



THE MT. WILSON OBSERVER

WHERE YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS COMES FIRST

Friday, March 23 - March 29, 2007 Volume 2, No.12

All Things Great & Small: Leaders of Sierra Madre, Altadena and Pasadena Welcome Superintendent Dr. Edwin Diaz, Who Talks About the Children

By Katina Dunn

The new Superintendent of Pasadena Unified School District kept his focus on his new charge of 21,000 students last week.

Dr. Edwin Diaz finished his first week of visiting students and teachers at schools with a reception in the courtyard of Pacific Asia Museum, speaking to a high-powered crowd that included State Senator Jack Scott, Assembly Member Anthony Portantino, Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard, Altadena Town Council Chairman Ken Balder, Sierra Madre Mayor John Buchanan, PUSD Board President Pete Soelter, Learning Works Director Dr. Mikhala Rahn, Pasadena Police Chief Bernard Melikian, former Superintendent of San Francisco, San Jose and Los Angeles school districts Ramon Cortines, and Maureen Carlson, President of the Pasadena Educational Foundation (PEF). Dozens of city and PUSD administrators, teachers and parents also attended.

Soelter prefaced Diaz by telling the crowd that so many citizens of Gilroy were crying at Diaz' departure that he knew PUSD was getting a good person.

Diaz said it was not easy to leave his home town of Gilroy in Northern California, where he grew up to become football coach and later, Superintendent. He explained that the reason he and his wife decided to accept the job and move to Pasadena is because "We see the potential. We see the opportunity to make a difference in public education."

He went on to say that Pasadena has the resources to make a difference to all children, regardless of background. "My pledge to this community and to this board of education and especially to our students - I will work every day to make that happen," he said, promising to stay focused "on that vision of success" for each student.

Diaz emphasized a high level of expectation for students. "We won't accept things that we wouldn't accept for ourselves," he said.

State Senator Jack Scott, known for his devotion to education, rallied the crowd to get behind Dr. Diaz and give him the support he deserves. He said he had a very supportive board when he was head of Pasadena City College. "They were willing to say 'Jack, I'm behind ya!' and instead of spreading rumors behind my back they would pick up the phone and talk to me," he said.

"This is a precious moment we have - let's seize the moment," said Scott. "We're not going to be doing anything more important than educating the children..."

PEF President Maureen Carlson said "this is very moving... we might truly become a city of learning."

Noting that 31% of area children attend private schools, Carlson said "If we don't own - it's the end of democracy as we know it."



Photo by Felix Orna
Dr. Edwin Diaz, Superintendent
Pasadena Unified School District
want for every child what we want for our own - it's the end of democracy as we know it."

WISTARIA HYSTERIA COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR

By Phyllis Chapman, Sierra Madre Historian



Wistaria Hysteria will grip Sierra Madre once again on Sunday, March 25, when the annual festival pays homage to the town's 123-year-old horticultural wonder. Who would have guessed when the vine was planted from a 75-cent, gallon can that today it would be listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's largest flowering plant. (continued page 3)



Photo by Kevin Dunn - Spring is here. Pg. 10

Driver Hits Caregiver Walking With Blind Resident

By Katina Dunn

A caregiver and resident are recovering from injuries sustained when the caregiver was struck by a car at the intersection of Sierra Madre Blvd. and Lima on Wednesday, March 14 at 10:22 a.m.

A 66-year old male driver was cited with failure to yield to a blind pedestrian and crossing double yellow lines, according to Cpl. Charles Kamchamman. His car was travelling at about 15 miles per hour.

The caregiver was apparently hit and she fell, toppling the resident she was accompanying across the street. She works at the CLIMB (Center for Living Independence for the Multi-Handicapped Blind) facility at 171 W. Sierra Madre Blvd. The caregiver was taken by ambulance to the hospital, where she was treated and released, according to Abby Swallow, spokesperson for Methodist Hospital of Southern California in Arcadia. The caregiver is still seeing a doctor, according to employees at CLIMB. The identity of the resident has not been made public.

Sierra Madre Election Watch: What Is Measure V?

By Susan Henderson

On April 17th Voters in Sierra Madre will determine whether or not Measure V will become the law governing development in Downtown Sierra Madre. We asked the No on V and the Yes on V supporters to answer a series of questions. As of press time, No on V supporters had not responded to our repeated requests. We did, however, receive a response from a reader who is Yes on V which is printed below in its entirety. The question that was posed to both campaigns was: "What does Measure V do for the residents, homeowners, property owners and business owners of Sierra Madre?"

(Note: A YES VOTE ON MEASURE V REQUIRES VOTER APPROVAL IN ORDER TO BUILD ANY STRUCTURE DOWNTOWN GREATER THAN THE PROVISIONS IN THE CITY'S EXISTING STANDARDS.)

The data supports Measure V, 2-30-13, and I encourage the residents of Sierra Madre who value the small town charm that we have fostered so far to vote YES. The following is from the 1996 Sierra Madre General Plan:

Page 29: Residential High Density--Entrepreneur (Map designation RE) Objective L21: Provide an opportunity for small entrepreneurial businesses, service and professional offices in addition to residential uses near the downtown area where transit opportunities exist and where a mix of uses already exists.

Policies: L21.1: Allow for residential density of up to 13 units per acre and limited offices and entrepreneurial businesses, where the total site density does not exceed a floor area ratio of 1:1.

Page 31: Commercial (Map designation C) Objective L25: Provide for infill development in the downtown area to create a uniform and consistent pattern of development.

Policies: L25.1 Permit a maximum building area, excluding parking, expressed as the ratio of building area to lot size (floor area ratio), of 1.5 and a height of 30 feet.

Page 35: Artisan Mixed Use (Map designation AMU) Objective L33: Provide for infill development in the manufacturing area to create a uniform and consistent pattern of development.

Policies: L33.2 Permit a maximum building area, excluding parking, expressed as a ratio of building area to lot size (floor area ratio), of approximately 1.5 and a height of approximately 30 feet for structures designed for general commercial use.

A structure of two stories is the result of the 30 feet stated in Policy L25.1 and L33.2 and 13 units per acre is the result of the statement found in Policy L21.1 (State law does allow additional units of lower/moderate cost housing if a developer includes that in a project.) Neither the Howie's Market nor the Skilled Nursing site plans are consistent with the General Plan or our town as we now know it.

I helped write the Mission Statement for the Downtown Specific Plan and "views of the hillsides" was insisted upon. Excessive heights in the downtown will obliterate these treasured views.

The proponents of 2-30-13, Measure V, have authored this measure based on the modest simplicity of these policies found in the 1996 General Plan. This is seen as compatible with the desires of the residents who signed the petition. I encourage your readers to Vote YES on Measure V. Caroline Brown, Sierra Madre

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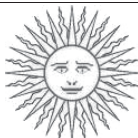
Weather Wise

5-Day Forecast for Sierra Madre, Ca.

Longitude W118.0, Latitude N34.2

Friday:	Sunny	Hi 70 - 80s	Lows 50s
Saturday:	Sunny	Hi 70 - 80s	Lows 50s
Sunday:	Sunny	Hi 70 - 80s	Lows 50s
Monday:	Mostly Sunny	Hi 60 - 70s	Lows 50s
Tuesday:	Mostly Sunny	Hi 60 - 70s	Lows 50s

Forecasts courtesy of the National Weather Service



Friday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m.

Heirloom Tomato Seminar and Super Sale

Lecture Hall A
The Arboretum
301 N. Baldwin Ave.

Friday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m.

Travelers & Collectors Series

"The Big Island, Kauai and Maui:
by Jack & Barbara Ludt
Sierra Madre City Hall
232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.
(626) 355-7186 or visit
www.sierramadrelib.ca.us

Sunday, March 25, 2007 1-7 p.m.

Art Benefit for Undocumented Students
2012 Colorado Blvd in Los Angeles

100% of funds raised go to student scholarships

Citizenship status should not prevent our brightest students from attending college. This year it will cost \$6,522 to attend UCLA. Undocumented students are ineligible for federal financial aid.

Artwork by: Gilbert "Magu" Lujan, Margaret Garcia, Leo Limon, Irene Carranza, Isabel Martinez, Olivia Barrionuevo, Roberto Munguia, Judith Duran, Jose Luis Zuno, Guillermo Bert and more. For more info email: razaeducators@aol.com or call Erika Coronado at (310) 627-2327



City of Sierra Madre March Events

- 24 - City Web Site Evaluation Community Focus Group - 10:00 AM - Public Library
- 27 - Regular City Council Meeting - 6:30 PM - Council Chamber
- 28 - All-America City Rally - Webb Martin Realtors
- 28 - Library Board of Trustees Meeting - 7:00 PM - Conference Room
- 30 - City Hall - All Day - Closed

This is the information posted by the City for the Citizens of Sierra Madre provided in this paper as a courtesy to the community by The Mt. Wilson Observer.

Courtesy Notice

Subject: Draft Downtown Sierra Madre Design Guidelines

"The City of Sierra Madre gives notice, that the planning commission will be reviewing and discussing Draft Downtown Sierra Madre Design Guidelines. The Commission is being asked to provide direction and feedback to staff regarding these draft guidelines that would potentially apply to the architecture and design of downtown buildings; the Commission is not being asked to make a final recommendation or decision at this time.

Special Planning Commission Meeting

DATE AND TIME OF MEETING Thursday, March 22, 2007
PLACE OF MEETING City of Sierra Madre
City Council Chambers
232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.
Sierra Madre, CA 91024

(meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.)

All interested persons may attend this meeting and the Planning Commission will hear them with respect thereto. For further information on this subject, please contact the Development Services Department at (626) 355-7135.



Please Join Us!

Friday March 23rd, 2007
4:15pm - 6:30pm

"Spring REU Celebration"

A Semi-Annual Celebration of Cutting Edge
Environmental and Medical Chemistry Research
Conducted by
Community College Students
at Oak Crest Institute of Science



4:15pm -- 4:30pm Informal reception
4:30pm -- 6:30pm Student Research Presentations
(Optional tour of Oak Crest after student presentations)

RSVP to Sayuri D. Hanna (s.hanna@oak-crest.org or 626-817-0883) by 3/22/07
If you forget to RSVP but are able to join us anyway, please do!

Ample street parking available.

Roy Roams' 91024

Good Night Sweet... Whippersnappers

A neighbor called to let us know there is yet another side to the birthday party - the one that a neighbor mom mentioned at a recent city council meeting while protesting police presence. "It was the swearing that really got to me," said the neighbor. "And the yelling. Eleven o'clock at night. We'd like to have some joy, too." Not only that, said the neighbor, "Even young whippersnappers need sleep too."

The Blogstress Formerly Known As...

A source at Pasadena Unified says that when Beth Buck was calling to look into our editor's fundraising talents, she introduced herself solely as "former owner of Mountain Views" who has "a blog"

The Four-Way Test

We know many good people who belong to Rotary Clubs in Pasadena, Altadena and Sierra Madre and we have visited clubs, who have been very generous to many causes. The Rotary pledge is worth repeating here:

"Of the things we think, say or do

First.....Is it the TRUTH?

Second....Is it FAIR to all concerned?

Third....Will it build GOOD WILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?

Fourth....Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?"

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Café 322

Singing is good for the heart
Opera and Broadway 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.
Strawberries, Lili's herbs, The Tomato Man, live music, fresh flowers, honey, and fresh baked bread. Menudo & tamale stand.
PHS parking lot
2925 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.

Beantown

45 N. Baldwin
Order an ice cream cone
(626) 355-1596

Lucky Baldwin's

21 Kersting Court
Have breakfast and watch soccer
(626) 355-1140

Sunday, March 25

All Day Long
Wistaria Festival at Memorial Park
Art, Food and Camaraderie
Purchase roses to benefit the Sierra Madre Rose Float Association

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

Both Days:

Family Fishing: \$10 per family, or \$6 per person
Call (626) 355-5278

What's Up at Hart Park House?

Tax Help with Don Bruner

Every Wednesday
through April 11
1 to 2 p.m. at
222 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.
Call (626) 355-7394

Thursday, April 19

Flower Fields of Carlsbad Rancho
Lunch at Karl Strauss Brewing Co.
\$43 per person,
Reserve Space Now
Call Commissioner Theresa Daley
(626) 355-7427



MISSING CAT: \$500 REWARD. Name - Otis, all white cat, blue collar, microchip, last seen 2/23/07.

Please call 626-824-8839 or email atOtis@yahoo.com with any information.

The Majestical Roof - Artist Boutique

Saturday March 31 from 1 to 3 p.m.

NEXT TOP DOG Runway Show

Host: Actor James Duvall: Top Dog Show

Dog Expo featuring Christina Bernal with Flea Bag Clothing

Free and Open To The Public

The Courtyard at 88 N. Fair Oaks Ave. Pasadena
For more info contact: Yvonne Russo
626-844-8886

"For Such A One As This"

Riveting Presentation of
The Greatest Story Ever Told
Full Orchestra - Choir - Professional Cast

Two Nights Only

April 1, Palm Sunday - 6 p.m. &

April 6, Good Friday - 7:30 p.m.

Pasadena First Church of The Nazarene

3700 E. Sierra Madre Blvd.

Pasadena 91107

Information/Directions: 626.351.9631
www.paznaz.org



No Tickets

Open Seating

Donations Accepted

Childcare Available
(0-5 years)

Free Reception
Immediately Following

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Give New Meaning To Your Easter Season This Year....

Invite Friends & Neighbors To Share The Experience With You

HYDROCHLOROFLOUROCARBONS!

Hole in the Ozone Layer?



It's funny because just the other day I was thinking to myself, "Self, whatever happened to the hole in the ozone layer?" I was pretty sure that I had heard that it was smaller. But where had I heard that? And when?

Do you remember when the ozone hole was, for a while there, the number one impending environmental disaster that was most likely to kill us all? This was sometime after nuclear power plant meltdowns, but still before Global Warming became a proper noun written with capital letters. Remember everyone became all agitated and concerned about hairspray and spray-on deodorant?

Now, OK, sorry but I have to interrupt myself here. People, if it requires an end-of-the-world doomsday scenario of the ozone-hole type for a nation to become concerned about spray-on deodorant, there is something deeply, fundamentally, wrong with that nation. There is absolutely, categorically, nothing worse (from a daily hygiene perspective) that you can do to yourself than spray a freezing cold chemical into your armpits first thing in the morning (as if there is athlete's foot in there) and then wait for it to dry and come off in itchy flakes. Oh! that spray-on deodorant is nasty nasty stuff, and I (who was not old enough to vote, or care about issues beyond the design of my Lego fortress for my GI Joe anti-insurgent SWAT special forces football team) refuse to take any responsibility for the fact that you people somehow found this product to be worthy and acceptable. Shame on you. There should have been laws way before the hole in the ozone layer.

So anyway, everyone stopped using the spray-on deodorant and hairspray (and remember, this was back when hairspray mattered) because a vast hole was opening in the fragile layer of our atmosphere that protected us from strong and violent solar radiation. We were all going to die. But we didn't (not all of us),

and the ozone-hole issue pretty much went away.

Why, you ask, is that "funny" (see paragraph one, first sentence)? Well, it's "funny" because last week the ozone-hole suddenly came charging back into the news - which is to say that it showed up on, like, page 94 of the New York Times and in a couple of articles written by the mysterious gnomes in the dungeon of the "Associated Press."

Apparently a report issued by five American and European (no word on how many of each) scientists in the "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences" shared the finding that the dramatic cutbacks in emissions of ozone depleting gases (like hydrochloroflourocarbons - the best science word to yell out of your car window at confused pedestrians) have been way more effective at preventing global warming than the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol, which happens to be the very agreement that was actually aimed at limiting global warming. The Montreal Protocol, negotiated and signed in 1987 somewhere in Canada, reduced the emissions of HYDROCHLOROFLOUROCARBONS! in developed nations to such an extent that it has proven to be 5.5 times more effective than the Kyoto Protocol.

This has prompted a diplomatic crisis between Canada and Japan. Japan has banned the import of all Canadian cars and has refused to take part in any future curling meets. Canada, meanwhile, continues to reluctantly import Japanese cars, but intends to punish the cars by putting lots of salt on the roads from now on, and refuses to take part in the Japanese national pastime of baseball. Montreal has, in fact, already eliminated its team. (Goodbye Expos. Your accomplishments will never be forgotten).

Other than this friction between well-educated industrialized nations whose people eat lots of fish, the results of this whole ozone-hole report thingy are excellent news.

Want to fight global warming? Don't worry your little head about carbon neutral life styles. No need to be all vegetarian and depressed. All that is really required is that you stop spraying disgusting white stuff into your armpits. Easy. It's 5.5 times more effective.

An Inconsistent Truth: Zoning Ordinances, Property Rights and the Best Interest of the Community Don't Always Agree

By Susan Henderson

Gina Frierman-Hunt (chairperson), Ron Brandley, John Hutt, Thomas Pendlebury, Russell Replege, Bob Spears and John A. Vandevelde currently sit on the Sierra Madre Planning Commission. They are responsible for making recommendations to the city council on matters such as, "...current land-use (i.e. applications for General Plan amendments, zone changes, specific plans, conditional use permits, tract maps, variances, and appeals of staff land-use decisions)" and "...advising the City Council on City-initiated amendments to the City's General Plan." (excerpt from City of Sierra Madre website)

To understate the task, you could say that their job is not easy. The decisions often have a direct impact on individual residents, such as conditional use permits (C.U.P.) for homeowners or an indirect impact such as recommendations on the use of public land. In any instance, the volunteers that sit on the Planning Commission are truly in very heated seats.

At the Planning Commission held on March 15th, for instance, approval was finally given for a C.U.P. and a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new residence and accessory structures to be built on West Grandview. The owner-applicants came before the commission because their plans exceeded the allowable square footage for a house (5,400 sq. ft.).

Current Sierra Madre codes requires that homes which exceed 4,000 square feet in area must have such a permit. In addition, a Certificate of Appropriateness, which basically states that the structure is consistent with other buildings in the area was required.

The application process for these permits includes the involvement of the Public Works office and the individual's architect and/or contractor.

Each commissioner analyzed the request. The commissioners also visited the site. Some commissioners even spoke with neighbors for their opinion on the proposed plan.

Notice of a public hearing was given to each resident within 300 yards of the proposed site. At that hearing, the commission received comments not only from the applicants, but also from neighbors either supporting or opposing the plan.

At the first hearing for the Grandview property, unique in design because of the oblong shape of the lot, some commissioners expressed concern because of the proposed entrance and the gables (the vertical triangular end of a building from cornice or eaves to ridge). Some neighbors also expressed concern about the height of the building in relation to surrounding homes, and the overall size. Privacy issues were also raised as some neighbors feared the second story would allow the new homeowners to look into their backyards.

The commission sent the applicants back to the drawing board and asked them to address the following:

1. Lower the slope of the roof.
2. Reduce the size of the gables.
3. Reduce the size of the bay window
4. Revise the SW gable roof to a "hip" roof
5. Increase the setback from 6' to 7' to allow for more landscaping
6. Reduce the sill height of a specific window
7. Lower the master bedroom suite floor by 6".

The recommendations were made in order to address the concerns of the neighbors and yet, still accommodate the owners' design plans.

At the March 15th meeting, the applicants had addressed to the satisfaction of the majority of the commission all seven of the recommendations. Neighbors came forth again to express concerns about the size of the building and its' impact on surrounding homes. After lengthy discussion, the commission voted 5 to 1 to approve the project. (Commissioner Hutt voted against approval; Commissioner Brandley recused himself from the matter due to a conflict of interest). Despite the inherent rights of all property owners, the planning commission must insure that no local laws are violated, that the rights of neighbors are not violated and that what is proposed is consistent with the existing neighborhood. Sounds like a little, but it really is a lot.

WISTARIA

(cont. from pg. 1)

Guinness experts state that at the height of bloom, the vine has 1.5 million blossoms with 40 blossoms per square foot, weighs 250 tons and has branches extending 500 feet. Today the vine covers more than an acre.

This wistaria saga had its beginning in 1983 when Amos Trussell built a home for his daughter Winona and son-in-law Edward Jones on Piedmont, which today is the corner of Carter and Hermosa avenues. Because of a change in plans, the home was sold in 1984 to William and Alice Brugman.

While Mr. Brugman, a mining engineer, was working in Mexico, Mrs. Brugman drove in her horse and buggy to the Pioneer Nursery in Monrovia and purchased the vine. She planted it in front of the porch to enhance her new home and is said to have remarked: "They say wistaria grows fast," certainly a proven understatement.

In 1913, Henry and Estelle Fennel bought the property. Henry Fennel gave the vine devoted care. He built arbors around the house that gave support to the heavy branches so that end tendrils did not hang down and die from sheer weight. This certainly contributed to its phenomenal growth. Also, the terraced location, famous itself as "Lookout Point" before homes were built on Carter blocking the view, affords the drainage condition wistaria favors. There is probably a good underground water supply as well.

In 1918, they welcomed the American Red Cross for a successful fundraiser with 12,000 people in attendance. This then spearheaded for years to come annual wistaria festivals sponsored by various local groups that attracted thousands of people.

Among the famous who came were violinist Fritz Kreisler, who took seeds back

to plant in his native Austria. Other celebrity guests were actress Mary Pickford and artist Norman Rockwell. Actress Janet Leigh was crowned "Wistaria Queen."

The Packard Car Co. used the vine as a backdrop to advertise its cars. The Pacific Electric Street Car Co. added extra cars on the line to handle the crowds, and one year the Sierra Madre Volunteer Fire Dept. parked 30,000 cars on a lower parking lot.

By the 1970s and '80s, vine activity almost ended. It resumed again for just one day for local people to visit at the height of bloom. Between 500 and 600 people attended.

In 1989, Huell Howser came to film the vine for his "Videolog" that aired on public television's KCET. The next year, thanks to the media coverage, a throng of 6,000 descended on the town to see the vine, with lines stretching for two blocks. Although totally unprepared for such a turnout, sponsors soon organized. The event is now combined with a Chamber of Commerce downtown street fair. Reservations are required for vine viewing, and shuttle buses transport people from downtown to the site of the vine.

As for the correct spelling - "wistaria" or "wistaria" - the plant is named in honor of Caspar Wistar (1761-1818). He was an American physician whose accomplishments included writing the first book on anatomy. When the genus went into the books, it was misspelled as "wistaria." So the traditional spelling in Sierra Madre - "wistaria" - is correct after all.

The town also expresses appreciation that the vine property owners generously allow the public to come each year and to enjoy its lavender loveliness.

Wistaria Festival, 9am-5pm, Throughout Sierra Madre, Contact: Chamber of Commerce, 626-355-5111

March 2007-Centennial Events Calendar

- March 2-March 31, Woman's Club Display at Library (month long), Sierra Madre Library Display Case, Contact: Sierra Madre Woman's Club, 626-355-4908/355-7739
- March 25, Wistaria Festival, 9am-5pm, Throughout Sierra Madre, Contact: Chamber of Commerce, 626-355-5111
- March 28, All-America City Delegation Rally, 6pm, Location: Webb-Martin Realtors, Contact: Community Services Department, 626-355-5278
- March 30, Huck Finn Camp Out, Location: City Yards Settling Basins, Contact: Community Services Department, 626-355-5278
- March 31, Huck Finn Fishing Derby, 7am-4pm, Location: City Yards Settling Basins, Contact: Community Services Department, 626-355-5278
- March 31, Sierra Madre Public Works Open House, 1pm, Location: City Yards & Water System, Contact: City of Sierra Madre, 626-355-7135

Special Wistaria Postmark



The Wistaria Festival Postal Station will be open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday at Kersting Court.

When the US Postal Service approves a special event postmark cancellation, letters and cards can be mailed at the local post office for 30 days from the day of the event.

For more information contact the Chamber of Commerce at 626-355-5111

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ARMED RESPONSE

Fire Safe Council
TIP OF THE WEEK
From Caroline Brown

Managing brush in areas around the homes in Sierra Madre's "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone" is the responsibility of nearly 900 homeowners in our foothills. While many of these homes do not have native brush on them, they are adjacent to areas where this plant community still exists.

We have also planted non-native species of trees and ornamental plants that are extremely hazardous during brush fires and the accompanying wind storms. Our brush fire season here is duplicated in Australia where their "bush" fires are fed by Eucalyptus trees. We have imported this tree for generations of horticultural use and now know of its dangers from the Oakland Hills fire of 1991. Palm trees are not native to our foothills and their prominence in our landscape is a disaster during wild fires when their ignited fronds sail through the air pushing the fire far ahead of the ground fire.

All pine, fir, redwood, cedar and juniper species of trees are equally dangerous as fire spreaders. They are not native to our foothills and they contain high levels of volatile oils and sap. The City of Santa Barbara lists these as undesirable plants on their "High Fire Hazard Area Landscape Guidelines" that you can find online. Hillside residents need not only manage native dead and dying brush but these exotic species of plants as well. Consider removing species that are fire prone.

There are lists of trees and other plants that you can replace for fire safe landscaping by going online to: fire.lacounty.gov/forestry/BrushManagementPlantIDGuide.ASP. The next Fire Safe Council meeting will be April 9 at 7 P.M. in the City Council chambers.

Visit www.firesafecouncil.org for important fire protection measures for your home. Also, www.firecenter.berkeley.edu/people/Quarles for a link to "Vulnerable parts of your home."

For information call: 355-9350, 355-1182 or 355-0741 or e-mail us at: smfiresafecouncil@hotmail.com

SIERRA MADRE POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of Sunday, March 11th, to Saturday March 17th, the Sierra Madre Police Department responded to approximately 219 calls for service.

Sunday, March 11th:

11:19 PM - Vandalism, 300 block East Grandview Ave. A resident reported his U.S. Postal Mail Box damaged. When the damage occurred two girls were seen fleeing on foot then by car Sunday, 3/11 at around 10:00 PM. The damage to the mail box was estimated at \$155.00.

Tuesday, March 13th:

11:26 AM - Theft of US Mail, 500, 600 block North Michillinda Ave and 400 block Gatewood Lane. The San Marino Police Department called several Sierra Madre residents regarding the theft of their mail from several Sierra Madre residents. The three residents who were victims were called and filed theft reports. Several people are in custody and the theft is under investigation. According to the San Marino Police Department, they arrested suspects in this case for forgery involving these victims, and found additional mail from 3 other Sierra Madre residents in the suspects' vehicle.

8:51 PM - Auto burglary, 300 block San Gabriel Court. A resident reported at around 8:45 PM the front passenger window of his Honda was smashed and his car alarm activated. Taken from the car's front seat was a black Dell lap top bag, Apple I-Pod and a Dell computer belonging to Wachovia Company. The loss was estimated at \$440.00 less the company owned lap top.

10:02 AM - Auto burglary, 700 West Highland Ave. A resident reported his car window smashed and his Tascam reel recorder meter / noise reduction unit and recording tapes were stolen from the passenger seat of his car. The theft occurred between 7:30PM Tuesday, 4/13 and 10:02 PM. The loss was estimated at \$2420.00.

Wednesday, March 14th:

7:48 AM - Auto burglary, 600 block Oakcrest Drive. A resident reported his Dell lap top and Kodak Easyshare camera stolen from the back seat of his car. The rear driver's side window was smashed between 8:00 PM Tuesday, 3/13 and 7:30 AM Wednesday, 3/14. The loss was estimated at \$1750.00.

5:02 PM - Theft of US Mail, 200 block Canon Ave. A resident reported a package containing Rasin Woman's make-up was stolen after being delivered by the US Post Office. The package tracking verified the delivery Monday, 3/12 at 9:06 AM. The loss was valued at \$50.00.

Thursday, March 15th:

7:16 PM - Graffiti, 300 block W. Grandview Ave. Large black letters were sprayed on the city owned bus bench. It is unknown when the vandalism occurred and no estimate of repair was available.

Friday, March 16th:

3:16 AM - Grand theft, 100 block North Mountain Trail Ave. A resident reported her pink Apple Nano, Canon ELF camera, Guess Wallet, check book, car registration, book bag and books were stolen from her unlocked car. The theft occurred between 9:00 PM Thursday, 3/15 and 7:30 AM Friday, 3/16. The total dollar loss of her property was estimated at \$775.00.

Saturday, March 17th:

11:03 AM - Vandalism, 160 North Canon Ave, Sierra Madre School. The assistant principal reported graffiti and vandalism in several locations around the campus. The damage occurred between Friday, 3/16 10:30 PM and Saturday, 3/17 at 10:15 AM.

Mountain Clymer

By Kim Clymer

Thoughts After The Pack Station Part 2 of 4

Kim Clymer used to own the pack station in the San Gabriel Mountains. Now she is involved in other pursuits, including wrestling with philosophical issues and writing.

The Cabins

The cabins, for those of you unfamiliar with this magical retreat, are accessible only by foot and are nestled along the stream that runs between the walls of the canyon. In some places, its slice in the mountains is narrow, steep and rocky, and in others, it widens to allow room for clusters of cabins to stand in the shade of the abundant trees...old canyon oaks, massive eucalyptus, fragrant bay laurels, towering pines and the deciduous maples and alders that line the streambed. Some of the structures have had or are approaching their centennial celebration, others were built as late as the mid-nineteen thirties.

There is no electricity in the canyon, save for the generators and car batteries that some use to power a few of what their owners perceive to be necessities, but are usually, in fact, just security blankets...tethers to the outside world that they could do just fine without, but feel more comfortable having there with them.

Each storybook-like cottage has its own personality, its own history and its own amenities. Some are heated with propane wall heaters, but the majority rely on wood-burning stoves or fireplaces for warmth. Some have battery powered lights, some propane lighting systems, but most rely on kerosene lanterns or candles to light their shadowy interiors. You could probably count on one hand the number of



Photo Courtesy of E. Steve McNeil
Big Santa Anita Canyon Cabin

homes that have anything even remotely resembling modern plumbing...hot and cold running water and flush toilets...most have outhouses and limited access to running water. Since the stream is no longer potable, bottled drinking water is usually packed in on the donkeys that serve the canyon's transportation needs.

Some of the cabins have tapped into springs in the canyon wall and have cold water running in their cabins...others are totally dry. Each kitchen is completely functional and most cooking can be done nearly as easily as at home. Usually they are equipped with a propane stove or range and a propane refrigerator that function more or less the same as modern appliances.

Pet Food Warning

There have been no local reports of pet food poisoning, according to the veterinarian technician at the Animal Emergency Clinic of Pasadena on Foothill Blvd.

If a pet seems lethargic or is vomiting, take it to the veterinarian for blood work and urinalysis.

Menu Foods Inc. is recalling all its "cuts and gravy" style dog and cat food produced at its Emporia, Kansas site, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration website. Ten deaths - nine cats and one dog - have been reported at this time, according to the FDA. The products are packaged in cans and pouches and sold at Safeway, Wal-Mart, PetSmart, Kroger, Ahold USA Inc. and Pet Valu.

The company provides a list of recalled products at <http://www.menufoods.com/recall> and by telephone at (866) 895-2708. Other sources are www.iamss.com and www.eukanuba.com.



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recall info is available at <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/petfood.html>

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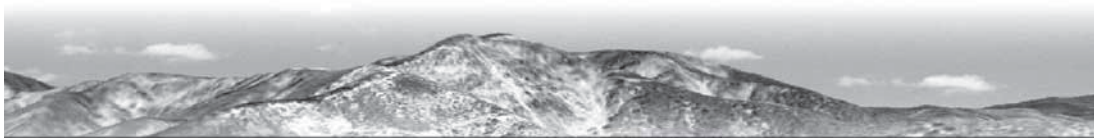
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The Mt. Wilson Observer



PASADENA

Pasadena Goes Wireless

Many are concerned with cost and customer service

By Dean Lee

The only people that seem not to benefit from Pasadena's new citywide wireless network are those residents paying the bill. Pasadena City Council members voted unanimously Monday favoring EarthLink, with a \$22 per-month per resident service charge, as the sole contractor for the system although competition would exist among providers.

"There is a different fee scale for those with low incomes and the city would get a substantial discount," said Victor Gordo, the city's economic development and technology committee chair.

The company will invest an estimated \$5.8 million over seven years to provide the city's 133,936 residents with services. At its projected monthly cost, EarthLink is looking at generating more than \$247 million in revenue of which the city would receive \$311,284 over the seven years.

Under the contract the city will receive 650 general wireless service accounts, at no net cost, to support city operations, including access to e-mail, business applications, and the Internet for city staff working outside their offices.

The move has some questioning why the city did not follow the lead of other major cities such as San Francisco, Austin Texas or New Orleans offering free wireless to all their residents.

"I think if you really look at the fine print of anyone offering free wireless there is some catch, advertising, amount of time allowed, or the coverage area," said city management analyst, Shinji Hosokawa. "What is being offered is reliable high-speed service."

Service may not be available to some Linda Vista and San Rafael residents in areas with few mounting possibilities. This is a particular problem in areas not adjacent to main city streets the report says. Also Landmark and areas zoned Open Space, where placement of wireless equipment is prohibited, may also be limited.

The report does state that EarthLink will offer free service in designated parks and public areas throughout the city.

EarthLink signed an agreement with the city of New Orleans in September providing, without advertising, a free wireless service at a lower speed than Pasadena's system. For higher speeds residents pay a monthly \$22 fee similar to Pasadena. Only a subscription fee - per resident based system for residents was mentioned in the Pasadena contract.

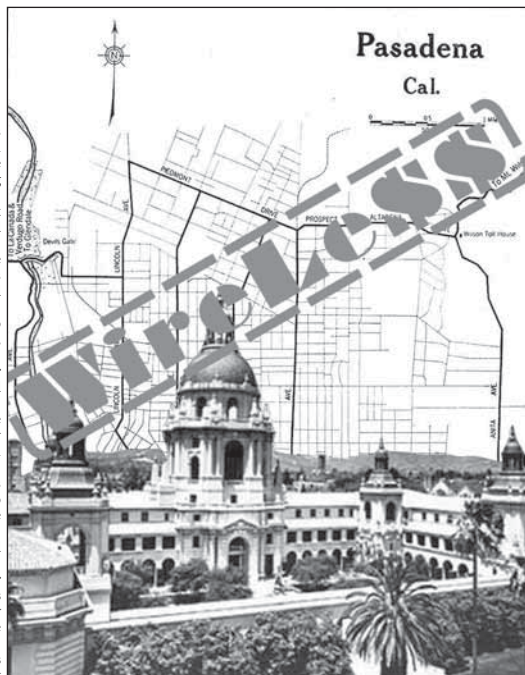
The city's staff said one factor in selecting EarthLink was to support local business although EarthLink's headquarters are now located in Atlanta Georgia. The company was founded in 1996 and moved to Pasadena a year later and still maintains strong connections within the city, Hosokawa said.

Before voting in favor of the contract, council member Paul Little expressed concerns with EarthLink's customer care citing his own experience; something he said he did not want residents to encounter. He asked that good technical support be mandated in the contract though customer service standards.

"My concern is that people trying to 'sign on' call up and are shifted around or put on hold for 45 minutes to get someone that doesn't know what they are talking about..." Little said. "In today's arena I think our constituents deserve at least a phone number here in the United States they can call to deal with their problems."

Little said in his situation he had to force someone in India to give him a number here, in what he called, "on shore," going over protocol to fix his problem. In 2005 EarthLink closed the last of its United States-based call centers according to its office.

EarthLink plans to begin putting the system in within 90 days, Gordo said. The system will make up of small antennas mounted throughout the city on existing light poles. The system will also go through an initial two mile-wide trial stage he said.



Groups Bicker Over Desiderio Army Buildings: "Should They Stay or Should They Go?"

By Dean Lee

In what some called a renege by the city and others a possible big mistake the Pasadena City Council voted Monday in favor of putting off further testimony and a decision until April 9 over the demolition of all buildings at the Desiderio Army Reserve Center located under the Colorado Street Bridge.

The city's planning commission had overwhelmingly approved the move last month.

Clearing the site would make way for a new nature center, house the Arroyo Center for the Arts and provide nine units of affordable housing something one group, Habitat for Humanity, said was in the best interest of the city although the California Art Club said otherwise.

Councilmember Paul Little made clear that if the two groups could not get along the city should look into a third option, opening the site for use by the city's fire and police.

"In February we were trying to decide how to split the baby and in this case the baby died," Little said. "We have two entities one with a letter that says 'we have a proposal and we're going to stick with it' And the other's saying the same."

Other council members disagreed with Little's approach saying the point of the project was to conserve open space and make way for affordable housing something both groups had worked hard to accomplish.

"Fire and police was not the only other option," said councilmember Joyce Streater. "If I remember correctly, Habitat for Humanity had proposed a significantly larger number of housing and both having been working to compromise so I don't think we shouldn't turn our backs on all their efforts."

Councilmember Steve Madison representing district 6, the site's location, said that regardless of what proposal was adopted he wanted Reginald Desiderio, whom the site is named, to be remembered in some way. Madison also expressed he was in favor of keeping the existing buildings.

The city's Deputy Director of Planning and Development, Stephanie DeWolfe, earlier explained two schemes for the site. Both meet the city's requirements. The first showed nine housing units face to face with a courtyard between them with the main Arroyo Center off to one side. The other lined the houses in a row to allow for use of the existing structures for the main center.

After the council's decision to put the matter off and with half the council members gone, Bogaard opened public comment, at which time 20 or so eager proponents for saving the buildings rushed the lectern.

An overwhelming majority of them were coached by the California Art Club wearing stickers, holding signs, and handing out letters asking not to destroy the building, saving money.

"This will be a world class museum," said Peter Adams the Art Club's Director. "How could you destroy this?" The night ended with Sgt. 1st class Patrick Nevers, currently stationed at the Army site, expressing concern over the city's plans saying he had vested interest in seeing the buildings remain having served in the same unit as Desiderio.

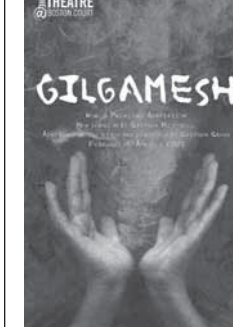
"Thirty years later I'm still working the same unit as Desiderio," Nevers said. "I would like to see the building stay to honor what he stood for and died for."

Nevers also said the site was once a hotel as well as a hospital, something he said was worth thinking about. He also said the Army had no intention of moving before 2010 when their new site in the city of Bell was complete. Bogaard thanked Nevers for his service and said he was also a true hero along with Adam Rosema, a Pasadena resident killed in Iraq last week by a roadside bomb. Bogaard ended the meeting in a moment of silence for what he called "Pasadena's own."

Play Review

GILGAMESH

A stage adaptation directed by Stephen Sachs & Jessica Kubzansky from the new book version by Stephen Mitchell by Despina Tsiknas-Arzouman



The story of the great King Gilgamesh, and his companion, Enkidu, and the subsequent mythic journey taken by him comes to life in a beautifully acted adaptation at the Boston Court Theatre in Pasadena. The original version was written in the Sumerian language about 2000 B.C. and is the oldest known text in the world; and what is written upon those ancient tablets closely parallels the stories depicted in the bible.

Gilgamesh (strikingly portrayed by DeObia Oparei) lived around 2750 B.C. and had unrivaled heroic power and energy. It was said that he was over 16 feet tall, and was two-thirds "god," and one-third "mortal." So prevailing were his strengths, that he chose to abuse those privileges when it came to ruling over his kingdom. He even helped himself to every virgin bride on her wedding night before their husbands could touch them. [Thus far, scholars have not agreed to what is the etymology of his name. Simultaneous with Gilgamesh's reign as king in Uruk, and in the wild forest lands - the Cedars of Lebanon - outside

of the kingdom, there was born a man who came to be known as Enkidu (possibly meaning "Earth Lord"). Enkidu (boldly performed by Will Watkins) was "found" by some kinsmen of Uruk who then guided him to seek the sexual priestess Shamhat (beautifully played by Necar Zadegan) so that she might civilize Enkidu through her erotic arts. She did.

Meanwhile, Gilgamesh, had a powerful dream which his mother, Ninsun (played by Fran Bennett), interpreted as a beneficent message that foretold the arrival of Enkidu and their relationship. Thereafter, Gilgamesh and Enkidu were inseparable, and went out to conquer all that Gilgamesh sensed needed to be conquered. Enkidu, however, while acquiescing to Gilgamesh's desires, could not always follow the reasoning underlying Gilgamesh's means; and Enkidu's anguish over the senseless killing of the "evil" forest monster ultimately caused his demise.

Gilgamesh was devastated by Enkidu's passing and could not accept the reality of death. Gilgamesh then set out to seek and to find the secret to eternal life; though he was unsuccessful. However, upon returning to his great kingdom, Gilgamesh was now able to retreat into and appreciate the real beauty and grandeur of his kingdom, which he was previously blind to.

The entire play was presented with few props; the costumes were stunning; and the actors projected the feel-pictures necessary for the audience to see. Bravo to Directors Stephen Sachs & Jessica Kubzansky! The ascetic staging favored the fine acting skills, as well as captured the essence of ancient times; and such austerity projected more than any amount of props could. Everyone in the chorus - Cynthia Boorujy, Jack Kandel, Newton Kaneshiro, Shihien Vazaz - choreographed the scene transitions seamlessly, and their various character portrayals throughout the play were wonderful. Thank you to Stephen Mitchell for sharing some time to answer our questions.

GILGAMESH, now playing at The Theatre at Boston Court, 70 N Mentor Avenue, Pasadena, CA. There is some nudity and smoking on stage. For tickets call 626-683-6883 or visit BostonCourt.org.



THE MT. WILSON OBSERVER



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Mt. Wilson Observer Mission Statement

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 quality of life in our community, including the magnificence of our natural resources. Integrity will be our guide.

OPINION

This week, The Mt. Wilson Observer received two pieces of correspondence from a long time Sierra Madre resident that have a very important message for all of us. Therefore, I gladly yield the space normally reserved for my column to the Gentleman we all call John Grijalva. - Susan Henderson, Managing Editor

Great People in A Great Place

By John Grijalva, Long Time Resident

For the past year there seems to be a lot of disagreement among the citizens including the City Council over the pending Measure V. When this is such a **GREAT PLACE TO LIVE**, why change it. Changes in moderation are O.K.

Why I know this is a **GREAT PLACE TO LIVE**: Just recently our friends and the Civic Club heard we needed some help because of illness. They arrived with Get Well wishes and food. What wonderful people they are. All is O.K. now. I am sure at one time or another we have all received this kind of treatment.

This type of thing makes Sierra Madre a **GREAT PLACE TO LIVE**.

I go to Bean Town several mornings a week for coffee. On my way I pass Village Auto and Independent Honda Auto. Once in a while my timing is right, when Bill Schlote and Chris Hovland are giving some dogs treats. I later ask

about this and they reply they are regular customers.

Three weeks ago I broke my foot. Bill knows I go to Bean Town for coffee so he comes to my house and pushes me to Bean Town in my wheel chair. Buddy Switzer takes over for Bill when he is away. As I can't drive yet, George Sipos has taken me for X-rays and Blood work.

What a **GREAT PLACE TO LIVE**.

I am surprised and saddened at the mean spirited actions of some of our local citizens. Instead of bashing the other fellow, keep it to yourself and take care of it at the polls. Vote as you want to vote and let others vote as they want.

If we can get past all this and prove we are the "All American City" not just in words but also in deeds. Aren't you glad you have the right to vote?

This is a **GREAT PLACE TO LIVE**.

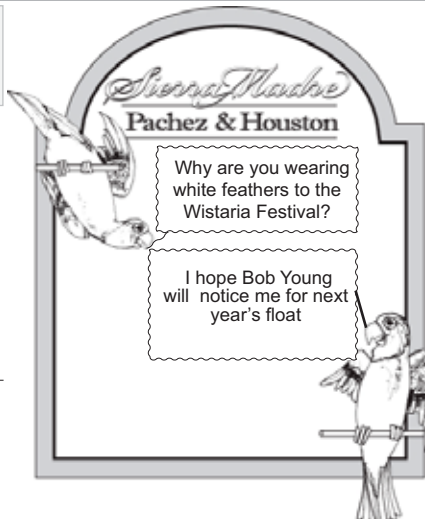
MY HOMETOWN AIN'T THE SAME NO MORE
THEY TORE UP THE TRACKS
RIPPED DOWN THE DEPOT
AND DOWN BY THE END OF THE TRACKS
WHERE THE TRAIL USE TA START
THEY BUILT THINGS TO PUT PEOPLE IN
WHERE THE RED CARS ONCE PARKED,
AND THE PEPPER TREES GREW
WITH THEIR RED STICKY BARK.

AND I REMEMBER THAT SCHOOL
WHERE MOST OF US WENT.
IT WAS A WORK OF ART SOME SAID
WITH FRESH AIR CLASSES
WHERE YOU COULD GO BAREFOOT
NOT CUZ YOU HAD TO BUT CUZ YOU WANTED TO
BUT THEY SEALED UP THE CLASS ROOMS
SO NO AIR COULD GET IN
AND THEY SOLD THE SCHOOL TO THE TOWN NEXT DOOR
IN THE NAME OF PROGRESS
AND FOR LOWER TAXES
BUT THE TAXES WENT UP ANYWAY
AND WE AIN'T GOT THAT SCHOOL NO MORE

SOME OF THE OLD FOLKS WERE STILL AROUND
AND EVERY NOW & THEN WE GET TOGETHER
AND WE TALK ABOUT OUR TOWN
SOME AIN'T EVEN MOVED OUT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS
AND SOME ARE FAR AWAY
BUT THEY STILL RETURN
TO FILL THEIR CUPS FROM THAT SPRING WE CALL HOME
AND ONCE MORE HEAR THE ECHOES FROM THE CANYON
THE VOICES OF THOSE WHOSE YOUTH WAS SPENT
ON THOSE IDYLIC YEARS BEFORE AND AFTER THE WAR
BUT YA KNOW MY HOME TOWN AIN'T THE SAME NO MORE

NOW IT AIN'T THE SAME
NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY
IT'S GOT SPIRIT AND VERVE
BUT NOT THE SAME
It's planned and orchestrated
AND MADE TO COME OUT RIGHT
AND WE TRY TO GET BACK WHAT WE LOST
TRY WITH ALL OUR MIGHT
BUT IT DON'T HAPPEN OUT OF OUR HEARTS FROM OUR CORE
NAW MY HOME TOWN AIN'T THE SAME NO MORE
AND I'M SAD BUT I THINK I UNDERSTAND
LOST YOUTH
LOST INNOCENCE
LOST OPTIMISM
THEY REMAIN, BUT FOR OTHERS TO TAKE THEIR STAND
AND FOR ME AND THOSE WITH ME WHO WERE HOPING FOR?
NAW, MY HOME TOWN AIN'T THE SAME NO MORE.

Printed with permission
Submitted by John Grijalva
Written by Bill Spargur, who now resides in Oregon



Facing the Inevitable

By David Smith

First of all, there are decent, honest people on both sides of the Measure V issue, realtors and developers included. The realtors and developers aren't evil. They're just business people pursuing profits. There's nothing wrong with that. What we're really dealing with are conflicting positions that deal with money, a lot of money, many, many millions of dollars.

The cause of the conflict is a real estate market that's going through extremes as great as this controversy.

A few years ago, home prices were increasing at an incredible rate. People were pouring into jobs in real estate, mortgage brokering, and residential construction. You could buy a house with no money down and no income verification. Wow! For the first time in history a homeless person could buy a home. Fortunes were being made in a matter of months. The Standard and Poor's Case-Shiller Index for Los Angeles, the preeminent measure of housing prices, went up by over 20% in the spring and summer of 2004. We'd never seen a boom like this before.

I'll give you a lecture like the one I got in Economics 101 about 40-some years ago, only I'll substitute developers and homes for farmers and wheat. Price of homes goes up, developers build more houses. In fact, a lot more people become developers, as well as realtors and mortgage brokers. Everyone wants to get in on the easy money.

Eventually, you have enough homes and, then, too many homes, so, what happens, prices start going down. And the plentiful jobs and the easy money dry up.

The S&P Case-Shiller Index for Los Angeles showed month over month declines for October and November of last year of -.1% and -.2% respectively.

These were the first declines in the index since January of 1999. Still, declines of such a small magnitude could be considered seasonal adjustments in a normal market. But the -1.3% December decline is anything but normal. This is the first time we've seen a decline of this magnitude since March of 1993, (-1.4%). The first time a decline like this appears in the 20-year history of the index is in November of 1990, (-1.3%), at the beginning of the last real estate crash.

The party is over. Now, there's a great big hangover ahead, and nobody wants to face it. That's what this conflict is all about. We, the homeowners, are fighting to hold on to our homes and the equity we have in them. And the realtors and developers want to continue to receive the substantial incomes they earned during the boom.

We're fighting to see who is going to endure what share of the hardship the end of the boom will bring, the people who bought their dream home in Sierra Madre, or the realtors who sold it to them.

The outrage that proponents of Measure V feel comes from an appearance that the majority of the members of the City Council, as well as our city administration, are favoring the developer/realtor side of this issue to the detriment of the homeowners and families of Sierra Madre, the people whose interests they're supposed to be protecting. Measure V is a response to a deep sense of betrayal felt by most residents. If the City Council and the city administration won't protect the people's interests, we must do it ourselves.

The thing is, the real estate crash doesn't have to be a nightmare for anyone. Some areas of Los Angeles saw no home price declines whatsoever during the crash in the early 1990s. If you keep the condo glut out and the inventory of homes for sale in Sierra Madre low, we could do equally well this time around.

The crash is coming. No one can stop it. It's a natural phenomenon. Building high density condominium developments in our downtown may look like a respite for the developers and realtors, but it will only intensify the inevitable pain for everyone.

It is our very great misfortune to have a City Council and a city administration that lacks the intelligence and wisdom to see this.

The Cash Value of Opposing 2-30-13

By Stefan Bund



When I first got involved in the debate over downtown development, I reacted to the city's proposal that 339,000 square feet of property downtown should be given over to developers to do as they might. One square foot of Sierra Madre real estate in 2005 was worth around \$625. That's what I paid when I moved here.

In 2007, property values have held fast. My estimate might have gone up, too. New lofts on Montecito are selling around \$835,000, for a two story, 1000 square foot condo. Whoever gets to live in there will be treated to sunny window views, and a short walk to Beantown.

But if you took the 339,000 square feet, and sold the ground floor at retail of \$600 a square foot, you'd be looking at \$203,400,000 worth of real estate. Not bad. Then you add the next floor, for lofts (Cont. page 7)

Letters To The Editor

A Hometown Newspaper That I Admire and Support

Superb edition of The Mount Wilson Observer!! I'm so proud to know you both, as well as your crew of hard working contributors and volunteers. This is what we needed: good hard hitting factual irrefutable information on where the support for the opposition is coming from.

I couldn't be happier than to acknowledge that I have a subscription to a hometown newspaper that I admire and support.
Anita Delmer

Measure V

KEEP NOISE, CONGESTION, AND SMOG OUT OF SIERRA MADRE -- VOTE 'YES' ON V?

NO HIGHRISES, CHAIN STORES OR STRIP MALLS IN SIERRA MADRE -- VOTE 'YES' ON V.

THE FUTURE OF SIERRA MADRE IF MEASURE V FAILS -- TRAFFIC CONGESTION, RENTLESS NOISE, 2-STORY PARKING LOTS
-author's name withheld upon request

WHY VOTE NO?

1. Realtors have the RIGHT to make as much money as possible....no matter what.\$\$\$\$\$\$
2. Developers have the RIGHT to make as much money as possible....no matter what.\$\$\$\$\$\$
3. Politicians have the RIGHT to go back on their promises to the people who elected them, for whatever reasons they choose, because they are special and smarter than the people.\$\$\$\$\$\$??? I sure would like to hope not!

WHY VOTE YES?

1. Most people live in Sierra Madre because they treasure the small town ambience here, that is why we don't live in Pasadena, Arcadia, Glendale for example.
2. The fact that outside interests are trying to "buy" our little town is very, very disturbing.
3. If downtown Sierra Madre goes to big development, how far behind is the total development of our beautiful hillsides?
Again, PLEASE follow the MONEY trail here.
Get the vote out for Yes on Measure V...Take back Sierra Madre please

John and Diane Shear
Sierra Madre

The way things are done in Baghdad.....

In your report of the March 13 city council meeting, an individual named Josh Moran complains to members of council that a group of scoundrels, myself included, are using the Mt. Wilson Observer to express views that are contrary to Mr. Moran's own. And I believe he's implying that our city fathers take action against the Observer, perhaps even censor the rag.

What the city council failed to explain to Mr. Moran is that whatever the Observer does or doesn't publish is none of the city council's business.

But by all means have the city mount a raid on the Observer; dismantle and destroy its computers; jail its editors, staff, and even advertisers.

That, after all, is the way they do things in Baghdad, Tripoli, Moscow, and the other garden spots.

Joe Scalzo

CASH VALUE (continued from page 6)

at the Montecito rate, which a good agent would ask, you'd get 339,000 square feet, at \$271,200,000.00. Add those two together for a conservative \$474,600,000.00 for the first two stories of the new downtown.

But according to the economist who consulted the City Council, the selling price of the first two stories wouldn't pay the costs of the buildings. So in order to make money on building downtown, you'll have to go higher than two stories...

Add a third story for \$850 a square foot, at Montecito Boulevard rates. Floor three gets you \$305,100,000.00 Now you've hit payday.

So pretend you're a real estate agent selling off \$305 million. What do you charge for your service? Is six percent enough? At six percent, you've earned \$17,289,000.00 in commissions. Then after you've cleared your inventory of fourth floor condos, you've netted \$18,306,000.00.

So if you sell all 339,000 square feet at the rates we've discussed, you'll net around \$64,071,000.00 in commissions.

That's in year one. Every five years those properties will change hands, given the healthy rate of real estate returns here.

Living where the women are strong, the men are good looking, and the children are above average will allow real estate to do well here.

People know this scenario is just too good for the real estate industry to walk away from. That's why they're calling you, demanding that you vote no on 2-30-13, because then you'd get to vote to approve developments above two stories.

Remember, voting YES on 2-30-13 gives residents the right to vote on new buildings that go above two stories. So real estate people don't want residents to vote on it.

V IS VICTORY for residents, so vote YES on it, and we can be done with all this.



Dining My Way Through Sierra Madre

By Rich Johnson

The best lamb I have had this side of Australia was at an Italian restaurant! Café 322 which is coincidentally at 322 West Sierra Madre Blvd. Groovy music too. Be sure to say hi to Mary.

If you've never had Moussaka you need to keep going east on Sierra Madre Blvd, until you see Corfu on the south side of the street. (It's before Baldwin) Moussaka is a combination of eggplant, potato and ground beef (I think). But it's all Greek to me and yummy.

Cross the street and its fish and chips at the Delirium. They also have a terrific club sandwich. Be sure to say hi to Lucy and Lisa.

My kids have eaten at the House of Chalachai Thai Restaurant and love it. I haven't dined there as I am a Scandinavian from Minnesota. Ketchup is as spicy as I can handle.

Working your way up Baldwin whatever you order at Casa del Rey ask them to crisp the cheese on the refried beans. It makes it crunchy and that is very good. Sylvia will take care of you on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

For the world's greatest Chinese Chicken Salad you should go, of course, to an Italian restaurant. That would be Village Pizza just north of Casa del Rey. Trust me, the big guy. You want this. Also try their BBQ chicken pizza.

Bean Town has more than coffee and mega calorie baked stuff. Try their terrific soups and well crafted sandwiches.

By the way, I, or my companions have paid for all the meals I have ever eaten in any of these restaurants. Of course, it doesn't have to be that way.

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VOTE YES ON MEASURE V (2-30-13) AND LET THE SUPER SIZERS KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF THEIR VISION FOR YOUR CITY.

VOTE YES ON MEASURE V AND KEEP OUTSIDE MONEY FROM DETERMINING OUR FUTURE.



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2007 Dan Stover Music Awards

Photo and Story By Katina Dunn

The Sierra Madre Rotary Club's annual Dan Stover Music Award winners are pianist Tim Wang from Arcadia High School, Violinist Sofia Kim from New Roads School in Santa Monica and pianist Yuqi Wang from Pasadena High School.



(Left to right) Yuqi Wang, Tim Wang and Sofia Kim at the Dan Stover Music Competition

Competition Chairman Tom Brady invited youngsters, including his own children – pianist Jennifer and guitarist Kathleen – to the competition held at Alverno High School "to hear what is possible by hard work and the love of music."

Brady, who has chaired the competition for four years, said "we wanted to recognize and encourage the arts in Sierra Madre... to recognize this talent and celebrate it."

Judges were Eric Byak, producer; Marco Luciani, songwriter and keyboardist; and Connie Washburn, Sierra Madre instructor, performer and Bach specialist.

Eight students competed, and the winners will continue on to the district conference in May. First place winner Wang won \$450, Kim won \$300 and Wang won \$275.

Pasadena High School also won a "School Spirit" award of \$250, for having the most audience members present. PHS Music Director David Miller said the award would be used for the school's music programs.

Saturday, March 24 from 11 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Sally Ride Science Festival at Caltech

Science festival for middle-school girls, grades five through eight.

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, also in Pasadena, is a sponsor of the event.

Several female JPL researchers, engineers and scientists will participate in the festival and talk with the young ladies about their careers.

The JPL participants will show images of earthquakes and volcanoes from space, demonstrate how robots work, and discuss NASA's search for habitable planets beyond our solar system, incorporating a "build your own alien" hands-on activity.

This year's event will feature a talk by astronaut Sally Ride, plus Dr. Maria Zuber, a geophysicist and the first woman to head the Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

Discovery workshops will include information on



Photo courtesy csuc
Former Astronaut Sally Ride

computer and planetary science. A street fair will include booths and exhibits, demonstrations, food, music, and drawings for prizes.

An adult program for parents and teachers will focus on topics such as reinforcing hands-on science instruction, science resources for girls, and gender equity.

The cost is \$18 in advance and includes lunch and all festival activities and materials. Advance registration is required.

Teachers, parents, and students can register and learn more about the festival by visiting www.SallyRideScience.com or by calling (800) 561-5161. To learn more about Sally Ride Science, visit <http://www.sallyridescience.com>.

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Bethany Christian School

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(626) 355-3527

March 23, 2007- Pre-school grandparent's day.

March 29, 2007- Pre-school & kindergarten partner's day.

The Gooden School

192 N. Baldwin Ave.
(626) 355-2410

www.goodenschool.org

March 29-30, 2007- No school for students.

LaSalle High School

3880 E. Sierra Madre Blvd.
Pasadena

(626) 351-8951

March 20-24, 2007- Student Project in

Tijuana, Mexico.

March 23, 24, 30, and 31, 2007- Spring musical.

March 27, 2007- Students make dinner at Union

Station.

March 29, 2007- Café biblio-tech

(arts learning day).

Odyssey Charter School

725 W. Altadena Dr.
Altadena, CA

(626) 229-0993

www.odysseycharterschool.com

March 30, 2007- Spring Performance.

Pasadena High School

2925 E. Sierra Madre Blvd. Pasadena

(626) 798-8901

March 23, 2007- Spring dance and career fair.

March 30, 2007- Talent show.

Sierra Madre Elementary School

141 W. Highland Ave.

(626) 355-1428

Sierra Madre Middle School

160 N. Canon

(626) 836-2947

St. Rita's Catholic School

322 N. Baldwin Ave.

(626) 355-9028

Gibson Consulting to Present Pasadena Unified School District Management Audit

The final report on a Management Audit of the Pasadena Unified School District will be presented by Greg Gibson, President of Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. to the three communities that make up the Pasadena Unified School District.

The report will be presented to the Pasadena City Council on March 26 at the Pasadena Senior Center, 85 E. Holly Street, Pasadena at 6:30 p.m.

The Sierra Madre City Council presentation will be on March 27 at Sierra Madre City Hall, 232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre at 6:30 p.m.

The report, which was commissioned by the Management Audit Advisory Council, was conducted from September 2006 through February 2007. The preliminary report was released on February 9; no content changes were made in the final report.

The objectives of the study were to evaluate the Central Office organization structure at the director level and higher to ensure effective decision-making was supported; evaluate the Board of Education and District level decision-making from both policy and process perspectives; and evaluate the effectiveness of procedures provided by District Classified Human Resources Department staff and the Personnel Commission in the recruitment and hiring of classified employees.

The Management Audit was funded jointly by Pasadena, Altadena, Sierra Madre, and the Pasadena Unified School District.

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Dominique Barr as Horton the Elephant in Alverno High School's production of Seussical

The Play's the Thing One and Thing Two

By Luella Wagner

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of The Cat in the Hat, the Alverno High School Drama Department presents Seussical – the musical adaptation of Dr. Seuss stories that will entertain young and old alike.

While the musical is based on the characters of Dr. Seuss, the story line itself embraces powerful themes that will enrich the adult as well as delight the child. One of the central themes is the power of imagination and the ability to think and create your own reality.

The musical opens with the song "Oh The Things You Can Think" inviting the audience to imagine all the possibilities that exist in the universe. The two thinkers in the musical Horton the Elephant, played by Dominique Barr and JoJo played by Carolyn Bickel, are ostracized for their beliefs, yet in the end are vindicated

and rewarded for their conviction and steadfastness.

They form a bond that takes the audience with them on an odyssey of imagination and determination.

We are first introduced to Horton the Elephant who rescues the citizens of Who by placing them on a tiny speck of dust. Those around him think he's nuts, but Horton, unwilling to listen to the crowd, protects his tiny dust speck and sings the very touching words "A person's a person no matter how small."

The audience may draw parallels from Horton's determination to protect the "tiniest planet in the sky" with our own current day issues of global warming, war, or any of the other calamities that we are experiencing on our planet and how far we will go to protect it.

The Cat in the Hat, played by Lindsey Gitter, acts as the emcee takes us inside the home of the Mayor and Mrs. Mayor of Whoville and their son JoJo. JoJo, like Horton, is a thinker whose "thinks" get him into trouble. The parents decide to send him off to military school hoping that that will stop the problem of JoJo's "thinks." Being in the military only makes JoJo more determined to speak his mind and go with his convictions. The obvious lesson to be learned is to stick with your convictions no matter what those around you are saying.

Gertrude, played by Amanda Aaronian, has an unabashed love for Horton, who as usual doesn't even notice her. Gertrude too is determined and seeks the counsel of Mayzie, played by Alix Gitter, a flamboyant, glitzy bird who advises Gertrude to go to the doctor and get some special tail growing pills. In a culture where pills are always seen as the answer to our problems, we find out that this is not always the case. Even with her new tail, Horton isn't even interested in Gertrude. It isn't until Gertrude rescues the speck of dust that was taken from Horton that he truly falls in love with her.

There are many other themes that are explored in the musical as well as special effects, fabulous dance numbers and a great musical accompaniment. Carol Busser choreographed the entire production with numbers that include jungle animals, a pack of monkeys, and circus performers. Lisa Edwards, the musical director, leads the audience through the highs and lows of the musical score.

Thursday March 29, Friday March 30 & Saturday March 31 at 7:30 p.m. Sierra Madre Elementary School 141 W. Highland Street, Sierra Madre.

Tickets are \$7 presale and may be purchased at Alverno High School and \$10 at the door.

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TABLE FOR TWO by PETER DILLS

Japon Bistro



You ever wondered what dish would be your last? You know the old standard – if you were on a deserted island and death was imminent what would you order ... Steak - Lobster - Sushi? Hmm?

There are many Sushi restaurants in The San Gabriel Valley and (much like Politics and Religion) everyone seems to have their own opinion. One of my favorites is Japon Bistro in 'The Heart of Pasadena.' Why? I think it is because the restaurant just makes me feel so comfortable.

Japon Bistro Opened in 2003. Owner Clarence 'Koji' Wong is always at the front and offers a friendly hello to all who walk in. There are no happy-hour specials or buy-one-get-one free that other sushi restaurants offer as loss-leaders. 'Koji' tells me that the fish at his restaurant is always fresh and prices are very competitive. 'Koji' goes down to the fish market at least four times a week and selects many of his specials right there that morning. 'Koji' showed me pictures of himself with a huge Blue Fin Tuna.

So what is Japon Bistro? 'Koji' explains - it is a Japanese Fusion Restaurant... part Sushi Bar, part Japanese and with an acclaimed Sake Menu - thus Fusion.

For me, I always head right to the Sushi Bar and start off with the Tuna Hand roll (\$5.50); Master Sushi Chef 'Ichero' is, as the kids say, the 'Bomb'.

Here are a few of my favorite dishes - Seared Albacore with ponzu sauce (\$12); Seared Albacore Sashimi Salad (\$9); Salmon Skin Handroll (\$5.50); and the Drunken Rock Shrimp (\$10). For additional menu items plus current prices, log onto www.japonbistro.com. The menu offers all of your traditional favorites - California Rolls, Dynamite, Sea Urchin, etc. But if you dig a little deeper at Japon Bistro, you'll be very pleased.

Why go? Japon Bistro offers a real comfortable setting and friendly service; do yourself a favor, don't be in a hurry at Japon Bistro. The restaurant has been described as romantic; it is perfect for a special occasion and they do have plenty of items for kids or the vegans in your party.

What to Avoid? Parking - my suggestion is to do one loop in front of the restaurant and then go directly behind the restaurant and park in the lot. Yes, there is validation available.

Japon Bistro 927 E. Colorado Pasadena. (626) 744 1751
*** Drive from anywhere in the city

Watch Peter Dills every Sunday Night at 8 PM on KJLA TV... Right after Race Replays from Santa Anita. E-mail Peter at chilipete@aol.com

The Rating Criteria:

***By train or plane I would find a way to get to this restaurant

***I would drive anywhere in the city to get to this restaurant

**If I am in the neighborhood I would go to this restaurant

*If I got a flat tire in front of this restaurant, I might go inside

What's New For You At www.mtwilsonobserver.com

Got A Favorite Restaurant or Chef? **Tell Peter Dills**

Looking Up

With Bob Eklund

TechKnowledge

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Photo by Jean Boenish

Have A Heavenly Spring

moments to visualize how the Earth is moving. It's not only rolling eastward in its daily rotation (causing the Sun and stars to rise in the east and set in the west), but it's also traveling eastward in its orbit around the Sun. Each day we go about 1/365th of the way around the Sun, causing any given star to rise about four minutes earlier each night.

Does this exercise in heavenly geometry make your head swim? It had that effect on me at first. But stay with it, as I did, and you'll start to get a very satisfying, deep-down gut sense of the fact that it really is the Earth (us) that is moving, and not the objects in the sky. And that understanding is a very precious thing (it almost cost Galileo his life).

It adds to my sense of adventure to think of the space we're moving into each day as a brand-new, fresh space. Even though the Earth is repeating an orbit that it has followed year after year, the space it occupies may be new because the Sun itself is moving through the Milky Way Galaxy, which in turn is part of a Universe of expanding space. Things are on the move!

It's a whole new day
In a fresh part of space where
No one's ever been.

(Poems used in this column are copyright
©2007 by Robert L. Eklund.)

This year on March 20, at 5:07 p.m. PDT, Planet Earth reached the point in its orbit around the Sun when days and nights are of equal length, everywhere on the globe. Astronomers call this the Vernal Equinox ("vernal" meaning "spring," and "equinox" meaning "equal night"). Most of us simply call it the first day of spring. (Hooray!)

Yes, spring is officially here. The daylight hours are lengthening, and will continue to do so until June 21, the Summer Solstice. Then they will shorten again, passing the Autumnal Equinox on September 23, and continue to shorten until reaching the Winter Solstice, the time of shortest days and longest nights, on December 21.

The Earth has seasons because it is tilted about 23½ degrees with respect to the plane of its orbit around the Sun. In June, the northern hemisphere is tilted toward the Sun, getting more direct sunlight and thus more heat—and in December the same is true of the southern hemisphere. At the time of the spring and fall equinoxes, both hemispheres get exactly the same amount of sunlight.

Here's a mental exercise that I think you'll find interesting. Next time you're outdoors on a clear evening, face east and take a few

Speaking of the Heavens....

Paul the Cyberian

It might just be coincidence but several of my very close friends and myself were all treated to a spectacular astronomical night-show on the same night. One thing that makes this seemingly innocuous turn of events more surprising than it might actually be on its face is the fact that I am a life-long Astronomy fan. My group of family and close associates has traditionally been far less excited about celestial events than I normally tend to be.

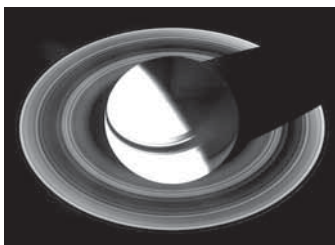


Photo courtesy Nasa - Saturn and Rings

However, ironically, we all experienced the same show in three different places at the same time.

The weather this past weekend resulted in exceptionally clear night skies that made a near perfect viewing environment for stargazing.

We all shared our viewing experiences with each other when we met Sunday night and the general review was very positive. The "star" of the evening was the planet

Saturn which shone with a rarely seen view due to its close proximity to the Earth and the angle of the planet when viewed from Earth. We all were treated to a spectacular view of the ringed planet in large part due to the fact that we have friends with large telescopes. The weather has since turned cloudy and the sights we enjoyed that night may not be available for some time to come.

Fortunately for the modern Internet user there is a virtual bounty of astronomical sites available on the Web that highlight the true majesty of the night sky regardless of the weather.

My favorite site (and the one I view the most) is called "The Astronomy Picture of the Day."

You can find this site at <http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/>. NASA

sponsors this site and the Hubble Space Telescope took the pictures. The Hubble Space is in orbit at an altitude of approximately 375 miles above the Earth. This allows for clear deep-space viewing free from the interference encountered in stargazing from the Earth's surface. The pictures produced in this environment have been nothing short of spectacular and have given the average person the ability to literally look backward in time.

The pictorial archives of the site allow the user free access to hundreds of pictures that are truly breath-taking. You can also use these pics as backgrounds for your desktop to give your workspace a truly unique appearance. Try it. I guarantee that you'll like it.

WorkForce with Madeline

Q: I will soon be graduating from college with a BS in Management. I'm now starting the interview process. I plan on working for a few years and then pursuing an MBA part-time while continuing to work. Should I mention this during my interview?

A: An MBA is certainly a great tool for career advancement, but for now, your plans are better left unmentioned. The interviewer might not fully believe your part-time intention and might draw the conclusion that you will be totally leaving the company for further schooling. Much effort is spent in training new recruits, and companies like to feel their time is worth it.

Also, adding this bit of information serves absolutely no purpose. It will not make the interviewer think more kindly of you.

Wait until you get the job and have established a firm footing before you announce your intentions. Often, companies will pay for all or part of your MBA studies if you prove to be a valuable asset.

Q: Currently, I live and work in the Los Angeles area, but am applying to jobs in San Francisco to be with my future husband. He's a top level manager at a large insurance company. I do have a great job now, but we decided it would be more financially prudent for me to make the move. We also have family in the San Francisco area. Should I discuss my reasons for relocating in my cover letter?

A: Not necessary. Companies really don't care. They're used to people relocating to other areas for all sorts of reasons and would find reading all your details quite tedious.

Just elaborate on your qualifications and why you are seeking a position at that particular company. Eliminate all this extra "stuff."



Send your questions to Madeline at complyte2@aol.com

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Story and Photos By Chris Bertrand

Inspired By The Designs of Frank Lloyd Wright



Sweeping horizontal lines, expansive bands of windows and wide overhanging eaves inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Architecture.

As a Chicagoan by birth, my architectural interest comes to rapt attention when passing homes in the style of early 20th century architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. The fascination with Wright is to the Midwest what the Craftsman is to Pasadena. Extensive walking tours and Wright-related events happen often, particularly in the Oak Park area of Chicago.

With 1,100 architectural designs, of which about half were built, he was likely America's most influential architect. Wright sought to redefine our nation's architecture with his Prairie style design, distinguished by sweeping horizontal lines, low pitched roofs, expansive bands of windows and wide overhanging eaves. His Prairie style combines functionality and beauty, while reflecting the natural surroundings. Trademarks include an extensive use of natural materials, built-in furniture and a purposeful blurring of the lines from indoor to outdoor.

Wright continues to influence architecture today, as seen in this Sierra Madre home at 462 Ida May Lane. Constructed about 10 years ago in a cul de sac of upscale custom homes off Jameson Court, two former Chicagoan owners have already enjoyed the ambience of this home. Such is our love for the Wright style. It offers an up to date lifestyle, with modern building technologies and the latest amenities, surrounded by distinctive Wright styling inside and out.

Extensive use of beautiful built-ins, period reproduction light fixtures and clear coat maple wood, a Wright favorite, unify the interior design. Mitten pattern glass mullions in the Pella windows repeat another Wright design. Intricate ceilings with indirect lighting and two sets of massive crown molding create a stunning architectural statement in the living room. The



Living Room: Inset ceilings and double millwork in intricate patterns glow with indirect lighting.



Dining Room: Mitten style window mullion style repeated in the custom built-ins and reproduction lighting.

The mutten pattern of the windows is even replicated on the built-ins and the fireplace mirror. That purposeful marriage of indoor to outdoor becomes clear, as each window looks out to a planned vignette view of landscape, or in the case of the upstairs porch, a beautiful mountain view. Much of the landscape was preserved and replanted after construction was complete. A patio fountain adjacent to the kitchen sends the soothing sound of gently falling water into the casual areas of the home. Even the massive front planters follow Wright's lines.

For all the drama and excitement inherent in this beautifully crafted property, it is an extremely livable home. Easily accommodating a casual or formal lifestyle, the home offers five bedrooms, five baths, a wonderful chef's kitchen with slab granite and Viking stove, an elevator, and an attached three car garage. The current owners contracted the original craftsman responsible for the home's original millwork and cabinetry to duplicate the design and materials, when configuring the main floor bedroom as a fabulous home office.

Offered at \$2,150,000 by Irene Daly and Cheryl Daly-Allen of Dilbeck Realtors. For an appointment to see this home, visit DalyDouble.com or call 626-462-2424. A myriad of internet sites offer more information on Frank Lloyd Wright. Two of my favorites are: SaveWright.com and WrightPlus.com.

Have an interesting idea for a home, building, garden or person I should cover? Contact me at c.bertrand@themtwillsonobserver.com

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

By Pat Birdsall

Decent Descendants

Last week I was in a hurry to send my column in on time, giving it just a quick once-over. I should have made that a quick twice-over. The next morning, I noticed a glaring error. Instead of the word "descent" in the sentence, "Being of Irish descent, I have always celebrated March 17th, St. Patrick's Day," I had typed "decent." I picked up the phone and called the editor. Stop the presses! Stop the presses! I was assured it would be corrected...Whew, color me relieved!

When I received my copy of the paper however, there it was...looking as large as the Empire State Building... the word "DECENT" was where "descent" should have been! After getting over myself, I figured that since nothing could be done about it, I might as well laugh at the ludicrous juxtaposition I created with the words in the first place. "Decent" and "St. Patrick's Day celebration?" They certainly don't belong in the same sentence do they? I do consider myself a fairly decent soul, but that certainly isn't a quality one need bring to a St. Paddy's Day celebration.

I'm sure my ancestral lineage was made up of decent folks as well, although my maternal grandfather, Joseph Moran, was a bootlegger in Omaha, Nebraska. This avocation led to his early demise at the tender age of twenty-five. Joe was an Irish bootlegger who encroached on an Italian bootlegger's territory. He was shot and stabbed, succumbing later from pneumonia while in the hospital. This left my grandmother a widow at twenty-one, pregnant and with a four year-old daughter, my mother, to raise.

This self-created mix-up had a positive aspect for me. It made me think of those at the base of this family tree of mine. A decent lot to descend from indeed!

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SPORTS

The Miranda Factor

A determined ten-year old athlete finds inspiration from her grandmothers



Photos by Byron Moore
Miranda Stiver finished 32nd out of 162 women who participated in the Pasadena Triathlon recently at the Rose Bowl.

By Katina Dunn

"Wouldn't it be nice...?" Most of the time when Miranda Stiver asks that, it has to do with playing soccer in Club Soccer, softball in the SMGSA (Sierra Madre Girls Softball Association), running, swimming and cycling in the Pasadena Triathlon or racing up the Mt. Wilson Trail.

The 10-year old athlete trains about six hours each week, besides scheduled games of soccer as a member of the L.A. Football Club; and in softball as a Red Hot Chili Pepper. As luck would have it, she has two girlfriends on both teams - Kaylee Johnson and Olivia Leva - which she says is "more fun" than when she was on the boys' team in Little League.

Her weekly workout of six training hours includes 1.5 hours of physical fitness training at the Competitive Athlete Training Zone (CATZ) facility in Pasadena, which is smart, because, as her dad Brian says, "There's so much torque on the knees. You have to strengthen your core muscles and hips."

He says CATZ, which is for all ages, "has a fantastic program for kids."

Miranda's first race was the 5K she ran when she was five years-old, to raise funds for cancer research at City of Hope. Her grandmother, Marlene, was a patient there. Miranda ran the 5K in 28 minutes and discovered her athletic self. "I could just be sitting at home doing absolutely nothing," said Miranda. "Or I could be running and helping other people to survive. It's the only way I could help," she said of her grandmother. "I couldn't be her doctor or anything."

Grandmother Marlene, who died a few years ago, occupies a special part of her psyche. "If I can't go on - and I know it's in my head - I ask her for help. It's amazing," said Miranda. "Whenever I think about her, I know she's happy and proud of me and I lift up my stride and then I'm off!"

Grandmother Solveigh now offers solace making Miranda's favorite dish of Swedish pancakes.

The young athlete plans to enter the Mt. Wilson Trail Race again in May. Last year, she was the youngest, fastest participant who ran 8.6 miles in one hour, 42 minutes. That's just side stuff to soccer, though. Last year she scored 40 goals.

Miranda hopes to be a pro soccer player someday (if not a criminal attorney), and has a complete appreciation of teamwork. "Everybody hangs on and off the field," she said. "That's what makes a good team. Everybody united and not spread apart. It's fun."



Ten year-old Miranda Stiver won 3rd place in her first Triathlon at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena recently. Miranda and her father, Brian, both competed in the 5K run, 15K bike and 150M swim. Her younger brother, Christian, is also an athlete.



View From The Couch

By Stanley J. Forrester

BASEBALL

This time of year always remind me of my father. In case you haven't heard spring training has started. Both the Dodgers' and the Angels have been on the radio and their pre-season games have been exciting. Opening day is about two weeks away. I can hardly wait.

Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet were once the national mantra. And, if you are as old as I am, you probably started to sing the tune.

How is it that a sport which was our national pastime has fallen out of the public interest? Some say that it is the sports fault - that the fans never came back after the strike. Other suggest that the sport is too slow moving for today's fast paced society. Still others think that Free agency killed the sport. In the old days, the rule was that a player started with one team and stayed with that team until he left baseball unless he wasn't any good or got old and injured, then he got traded. Otherwise players stayed with the team and their presence became part of our life history.

The Dodger infield of Garvey, Lopes, Russell, and Cey saw my children thru T-ball and high school graduations. Those guys were together longer than any infield in the history of baseball. Free Agency has changed how organization deals with players, and consequently how fans are able to identify with players. Whatever the reason baseball does not occupy the special place it once held in our lives.

Oh but what fun baseball provided for me in my youth. Attending a baseball game with my dad was tantamount to the best birthday and Christmas presents all rolled into one glorious event. Sitting in the ball park in the outfield bleacher soaking up the drama of the game, or listening to the announcer on the radio describe the arms and the power of the Cincinnati Red's first baseman Ted Kluszewski, made for a perfect day with dad.

It wasn't that we just loved baseball, the game provided so many lessons about life. I remember having difficulties with the concept of decimals and percentages. Dad's solution was to go to the paper and have me examine the box scores. "Tell me what Big Ted is hitting?" From that one question and my understanding of baseball the concept of percentages became crystal clear. Mrs. Powers, my third grade teacher was impressed with my Dad's teaching tool. She told my mom she was going to use it.

Loyalty was a necessary element of being a true baseball fan. We stuck with the Reds no matter what, they were our team and we never deserted them. We knew the players and the coaches. They were all part of what we believed in - and every was the year we were going to win. Dad passed before the era of the Big Red machine and Sparky Anderson finally won it all. But spring training always takes me back to those days time spent with my father learning so very much about baseball and life.

I'm just sitting on the couch with my mit and remote control waiting to..Play Ball!

Kha-Kazek New Power Hitter to Watch

By Larry Horn



Photos By Lynda Ott-Albright
Opening Day was fun for everyone

The season is off to an auspicious beginning for the athletes of the Sierra Madre Girls Softball Association (SMGSA). The players are enjoying new uniforms in a rainbow of colors plus a newly revamped field. The League has seen an explosion of growth this year, to nine teams and 122 girls alone in the eight year-old and under 8U Division.

There are four Divisions - 8U, 10U, 12U and 16U - with more than 350 team members in a total of 29 teams.

They will play against Arcadia teams for the first time this year in the Amateur Softball Association, because Arcadia has joined ASA this year.

The teams thank new SMGSA Board Member Ed McCarthy for helping out with the uniforms.

For recent Opening Day ceremonies held March 10, the crowd gathered together with parents, coaches and friends at Heasley Field in Sierra Vista Park.

Following Grace Osimo's beautiful rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner, a special

presentation was made to two former players. During the 2006 season, Jessica Siraganian-Harr and Michelle Tanner launched the first two Heasley Field over-the-fence home runs in the long history of SMGSA. A special home run sign will be displayed on the outfield fence to honor Jessica, Michelle, and future Heasley long-ball hitters. In a game later in the day, Michelle Kha-Kazek, catcher for the 16-Under "Panic!" added her name to the sign with a 250 foot tape-measure blast that cleared the high center field fence, and landed on the T-Ball infield.

The keynote address was given by Lisa Longaker-Hadfield, one of the all-time great UCLA Bruin softball pitchers. Longaker-Hadfield shared



memories of her early years as a player, and encouraged today's girls to take advantage of the added opportunities available to them.

A highlight of the event was the traditional "first pitch ceremony," performed annually by the youngest player in the league. Six year old Sophia Alonzo stepped to the center of the diamond and tossed the first pitch to Longaker-Hadfield, who then autographed the ball for Sophia.

Check future issues of the Mt. Wilson



Observer, and follow the progress of the SMGSA Spring Season. Look for game scores and highlights, player profiles and coach profiles in upcoming weeks.

The Sierra Madre Girls Softball Association is a 501(c)(3) qualified non-profit organization serving the youth of Sierra Madre and many surrounding cities. For additional information about the league, or to sponsor a team, please visit the league website at www.smgsa.org, or leave a message on the league hotline at (626) 355-3899.

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