix, Halverson and Luana Hakes.

Juniors: Almore, Del Real, Lopez, Uranga and West

Sophomores: Hunter and Issa

Freshmen: Capra, Becca Iraheta, Bella Jusay, Gabby Lepaspi, Lauren Sanchez, Elise Torres and Tiffany Wu.



Photos by Ray Elgin of Belle & Beau Photography  
Senior Merete Halverson has scored 16 goals this season; Frosh Jessica Capra (below left) made 8 goals this season, and Sophomore Ameenah Issa (below right) has scored 6 goals this season.



## Barbaro Euthanized

Barbaro's gallant fight for survival ended Monday morning, 256 days after the colt suffered multiple fractures of his right hind leg in the May 20 Preakness Stakes, the second leg of thoroughbred racing's Triple Crown.



## View From The Couch

By Stanley J. Forrester

## The Improbable & The Impossible Down Under

The Australian Open is one of the big four majors in tennis, often called the Grand Slam of Asia/Pacific. This year's Open can best be described as from the improbable to the impossible. In case you did not hear, Serena Williams, the young lady from Compton, California, won on the ladies' side and that dynamic tennis playing machine, Roger Federer won the men's championship.

The Improbable was the win by Serena Williams.

Serena came into this major tournament as an unranked player and beat everybody. She started at No. 81 in the World Tennis Rankings and when it was over, she was ranked number fourteen. A win at this level is more impressive than a win at some of the lesser known tournaments. The Opens are to be won by a ranked player not someone that "used to be." Serena had been written off by the tennis world. She last played about two years ago and then she was not playing very well. When she arrived in Melbourne she was out of shape and not up to the physical level that is required to win. As Ms. Williams progressed through the field and continued winning, her resolve came shining through.

On many occasions you could see her dig deep to keep the point alive. By the time she made it to the finals, she was unbelievable. Serena was on fire - she had backhand winners, forehand winners, and oh yes the ace. To the women of professional tennis she was back.

Now, The Impossible was Roger Federer.

The impossibility was not that he won the tournament, for everyone expected him to do that. But it was the way in which he won. One commentator accused Roger of never breaking a sweat. During the entire Open he never lost a set. He was never extended beyond the bare minimum to proceed. This feat has not been accomplished in a major since Bjorn Borg did it in 1991. Federer dominated throughout the entire tournament, but not to lose a set - that's impossible. Or at least for mere mortals. It is apparently not so when you are Mr. Federer, that tennis playing machine. The only hope the men of professional tennis have is that Federer never figures out how to play on clay. I understand he has not won the French Open and it is played on clay.

So there you have the improbable and impossible. From the couch, still trying to figure out how they did it!

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