

So Long...For Now

Interim City Manager Don Hopper Says Goodbye.. Again



Although Don has enjoyed his brief tenure with Sierra Madre, he is not ready to give up retirement. Off to Alaska, on Tuesday the council presented him with a proclamation, trophy and certificates for golf. Photo and story By Susan Henderson

On Wednesday, July 31, 2007, Interim City Manager Don Hopper will say goodbye to the city of Sierra Madre once again. Before leaving, Hopper had a few things to tell us. (Part 1 of 2)

Hopper's professional background would seem to indicate that bringing him on board as Interim City Manager for Sierra Madre would certainly provoke controversy. "After all," says Hopper, "my entire background has been about development." And that's the truth. Hopper was the City Manager of Monrovia until 2004 when he retired. Shortly thereafter, he was called upon by Sierra Madre to serve as Interim City Manager while the search that gave the city John Gillison was conducted. When Gillison resigned earlier this year, Hopper came back out of retirement for Sierra Madre.

Although he is quick to point out his development credentials, what he doesn't say is that he has an outstanding reputation as a leader, communicator and organizer. During his tenure in Sierra Madre, he has been able to satisfy the council, city staff and most of the community.

In the interview, Hopper expressed his appreciation for a "Hometown Paper" such as the Mt. Wilson Observer. He was concerned, however, about a recent column by Hail Hamilton in which Hamilton referred to the current police pay situation as a "no-brainer." "This is an issue that needs to be brought out,"

says Hopper, "but it's not a no-brainer." Hopper pointed out that the city currently lacks another revenue source to shift funds from. "Right now our choice would be to close the Library or cut Recreation Services. They will be dependent upon what the community values."

Currently, says Hopper, city staff embraces the notion that we provide the best services that we can afford. He notes that for a city the size of Sierra Madre, the services are extraordinary, citing our police department, paramedic program, fire department, Youth Activity Center, Senior Center, and Library. "With rapidly eroding resources, [in order to keep these services] it will be a test of will and our ability to pay." "The question then becomes, how much are we willing to pay?"

Post Measure V

When questioned about the status of the projects still on the table, Hopper was optimistic. He cited the City Attorney's recent decision to meet with the community and hold open discussions regarding the resolution of the Stonehouse lawsuit. "We needed to start a dialogue and gain the trust and confidence of the residents." He believes that the "Stonehouse Model" is also the key to dealing with the Howie's Market and Skilled Nursing Facility projects. "I have met with both property owners. We need to change skepticism into optimism."

Hopper says both projects are exempt from Measure V because they had "vested applications" at the time the measure was adopted. He has, however, asked for a meeting with the Yes On V residents so that he can "figure out a way to get these projects done." He earnestly believes that both owners are willing to work with the community.

Although he will officially be leaving his post at the end of the month, Hopper says he will be available to the council if needed. "I want to help accomplish - help bridge the objections to these projects."

- By Susan Henderson

Red Flag Patrol Begins Training



(l. to r.) Red Flag Patrol Director Tom Gates with Jeff Ward, of E. Waldo Ward, Fire Safe Council Director Mike Kinney and Basil Kruger of Arnold's Frontier Hardware. Ward and Kruger donated funds for the acquisition of the Red Flag Patrol Signs for vehicles.

•Photo and Story By Susan Henderson

After twenty months of hard work, Mike Kinney and the Sierra Madre Fire Safe Council held its first training session of Red Flag Patrol Volunteers. Approximately 20 volunteers, most from Sierra Madre, signed up for patrol duty in an effort to prevent a disaster from occurring.

The patrol will canvas areas of Hastings Ranch, all of Sierra Madre and parts of Arcadia, (cont. pg. 3)

Breaking News

Developer's Troubles May Lead To Properties Being Sold

By Dean Lee

Legal troubles surfaced today over a foreclosure notice filed in Oregon against the developer of Sierra Madre's Stonehouse and 1 Carter properties, Dorn Platz. The action alleges that the developer had fallen behind with payments on a \$31.5 million debt according to the Portland Tribune.

Other (as of press time) local reports surfaced Friday saying DornPlatzhasalsosold all but one building in Pasadena's

(continued page 3)

Déjà vu

Council Sends Police Ballot Initiative Out For Analysis

Already familiar with the procedures for placing an initiative on the ballot, the City Council on Tuesday, approved the allocation of \$30,000 to pay for an analysis of the Sierra Madre Police Pay Initiative. City Clerk Nancy Schollenberger notified the council that the measure had collected sufficient signatures to be placed on the ballot.

According to City Attorney Sandra Levin, the council had four choices that evening:

- Adopt the Measure as written
- Set a date for a special election
- Request a 30 day Impact Analysis Report

Levin instructed the council that when they call for an election they could

either call for a special election within 90 days or consolidate with an election date that has already been established. The potential dates are November 2007, February 2008 or April 2008.

The council was in agreement that in the instance of this measure which requires that the city pay its police and fire fighters no less than the lowest paid officers in other San Gabriel Valley cities, it was necessary to have a report on the fiscal impact. The measure would also require that the public safety expenses become a part of the general fund expenses.

However, Councilman Watts expressed concern about the source of the funding. "People would feel a lot better if we had the financing in place. How much are we going to spend before the vote? I think the police deserve this, but we need to do this responsibly."

(continued on page 3)

Tree Troubles

A WCA worker surveys the remains of a Silk Oak that was cut down on N. Baldwin Monday. A total of 180 trees throughout Sierra Madre were tested; 18 had structural defects, according to Bruce Inman, Director of Public Works. The evaluations, completed by an arborist, determined that these trees, especially Eucalyptus, had rotting cores and posed a danger to the community. Residents have expressed mixed reactions to the trees being cut down. The homeowner who lives in the house where this Oak had previously provided shade, was sad to see the tree cut down, however, realized the safety hazard that it posed.

-Photo by Susan Henderson



Director of Development Services, Matt Marquez proudly displays a Resolution and Plaque from the City of Sierra Madre in recognition of his five years of service. Marquez will be leaving the city for a new position with the City of Commerce on July 31. A resident of Sierra Madre, the city was his first professional job. He started as an assistant planner and worked his way through the ranks to become Director of Development Services in April of this year.

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Weather Wise

5-Day Forecast for Sierra Madre, Ca.
Longitude W118.0, Latitude N34.2



Friday:	Sunny	Hi 90s	Lows 60s
Saturday:	Sunny	Hi 90s	Lows 60s
Sunday:	Sunny	Hi 90s	Lows 60s
Monday:	Sunny	Hi 90s	Lows 60s
Tuesday:	Sunny	Hi 90s	Lows 60s

Forecasts courtesy of the National Weather Service



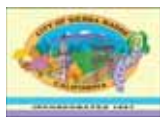
City of Sierra Madre July Events

- 28 - Midsummer Night's Dream - 4:00 pm - Memorial Park
- 28 - Community Arts Commission Trip to /Getty Villa - 10:30 am
- 29 - Concert in the Park: Pecos Brother's Band - 6:00 pm - Memorial Park
- 31 - Summer Fun in the Park: Arboretum - 9:00 am - Memorial Park

City of Sierra Madre August Events Preview

- 5 - Concert in the Park: Ken O'Malley & the Twilight Lords - 6:00 pm - Memorial Park
- 12 - Concert in the Park: Pasadena Crown City Chorus - 6:00 pm - Memorial Park
- 13 - Fire Safe Council Meeting 7:00 pm City Council Chambers Topic: SM Water
- 19 - Concert in the Park: Elvis and the Heroes of Rock - 6:00 pm - Memorial Park
- 21 - Splashin' Movie Night: Flushed Away - 7:00 pm - Sierra Madre Pool
- 25 - Healthy Family Fun - 5 Park Eco Challenge - 9:00 am - Sierra Vista Park
- 26 - Concert in the Park: Fairytale & Fantasy III - 6:00 pm - Memorial Park
- 27 - Deadline: Order Sierra Madre City Flags - Community Services - Vista Park

For more information on these and other City programs, call 355-7135 or visit www.cityofsierramadre.com



Sierra Madre City Flag Sales

The Community Arts Commission has Sierra Madre flags available for sale. The flags are nylon 2 ft by 3 ft, with grommets or pole sleeves. They are appropriate for indoor or outdoor use. Flags are \$40 and can be ordered by pre-sale only. You can order a flag at the Sunday evening Concerts in Memorial Park or at the Community and Personnel Services Department, 611 E. Sierra Madre Blvd.

The deadline to order flags is August 27, 2007. Flags will be mailed in the middle of October. Show your Sierra Madre pride and order your flag now!

For further questions call the Community and Personnel Services Department at (626) 355-5278

Roy Roams' 91024

More than just a pretty face - Remember that gorgeous pooch that Liam was admiring on the front page last week? Well it turns out that the dog's name is Bernie and boy, does he have credentials. Bernie is a Certified Animal Assisted Therapy Dog. He has received awards from the SPCA/Pasadena Humane Society, and The National Great Pyrenees Club of America for his work in Hospitals, Libraries, & Schools. His owner, Lois Longo of Arcadia, contacted the paper last week to give us the 411 on this wonderful dog. Thanks Lois for letting us in on Bernie's accomplishments. Thanks to you, Bernie, for all you do. Rumor has it that Bernie visits the Arcadia Library once a month.

Homeland Security - Seems as though the Sierra Madre PD takes our safety very seriously. Reporter Dean Lee was stopped by our officers at 10:00 pm Wednesday. Lee was pedaling out of town on his bicycle after spending hours in Kersting Court conducting a traffic survey. The officer who stopped Dean wanted to know just what he was doing in our fair city and why his 'tail light' wasn't up to snuff. "People seem to always discriminate against bike riders," said Lee, "That's just not fair."

What Confidential Letter? There has been a buzz, according to a reporter for another newspaper, about the number of leaks in City Hall lately. Two. One reference was made to a confidential letter that was allegedly printed in an unidentified newspaper. MWO? Couldn't be. We did however, publish on our website a copy of a letter distributed in a City Council meeting by one of the speakers. The letter was about the potential impact of an upcoming statewide initiative on our HMZ. However, the letter was not from a closed session meeting, nor was it about a personnel matter. It was a strategy missive sent to the council and planning commission by the City Manager. And, I am certain, it was intended to be discussed in an open council meeting in order to avoid the appearance of violating the Brown Act.

Dressed for Success - If you attended this week's city council meeting you would have seen the council and staff decked out in colorful Hawaiian attire. That is, everyone except Matt Marquez who forgot that Tuesday was the annual 'Dress Hawaiian Day' in celebration of the summer break. For the last several years, the council has worn this festive attire at the last meeting before the summer break. Matt, on the other hand, was probably preparing for his new job with a crisp white shirt and tie. Good Luck in your new job. We're going to miss you.

Are We There Yet? - Maybe - almost. As we go to press, no announcement of a new city manager has been made. And, at least one media outlet should almost be out of names to speculate over (speaking of leaks from City Hall). Nevertheless, it looks like the city manager's job duties will be shared by senior staff until we find that perfect someone. **Breaking News:** A special city council meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 30th. On the agenda is "Announcement Of The New City Manager"! Stay Tuned

Green Beer For All - Oh yes, at that special meeting, Mayor Joffe will be teleconferenced in from Ireland. Pretty Cool. How about serving Green Beer instead of Hawaiian Shirts for the real last meeting before Summer Break?

Did They Catch You? The SMPD who are set up a check point to catch all you violators out there. So, mind your traffic laws. All of them. No telling where they will be next. I know, but you will have to find out on your own. No speeding, no drinking, no wreckless driving, wear seatbelts, use car seats for kids and be polite. Do all the usual things that will keep you from getting a ticket. But look on the bright side, if you should get a ticket it will be like donating to a worthy cause. The city can use all the extra revenue we can get. **Full results on page 4.**

Summer 2007 Concerts in the Park Series

Sierra Madre Community and Personnel Services is offering "Spectacular Summer Sounds" a series of concerts in Memorial Park. These events, every Sunday night starting July 8th, are great for families, couples and friends with a variety of music ranging from folk to rock and roll to jazz.

Bring your blankets and lawn chairs as seating is on the green. Spectators are asked to support our local organizations who will be providing refreshments.

Alcohol is prohibited.

Every Sunday Night thru August 26, 2007 6-8:00 pm

222 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.

Event Schedule

July 29:
Pecos Brother Band
Kiwanis Club

August 5:
Ken O'Malley & the Twilight Lords
Civic Club

August 12:
Pasadena Crown City Chorus
Centennial Committee

August 19:
Elvis and the Heroes of Rock
Rotary Club

August 26:
Fairytale & Fantasy III
Southern California Lyric Theater

*This concert series is sponsored by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Recording Industries' Music Performance Fund through the assistance of the Professional Musicians Union Local 47.

For more information, please contact the Community & Personnel Services Department at 626-355-5278

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Farmer's Market

Every Saturday to 12:30 p.m.
B-B-Berries, Lili's herbs, honey, menudo & tamale stand. Bring the kiddies. PHS parking lot
2925 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.



Café 322

Sunday Nights
Let's Sing Opera & Broadway
Pianist Danny Guerrero & Friends
322 Sierra Madre Blvd.
Sierra Madre (626) 836-5414

Beantown

45 N. Baldwin
Time for Ice Cream
(626) 355-1596

Lucky Baldwin's

21 Kersting Court
(626) 355-1140

Mary's Market

561 Woodland Drive
(626) 355-4534

The Harvey Hyde Show

Every Sunday 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Hard-hitting, high impact sports talk radio
KSHP Las Vegas - 1400 AM
Live! from BURGER CONTINENTAL
535 South Lake Avenue Pasadena



Dear Neighborhood Block Captain:

"National Night Out" will be held on Tuesday, August 7th, 2007, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The Sierra Madre Police Department along with the Sierra Madre Fire Department will work together with the community to promote Public Safety-community partnerships. The theme is: "Give Neighborhood Crime and Drugs A Going Away Party, America's Night Out Against Crime".

Your neighborhood or Neighborhood Association can show support for "National Night Out" by organizing a block party or Neighborhood Watch meeting. If you will be doing either of these, we ask that you register with the Sierra Madre Police Department to assure that your celebration or get-together will be visited by participating city agencies. Every effort will be made by a police department representative to visit each party or meeting, as this event presents an opportunity for us to interact with you. However, due to the high number of gatherings expected on this occasion, the Police Department, Fire Department Representatives will make no formal presentations. However, Police Department and Fire Department representatives will have only enough time for a brief visit to each location.

Individual residents can also participate by leaving their house and porch lights on during the hours of "National Night Out". These homes will not be included on the list for our representatives to visit.

Start organizing as soon as you can. Please feel free to contact Desk Officer Hasmick Hartunian at (626) 355-1414 or email hhartunian@ci.sierra-madre.ca.us, no later than July 20th, 2007, to register your party or meeting.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to your participation in this very worthwhile program.
Sincerely, Hasmick Hartunian - Desk Officer

Got News?

Call 626-355-2737

Southern California Lyric Theater

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Shakespeare's Classic Comedy Updated to 1958
with Doo Wop music by the SCLT Troubadours

by William Shakespeare
Directed by Alison Kalmus



Memorial Park Bandshell

222 W. Sierra Madre Blvd, Sierra Madre
Saturdays July 14, 21, 28, and Aug 4 at 7pm

Seating on the green. Bring blankets, lawn chairs and a picnic dinner.

Admission Free

For more information, please visit our website at www.socal-lyrictheater.org

The Wild West

With Kyle McClure - This week...a change of pace

Swim Class Progress Report

Dear Ms. Lilly (Certified Red Cross Swim Instructor):

We are in receipt of the detailed and specific progress report that you sent regarding our three-year-old daughter's performance in the "pike" level swim class under your supervision. We have some questions.

First, would it be possible to begin utilizing some sort of water-proof technology for these progress reports? The exact scores on the warped and torn remnants of the blue piece of paper that was presented to our little "pike" as she was exiting the pool after class are difficult to make out.

A more legible report card would help us to understand our daughter's aquatic strengths and weaknesses better. And, given the rapidly approaching Summer Games (China is just around the corner!), we would like to begin addressing her "areas for growth" at home. As we communicated to you in our previous memorandum (dated July 9, 2007), we do not have a pool at our house. But please keep in mind, we are committed to our daughter's success as an athlete, and we are not above sneaking into the backyards of others.

Also we have one (1) bathtub, and several (3) sinks where many of the required skills can be practiced. We really want to help her make it to cell!

Additionally, it looks like several of the assessed tasks can be practiced and perfected in the complete absence of water. Like for example, the fourth task under the heading "Rescue/ Personal Safety" which says that students must be able to "dial 911." Is it necessary that the dialing be carried out in a pool? We are in possession of a telephone. In fact, we have a spare mounted on the wall of the garage. This allows us to field incoming calls when we are doing yard work. It could also be used to practice dialing the required digits. We wouldn't mind using it for that purpose at all. When the students are tested, will they

be speaking with a real 911 operator?

Also, there is a requirement on the progress report that states that students must be able to "describe two examples of danger." We were somewhat surprised to see that our daughter did not receive a checkmark for proficiency in this area. As parents, we can be somewhat careless, and we are easily distracted. This, combined with the creativity, swiftness, and high level of initiative possessed by our daughter, ensures that she often finds herself in dangerous situations. For example: dancing on the coffee table in socks and a blindfold. Or, rapidly climbing the ladder I left leaning against the garage. Please make sure to ask her about these or many other dangerous situations and mark her next progress report appropriately.

Please do not misunderstand. We are very proud of our daughter's accomplishments, and we realize what a joy it must be for you to work with/ for her. We appreciate your recognition of her excellence in the areas of back floating, front paddling, and bubble blowing. We agree. The "nose bubbles" are something special.

However, we do think that you are missing the point when you write, "keep working on putting your face in the water." Is it not, we ask you, impressive to find a student such as our daughter, who is somehow capable of keeping her face completely and totally dry no matter what steps you take to introduce a degree of wetness? We have seen your efforts; your cajoling, your "game playing" with rubber ducks, your attempts to use peer pressure ("Look, McKenzie can do it! You should try, too!) to get her face wet. We feel that it is time for you to recognize her skill, flexibility and determination in this area.

Of course, we will follow your recommendation and enroll her in pike again for the next session. But please take more care in your evaluation of her performance on the next progress report. We know you can do better.

RED FLAG (cont. from page 1)

looking for fire hazards. They will work as an extra set of eyes and ears for the Sierra Madre Fire Department.

Fire Marshall Rich Snyder conducted the training, with assistance from SM Police Captain Larry Gannon. Captain Gannon is a certified arson investigator and a member of the San Gabriel Valley Arson Task Force.

Vehicles used for patrols will display the new Red Flag Patrol signs that were donated by Arnold's Frontier Hardware and E. Waldo Ward. Volunteers will also carry photo identification. "It is important that we have very high visibility. The signs will act as both a deterrent and reminder to those who might engage in dangerous behavior," said Snyder.

Director for the Red Flag Patrol program is Tom Gates. "We are looking for at least another 30 volunteers," he said. Volunteers will patrol in teams of two. They will be prepared with the necessary tools to report potential hazards to the police and fire departments. They

will primarily work on Red Flag Warning days.

Our current weather conditions are extremely dangerous. Red Flag Warnings have already been issued 4-7 times this year and the official fire season has not yet started. On the average there are 12 such warnings per year.

Warnings are issued when winds exceed 25 miles per hour and humidity is less than 15%. Such a combination, given the current drought, could be devastating to the whole community.

Started in 1993 by US Senator Dianne Feinstein after the Oakland Hills Fire, there are currently 160 Fire Safe Councils across the state. More than six million homes are at risk in high brush areas in California.

In 2006, Sierra Madre received a modest grant in order to launch its' program.

The next meeting of the Fire Safe Council will be on August 13th at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall Chambers. Guest speaker will be Public Works Director Bruce Inman. His topic will be Sierra Madre's Water Supply.

BALLOT (from page 1)

Concerns about the source of funding the requirements of the initiative lead to discussions of the role on the newly appointed Ad Hoc Finance Committee. That committee is expected to recommend ways to solve the budget crisis, including how to pay for the police, paramedic and fire departments.

Councilman Kurt Zimmerman moved that the city authorize the 30 day report and analyze the fiscal impact of the ballot measure. Staff was instructed to work with the City Attorney and a consultant in preparing the report with a budget not to exceed \$30,000.00. The report is due by the council's first meeting in September.

At that meeting, the city would call for an election within 14 days. It is anticipated that the measure would be consolidated with the February, 2008 primary election. The council voted unanimously to prepare the report.



FREE!

Contemporary Praise Music
Concert



Ice Cream Social

Pasadena First Church of the Nazarene
3700 E. Sierra Madre Blvd.
Pasadena
Sunday - July 29th - 6 p.m.

Spend a cool, comfortable, air-conditioned evening at Pasadena First Church of the Nazarene enjoying the best contemporary praise music of recent years, presented by the full Praise Celebration Choir, 50+ voices, and the entire Sunrise Orchestra. It's Sunday evening, July 29th, at 6 p.m. There will be opportunities to sing along to soul, spirit and heart lifting music followed by ice cream sundaes on the patio. Who could ask for more! And best of all, it's all FREE! That's right, even the ice cream! Bring the family, bring your friends, co-workers, neighbors, and enjoy one of the best concerts happening this summer.

For information/directions call 626-351-9937 or go to our website www.pfnaz.org

All are welcome! Come see.... and sing!

Coffee with Joffe

Think Globally,
Shop Locally

When you live in a town as small as ours, any new business is exciting news. Also, any place I can walk is a great motivation to get some much-needed exercise. If the destination is a food establishment, there is the added benefit of working off the calories walking back up the hill to my house. So it was with great excitement that I walked downtown to the new coffee place **Steamers**. It was well worth the trek. The coffee is great and I love the logo. So now I can take a short walk to Steamers or a longer walk to Beantown and still get a good cup of coffee. Now if only I hadn't eaten that scone...

Seriously though, it has got to be hard being a business in downtown Sierra Madre. We all appreciate the charm of our small downtown but the very things that help keep our downtown quaint—remoteness from the freeway, limited parking, local traffic—mean death to a business owner.

Two years ago during the Downtown 101 series we heard from an economist who evaluated how we stack up compared to surrounding communities in terms of dollars spent in Sierra Madre vs. surrounding communities. The news was rather discouraging. The bottom line was that despite being, on average, more affluent than many of the surrounding communities, Sierra Madre is at the bottom of the barrel in terms of dollars spent in our hometown. In other words we love living in Sierra Madre but, when it comes to spending money, we go elsewhere. Of course much of that has to do with the fact that our town cannot support many of the goods and services we need. But how many of us really shopped at **Howie's** when they were in town, myself included?

Our town receives one percent of the sales tax collected in Sierra Madre. That amounts to about \$200,000 a year. Clearly a few thousand dollars more in sales tax revenue is not going to make or break our General Fund budget of \$6 million. But given the small number of feasible and acceptable options for increasing general fund revenue, every dollar counts. With the passage of Measure V, the community has spoken on the issue of height, density and number of stories in downtown. But there are still many unanswered questions not only about what downtown should look like but the kinds of businesses we want and how do we get them here. I hope that we can get back to that discussion.

In the meantime, next time you need a new garden hose or a loaf of bread or that special hostess gift, trying shopping locally first. Every dollar you pay in sales tax in Sierra Madre is a dollar less we need to generate in some other way. And I can't wait for the new bookstore to open—it's just the right distance home to work off the ice cream cone I'm planning to get at **Coldstone's**.

Sierra Madre Civic Club

invites you to the concert

in the Park Sunday, August

5, 6 - 8 p.m. featuring Ken

O'Malley and the Twilight

Lords. O'Malley, a talented

musician and showman and

his band, belt out a feisty

blend of traditional and new

Irish folk music. Along with

the entertaining appeal of

these musicians the Civic

Club will be serving up

incredibly decadent pie and

water. Bring a picnic

supper, save room for dessert

and plan to make this

evening an important one on

your summer concert

calendar.

KEN O'MALLEY
and
THE TWILIGHT LORDS



DEVELOPER (from page 1)

Ambassador complex and stopped paying vendors for products, services and supplies in May. The allegations also say that the developer may also start laying some employees off as of August 1.

Dorn Platz staff said they could not comment on allegations or whether any property had been sold, but implied that it had. Neither Dorn Platz President Greg Galletly, nor Project Managers Cheryl Corson or Kathy Teagarden, returned phone calls seeking comment.

The Tribune reported that a three-page letter given to the developer July 20 from attorney Douglas Cushing of Jordan Schrader Attorneys at Law claimed they failed to make payments on the property at The Round at Beaverton Central in Beaverton, Oregon. There is widespread speculation on the impact the foreclosure could have on other holdings of Dorn Platz.

The Pasadena City Council approved the Ambassador West Project in March, a new 450,000 square foot Sunrise Life/Care complex at the city's west end, but only after developer Dorn Platz got in a heated dispute over property lines with church goers from Harvest Rock Church. The confrontation ended with a threat by Harvest Rock to sue.

Harvest Rock lawyer Robert Silverstein said in March that Dorn Platz had illegally deeded itself, during a lot line adjustment, 7,000 square feet of the church's property as part of the Ambassador project without the authority to do so. Silverstein also said at the time that the city was responsible by issuing a Certificate of Compliance in 2006 for that adjustment.

Silverstein could not be reached for comment either but Harvest Rock staff said a settlement with Dorn Platz had not been reached.

The City did not comment Friday on how a sale of the property could affect the Project.

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Sierra Madre Fire Safe Council

TIP OF THE WEEK

From Caroline Brown

The rain on Monday, July 23, 2007, was a pleasant respite from the long, long dry spell. Of course, it wasn't hardly enough to fill a reservoir as we desperately need here in the southland, but it did aid firefighters and residents, too. Cooler, damp days make it more likely homeowners will take time to do some necessary brush clearance.

Sierra Madre foothill residents are well underway in taking charge of protecting their homes in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Many have been working hard to do fuel modification on their property. Many have purchased Thermo-gel to protect their home in advance of a brush fire. Many have joined the Fire Marshall's Red Flag Fire Patrol. If you are interested in any of these programs and need more information please call the numbers listed below.

The next Fire Safe Council meeting will be August 13 in the City Council chambers at 7 P.M.

Contact the Sierra Madre Fire Safe Council at: 355-0741, 355-7135 or 355-9350, or: smfiresafecouncil@hotmail.com

SIERRA MADRE POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of Sunday, July 15th, to Saturday July 21st, the Sierra Madre Police Department responded to approximately 283 calls for service.

Sunday, July 15th

6:22 PM - Elder Abuse Investigation, 200 block West Carter Ave. Officers responded to a reported battery that just occurred at the location. Upon the officers arrival an adult male was detained to the front of the location and subsequently taken into custody. Further investigation revealed that an elderly female at the location had been assaulted by the male. The case is currently under investigation by the police department and Adult Protective Services.

Monday, July 16th

5:20 PM - Identity theft, 505 Lotus Ln. A resident reported receiving a telephone call from a creditor informing her of a telephonic purchase of a store gift card, which she did not apply for. Additionally she received a credit card in the mail that she had not applied for and a letter from another creditor informing her address had been change.

Tuesday, July 17th

10:17 AM - Commercial burglary, Congregational Church, 170 West Sierra Madre Blvd. A church employee reported cash stolen from the church office. The crime occurred between 9:00 PM Monday, 7/16 and 8:25 AM Tuesday, 7/17. The total loss was \$380.00 in U.S. currency. The case is currently under investigation.

Wednesday, July 18th

3:21 PM - Vandalism, 00 block Vista Circle. A contractor working at the vacant lot reported protective caution screening removed from two oak trees. The damage occurred between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM, 7/18. The protective screens were in place pending new residential construction on the lot.

Thursday, July 19th

9:35 AM - Animal bite, Alegria Ave and Mountain Trail Ave. An 89 year old resident reported that he was the victim of a vicious dog attack Wednesday evening, 7/18 at 7:30 PM. The victim, who described the dog as a "Pit-bull" type dog was out for his evening walk when the "Pit-bull" lunged at him twice. Although the dog was on a leash the dog managed to bite the victim on his left hand requiring medical treatment for lacerations and puncture wounds. The dog owner, who was described as a female in her early 60's, fled the area as the victim retreated to his home seeking medical aid. The Police Department is asking for the publics help in this matter as there were people in the area who may have witnessed the attack but have not come forward. Anyone with any information is encouraged to call the police department at (626) 355-1414

Friday, July 20th

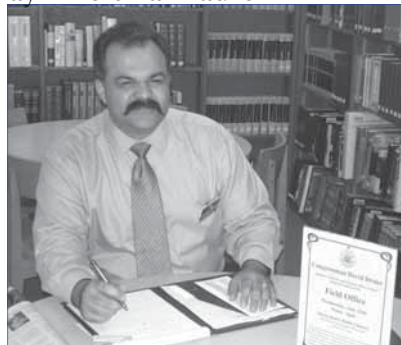
8:21 AM - Vandalism/graffiti, 222 West Sierra Madre Blvd, Memorial Park. Public Works employees reported graffiti "MATIK" and "I'M AWAY" on the walls of the men's restroom. A yellow making pen was used to vandalize the restroom. The crime occurred sometime between 5:30 PM Thursday, 7/19 and 8:15 Friday, 7/20. No repair estimate was available.

Saturday, JULY 21st

4:16 PM - Domestic violence investigation, 400 block North Sunnyside Ave. An off duty police officer reported a car being driven erratically and an assault in progress with the occupants inside the vehicle. Officers responding to the area located the vehicle traveling on Michillinda Ave. A high risk stop was initiated and the parties, a male and female, inside the vehicle were detained. Officers determined that the female had been pulled into the vehicle against her will after an argument with the male. The male was arrested for domestic battery and false imprisonment. He was transported to the Pasadena Jail for remand.

5:24 PM - Stolen vehicle, 300 block of Laurel Ave. A gardener reported that his 1982 Toyota pick-up truck was stolen from the front of the residence, while he worked in the rear yard. The loss included the truck and a large amount of gardening equipment inside the bed of the pickup. Total loss was estimated at \$4,730.00

A Day In Sierra Madre



Congressional Aide Carlos Cortez visited Sierra Madre this week on behalf of Congressman David Dreier. The Congressman has aides available in Sierra Madre to personally help constituents deal with federal agency issues such as IRS, Social Security and Medicare problems, etc. - Photo By Susan Henderson

Sierra Madre Checkpoint Results

The Sierra Madre Police Department conducted a Seat Belt / Driver's License checkpoint which operated from 7:00 AM on Thursday, July 26, 2007, through 11:00 AM in the 100 block of S. Baldwin Ave.

The following statistics summarize the enforcement activity which took place during the checkpoint:

VEHICLES SCREENED:	675
COURTESY NOTICES:	29
CITATIONS:	13
VEHICLES IMPOUNDED:	4
SUSPENDED/ REVOKED DRIVER'S LICENSES:	3
UNLICENSED DRIVER:	1



Environmentally Speaking,

"Did You Know?"

Water, Water Everywhere

We all need to think about the unnecessary energy costs that go into making a bottle of water...

To make the plastic for the bottles burns up something like 1.5 million barrels of oil, enough to power 100,000 cars for a year. Nearly 90% of the bottles are not recycled and end up in our ever burgeoning landfills. That translates into 30 billion throwaway bottles. If these bottles were put end to end, they would go around the world more than 150 times, and will still be intact 1000 years from now.

To get the bottled water on the shelf for purchase requires travel on ships and in trucks. Because water is heavy, transporting it requires a lot of fuel. The entire process—bottling, packaging and shipping—creates pollution and greenhouse gases.

Tap water is delivered using little or no oil, and there is no valid reason to think that bottled water is healthier. The United States generally has high-quality tap water, yet it is the world's largest market for bottled water.

(Some information garnered from CBS News and the Sierra Club)

Brought to you by:
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Your thoughts and comments are welcome...



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The Mt. Wilson Observer



PASADENA

Protecting Our Most Precious: Disaster Preparedness For Children



Local police and fire departments work with the National Guard in this simulated exercise that included preparations for how to care for children in a disaster.

Story and Photos By Dean Lee

In an attempt to not recreate many of the ills that plagued the large-scale disaster relief efforts of the Gulf Coast in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina including missing small children and unsupervised youth- the U.S. Military trained for the first time ever Tuesday with local police, fire and other emergency response services at the Rose Bowl Stadium by simulating the aftermath of a 7.4 earthquake.

Laramie McNamara, exercise director for Project K.I.D. (kids in devastation) based in Indiana, working with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, said they came to Southern California for the perfect opportunity to simulate a situation where children go missing during a large disaster. She and others said Project K.I.D. came about after seeing the need during Hurricane Katrina.

"What we learned in Katrina was that really there was no forethought for children in something of this scale," said Project K.I.D. Chairman Lenore Ealy. "People just haven't thought about it, and the Red Cross lumps kids in with adults. The idea is to keep the family unit together but that doesn't always happen."

McNamara pointed out that, as of now, local law enforcement becomes legal guardians when children are lost bogging them down and restricting what they can do. Legal custody issues also arise by not allowing lost children to cross state lines.

"There were sheriffs that drove around all day after Katrina with three and four kids with them because they had nowhere to leave them," McNamara said. "We heard reports that some would take them home to their

go through a quick intake and a nurse checks them. They are given food and water making sure they stay hydrated.

Project K.I.D. also deals with legal situations that arise. The group set up a mock excise in front of the Rose Bowl area complete with real attorneys and a judge to determine custody of a small child.



"In this scenario a person comes up claiming to be the uncle but has no identification," Ealy said. "The kid seems reluctant (to go with the uncle), and so a case was heard on the spot. In this case the judge ruled not to release the child."

She added that working with federal judges also allows agencies to transport the children to other states to get help, something she said happened in Katrina and will probably happen again.

Tuesday's overall exercise, dubbed Operation Golden Phoenix, simulated a large-scale earthquake one week after when major roads and freeways are destroyed. The training involved mass casualties, crowd control, looting and fires, reported throughout the area during the exercises.

At one point, 50 Marines posing as mad evacuees trying to get food, were held at bay by riot police. The exercise ended with the crowd being move 100 yards and still hungry. One Marie remarked that the situation was a little too real, having seen first hand the relief efforts in New Orleans.

The exercises also included four U.S. Marine Corps helicopters staged at the Bob Hope Airport in Burbank, transporting police and fire personnel to and from the Rose Bowl.

Ground units tended to the sick and injured; some posed as having been pulled from the surrounding rubble, with the assistance of U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy and National Guard rescue personnel. All were deployed as directed by incident management officials.

U.S. Marine HM2, Armando Gonzales, held 23 different injured person profiles. "This is a 40 year male. He was in a collapsed concrete slab building, impaled with a severed arm."

It happened four days ago. His respirations is 24..." he said adding, "...We train in combat while others here train with civilians, so both sides are coming together to swap ideas."

Local agencies involved included: Pasadena, Alhambra, Burbank, Glendale, Los Angeles, Monterey Park and South Pasadena, among many others.

The San Gabriel Pomona Valley Chapter of the Red Cross estimated that 1.9 million people would be affected in a disaster the size of Tuesday's simulation.



wives or other relatives to watch over them for days."

Having a place already prepared to take kids frees up not only emergency personnel, but also those that would otherwise not volunteer because of having to watch over their own children.

"What we do is give them a place they know kids will be safe," Ealy said. "We set up a parameter so that kids are protected from predators that might take advantage of the situation. This is a bigger problem than people would like to think."

The Project K.I.D. "Play Care" was setup in a grassy area in front of the Rose Bowl, well away from the main

emergency staging area. The area had simple canopies and portable plastic fencing used at many construction sites. Ealy said the play area cost about \$20,000, all collected through private donations. The group was currently working with FEMA, the Red Cross and other government agencies for funding. "Once you get children together with other children they become what they are, kids," McNamara said. "They play and socialize, forgetting about everything else. When they come in our first goal is to clam them down. That's what all the toys are for."

The children then they come in our first goal is to clam them down. That's what all the toys are for."

Arts & Architecture

By Virginia Olive Hoge

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

1864-1901

Portrait of a Prostitute

Norton Simon Museum
Closed Tuesdays

Wednesday - Monday Hours: 12:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Friday Hours: 12:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Admission: \$8 for Adults; \$4 for Seniors,

Free for students with i.d. and ages 0-18

Free to Members

Free on first Friday of the month from 6:00-9:00 p.m.



Anyone who loves Pasadena cannot help but feel that walking into the Norton Simon Museum is like walking into a church, and everybody heads straight for their favorite painter. Mine is the little man, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, one of my favorite painters and, to my everlasting gratitude to its founder, the

Norton Simon has four masterpieces on permanent display.

Lautrec was wise beyond his years, a circumstance of his disability, but he used this wisdom (which had cost him, for sure) as a window into human psyche. This, in combination with masterly drawing, gave society back unto itself, both for now and forever.

Lautrec captures certain essential characteristics of the human being and none of them were good.

And that is it, exactly. Lautrec put "pain" (human pain) and its "evil twin" Vanity into the same face and we will never forget it - in this portrait and the other inimitable faces of the people in his portraits. This is why I LOVE Lautrec. He captures the human face filled with so many complicated motives. You can "read" each one like a novel and, like a 600 page novel, is about the depth of expression they capture.

Portrait of a Prostitute was painted in oil on cardboard (notice the humbleness of the material - I think this freed his hand here, always a good think for a draftsman) in 1893 when Lautrec was just 29 years old. The subject is one of the sorriest-looking prostitutes on the face of the planet, sitting in a boudoir, waiting for clients. Lautrec is stingly accurate in capturing her facial expression which captures her daze which is sad but also an expression worn numb to the point of dumbness by surrender to her circumstances.

Lautrec's got her all there - using "sickly" colors which are made electric by the brown color underneath them. (I am not sure if Lautrec intended for the brown to be this exact color, perhaps it has darkened in time, but if he were alive today I would tell him "it works!").

Make sure you stop by the Norton Simon and see her.

In Vogue: Each member of the Pasadena City Council was given a T-shirt denouncing the 2008 Beijing Olympics



the upcoming ones in Beijing saying, "don't let history repeat itself."

Photo by Dean Lee

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

OPINION

ERASE

By Susan Henderson



Erase (v): the act of removing from existence or memory

It's ironic that one of my favorite movies stars our Governor and is named "*Eraser*". The movie came out about 11 years ago when the population of Sierra Madre was approximately 10,000 people. In the movie, *Arnold Schwarzenegger*, who was possibly rehearsing for a bigger real life role, was responsible for making one's identity disappear off the face of the earth. In the movie he does it under the auspices of protecting government witnesses. The film is entertaining if you like escapism because he does such *normal* things, such as toss refrigerators like they are marshmallows. He also gets shot a million times and doesn't lose a pint of blood. Yup, I definitely think he was rehearsing for a future role.

Fast forward - Sierra Madre 2007. Sierra Madre has a population of approximately 11,700 people. Arnold is acting out in Sacramento as our Governor and apparently still *erasing* things. Among the many agencies under his control is the Department of Housing and Community Development. They are the group responsible for the development and enforcement of the RHNA standards. The ones who say we must build, build, build. And, if they have their way, they will be responsible for the 'erasure' of Sierra Madre. This time, however, Arnold and his crew are doing it in the name of...I'm really not sure. He definitely isn't protecting any witnesses. Actually he's not protecting anything. He is throwing our town around like it is a marshmallow. However, his antics aren't funny. Not one bit.

I was reminded of that movie when I thought about our fight to maintain our identity while interviewing Interim City Manager Don Hopper. When asked if we really had a chance at preserving Sierra Madre as a small town for future generations, Hopper was doubtful. And, I fear he is right.

The cards seemed to be stacked against us. Development is all around us. The state is demanding that we stuff ourselves to the brim. Their eyes are fixated on our hillsides. Most of us live in fear that when the house next door sells it will be replaced with multiple units. As you read this, residents on the boundaries of the Stonehouse project are worried about encroachment of their views. Their identity is being erased. Our identity is being erased.

It is one thing to embrace progress and technology. But do we allow progress to change who we really are? Yes, times are changing but isn't that the whole point of living in Sierra Madre - to leave that change somewhere else? We go outside of Sierra Madre and look at miles and miles of change. We come back to Sierra Madre and the only change we really want to see is maybe the color of the building or a new sign welcoming us into the city.

The other day I was looking at a picture of Connie Mack Stadium as it used to stand in my hometown of Philadelphia. (Yes, the team that lost its 10,000th game is my favorite.) When I was growing up, there was a Recreation Center complete with swimming pool, close by. We lived within a few blocks of both. Today, those buildings are gone. The stadium was replaced with a mega church. The corner is unrecognizable. There is nothing warm and cozy about it now. The ambience of the area has been removed - erased. The only thing left are memories which, as most of you know, fade too quickly.

Is that what we want for our city? Do we want this wonderful small town in a few years to only be a memory? Take a look at the scale model of Sierra Madre circa 1941 in City Hall. Certainly there have been some changes, but who we were then and who we are now has not been erased. At least not yet.

Does Sierra Madre Really Care About Free Speech?

By Hail Hamilton



"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Although First Amendment legal protections are almost entirely a creation of modern America, common law protection for free speech began in the 18th and 19th centuries. For example, the trial of printer John Peter Zenger in 1735 was a landmark of common law protection for free speech.

In the Zenger case, a New York jury returned a verdict of "not guilty" on a charge of seditious libel. This was in contrast to the practice in England where juries were permitted only to decide whether the defendant printed the allegedly libelous words. As a result of the precedent set in the Zenger case, colonial juries rarely supported prosecutions for seditious libel, and the common law of seditious libel became largely unenforceable in the British colonies in America.

It doesn't take a PhD to see the effects the Zenger case had on the evolving independence movement in America. Printers like Thomas Paine and Benjamin Franklin were emboldened by the Zenger decision. Many others soon followed. In time the colonies were ablaze in revolutionary rhetoric. And eventually these fiery words served as the match that led to the Concord Green and the American War of Independence.

"Give me Liberty or give me Death;" "No Taxation without Representation;" "All men are created Equal;" "We mutually pledge our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor." These were fighting words spoken by free-thinking men—men who were willing to die to speak freely. These are the words of our nation's Founding Fathers.

Have we forgotten Lincoln's admonition at Gettysburg: "...that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the Earth." Lincoln's "new birth of freedom" included free speech.

Perhaps a review is needed of the values served by protecting free speech.

- Discovering of Truth—suggests that in the "Marketplace of Ideas" when truth and falsehood are allowed to freely grapple, in the end given time, truth will out.
- Facilitating Participation in Political Democracy—suggests that citizens will make wise and informed decisions, if candidates and proponents are allowed unrestricted ability to communicate their positions.
- Creating a More Adaptable and Stable Community—suggests that a society in which angry and alienated citizens are allowed to speak their mind will be more stable, as people will be less likely to resort to violence.
- Assuring Individual Self-Fulfillment—suggests free speech enables individuals to express themselves, create and identify—and, in the process perhaps, find kindred spirits. Free speech thus becomes an important aspect of human dignity.

Checking Abuse of Government Power—suggests that freedom of the press enables citizens to learn about abuses of power—and then do something about it through the political process of voting, impeachment, recall, initiative, referendum, lobbying and demonstrations. (continued on page 8)

Around The Town With Sir Eric Maundry



"Kindly let me help you or you will drown," said the monkey, putting the fish safely up a tree."
- Alan Watts

The current fog bank rolling our way from the august ruling body in residence at City Hall tells us that this little town is on its way to fiscal calamity and that we need to do something about it NOW. Never mind that going broke is a decades old Sierra Madre tradition, this time it's a hair-tearing, arms a-waving, running through the streets howling like a baboon on fire, kind of crisis. Or so some would have us believe.

Now, when pressed for the reasons why our fiscal situation is so dire, the official explanation for this purported cash crunch is invariably "lawsuits." Which, given the high cost of anything legal, is probably a contributing cause. But couldn't it also be because this City Council spends money like a betrayed wife out on a revenge shopping spree with her cheating husband's platinum AMEX card? Also a possibility. The way things are going maybe we should change *Enid Joffe's* job title from City Mayor to Prime Minister of Gucciville, or something.

So here is an example of what I like to call Gucci Economics: This town's resident taxpayers are now beholden to pick up the tab for something called *'The Harriet and Milton Goldberg Recreation Area.'* AKA 'Goldberg Park.' Now, as grand and leisurely as that name might sound to some, what we are actually talking about here is a small and scruffy 6,500 sq foot empty lot at 171 S. Sunnyside.

A lot that the City of Sierra Madre accepted escrow on (circa 12/14/06) for the rather posh sum of \$550,000 (AIN 5768-033-036 later changed to 5768-033-900, non-taxable city owned property). Strangely enough, a similarly sized empty lot (AIN 5768-033-037) located fairly close to our nascent 'recreation area,' had sold a few weeks earlier for \$284,722. Hmm ... Now in fairly recent times \$550,000 would not only get you a nice lot, there would also be a house on it as well. And even at today's market prices it appears that the City of Sierra Madre was badly fleeced on the Goldberg Park purchase. Currently available on South Hermosa is a "wonderful single story character home" on a 7,588 sq foot lot for \$555,000, or a mere \$5,000 more than the city shelled out for the empty and much smaller S. Sunnyside patch.

Also currently up for grabs on Sturtevant is a home on a 7,401 sq foot lot for \$650,000 (with rebate). Now that might be \$100,000 more than what we paid for the smaller Goldberg Park property, but who wouldn't pay an extra 100 grand for a 3 bedroom home with central air, 2 car garage and "beautifully finished hardwood floors?"...

In the March 8, 2007 edition of the always sunny Sierra Madre Weekly there is an article ("*Sierra Madre Nursery School Meets Fundraising Goal*") that discusses this transaction in an oblique kind of way. After years of hard work, the Sierra Madre Nursery School finally had enough cash to buy their lot from the city. The amount paid to the City of Sierra Madre for that lot was \$200,000, or less than half of what we paid for the smaller S. Sunnyside property.

The then City Manager, *John Gillison*, hailed the sale to these good people, and discussed how the money was to be used. According to the article, the City Council "directed that the proceeds be used to fund more open space preservation," or, as Gillison explained, the \$200,000 was to partially offset the price of Goldberg Park.

Now if you go to *Enid Joffe's* chipper power point presentation on our city's troubled finances (http://www.cityofsierramadre.com/docs_forms/files/state_of_city_2007_6-14ppt), you will see that there appears to be a \$380,000 balance due on Goldberg Park. So I suppose we can assume that \$170,000 of the Nursery School cash went towards Goldberg Park, and we are now picking up the rest of the damage ... In the Sierra Madre Weekly piece mentioned above, John Gillison discussed exactly what kind of park the *Harriet and Milton Goldberg Recreation Area* will be. As the article states, this "...will be an open space passive use park unlike any other in town with benches, open recreation area and landscape features, but probably no playground equipment." In other words, it will be just like the backyards of all the houses surrounding it. A lawn, a couple of places to sit, maybe a birdbath, and still no sidewalk. Well, at least the neighborhood dogs will find some use for it ...

Much more on this topic next week ... Kicking it old school is what we like to do at eric.maundry@yahoo.com.

Pull up a chair and drop me a line why don't you? I'll pour the drinks ... Cheers!

The Mountain Clymer

By Kim Clymer Kelley

.....And Baby Makes 3

October 27, 2002 was a historical day at the pack station. It was the first time that a baby donkey had ever been born at Chantry Flat. Adams' Pack Station was first moved to its current location in 1936 from Sierra Madre. With the completion of the Chantry Road in 1935, it became possible to drive 4 miles closer to the community in the Big Santa Anita Canyon. This prompted J.P. Steele to purchase Sierra Madre's only remaining pack station from Cora Corum and move it to Chantry Flat. In the 66 years of its existence since then, not one donkey at the station had ever given birth.

When I took over the station, one of the main problems that loomed was the age of the animals that were working there. While not ancient, they were getting older and it was necessary to begin to plan for their retirement. With this in mind, I purchased two donkeys at an auction in December 2000. They were only \$65 and \$75...seemingly a bargain...but when I went to pick them up, I realized that I had perhaps bitten off more than I could chew. Both of them were fresh off the range and totally wild, scared of humans, and not at all pleased with their new home or neighbors. They were very attached to one another and moved about the corral in tandem with one precisely shadowing the other's moves. One of them was pure white, I named him Andy (after Andy Warhol), and the other was gray with a black main and tail, so (being a big Winnie the Pooh fan) I had to name him Eyecore.

Most female equine are not neutered. Castrating (gelding) the males is a far easier procedure and also serves to make the male animal more gentle and well behaved, so it is the procedure of choice. The two new donkeys were not gelded like all of my other male animals were. For the first 6 months or so that the two were at the station, they spent all of their time far from the other animals, usually off in a corner by themselves. The fact that there was a very attractive, very fertile female named Bonnie right under their noses and that they were the only ones who could possibly be interested, was totally lost on them. It was not until we tamed (broke) them both that they became aware of the possibilities and delights of life at the station.

We first noticed this change in their outlook on a very crowded Labor Day weekend when, much to our horror, dismay, and surprise, we hosted a very noisy and raucous donkey orgy in our front corral...right in view of scores of store customers. I remember us tearing across the parking lot waving our hands and screaming in an effort to break up the show, grabbing a flimsy leaf rake and whacking first Andy and then Eyecore on the butt as they took their turns on poor Bonnie, who stood, in a most dignified manner, at the fence with her head through the rails, braying, panting and drooling. Finally we succeeded in separating the boys from the object of their affection, and they retreated up the stairs to the top corral. I am sure most of the male witnesses of the incident left the station feeling very humbled and inadequate, most of the children with some interesting questions for their parents or stories for their friends, and most of the women never again easily impressed.

Up until now, it was impossible to tell



A Darling Baby Donkey From Iowa

when Bonnie was "in season", but now it was obvious since for a week during each of the next couple months we had a repeat of this scene. This went on until maybe January or February when it finally dawned on us that we had not had to intercede on Bonnie's behalf in awhile. She was pregnant...with the gestation period for a donkey being about a year, she was due sometime in November or December we estimated, though we could only guess. Sometime during that following summer, a new man came into my life. His name was Al, a school bus driver from Rancho Cucamonga. Al was totally smitten with the station and life in the mountains. He was a wonderful man with a great outlook on life...positive, outgoing, kind, and a great sense of humor...too good sometimes...everything was a joke. He loved "playing cowboy" up at the station, and purchased a cowboy hat, cowboy shirt, and cowboy boots to "mosey" around in during his visits to the station. One Saturday at the end of October, Al came up to the station for a visit, and since his daughter was with her mother and my boys were with their father, he decided to spend the night.

That evening when we went out to put the animals away for the evening, I checked out Bonnie's udders to see if there was any change. I had read that a donkey's udders will "bag up"...begin to fill with milk...any time from a day to a week before birth. Bonnie was never too thrilled with me poking around her udders, but tolerated it long enough for me to stick my head under her to take a quick look. This time, to my surprise, there seemed to be a change. I went to get a flashlight to get a better look. We halted her and hitched her to the rail so I could see if my initial evaluation was correct. Amidst endless boob jokes by Al, I crouched down next to Bonnie with the flashlight and confirmed what I thought I had seen...her udders were indeed starting to fill. I tried to express some milk and, sure enough, was able to do so. I was thrilled!!! "Wow!!!!" I told Al, excitedly, "she is going to have this baby sometime real soon! We will have to get her stall ready tomorrow and keep her there at night so she will have a nice place to have the baby." We untied her, slipped her halter off, and shooed her and the rest of the gang up the ramp to the upper corral for the night. We returned to the house to retire for the night.

That was Saturday, October 26, 2002.

Invasion of the POME Lawyers

By Rich Johnson



If you are a regular reader of this drivel, you may remember your intrepid reporter warned the country in the March 16, 2007 Mount Wilson Observer that an invasion of the US by the British was imminent.

Well, it has happened. And it should come as no surprise. As was reported in my previous column they have attempted this in every century. The Revolutionary war in the 1700s, the War of 1812 in the 1800s, the British Invasion in the 1960s. Now in 2007, the legal revocation of our independence due to mismanagement.

This time around, the British have abandoned all civility in their invasion tactics. No, government trained killers couldn't do it in the 18th and 19th centuries. And mop headed rock and rollers couldn't do it in the 20th century. Now they are using lawyers. Oh, sure, they call them solicitors. But don't be fooled. They are government trained lawyers.

We know they have their eyes on Sierra Madre. What? You thought Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's February 1983 trip to the British Home was just a social call? Not a chance.

Fortunately for us there is a small underground group in Great Britain working hard to defend the freedom and sovereignty of the good ol' USA (or it just may be they really don't want us.) Keep this to yourself but the underground contact here goes by the alias Jacki Rubin. She lives right here in Sierra Madre posing as the retired wife of American philanthropist and historian, Howard Rubin. The intelligence community knows Howard as "Numbers" Rubin.

Jacki has informed us the English underground is headquartered in the East End of London. They have developed a secret code we need to learn to be able to communicate with them without detection. It's very similar to Cockney Rhyming Slang. Here are some of the key words and phrases.

If a suspicious and pale looking foreigner comes up to you in Kersting Court and says:

1. Take the "apples and pears", they mean the stairs.
2. Bring some "bread and honey", better bring some money.
3. Use the "dog and bone", means use the phone.
4. Take the "frog and toad", means take the road.
5. Use your "plates and meat", means use your feet.
6. Watch out for the "trouble and strife", watch out for the wife.
7. Pick up a new "whistle and flute", means buy a new suit.
8. Look for a "corn on the cob", means look for a job.
9. Got the "cucumbers"? means got the numbers?

Our resident thorn, Jim Snider, in an attempt to get into this reporter's (and the Mount Wilson Observer's good graces) has offered to donate \$150 Million dollars to the cause for freedom and independence. I turned him down flat. It's not that easy Cumquat Kid.

For further information and details Jacki can be reached at (800) 555-POME. And for goodness sake, don't tell anybody.

Jeff's Pics

The Book Report

The Tree: A Natural History of What Trees Are, How They Live, and Why They Matter By Colin Tudge



British biologist and science writer Tudge has gone the world over to bring back wondrous stories and amazing facts about the trees around us. His travels took him throughout the United States, Brazil, the Amazon and Costa Rican rain forests, India, Panama, New Zealand, China, and all over Europe. How do trees live so long, how do they work and how do they compete and coexist with nature and humankind? How do biologist identify the different kinds? They are the longest living species, serve as our planet's lungs, a major food source, home for 1000's of species, and provide a large part of nature's most incredible beauty.

He describes an amazing variety of species around the planet and the different characteristics of each. How did trees evolve over millions of years, how do they adapt and reproduce? He sees trees as engineering marvels and wood as one of the wonders of the world. We learn about the mighty kauri, redwoods, baobabs, palms, beeches, oaks, banyans, mangroves - whose roots are in the sea, plus many, many more. He begins with the oldest conifers which go back 300 million years, and moves through the evolution of pines and flowering trees.

We learn about the great forest where trees must compete for light, discourage predators and use other species for reproduction. This is done by chemicals, just one fact about the secret life of trees. We learn about tree habitats, where to find certain ones, and how some species are in flux. In the end, he explains the importance of trees and our need to have increased knowledge about them, and warns us of the effects if we fail to do that. This book is a combination of science, philosophy, history and environmentalism and also a wonderful, passionate love story about those magnificent beings all around us. Enjoy!!

Scene One, Take One- DVD Reviews

Juliet of the Spirits by Federico Fellini (1965)



Juliet (Giulietta Masina, Fellini's real wife) is a married woman in her 30s, resigned somewhat to an ordinary life with her dull husband, Giorgio (Mario Pisu), who gives her little attention. She thinks it's the pressures of business that make him so indifferent, but soon she wonders if he may be having an affair. One night, Giorgio and a few friends have a séance, and Juliet discovers that she can conjure up various spirits. To see if her suspicions about Giorgio are correct, Juliet hires a sleuth who shadows her worst fears, causing her to change her lifestyle and move out from the shadow of her unfaithful husband. She also has visions that tell her that she deserves some enjoyment. The movie is about how she deals with this discovery and finding another life.

But what is amazing about the movie is not her plight so much as the way Fellini puts her into the center of a surrealistic storm of fantasies, dreams, nightmares, friends, childhood memories, relatives and mysterious strangers that suddenly come into her life. The result is a surreal and wild investigation into the psychology of a modern woman. Fantastic extravagant colors and Oscar-nominated costumes and sets create an amazing visual hological feast. It looks like nothing the cinema had seen before or since as done by the great Italian genius Fellini. One of the most delightful sights occurs on the seaside, when Juliet goes there with her amazing sisters and their children. Across the sand, she sees Suzy, a neighbor, in a magical parade with her admirers, friends, servants and followers, dressed in bright yellow, protected by colorful parasols, setting up a tent on the sand, beckoning invitingly to her.

It was the Winner of five Best Foreign Film of the Year awards including those of the National Board of Review and the New York Film Critics. Judith Crist called it "a masterpiece, certainly one of the most beautiful and stimulating films ever made". If you haven't seen it you are in for quite a ride and if you have it's worth seeing again! Enjoy!

Any recommendations please email to jab33jab@yahoo.

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Potter Madness



Book Stampede: At 11:59 p.m. last Friday night, thousands stood gathered outside many bookstores to find out whether their favorite hero, Harry Potter lives or dies in the seventh and final Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, by novelist J. K. Rowling. In less than 20 minutes a block long line at Vroman's Books in Pasadena was gone.

"We had it much more planned out this time. People bought the books in advance and then they turned in their vouchers to get the book," said Jennifer Ramos, Vroman's promotional director. "We ordered 2,500 copies and most of those went tonight but we also set some aside for children and parents who didn't want to come out at midnight."

And those that waited were well rewarded the next morning as Vroman's opened to a huge book party complete with live English owls, albino snakes, and many other creepy animals courtesy of the Los Angeles Zoo. A magic show followed, and those who knew Potter the best were given prizes as questions spanning the whole series were asked.

Ramos noted that during the release of the last Harry Potter book, fans had to wait in long lines to pay for the book at that time, which forced those who showed up at midnight to wait even longer. At some supermarkets many waited hours, just to see the book go on sale at 40 percent off the next day.

This year at Borders Books on Lake Avenue, the line snaked through most of the store and then outside. The scene was chaotic, but most said they wanted to make sure they got the book and they knew Borders would not run out. Some stores opened twice, once at midnight, then again at 2 a.m.

Without giving away Harry Potter's fate, it is fair to say this: the book has by far, the most deaths of any in the series. Before it's all over 23 plot significant characters die, not including many that perish in "The Battle of Hogwarts."

-Graphic and Story By Dean Lee

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TRISH's TRUTH

Becoming College Bound

By Trisha Collins

Every teenager or child has a dream of what they want to be when they grow up. Most want to grow up, go to college, get a job, and have companionship. To live in a nice house with a white-picket fence, and a loving family, possible a pet or two. I recently visited a camp where a guest speaker asked the kids what they wanted to be when they grew up. Most replied that they wanted to be a(n): athlete, businessman/woman, dancer, or teacher. This is all fine and well, it's very good to have goals. The thing with goals is, is that you have to achieve them, and the journey isn't always easy. In order to be whatever you (and I stress the "you," because you've got to do things for you, especially regarding your future) want to be, you probably need good grades in the right classes at college. And in order to get those grades, you need to do great in high school. As a freshman I realized that you need to start preparing for college NOW. It's never too early to start, but not everyone knows what to do. Here are some things that might help you prepare that I've learned from the best:

1. Join a club (or two)! This can help you in more than one way. If you're a people-person who is very outgoing, this is great. If you're not so good at communicating, this is also a good thing. Joining a club will help you break out of your shell. The sooner, the better, because out in the "real world," you've got to be able to speak out and communicate well with others. The college-relation to becoming part of a club is that it will look good on your college application. If you want to go to UCLA, you've got to realize that there are thousands of students just like you, hoping to get in. You need to see what sets you apart from everyone else. How do you stand out? Clubs are something that not everyone is in, that's what can make you unique.

2. Make good grades (always)! Grades, grades, grades...when it comes down to it, they count. The four years in high school, are basically the four years of the rest of your life. All your grades from Pre-K to 8th grade don't really count in the long run. It's 9th through 12th grade that colleges really look at, because it's all added into one GPA (grade point average). If you have bad grades and a bad attendance record, you can kiss that Harvard application goodbye. A lot of teens think that they can skim through college on sports alone. You can't. Even athletes have to "make the grade" or else they can be suspended from playing or (if they have a sports scholarship) dropped from the college all together. Grades are essential, along with good SAT/ACT scores. They are another thing to prepare for early. You can start by taking prep-courses online or at your school.

3. Learn to play an instrument. This, along with joining a club, will also set you apart from others applying to the college of your choice. You can also receive scholarships if your college has an orchestra, band, or chorus. That way you can practically go to college for free. It's also beneficial for the creative side of you to learn to play an instrument, as well as builds character and discipline.

4. Take the right classes! If you plan on being an architect, you should start researching what classes you need to take in high school. You wouldn't spend your time in chorus, when you could be taking engineering. Be practical with your elective choices, and always think about what would be best for your future.

I hope some of this advice was beneficial towards you and your college-bound goals. With good grades, the right classes, being a participant in a club, and the ability to play an instrument, you should soar beyond college to a successful career.

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FREE SPEECH (continued from page 6)

- Promoting Tolerance—suggests that free speech, especially our practice of extending protection of speech to hateful and unpopular speech that is personally upsetting, teaches us tolerance in other aspects of life—and that a tolerant society is a better society.

- Creating a More Robust and Diverse Community—suggests that a community in which free speech is valued and protected is likely to be a more energized, creative society as its citizens actively fulfill themselves in many diverse and interesting ways.

Susan Henderson, Editor and Publisher of The Mt. Wilson Observer, hit the nail on the head in her column last week. Like our Founding Fathers she defended free speech. She can fire "Sir Eric" and me anytime she chooses. The Observer is her newspaper. She's the boss. But she can't stifle dissent. No more than the British could in colonial America. And she knows that. In fact, like our Founding Fathers, she welcomes controversy and encourages debate.

Sierra Madre must begin to heal itself from the divisiveness and rancor of the recent political campaigns—especially Measure V and the attempt to recall Joe Mosca. We must learn tolerance—especially of ideas. Our community is faced with some serious challenges—first and foremost is our impending financial meltdown. We either learn to work together to solve these challenges or we will become just another bankrupt "community" of the Los Angeles County, like Altadena totally dependent on the largess of county, state and federal governments.

IN A FREE THINKING, FREE SPEAKING DEMOCRACY—THE CHOICE IS YOURS!

TABLE FOR TWO by PETER DILLS

Tipping Part 2



Let's review a few of last weeks tipping suggestions. If you're not sure of the percentage to tip, just double the tax. That usually makes everyone, including your server, happy. Remember, the server doesn't make the food; so if the food wasn't so hot, but the service was accurate and speedy, don't penalize the server. You must tip for service. One last reminder - - kids! If your kids make a mess (sometimes they do) leave the busboy a few extra bucks. Come on, don't be cheap; servers rely on your generosity to earn a living.

Some people tip heavily to prove that they are a big shot or to impress their friends. Regardless, I think you'll agree that we all work hard for our money and sometimes it's hard to part with it on tips. But, believe you me, the best places to tip are the places

you go to most often - your favorite car wash/restaurant/hotel. Remember we are rewarding those who take care of us.

Speaking of Hotels here are a few suggestions for tipping at your favorite Hotel. On a recent stay at the Ritz Carlton here are few of my recent tips.

Hotel Concierge: If the concierge arranges for tickets to a local show or a sporting event I suggest a \$10 to \$20 gratuity, depending on the venue. Restaurant reservations outside the hotel, usually \$10 will be appreciated.

Room Service: In many hotels the tip is added to the bill. However, depending on speed of service, add another \$2. I usually leave \$10 for the cleaning person if I left a bit of a mess.

Bellhop: \$2 per bag and an extra \$5 if they arranged for ice or glasses to be sent to your room.

Pool Attendant: A nice chair and a towel, I tip \$3 to \$5 for this service.

Club/Concierge Level Captain: Many of the better hotels offer Concierge Level; I always tip at least \$5 per attendant.

Hotel Valet: Hotels charge between \$15 and \$25 for in and out privileges for their guests. At the end of your stay, \$10 is suggested. The Valets usually pool the tips.

Yes - I know that's a lot of tipping, but trust me, if you plan on returning you will be treated like royalty!!!

If you have your own tips on tipping e mail me: thechefknows@yahoo.com. Coming up in a few weeks, The Top Ten Restaurants of Waikiki Join me every Sunday Night at 8 PM on KJLA TV for the Chef Knows



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Photo by Jean Boenisch

SURVIVAL ON AN ORANGE PLANET—After having explored Mars for 3 ½ years in missions that were originally designed for three months, NASA's Mars rovers are now facing perhaps their biggest challenge, according to a release issued July 20.

For nearly a month, a series of severe Martian summer dust storms has affected the rover Opportunity and, to a lesser extent, its companion, Spirit. The dust in the Martian atmosphere over Opportunity has blocked 99 percent of direct sunlight to the rover, leaving only the limited diffuse sky light to power it. Scientists fear the storms might continue for several days, if not weeks.

"We're rooting for our rovers to survive these storms, but they were never designed for conditions this intense," said Alan Stern, associate administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate, Washington. If the sunlight is further cut back for an extended period, the rovers will not be able to generate enough power to keep themselves warm and operate at all, even in a near-dormant state. The rovers use electric heaters to keep some of their vital core electronics from becoming too cold.

Before the dust storms began blocking sunlight last month, Opportunity's solar panels had been producing about 700 watt-hours of electricity per day, enough to light a 100-watt bulb for seven hours. When dust in the air reduced the panels' daily output to less than 400 watt-hours, the rover team suspended driving and most observations, including use of the robotic arm, cameras and spectrometers to study the site where Opportunity is located.

On July 17, the output from Opportunity's solar panels dropped to 148 watt-hours, the lowest point for either rover. On July 18, Opportunity's solar-panel output dropped even lower, to 128 watt-hours. NASA engineers are taking proactive measures to protect the rovers, especially Opportunity, which is experiencing the brunt of the dust storm. The rovers are showing robust survival characteristics. Spirit, in a location where the storm is currently less severe, has been instructed to conserve battery power by limiting its activities.

"We are taking more aggressive action with both rovers than we needed before," said John Callas, project manager for the twin rovers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif. By Opportunity's 1,236th Martian day, which ended July 17, driving and all science observations had already been suspended. The rover still used more energy than its solar panels could generate on that day, drawing down its battery. "The only thing left to cut were some of the communication sessions," Callas said.

To minimize further the amount of energy Opportunity is using, mission controllers sent commands on July 18 instructing the rover to refrain from communicating with Earth for the next two days—expected to lower energy use to less than 130 watt-hours.

AS LAURA AND I WATCHED AN ORANGE-HUED, SLIM CRESCENT MOON SETTING INTO THE PACIFIC OCEAN on July 18, we were reminded that July 20, 2007, is the 38th anniversary of the day mankind first set foot on the Moon. We wondered: Will humans return to the Moon someday? A press release, issued July 20, gave the answer: NASA is indeed planning to send humans back to the Moon by 2020—thirteen years off—and in preparation for such an event, two NASA robots are surveying an isolated polar desert within a crater in the Arctic Circle. The study will help scientists learn how robots could evaluate potential outposts on the Moon or Mars.

The robots, called K10 Black and K10 Red, carry 3-D laser scanners and ground-penetrating radar. The team arrived at Haughton Crater at Devon Island, Canada, on July 12 and will operate the machines until July 31. Scientists chose the polar region because of the extreme environmental conditions, lack of infrastructure and resources, and geologic features. Additionally, Haughton Crater is geographically similar to Shackleton Crater at the South Pole of the Moon. Both are impact craters that measure roughly 12.4 miles in diameter.

The robots' 3-D laser scanner can map topographic features as far as 3,280 feet away. The ground-penetrating radar, developed by JPL, can map below ground as deep as 16.4 feet.

LOOKING FOR THE YEAR'S FIRST ORANGE SPIDER—Just as people watch for the swallows to return to San Juan Capistrano Mission every year on or about March 19, Laura and I look forward each year in July to the re-emergence of the banded garden spiders (which we like to call "orange spiders").

Perhaps it's the beauty of their symmetrical, orb-shaped webs that appeals to us—or maybe their patience in making such works of art. How can the spider visualize and plan something so vastly bigger than herself? In any case, I like to keep a record—in the form of haiku-shaped, 17-syllable notes—about our first sightings of them each year. We look forward to observing the spiders and try never to kill them or disturb their webs (after all, an English proverb says, "If you wish to live and thrive, let a spider run alive"). Sometimes, though, disturbing a web just can't be helped! Here are some of our "first encounters" from recent years:

7/21/02
Strand of gossamer,
Slender as a memory...
First orange spider.

7/19/04
Laura's forehead meets
The year's first orange spider:
Broken web-strand hangs...

7/8/05
She sees a spider
With her blue LED light—
But is it orange?

The dates of first sightings, as recorded here, seem to have ranged from July 8 to July 21. This year, as of July 19, when I started this column, nothing had showed up. The next morning, July 20, I looked out the kitchen window and there, near the upper corner of the window-frame, was a tell-tale sign: a small, circular web with a small spider (probably a juvenile) hunched up in the middle of it. "Aha, I've seen one," I thought, and made a note of the sighting as I went out the door to do some errands. But when I returned, two hours later, there was no spider and no web: Had I been dreaming? No, probably the spider had decided to eat its web (I've seen them do that) and move on. But, I wondered, are the orange spiders this year going to be as hard to observe as that pesky dust-covered orange planet, Mars?

7/20/07
Definitely there,
Then definitely not there:
The spider knows why.

(Unless otherwise attributed, poems used in this column are by Bob Eklund and copyrighted by him.)

WorkForce

with Madeline



Q: What type of questions should I be asking at an interview?

I'm applying for a position as assistant payroll manager at a large company.

A: Recruiters expect you to ask questions at the interview, so you should have several carefully constructed ones prepared. Most recruiters feel that not asking questions is equivalent to not being interested in the position.

Sample questions might be:

1. What would my exact responsibilities be?
2. What attributes do you seek from your management team?
3. What growth opportunities will be available for me at this company?
4. Do you offer any in-service courses?
5. What is the make-up of the payroll team as far as experience?
6. Are co-workers easily available to offer help should I need it?
7. Tell me about the person who will be my supervisor.
8. Why did you choose to interview me?
9. When will a decision be made?
10. May I contact you if I have other questions?

It would be prudent to further demonstrate your interest by asking one or two questions relevant to the company's website. For example, you might say, "According to your website, you currently have 3,000 employees. How many payroll specialists do you employ to handle this large number?"

It is important for you to remember that not only is the company interviewing you, but you are also interviewing the company. With that in mind, consider these questions:

1. Why did the last person who held this job leave?
2. What is the average length of time people stay at this company?
3. What do you like about working here?

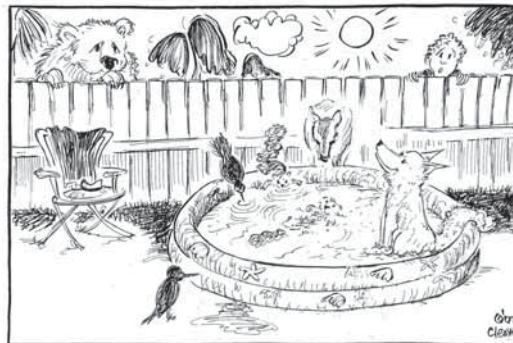
Keep your questions short. Avoid those that are irrelevant to the job, have obvious answers, and that hint of desperation. Of course, refrain from asking questions such as the following:

1. How long will my lunch break be?
2. Will I have to put in weekend hours?
3. What does this company consider to be a good absentee record?

According to Careerbuilder, "Asking questions gives you an active role in the interview and lets you steer the interview into areas in which you shine."

Madeline Miller is owner/manager of Compu-Type Résumé Service. She would love to hear from you with questions at comptype2@aol.com.

Her website is computype.bizland.com.



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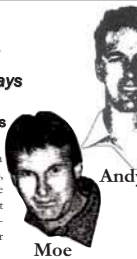
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One of a Kind:

*Featuring unique homes & gardens...
and the people who create them*

Story and Photos By Chris Bertrand

Pasadena's Ronald McDonald House



Operations director, Nita Moore, sits for just a moment with Ronald Mc Donald on one of the porches.

Two beautiful Craftsman homes at 763 and 765 S. Pasadena Avenue were built in 1912 for the daughters of California governor, Markham. The 9000+ square feet of combined living space that once housed the extended family of Californias

political elite, now provides a clean bed and hot showers for families with hospitalized children at the Huntington Hospital across the street, Children's Hospital LA and several other area hospitals.

These elegant homes lie on land set aside for the 110 freeway extension decades ago. The ensuing political turmoil over that freeway construction made Caltrans the owner of some spectacular homes that now survive in a kind of limbo. Caltrans now leases out the homes, and refurbished these two in 1990. The first was originally rented to the predecessor foundation, San Gabriel Valley Hospitality House, now Ronald McDonald House. The adjacent home was just leased and added to this use in 2006.

With ten bedrooms, seven and a half bathrooms, and two stocked pantries, families with critically ill children spend an average of two weeks in the caring confines of these two homes. While the foundation charges \$15 a night for those who can pay, (no one is turned away for inability to pay), it costs about \$144 a night to house these families who travel here from far flung states and countries, as well as within California.

Grand, covered porches which provided cool, shaded seating for the original residents, now provide respite to these families in crisis with newly completed cedar Adirondack furniture built by an ambitious Eagle Scout. An enormous living room in one of the homes creates a welcoming semblance of home with several comfortable seating areas.

The elegant dining room seats over 20 now, albeit in a more utilitarian setting. Laundry facilities in both homes are a blessing to parents who have little energy to feed themselves, much less search out a laundromat at odd hours. These days, internet and computer access is very important, allowing parents to keep in touch with loved ones as well as for some to telecommute while remaining close to their children.

The large lots offer space for visitor parking, children's play including small bikes and play equipment, meditation, an herb garden and a barbecue area. Little bits of normalcy, like grilling some burgers on the grill, peels back a bit of the enormous burden of what these families are undertaking here.



The spacious living room gives families a place to unwind a bit and interact with others facing the same challenges.

Refuge is truly the word that defines these spaces. Here they can clean up and rest up near their child's hospital. But they can also share experiences with other families in similar circumstances, one most of us pray never to face ourselves. Some have sold their

homes to make this trip for their child's ultra-specialized eye surgery, reconstructive plastic surgery from burns, cancer treatment, etc. Some try to maintain dual lives, supporting the sick child undergoing treatment, then going home periodically to try to keep up mortgage payments and see to family members left behind.

Only a bare bones staff is paid, while volunteers take up the rest of the manpower needed to keep the homes in good repair. The homes bear the name of Ronald McDonald House, giving them access to supplies normally provided to McDonald's through Golden State Food and many sponsors such as Sleep Comfort bedding. Surprisingly though, only 8% of the budget comes from that source.

For the rest, they rely on the generosity of large corporations, charitable organizations, and scout troops, down to individuals filling decorated tennis cans full of change. They've come up with a myriad of opportunities for individuals, groups or companies to help keep the doors open. Rooms can be sponsored, such as the Pasadena Firefighters Association did recently with one of the bedrooms. Meals for about 30 can be donated or prepared and delivered yourself for 6:00 dinner nightly. They have projects organized for volunteer groups to finish in just a day. Or donate as little as \$50 to be recognized as the house sponsor of the day.

Their wish list is long but not frivolous. Single serving packaged foods of all kinds, twin sheets, towels, liquid hand soap, earthquake disaster supplies like tents and new sleeping bags, crafts supplies, postage stamps and telephone calling cards, roses and wisteria for the garden, gift cards to Vons, Target and Walmart, etc. Contact Ronald McDonald House of Pasadena at 626-585-1588 or visit their website at www.PasadenaRMH.org.

Know of an interesting building or garden that might interest our readers? Contact me at C.Bertrand@TheMtWilsonObserver.com

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

By Pat Birdsall

What's In A Number?

No wonder there are no mockingbirds on Catalina Island--some idiot told them the trip was only 23 miles! I feel almost as stupid as the woman who asked her friend when the store, Tuesday Morning, was open. I can't count the number of times I've heard The Four Preps sing "26 Miles Across the Sea." I had it going through my head the night before the trip as a matter of fact, so what do I write? 23 miles...Egad! Color me embarrassed.

After reading about three break-in suspects who were apprehended in Georgia, my embarrassment eased a bit and I didn't feel quite so stupid. Two men and a woman were dismantling copper pipes and wiring in an abandoned nursing home. The building was clearly marked, "Caution!!! Gainesville Police Department K-9 Training Facility." When the officers arrived for work, the three thieves dropped their tools and ran. That was their second mistake. Trying to run from a whole unit of canines requires a collective IQ in the two digit range. Of course they might have thought K-9 referred to a facility that they obviously didn't spend much time in... School. I was feeling smarter by the minute.

Next, I happened on something else that perked me up even more. I read a short piece by Mervyn Saunders in the current Reader's Digest. It seems that he was deliberating over a new TV and asked the young salesman its country of origin. The salesman went into the stockroom and returned announcing, "Built in Antenna, sir."

By now I'm thinking that I'm bordering on "genius". Okay, okay, not even close, but feeling much better about my faux pas. So much better actually, that I think I'll listen to a few tunes on my iPod. Maybe "Six Days a Week" by the Beatles, "Fourteen Candles," by the Crests, or "Forty Ways to Leave Your Lover" by Paul Simon....or, or, or...

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SPORTS



View From The Couch

By Stanley J. Forrester

Do They Know Who They Are?

Lately the news has been filled with less than positive information about professional sports. The culprits have been the athletes, the fans, the owners, the coaches, and this week's latest bad actor, the officials. The games that we love to play and watch are suffering. Even that most revered game of golf has had the question of performance enhancing drugs arise. With so much going on I paused to consider just what does today's superstar athlete represent? Is he or she a role model, someone that adds to the fabric of life or are they simply over paid, spoiled, over indulged over aged adolescents?

The answer of course is yes - the sport stars are all those things. And, as in the rest of society they come in all shapes and forms. They come with all of the character flaws and all of the characteristics that are present in the world today. So why do we examine the sport star with such scrutiny? Why are we surprised when they behave badly?

What is the fascination and sometimes pleasure we appear to get out of their human weakness? They are no different than the rest of us; they are good, bad, and ugly. I would venture to guess that if you were to examine your work place you would find the same good, bad and ugly people. So, if that hypothesis is true, what is the reason that we spend so much time examining the sports star? There must be some reason, what is it?

My background is Midwestern/Southern - that is I was born in the Deep South and I spent my formative years in Southern Ohio. I tell you this because I think it

might explain my views regarding sports and why we have such a fascination with the athletes that play them, and why we demand that these sport stars be super guys. Growing up in our house baseball was king. There were eight kids in the family and the manager Dad, made nine. Each of us had a favorite player. My guy was Ted Kluszewski, the big left-handed first baseman for the Cincinnati Reds. At the dinner table you had to defend your guys' play, and Dad the manager would decide if you had a loafer or one eligible to be discussed in polite company. With this sort of discussion these players became a part of our daily life. Therefore the actions of your player on and off the field were important to you and the family table discussion. Your choice of hero said a lot about you. Can you imagine that game today? I don't think anyone in my family would take a chance picking a professional athlete as their very own.

You may not have played that sort of game, but somehow sports' took up a good portion of your time. When that happened you began to form a relationship with your favorite player, and his actions on and off the field became important. To youngsters these guys became our heroes. So, if they are heroes, you want to know everything about your hero. Today's youngster wears the jersey of his favorite player; he is connected to that player. If the player messes up, he takes a part of our dreams with him. And the couch becomes a sad place, for sports are important in our homes. Sports are important to our kids. For sports are still the place of dreams.

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The Beckham Craze

I'm trying to analyze why on earth I should be so fascinated with David Beckham who is young enough to be my grandson, or perhaps, great-grandson. But I am fascinated, from the very beginning as he and his "Spice Girl" wife and children began their long trek from the London airport. Could it be that he has a sincere look about him that enjoys celebrity but doesn't flaunt it!!! Who knows what attracts us ordinary people to those in the limelight!

In the days of Frank Sinatra, with every gal from 12-30 screaming and fainting at the sight of him, I preferred Bing Crosby. In fact, it took many years for me to listen to anything of Sinatra's. Those of us who liked the sound of Crosby, seemed able to enjoy him, his family and his music without such

dramatic outbursts every time we heard his voice.

In the days of my previous writing experiences, the only sports event I covered was Horse-racing, from the Santa Anita Derby each year, through the Triple Crown. I was amazed at how immersed one could get into the backgrounds of all of the trainers, owners and jockeys. It was most exhilarating to follow each horse and watch the betting and the many surprise endings.

I also enjoy the World Series, beginning with the play-offs in the Fall, but Soccer?? I had never watched a game, and still haven't, just excerpts of the Galaxy team while David Beckham has been on the front page of every publication in print for the past month or so. The only member of my extended family involved in Soccer was a grandson, who died much too young from asthma at the age of 25. His passion was music and was still in college at the time of his death, majoring in music composition. When in the early grades, like most of the youngsters, he had

a turn at Soccer. He was told to stand "right there" and when the ball came by, kick it!! Which he did, with less interest than a bee on the flowers he was busy watching at the time.

Now Beckham seems to be elevating the game of Soccer to a new level. He only has to "be there". His teammates don't seem to mind that he outshines all of them. Heaven knows, he takes himself seriously but not to an obnoxious degree, not seeming to mind if he makes a mistake now and then. So the shrieking and hoopla go on, at least long enough for the sports world to take greater notice of the game of Soccer.

It reminds me of what my mother once said about Hedy LaMar: It doesn't matter whether or not she can act, anyone that beautiful only has to "be".

- Pat Ostrye postrye@netscape.com

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