

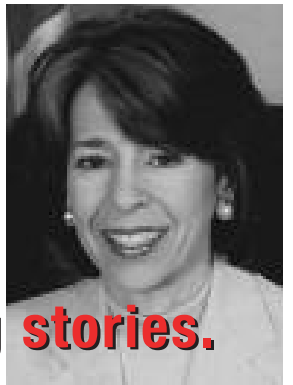
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Issue 326 • December 29 - January 4, 2006

## YEAR IN REVIEW



The *Weekly* takes a look back at 2005's most headline-making stories.

# letters & email



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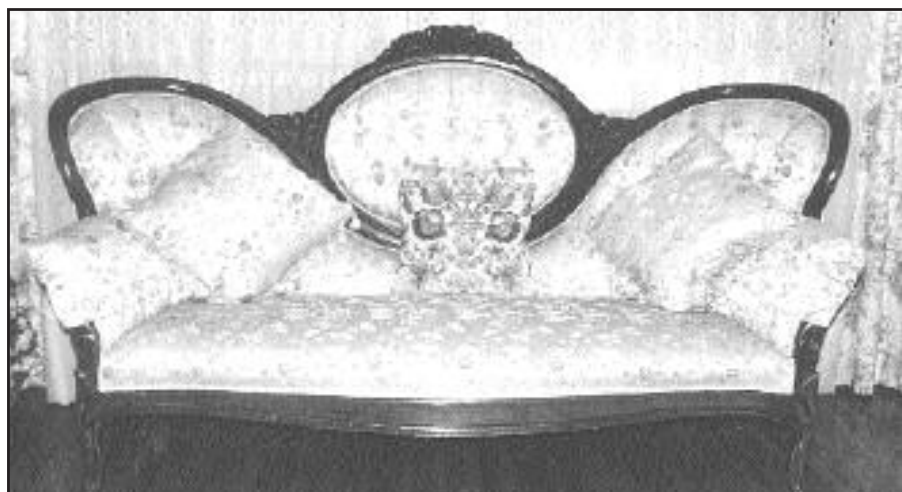


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## Murder Suspect Arrested

Information leads BHPD to suspect hiding in the attic of a South L.A. residence.

By Michelle Zenarosa

In a joint effort between detectives and special response team, last Thursday the Beverly Hills police officers arrested Nathan Hall, the man suspected of attacking two painters, leaving one dead and the other critically injured.

The crime occurred Dec. 14 at 6:45 a.m. when Hall, 50, allegedly got out of his vehicle and stabbed 75-year-old Helmut Mende, who was painting the wall of the parking lot near the Wells Fargo building in the 9300 block of Wilshire Boulevard at Crescent. Mende's co-worker, Jurgen Hapke, came to his aid and was subsequently stabbed in the chest. Hapke was later pronounced dead at the hospital. Mende sustained serious injuries, but has since been released from the hospital.

This is the first homicide in Beverly Hills in four years.

As a result of an on-going investigation by Beverly Hills detectives, an arrest warrant was obtained for Hall. When police officers

arrived at the suspect's residence in South Los Angeles near 39th Street and Budlong Avenue, further efforts were made to contact the suspect via telephone with no response. Furthermore, family members inside the residence denied that Hall was present.

After several attempts to reach Hall, the department's special response team made a forced entry and found Hall hiding in the attic, covered with a mattress and insulation materials. After repeated demands by the police, Hall surrendered and was taken into custody without further incident.

Hall was taken to the Beverly Hills police jail and booked on suspicion of murder. He is currently being held without bail.

According to the police, Hall has an extensive criminal history including alleged acts of violence. At the time of his arrest, Hall also had a parolee-at-large warrant, meaning he was on parole and officers were unable to locate him. Due to a continuing investigation, the police could not release



*Murder was the case: crime scene*

the details of Hall's criminal history or if he had previously committed murder. Police would also not release the details of his parole.

Detectives are looking into the possibility of charging Hall's family members with harboring a criminal and are reviewing the evidence, according to BHPD Captain Robert Curtis.

"Beverly Hills has experienced one or two murders a year and we've been very fortunate that in four years this is our first one and our detectives do an outstanding job," Harris said. "When we have a murder we put

virtually every detective on it if there are still leads."

Hall will be arraigned at Beverly Hills Superior Court and charges will be brought to the District Attorney's Office this week. Currently, photos of the suspect are being withheld pending further follow-up investigation with additional witness interviews.

According to officials, the case is labeled an open investigation and any further details, including the information that lead detectives to the suspect and any motive, is being withheld at this time.



## 2006 BUSINESS TAX RENEWALS

**The City of Beverly Hills announced that 2006 Business Tax renewal forms are being mailed to all registered businesses in the city.**

**Business taxes are due, in full, by the January 31, 2006 deadline. Unpaid taxes become delinquent on February 1, 2006. Penalty and interest charges accrue on late registrations at a monthly rate of 10% and 1.5%, respectively.**

**Section 3-1-201 of the Beverly Hills Municipal Code requires all businesses located or operating in the city to register and pay their taxes each calendar year. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in an estimated tax liability and legal prosecution.**

**For information regarding business tax renewals/registrations, please contact the City's Administrative Services Department at 310.285.2427.**



## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The City Council of Beverly Hills, at its REGULAR regular meeting to be held on **Tuesday, January 3, 2006, at 7:30 p.m.**, in the Council Chambers of the City Hall, 455 N. Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; will hold a public hearing to consider:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS AMENDING REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO COMMON INTEREST DEVELOPMENTS, AND, AMENDING THE BEVERLY HILLS MUNICIPAL CODE

At its meeting of September 29, 2005, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution recommending that the City Council adopt a recommended ordinance to the City Council which would amend Article 7 of Chapter 2, Title 10 of the Municipal Code regulating common interest developments or "CIDs" (e.g., condominiums, housing stock cooperatives, planned unit developments and community apartments); Article 28 regarding multi-family residential development standards; Article 30 regarding Architectural review criteria; Article 31 regarding Development Plan Review standards; and the City's General Plan to reflect that these changes will be consistent with the goals and policies of the Housing Element. The proposed ordinance would replace an interim ordinance approved March 3, 2005 and extended on April 4, 2005 to March 2006 which regulates Common Interest Developments, including conversions from apartments.

This project has been assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City, and no significant environmental impacts are anticipated; therefore, a Negative Declaration has been prepared.

All interested persons are invited to attend and speak on this matter. Written comments may also be submitted and should be addressed to the City Council, c/o City Clerk, 455 N. Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210 and should be received prior to the public meeting/hearing.

Please remember, if you challenge the Council's action in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the hearing before the City Council or in written correspondence delivered to the City, either at or prior to the hearing.

If there are any questions regarding this notice, please contact the Community Development Department at 310.285.1123. Copies of the interim ordinance are available for review or purchase in the Community Development Department, Room G-40, 455 N. Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, California.

BYRON POPE, CMC  
Acting City Clerk

# people & profiles

Los Angeles historian and longtime member of the Beverly Hills Historical Society Marc Wanamaker has once again put pen to paper in his new book, *Early Beverly Hills*, an homage to all that set the foundation for the famous city, from its true beginnings in the late 1800s through its thriving years of the 1940s.

Tell us about your company, **Byson Archives and Productions**.

I formed Byson Archives in 1971 because I was writing this encyclopedia on the history of the motion picture studios in the U.S. It is named after an early film company called the Byson Film Company in 1909, which was the second company to come to Los Angeles to make films. It turned into productions when I produced several documentaries in the late 1970s, early 1980s on film history. I've worked on many feature films and documentaries for many years and book projects, like "The Last Tycoon" for Paramount starring Robert DeNiro with the art department. They would ask, "We need the setting of an early movie studio in the 1920s to shoot our scenes." And I would show them pic-

tures and come up with the actual standing sites where they could shoot



Marc Wanamaker brings "Early Beverly Hills" back to life. recreate a period. The latest film was "The Aviator", and in there you have shots of filmmaking in the 1920s and 1930s.

**You have worked as a Los Angeles historian for nearly 40 years. How did your passion for Beverly Hills history begin?**

In 1969, I was with the American Film Institute; I was one of the first three employees of the AFI on the West Coast. We were given the job of going into Greystone Mansion in Beverly Hills to repair and restore as much as we could. We

put several million dollars into that building to make it into a film school of advanced studies. We literally were cleaning and shoveling dirt and dung out of windows from pigeons living in the rooms and nobody cared to shut the windows. At the time, the city more or less abandoned Greystone Mansion itself because Greystone was really a reservoir site for the city and they really didn't care about the building. AFI was a really good company to bring in and put money into it and make some use out of it. Unfortunately, other management of the American Film Institute did not care about the building as much as we did and allowed it to go back into a state of disrepair, which gives the American Film Institute a bad name in Beverly Hills. But I have to remind people that the first eight years people from the AFI did care about it.

**Your new book, *Early Beverly Hills*, is Part I of II. What made you want to write it?**

I've been a Beverly Hills historian for 30 years; that has a lot to do with it; and I was one of the first members of the Beverly Hills Historical Society when it was formed many years ago. I was already involved with the Beverly Hills Public Library with doing exhibits on Beverly Hills history and I have my own photographic and informational archives on the history of Los Angeles, and of course a big

section on the history of Beverly Hills. Many of these photographs and information came from movie studio research departments which I worked in for many years during the 1980s.

**How did you prepare to write the book?**

[Publishers] Arcadia Books said, "Our format is limited. You only have 128 pages. So we would suggest you split it into two volumes; do an earlier version and a later version." So I came up with the dates of 1880-1940 for this book and we called it *Early Beverly Hills* and the next book, which we don't have a title for, will be from 1940 on, because there's a lot of information from 1940 on, let alone this one. This one had to be cut drastically. I have many more pictures than 200 pictures that appear in this book. You can imagine.

**What makes this book different from other books about this world renowned city?**

Many Arcadia Books have a picture and a caption and that's it. I really wanted to make this into something useful, more useful than just a picture book. So I sacrificed photographs to put more text in. I decided at the beginning of each chapter to actually put some history in there, an introduction of each one so the reader knows what's going on. Then they said, "That's too much, you have too much information." So

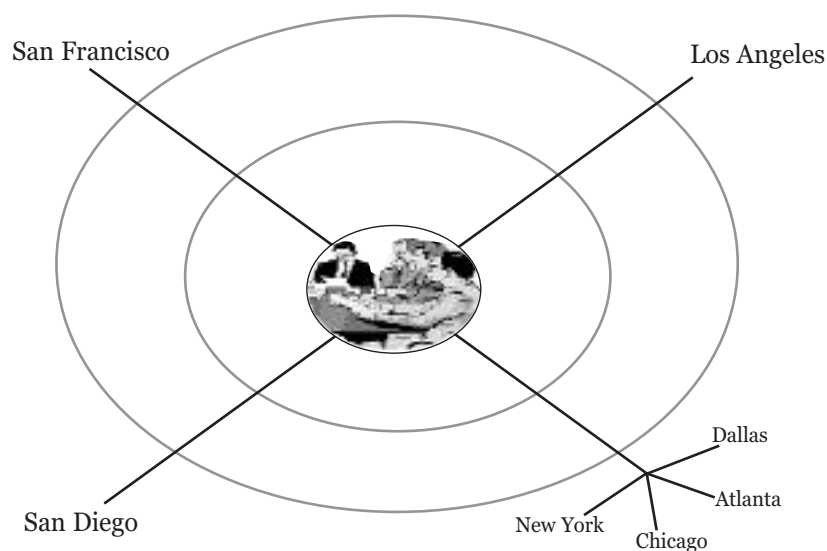
*people and pictures cont. on page 5*

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people and pictures cont. from page 4

they suggested starting with the information and the chapter heading and merge into the captions more of a history, and that was a tough job. I stuck in as much as I possibly could without sacrificing the size of the picture.

**You've written other similar books as well.**

I've written other books in various subjects-- one of them is called *Hollywood Haunted* in 1994, about a folklore of hauntings in Hollywood, which includes Beverly Hills. It's about homes, hotels, places of interests, streets, different landmarks that might be haunted. I also wrote *Hollywood Now and Then* in 1993, a picture book with tons of history in the captions and it's famous sights throughout Hollywood and buildings with photos before and after. Then I came out with another in 2005, *Los Angeles Past and Present*, with 68 sites before and after. I explain when it was built, who the architect was, who was there and why it's important.

**As an archivist, do you like writing?**

I don't mind writing, but trying to squeeze it into a format is very difficult. The text is the meat. I've been doing this for 30 years, and I've been going through my research materials which I have a lot of original clippings that have been combed from the research libraries. I've been col-

lecting clippings on Beverly Hills since the 1970s, and I've been to all the other archives around to see if there was anything I didn't have and I copied tons of material from the Beverly Hills Public Library. I found, to my surprise, some information that was wrong or misinformation or no information, and I was shocked to think I have information on this particular site or place. It turned out I had to do original research again on certain things.

**What type of research?**

The formation of Beverly Hills was formed as a city, but there were different class cities which I wasn't aware of. At the very beginning when it formed in 1914, it was more of a corporate entity and not an elected body. In other words, there was no mayor. I looked into this a little deeper and found out there was this corporate body, meaning a corporate board of directors, and that the president of the corporation would evolve every two years and that was sort of the unofficial mayor all the way until 1927. So from 1914 to 1927 there was no mayor and no City Council. After this honorary 'mayorship' of Will Rogers in 1926 happened people started to think about this and then they applied to the state of California to be a city first class, which means you have to have an elected body, a mayor, the whole works and that's when they did it. To me, that was kind of a surprise and it was under the radar and I actually had to write about it.

**How do you feel Beverly Hills has preserved its historical elements?**

Traditionally, Beverly Hills in the 1920s to 1940s, the community at the time was diverse with extremely rich people and you had apartment dwellers and small, single-family residences. Historically speaking, when you have your historic buildings around, your cultural centers like theatres, restaurants, stores, these are places where people felt at home. For example, the Brown Derby, which used to be on the corner of Rodeo and Wilshire, was a gathering place for the rich and famous and the unseen, the normal person who lived and worked in Beverly Hills. This was a real community melding the famous with the not-so-famous. That was an unusual factor in its cultural development.

But by the time the 1970s came around a lot of the old-timers were dying off, people moved away, new people moved in, including the Persians after the fall of Iran, and bought up properties that were kind of floundering and rejuvenated everything and it was quite a big deal. People call it the "Persian invasion", but in a way it wasn't really an invasion, it was a rejuvenation for the schools and everything. The negative point about it was that these people came with money and they needed to buy a place and they just bought it. That means that things changed drastically for values of the properties which is an artificial change. So [there was] a lot of negative feeling about that I remember, but Rodeo Drive was also

going down hill with businesses closing. This was a new life. Up until that time the community was sort of in suspension and all of a sudden it was growing again and went down in the 1980s, and now it's thriving. We have still lost our historical buildings though.

**In the 1980s, you started your preservation efforts in Beverly Hills serving on various committees to stop the demolition of the Beverly Theatre, and more recently demolition involving the construction Montage hotel.**

The famous Beverly Theatre at Beverly and Wilshire with the onion-domed architectural detail was built in 1923 as the first movie theatre in Beverly Hills and was dubbed "Theatre For The Stars." The Warner Theatre, known as the Warner Beverly Hills Theatre, a beautiful art-deco treasure at Canon and Wilshire, was the first one I fought to fight demolition of. I lost that battle and it took two years of committee meetings and everything to convince the City of Beverly Hills and Columbia Savings and Loan that owned it to make it into a city theatre. But they didn't care about it and they got their way. Then they went under and it was all a moot fight.

Now come to modern times, the Beverly Theatre, which was going to be demolished because of the new [Montage] hotel project on Beverly and Wilshire. The Beverly Hills

people and pictures cont. on page 15

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## Rise and Shine, Home Away From Home and Spice Up Your Life

By Irv Rudman

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Need a little bit more help waking up in the morning? Indulge in a steaming cup of premium coffee made from freshly ground beans. Our coffees are guaranteed to help you get your day off to a great start.

Still following the Atkins craze? Not to fear, The Bagel Factory also offers 15 kinds of home-made Sonny's soups including non-dairy, low fat and vegetarian recipes. As always, our soups are made fresh every day and include hand cut veg-

etables, pure filtered water and no starch or fillers. And for those of us watching our waistlines, there's also a great selection of sandwiches including Portobello mushroom, white fish and the ever-popular tuna melt. Salads make a great accompaniment to any meal and come in four delicious varieties.

For your convenience, Challah bread is offered every Friday and a selection of Artisan breads are available daily. Party platters can be custom made at any time. Just be sure to give us a little notice, so that we can use the freshest ingredients possible.

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# from the hills of beverly



## Goldman, Salter, Haft and Land Honored

Notes on the sports media and the Howard

By Rudy Cole

New reality for California: If you want to be popular, make movies and never run for governor. Come to think of it, why couldn't **Gray Davis** begin a new career as a political consultant on "Commander in Chief?" What the show lacks in credibility it makes up for in fine performances. "West Wing" continues to be the most authentic portrayal of government and political campaigns now on the tube. What is good about both shows is that it helps raise viewer interests in government.

"West Wing" hit a low on sensitivity Sunday when it aired a rerun. In this episode, the **John Seymour** character-- the former White House Chief of Staff and more recently Democratic nominee for Vice President, faces questions about his health and specifically his heart. Last week Seymour died of a heart attack. At the very least, a closing memorial might have been added.

Speaking of television, an era has certainly passed as ABC closes 35 years of carrying Monday Night Football. The *Los Angeles Times* sports TV/radio critic, **Larry Stewart**, chose the moment to continue his decades long vendetta against the late **Howard Cosell**. Stewart is usually balanced, fair minded and worth reading, except when it comes to Howard.

Stewart describes many personal conversations and interviews he had with Cosell, none of them flattering. Maybe they were as he wrote, but Cosell is not here to give his version-- and that makes Stewart's column less than generous. For years, Stewart had nothing but venomous words about Cosell, often citing Cosell's negative opinions about the sports print media. However, Howard had a years-long friendship with a far more memorable *Times* writer, **Jim Murray**.

Cosell was certainly acerbic, cantanker-

ous, beyond caustic and very egotistical. But he was also totally honest, fearless, informed and, most of all, highly entertaining. No, that might not be the best of Howard. He had the guts to make a lonely stand for **Muhammad Ali** when the greatest was pilloried over his stand on the draft. Whether or not they were right, and I had my doubts then and now, Howard defended the free speech, free dissenter stance, as he did throughout his career. Funny, not one word about any of this in Stewart's testy column.

Not always a fan favorite, it was comforting to see so many Howard pictures in the stands. Also noteworthy, although other news programs Monday evening, including Channel 5, spent many minutes on a tribute to Howard, ABC's Channel 7 gave the event a quick minute with no tribute to Howard.

\*\*\*

Back at home, supporters of Fire Chief **Robert Cavaglieri** lost the battle, but maybe not the war. Fire department insiders have told this column that the city manager has told the firefighters association that this will be the last time a chief is selected from outside the department. They have been assured, according to our very reliable

source, that the next chief will be one of their own.

The department will soon have a new chief, one from outside, but having survived a very cumbersome and exhausting process that included present fire department personnel.

Cavaglieri will be missed, but at least the city is making the right moves to maintain department morale by assuring top echelon members that they will indeed have a crack at advancement to chief. Of course, the new chief could be 21-years-old and serve for 50 years. Could explain why fire folks are hoping for a "mature" leader.

\*\*\*

Two of our best will receive special honors later this month when the Beverly Hills Theater Guild presents both with the very prestigious "Spotlight" award on Sunday, Jan. 29 at a dinner at the Four Seasons-- the hotel not in but "at" Beverly Hills.

**Janet Salter**, board chair, served for 10 years as president of the Guild. She and husband Maxwell, "the Mayor", are the principal donors of the Guild's major playwriting competition. They are also legendary givers to a wide range of philanthropies and, because of their support for public education, the school district named the high school theater for them.

**Sooky Goldman** was the founding president of the Guild and conceived and created the world famous **William O. Douglas** Outdoor Classroom, (WODOC).

from the hills cont. on page 8

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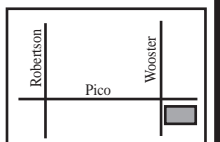
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from the hills cont. from page 7

More than that, both represent a Beverly Hills tradition: Strong women making a difference.

Sooky & Sam Goldman are very special treasures. Although not as prone to community leadership roles as Sooky, Sam has always been the silent partner, supporter of his legendary spouse. It was Sooky who put together the first true team of candidates that reflected the city's concerns about runaway variances. It was Sooky who conceived the premise of the Maple Counseling Center, it was Sooky who organized the first, major school bond election and so much more. Never interested in running for office, and she could have won anytime she had wanted, this is a far better place to live because of Sooky Goldman. Not too surprising, her son David married a strong woman community leader, Myra Lurie, president of the Board of Education.

You can support the Guild, give appreciation to Janet and Sooky and have an excellent evening by attending their tribute event.

If you received an invitation, return it soon and if not, call (310) 273-3390 for information.

Another very outstanding duo will also be feted this month: Beverly Hills' Combined Properties chair/CEO Ronald S. Haft and West Hollywood Mayor Abbe Land will jointly receive the Sheldon Andelson Award from Alternative Living for the Aging (ALA) at the Shutters, unfortunately, on the same night Sooky and Janet will be

honored, Jan. 29. Somehow, I hope people will try to make both.

Haft has quickly become a major player in both real estate and worthy causes. His company now owns and manages 40 shopping centers and mixed used projects and he has taken a leadership role in many civic and cultural groups, including LACMA and Children's Charities Foundation.

Land is not only mayor of West Hollywood, she is co-director of the Los Angeles Free Clinic. She has been an active leader in West Hollywood since its founding in 1984.

The late Sheldon Andelson, for whom the award honoring Haft and Mayor Land was named, once practiced law in Beverly Hills before creating his own headquarters at San Vicente and Santa Monica in West Hollywood. Andelson also created a new concept in dining on our borders with Trump's at Melrose and Robertson, now Morton's.

ALA is truly an outstanding charity. It has counseled 24,000 people and matched homes for 7,769 seniors so that they can have a safe, friendly housing alternative. Call or e-mail me for more information. (More on both Haft and Land after the event.)

\*\*\*

Thankfully, my own organization, Jewish Vocational Services, will hold their first ever "Texas Hold 'Em" poker party on a different January day, the 25th. The novel dinner-card challenge will be at the Friar's

of Beverly Hills with an early dinner at 6 p.m. so that you can start the cards moving by seven.

Whether or not you are lucky, you will help benefit an outstanding agency with a marvelous slogan: "Building Better Lives. One job at a time." For information and conditions of play, call (323) 761-8888. Don't be concerned about technical skills. Plenty of people will explain the rules and I assure you, I will hold bust hands all night.

\*\*\*

If you were out and about Beverly Hills during the holidays, you saw how many more people were on our streets, including Rodeo Drive, than in more recent years. Tourists and locals packed our stores and restaurants in record numbers. You could not get a reservation at the Peninsula, Hilton, Beverly Hills Hotel and Regent Beverly Wilshire restaurants and the same was true of most of restaurants such as Spago's. Retail space is hard to find, anywhere. The Rodeo Collection is now completely rented and about to open a fine dining Kosher steakhouse-- one with a huge New York following.

Rudy Cole served for eight years as a member and chair of the city's Recreation and Parks Commission. He also was President of the Greystone Foundation and served on three other city committees. Rudy can be reached at: Rudy@bhweekly.com.

# briefs

## Beverly Hills Alley Clean-Up and Bulky Item Pick-Up Scheduled

In order to keep alleys clean and free of debris, the City of Beverly Hills offers regularly scheduled alley clean-up and bulky item pick-up for residents. On the north side of Santa Monica Boulevard, alley clean-up is scheduled on the first and third week of each month. South of Santa Monica Boulevard, alley clean-up is scheduled on the second and fourth week of the month.

Remember to call customer service at (310) 285-2467 prior to placing your items in the alleys. City customer service staff will need your address and the type of bulky item, and will inform you of the pick-up schedule in your area.

If you need to remove any construction material, call customer service to request a temporary bin. The city collects this material through a commercial contractor. The fees vary depending on the size of the bin.

## City Leaders Endorse Assembly Candidates

Several city leaders have publicly announced their endorsements for Abbe Land and Mike Feuer, two candidates who plan to run for the 42nd Assembly District primary in June 2006, replacing

briefs cont. on page 9



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briefs cont. from page 8

Assemblymember Paul Koretz, who will end his six-year term. The district consists of much of the Westside including Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, Brentwood and Studio City.

Official Beverly Hills endorsements for Land include Beverly Hills elected officials, Mayor Linda Briskman and Vice Mayor Steve Webb, former Councilmembers Donna Ellman Garber, MeraLee Goldman, Vicki Reynolds, Max Salter, former treasurer Joan Seidel and former Board of Education members Lillian Raffel, Betty Wilson and AJ Willmer.

Those announcing endorsements for Feuer include current Beverly Hills Councilmembers Barry Brucker, Jimmy Delshad and Frank Fenton; BHUSD Superintendent Jeff Hubbard; Board of Education President Myra Lurie; Board of Education members Nooshin Meshkaty and Alissa Roston; Beverly Hills Education Foundation Board member Eileen Kahn; former Mayors Allan Alexander, Les Bronte, Mark Egerman, Tom Levyn and Joe Tilem; and former Board of Education member Virginia Maas.

Land currently serves as Mayor of West Hollywood and Co-CEO of The Los Angeles Free Clinic, the oldest continuously operating free clinic in the nation. According to Land, her major issues include tenants' rights, the creation and maintenance of affordable housing, economic development, social services and the environment.

Feuer, an attorney, is also a former L.A.

City Councilmember. While serving on the council, he led the committees on business tax reform, children's and seniors' issues and ethics in government, according to his website [www.mikefeuerforassembly.com](http://www.mikefeuerforassembly.com). He also served as director of Bet Tzedek Legal Services, where he oversaw free legal representation for more than 50,000 elderly, poor and disabled clients on issues including health care, nursing home abuse, consumer fraud and slum housing.

### Urban Design Project Wins Prestigious Crown Community Award

The Beverly Hills City Council accepted the Crown Community Award for the Urban Design Project at the Dec. 20 City Council meeting. The award, given by *American City and County Magazine*, was officially presented to the city at a Dec. 8 National League of Cities reception in Charlotte, NC.

"It's wonderful to be recognized for the Urban Design Project," Deputy City Manager David Lightner said. "The project built on the city's great strengths as a walkable, uniquely urban shopping experience. The results have benefited the entire community."

The Urban Design Project revitalized five streets in the Business Triangle to encourage more foot traffic with a "park-once and walk" approach to shopping. The enhancements included wider sidewalks, new streetlights, street furniture, crosswalks and plantings. The upgraded streets include Rodeo Drive, Beverly Drive, Canon Drive, Dayton Way and Brighton Way. For example, Rodeo



Urban Design Project wins Crown Community Award: Pictured (L-R) are Deputy City Engineer Ara Maloyan, Mayor Linda Briskman and Project Manager Daniel Cartagena.

Drive now has pedestrian-friendly sidewalks with ample promenade area, mid-block crosswalks and a new median planted with king palm trees, white-blooming agapanthus and dwarf philodendrons. Some of the more striking additions to the triangle are the modern streetlights.

The \$18 million project won the award based on its uniqueness, value to the community and innovative financing. Beverly Hills was one of six communities recognized out of more than 50 considered. Property owners on the five streets, including the city, jointly funded the project.

### January Is "Navel Oranges Month" At The Beverly Hills Farmers' Market

January is "Navel Oranges Month" at the

Beverly Hills Farmers' Market, located on the 9300 block of Civic Center Drive from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

On Jan. 1, the Beverly Hills Farmers' Market will be closed.

Jan. 8 welcomes back "The Kid Zone!" held the second Sunday of every month. The Kid Zone will feature pony rides and petting zoo for a small fee from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. In addition, come to the Market to learn about the Friends of the Beverly Hills Public Library. They'll be on-hand to give out information about the library's programs and collections from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Jan. 15 will feature live entertainment at the Market.

If you're looking for a four-legged addition to your family, don't miss Jan. 22 at the

briefs cont. on page 15



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# sports & scores



## BHHS Girls' Basketball Team Finishes Second In Tournament

Norman boys' basketball team wins at Palm Desert.

By Steven Herbert

The Beverly High girls' basketball team was unable to hold a four-point lead in the final minute, losing to undefeated Los Angeles Marymount, 55-52, in the final of the Marymount High School Basketball Classic Dec. 21.

The Sailors (11-0) made seven free throws in the final 55 seconds as the Normans (5-3) were called for two offensive fouls, committed a turnover and Bettina Shore missed the front end of a one-and-one.

Allison Galer missed a shot with two seconds to play in Beverly Hills' final opportunity to regain the lead after Marymount pulled ahead 53-52 with 13 seconds left. The Sailors added two insurance free throws after Galer's miss for the final margin.

The scored was tied 36-36 entering the

fourth quarter. Junior forward-center Amie Harris scored 13 of her 18 points in the fourth quarter for the Sailors, making five of seven free throws.

Norman senior forward Rosie McClaren scored eight of her 15 points, while freshman guard Sophie Payson scored six of her 22, including two of her six three-point baskets.

Beverly Hills trailed 23-19 at halftime, but outscored Marymount, 17-13, in the third quarter as Payson scored 10 points, making two three-point baskets.

The Normans were outscored, 9-5, in the first quarter, as Payson went scoreless. Both teams scored 14 points in the second quarter, with Payson scoring six points on two three-point baskets.

Galer added nine points, all in the second and

third quarters, while Gwynne Evans, Negin Mostadim and Shore each had two.

Evans pulled down a game-high seven rebounds and Galer six as Beverly Hills out-rebounded the Sailors, 24-20.

In other tournament games:

### Beverly Hills 47, Los Angeles Notre Dame Academy 35

McClaren and Didi Younesi each scored 11 points, all in the final three quarters, as the Normans won a first-round game Dec. 19 for their second victory of the season over the Regals.

Beverly Hills outscored Notre Dame, 15-7, in the second quarter taking a 22-13 halftime lead and 12-8 in the third, increasing its lead to 34-21 entering the fourth quarter.

Younesi scored nine points in the fourth quarter, making all three of her free throws, as the Normans were outscored, 14-13.

Beverly Hills outscored the Regals, 7-6, in the first quarter, with Evans scoring five points.

Evans added nine points, all in the first three quarters, Galer eight, all in the first three quarters and Mostadim and Shore four each.

The Normans defeated Notre Dame Academy, 50-35, in a nonleague game Nov. 28 at the Swim-Gym in the season opener for both teams.

### Beverly Hills 67, Los Angeles Shalhevet 19

Galer scored 16 points as the Normans won a semifinal game Dec. 20.

Beverly Hills outscored the Firehawks 10-3 in the first quarter and 16-6 in the second, taking a 26-9 halftime lead.

The Normans increased their lead to 45-17 entering the fourth quarter by outscoring Shalhevet, 19-8, in the third quarter. Beverly Hills outscored the Firehawks, 22-2, in the fourth quarter.

Younesi added nine points, Evans and McClaren eight each, Mostadim, Payson and Roxy Pirmia six each, Shore four and Lily Choi and Neeka Shayan two each.

Shayan led the Normans with 11 rebounds.

### What's Next?

The Normans are scheduled to play at Woodland Hills Louisville Tuesday at 7 p.m. and Lawndale Wednesday at 5 p.m. in nonleague games.

### Boys' Basketball

#### Beverly Hills 62, Palm Desert 55

George Medrano scored 19 points, Cosmo Morabbi 18 and Mabhod Zargar 14 for the Normans in a nonleague game Dec. 13 at Palm Desert.

Beverly Hills (5-4) led throughout and won for the fourth time in its last five games.

"They tried to make a few big runs and we contested the shots and made big plays," Norman coach Luis Turcios said.

Turcios called the Aztecs (5-3) "the best team we've played so far."

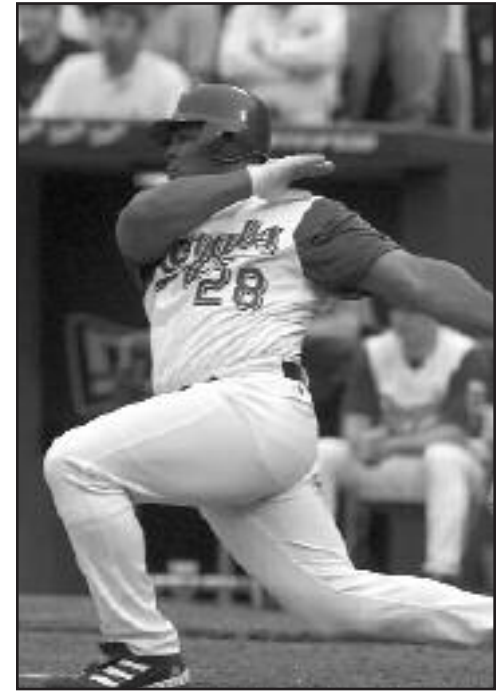
"They have size and they execute," Turcios said.

Turcios said he scheduled the game to simulate the atmosphere of the playoffs, where long bus rides to a hostile environment are common.

"It was a good test... and the kids responded," Turcios said.

Ben Smyth added nine points and Daniel Leisner two for Beverly Hills.

Morabbi made two three-point shots and Medrano, Smyth and Zargar one each.



Ken Harvey's future in professional baseball is uncertain after the Kansas City Royals declined to offer him a contract for the 2006 season.

### What's Next?

The Normans are scheduled to play host to Valencia Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in a nonleague game at the Swim-Gym. Beverly Hills lost to the Vikings, 59-57, in the seventh-place game of the 21st annual Simi Valley Varsity Tipoff Classic Dec. 3.

### Major League Baseball

Ken Harvey became a free agent when the Kansas City Royals declined to offer him a contract by the Dec. 20 deadline, but the American League team has an interest in re-signing him to a minor-league contract, general manager Allard Baird said.

Harvey, a 1996 Beverly High graduate, was limited to 12 games in 2005, mainly because of a back injury. He didn't play after May 18 and finished the season with a .222 batting average with one home run and five runs batted in.

Harvey, 27, tore an Achilles' tendon during an off-season workout recently and underwent surgery. The first baseman-designated hitter is expected to be sidelined for at least six months, a Royals official said.

Harvey, who played in the 2004 All-Star Game, was designated for assignment by the Royals Dec. 16, as they needed to make room for four free agent signees on their 40-man roster.

Under Major League Baseball rules, the Royals had 10 days to trade Harvey or he would have become a free agent if he declined to accept a minor league contract.

### College Football

David Oredugba, a 2004 Beverly High graduate, could play on some special teams for Northwestern in Friday's Vitalis Sun Bowl against UCLA, a university official said.

Oredugba, a redshirt freshman cornerback, has played in two games this season, but hasn't recorded any statistics.

He was named as the Wildcats' defensive practice player of the week for the week of the Purdue game, which Northwestern won, 34-29 Oct. 15.

Steven Herbert also covers sports for the Los Angeles Times and The Associated Press. He welcomes feedback and suggestions. He can be reached by e-mail at [StvHerbert@aol.com](mailto:StvHerbert@aol.com), by telephone at (310) 275-7943 or by fax at (310) 273-4519.

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# coverstory

## YEAR IN REVIEW

The *Weekly* takes a look back at 2005's most headline-making stories.

2005 has been a year full of breaking news in Beverly Hills.

This year, the City Council and Board of Education saw new faces, after months of debate the Montage hotel referendum passed, a former mayor was arrested, an increase in co-op conversions left some to fly the coop, long awaited air and soil sample results hit the presses, longtime employees retired, parking rates were on the rise, community rec center plans came to fruition, the council and school board came to a funding agreement and new developments were announced for Beverly Hills' future.

These are just some of the topics that made the news this year. The list is long, but the *Weekly* has narrowed it down to the most memorable and provocative headlines of 2005.

### FORMER MAYOR RESPONDS TO ALLEGATIONS OF ANIMAL NEGLECT

Rialto police investigate home of former Mayor Charlotte Spadaro after neighbors complain of foul odor from animal shelter.

Issue # 278, January 27-February 2, 2005



Police in Rialto were called to a house owned by former Beverly Hills Mayor Charlotte Spadaro on Jan. 16 after neighbors reported a strong odor emanating from her property.

Spadaro operated an animal rescue facility on South Acacia Avenue in San Bernardino County, which she used to shelter more than 100 dogs.

Spadaro served on the Beverly Hills Board of Education from 1979-1983 and the City Council from 1984-1988.

She was defeated in her 1983 re-election run for the Board of

Education by newcomers Frank Fenton, Mark Eggerman and Betty Wilson at the start of their respective political careers. A few months later in early 1984, Spadaro ran for City Council and was elected in a political comeback.

Reports stated that police entered the house with oxygen masks and found a dead Great Dane in the garage freezer that had started to decompose after the freezer failed.

Police told the *Weekly* they found Spadaro's property to be in violation of city and animal control codes, with 150 animals and six of those animals identified as needing medical attention.

According to police, the interior of the house was very dirty-- there were animal feces, bugs and roaches. Police told Spadaro that she would have to comply with certain orders immediately.

Spadaro declined to offer specifics of the case to the *Weekly* and said she thought the story had been "blown out of proportion."

**Update:** Spadaro was later arrested in Redlands in July and charged with cruelty to animals and destruction of evidence following months of investigation.

Charlotte was arrested July 10 by Redlands police on an outstanding warrant from Rialto. According to Redlands Police Department Public Information Officer Carl Baker, the department received a call on July 9 from Spadaro's neighbor on the 100 block of Buena Vista Street. Neighbors said they heard several dogs and cats in the house. Upon arriving at the residence, Baker said no one answered the door, but police obtained a search warrant and found 21 dogs and cats, and all were in good condition.

Spadaro reportedly bailed herself out of jail the same day.

Spadaro's son Jon was arraigned July 13.

Crispin said before the first weekly inspection by police, Spadaro and her son allegedly rented a Penske truck which was later investigated by Riverside County police on Feb. 5 in Rubidoux, an unincorporated area outside the city limits, after people complained of a foul odor emanating from the truck. In it, detectives found more than 2,000 pounds of animal carcasses. According to Riverside County Det. John Whiting, when police opened the truck, which was rented under Jon's name, they found several trash cans and trash bags filled with dog and cat carcasses.

According to police, Spadaro said most of the ani- cover story cont. on page 12

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mals died of natural causes and she decided to keep them in the freezer for proper burial at later time.

According to Riverside County Deputy District Attorney Jim McGee, Spadaro originally represented herself, but has now hired an attorney who is reviewing the discovery.

**WHY THE C.O.C.-CRECY?**

**Citizens' Oversight Committee continues to discuss Measure K fund use, but the COC's policy continues to keep members tightlipped about what's really going on.**

**Issue # 278, January 27-February 2, 2005**

The second installment of Citizens' Oversight Committee members convened for its third formal meeting in early January to continue the two years work of the original COC. But without a final report presented to the board by the outgoing committee, questions remained about whether the incoming committee would face any challenges without the report and whether the lack of a sitting COC during the summer months would have any impact.

Much like with the last COC, the *Weekly* has experienced similar difficulties getting members on the record to give timely updates with regard Measure K funds and school modernization.

The COC is independent of the school district and the board, and while district staff is present at the meetings, their role is largely passive, other than to answer questions and offer information to its members.

The COC chairman is the only member appointed to speak to the press, with the last COC refusing to speak with the media except during public meetings.

Kris Vosburgh, Executive Director of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association (HJTA), who was quoted in a related *Weekly* article [issue #263] and who also served on the first COC for Prop. BB in 1997, said he thinks COC's have no real power: "The COC has no legal control or influence over the board. The only thing they have if they're willing to use it in a rare instance as it has been used is a bully pulpit. If they can get their newspapers to pay attention, if they think something is being done improperly, then maybe they can generate a story, which that is the sole benefit. But they don't have the power to step in and prevent something from happening."

**Update:** Six new members of the Beverly Hills Citizen's Oversight Committee have recently been selected replacing four members. But the new members declined comment about their background and newly accepted positions, and would not speak with the *Weekly*.

New members include Brett Cohen as a parent or guardian member; Harriet Borson, David Foldvary, Marcia Kamine and Carol Katzman as at-large members; and Lisa Crane Greer as the business organization member.

Foldvary is a 2001 Beverly High graduate and a 2005 graduate of Georgetown University. He also served as student board member from 2000-2001. Borson is Les Bronte's former sister-in-law. Lapinski, Bruce Horowitz, Julie Steinberg, Jennifer Terrell and Les Bronte are returning members. Richard Seff, Denise Deman Williams, Martin Perlberger and Rabbi Jacob Pressman did not return for additional terms.

The Citizen's Oversight Committee (COC) voted unanimously at a meeting in November to not communicate with the press unless the committee "communicates as one body", meaning communication will be done through Chairperson Lapinski.

Several members also expressed their disapproval of recent articles and actions by the press stating that individual members' opinions were misconstrued as opinions of the committee as a whole. Lapinski referred to the press as "sharks" and Katzman called the press "sneaky."

At the most recent COC meeting this month members discussed the improvement in the recent bids for Beverly Vista's Building B project. Currently the district has bid out 75 percent of the project with bids averaging more than 20 percent what was originally estimated by the Board of Education consultants.

Also discussed was the budget for the Science and Technology Center (STC) at the high school as the Board initially approved \$27 million. Currently, the costs total about \$31.5 million. The budget will go back to the board for approval once again in January of next year.

**BRISKMAN, BRUCKER AND FENTON ELECTED TO CITY COUNCIL, MEASURE A PASSES**

**Briskman re-elected, Brucker and Fenton win other two council seats and Measure A succeeds.**

**Issue #284, March 10-16, 2005**



City Treasurer Frank Fenton and Board of Education member Barry Brucker were elected Mar. 8 to the Beverly Hills City Council, placing first and second. Vice Mayor Linda Briskman followed in third place for re-election, and Measure A passed by a clear margin of votes.

Election returns were reported late due to a problem with the ballot card reader, and ballots from the polls could not be

read properly because some bar codes had been cut off.

At the official provisional ballot count conducted by the City Clerk's Office, Barry Brucker, who as of election day's vote count for one of three City Council seats placed second behind Frank Fenton, pulled ahead to take first place. Linda Briskman placed third.

Brucker won all 10 precincts in the polling place vote.

The final count showed Brucker with 4,606 votes; Fenton 4,568; and Briskman 4,115.

'Yes' on Measure A came in with 4,482, and 'no' with 3,898—a margin of 584 votes.

There were 8,584 ballots cast, which was a higher turnout than normal.

There are 22,112 active registered voters and 4,941 inactive voters in Beverly Hills.

Typically, about 25-30 percent of registered voters turn out for a municipal election.

Fenton served on the Board of Education from 1983-1991, spent the last four years as City Treasurer and now as an elected council member he will be the first to hold all three major positions in the city.

Brucker also served on the school board for the past seven years, from 1997-2005, and resigned before his term was over to take his place on the council.

Only the first place candidate will serve as mayor in the fourth year of his term. Unless the second place candidate runs for re-election and wins in the 2009 election, he will not hold the position of mayor during his term on the council.

Real estate investor Mike Hakim placed fourth with 1,936 total votes, followed by residential realtor Marty Geimer who almost tied for the fourth place spot with 1,896 total votes, coming in fifth.

The Measure A race passed with a total vote tally of 4,482 "yes" and 3,898 "no."

As of election night, teacher Jacob Goldstein placed sixth with 1,198 votes and attorney Allison Margolin finished last with 1,023 votes.

**Update:** Briskman, Brucker and Fenton were sworn in during a council ceremony Mar. 22.

**SIDE BY SIDE AIR AND SOIL TESTING BY CITY AND PLAINTIFFS SHOW SIMILAR RESULTS AT BEVERLY HIGH**

**City representatives say no signs of toxic air at Beverly, parents and students give mixed reviews and plaintiffs provide no comment.**

**Issue #290, April 21-27, 2005**



Results from recent soil gas and air sampling conducted by plaintiffs at Beverly High show no signs that students or staff are being exposed to unhealthy amounts of chemicals in the air, according to an April 2005 analysis completed by Camp Dresser & McKee (CDM) on behalf of the City of Beverly Hills. CDM analyzed the results of sampling of the soil gas and indoor air, taken in September 2004 by 3TM International of Houston, an environmental testing firm hired by plaintiffs, in an ongoing lawsuit revolving around the oil wells at the high school. Parallel sampling by CDM and 3TM showed similar results.

Comparing the sampling results from soil gas testing and indoor air testing allowed CDM to conclude that there appears to be no correlation between the chemicals found in the soil gas and the chemicals found in the indoor air at the high school. Rather, the CDM report concludes that the low and sporadic detections of chemicals in the indoor air appear to be consistent with what is expected for a school facility that uses many

products that contain common volatile chemicals such as inks, markers, cleaning products and art supplies. Both CDM and 3TM found one sample that exceeded the state health standard for chronic (extended) exposure to PCE, a chemical used in many types of cleaners. That sample was taken in a supply closet that contained solvents such as cleaning solutions.

**Update:** Ed Masry, the lead plaintiff's attorney in the oil well case against the city and school district, passed away Dec. 5 of complications of diabetes.

Judge Wendell Mortimer also recently ruled that the trial date regarding the lawsuit, alleging that emissions from the oil derrick and power plant on Beverly High's campus have been responsible for hundreds of cases of cancer and other health problems suffered by area residents and former students from the high school over the last 20 years, will also be changed from a tentative July 2005 to March 2006.

The case proceeds with discovery at this time.

**JUDGE AFFIRMS MONTAGE ELECTION AND EIR VALIDITY**  
**Court denies motions to invalidate election results and EIR; judge firmly questions the Alliance's arguments.**

**Issue #291, April 28-May 4, 2005**

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge David P. Yaffe denied motions by the anti-Montage group, Beverly Hills Residential-Business Alliance, to invalidate the election results of the Montage referendum at a hearing April 22.

Alliance attorney Robert Silverstein hoped the court would rule in the opposition's favor on the grounds that the city did not follow California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines and misleading information was presented in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) by the city and hotel developers.

In his tentative ruling, Yaffe ruled in favor of the city and the developers, but gave the



Alliance, city and Montage counsel representatives time to argue their points.

Shortly after attorneys Silverstein and Mitchell Abbott of Richards, Watson & Gershon, and Jim Colbert of O'Melveny and Myers, who spoke on behalf of the city and Montage, Yaffe kept his original ruling-- denying the Alliance's motion to file supplemental petitions, denying its motion to sup-

plement the record, denying motions by all parties requesting that the court take judicial notice of documents that are not in the administrative record and denying the petition for writ of mandate.

**Update:** After investigating an alleged violation of the Brown Act by the Beverly Hills City Council at a meeting in August 2004, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office issued a letter to the city March 17, 2005 applauding the city and its elected city officials for commitment to the Brown Act, and stating that the D.A.'s office has closed the case.

A loose collection of residents also filed two lawsuits in September against the City of Beverly Hills and Beverly Hills Luxury Hotels calling for an intervention in the appeal and an immediate stay order and writ to prevent the demolition of "three iconic historical resources in Beverly Hills," according to court brief obtained by the *Weekly*, including the onion-domed 1924 Beverly Theatre, the glass-walled 1926 Art-Deco Bekins building and the 1945 Canon Theatre. The group also asked for payment of attorneys fees and costs, but the motions were denied by the Court of Appeals.

The Court of Appeals also recently granted Alliance attorney Robert Silverstein a third extension to file the brief in the case against the Montage Hotel, with a new due date of Dec.12.

### **WEBSTERS AND OBLANDER RETIRE AFTER MORE THAN 20 YEARS WITH THE CITY**

**City officially says goodbye to longtime city clerk and CFO.**

**Issue #291, April 28-May 4, 2005**

City Clerk Nina Webster retired after nearly 20 years working in the City of Beverly Hills. Her last day was May 5.

Nina and her husband, Assistant City Manager Dan Webster, moved back to her hometown of Boise, Idaho. Nina has held the city clerk position since 1998. Before that she was the executive secretary to the city manager in 1985 and office manager in 1987.

Fire Chief Pete Bonano also retired May 31. Bonano served as chief since 2002 and previously worked as chief in Arcadia and Hermosa Beach.

In 1987, Dan began working in the city as the street maintenance superintendent, 1991 as the senior public works superintendent, 1992 as director of Public Works, 2001 as deputy city manager and 2004 as assistant city manager.

Former Chief Financial Officer Don Oblander worked in the city since 1980, when he became director of finance administration and chief financial officer in 2001.

Oblander's official last day was also May 5, but he continued to work through June and on an assignment basis.

Oblander said he may do consulting work and spend some time on his hobbies and travel during his retirement.

BHUSD Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Gary Mortimer also announced his retirement this year, along with Director of Human Services April Meadow after 31 years of service.

**Update:** Acting City Clerk Byron Pope has reportedly been offered the position of city clerk, with an official announcement to be made in the near future.

Scott Miller replaced Oblander as Director of Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer. The new BHUSD assistant superintendent of human resources is Sal Gumina and assistant superintendent of business services is Mick McClatchey.

### **THE PRICE FOR PARKING MAY INCREASE**

**The City Council considers raising the additional hourly rate in the city's public parking structures to generate more revenue.**

**Issue #293, May 12-18, 2005**

In the report submitted to the council for discussion, city staff recommended rates for monthly and hourly parking in some of the city's structures be increased beyond the CPI in order to compete with the privately owned structures at the current market rate. The council approved the recommended monthly rate increase for various parking structures throughout the city, but asked staff to conduct a market study of the private structures adjacent to city lots to determine an appropriate increase rate.

Staff originally recommended increasing rates by .25 cents beyond the one dollar rate per half hour currently in place. The increased rate would only apply to the additional fee charged every half hour beyond the two-hour free parking service, but will bring the city the increased revenue needed to cover the cost of services provided.

**Update:** At a Town Hall meeting in September, parking consultant, Pat Gibson, having had several outreach meetings with local businesses and residents, conducted a downtown parking fee study. In the study he examined and evaluated the two-hour free parking program.

The city, in an attempt to rectify current parking system's cost problems, looked to several improvements that causing the least negatives, outlined by Gibson.

These alternative systems included a validation program, a debit system in which the customers pays a nominal fee for parking, forming a business improvement system to assess costs, increase fees much higher than one dollar per hour after the two free hours, reduce funding to the library, police or other operations in the city, or increase taxes for residents and business to help pay for the cost.

Most merchants expressed disdain for the validation system proposal.

The cost of maintaining the current parking system is \$2.3 million per year. However, the current system revenue is only \$1.98 million per year.

The merchants main concern was the lack of parking, the perception of free customer parking and the incentive for customers to come to Beverly Hills compared to Westfield Center at Century City, which gives away three hours of parking for free, and The Grove, which gives retail merchants one-hour free validation tickets and restaurants two-hour free parking validations to their customers.

In November, in order to address revenue problems with the two-hour free parking program at public parking structures in the city, staff refined the three alternative options.

Currently, parking is free to customers for the first two hours.

Any change in fee structure will not become effective until after the 2005 holiday season.

### **COMMUNITY REC CENTER PLANS MOVE FORWARD**

**Plans to build a Community Recreation Center proceed, but crucial discussions about the facility yet to take place.**

**Issue #295, May 26-June 1, 2005**



Since the Community Recreation Center feasibility study was reviewed and endorsed at the Mar. 1 council meeting, staff has helped propel the project forward by continuing the community outreach program and meeting with the public to gain input on the desired components of the center.

Councilmember Steve Webb, who is also on the subcommittee for a possible rec center, has indicated that the council has set this project "as one of its highest priorities," and while the community outreach phase is moving quickly, he said no concept for the community recreation center has been agreed upon at this point. According to Webb, the concept of a community recreation center has been talked about for many years but was never acted upon. With the YMCA now closed he believes there is a perceived need in the community for a recreation center.

For Councilmember Frank Fenton, who was appointed to the council subcommittee for the community recreation center after being elected to the City Council in March, there has been a long-standing need in Beverly Hills to provide the community with a place for activities like indoor basketball or senior programs.

While the community outreach program proceeds, Councilmember Barry Brucker says he wants to ensure that the city's existing public facilities aren't being neglected. He is concerned that a community recreation center could come at the expense of upgrading city parks like Roxbury and La Cienega that already have many of the facilities for the public to utilize.

If pursued, Brucker has stated that Roxbury Park could have a legitimate soccer field and a rehabilitation of the park's senior center and basketball courts might help to cover some of the services proposed for the community recreation center.

Brucker believes that having a community recreation center is not the only option for providing such facilities. He wants to encourage the council to have adequate dialogue about some of these issues.

Along with the community outreach program, the council subcommittee is moving forward on the site development by seeking input for potential ground lease developments.

**Update:** The Sports Management Group, the consultant group hired by the city to assess the community's need for a recreation center, presented the final results from the Community Recreation Center survey at a City Council meeting this month. According to the consultant, results are "very positive" and consistent with past information collected from the first sur-

vey, focus group session and a community workshop.

The survey was launched on June 2 and concluded four months later on Oct. 17. A total of 1,073 surveys were completed of which 66 were city employees.

According to the survey, more than half of residents who participated in the survey reported "they would use the center at least one to two days a week, the proposed 300-seat capacity community room with kitchen is appropriately sized, open-park space is their preference for the development of outdoor activity space, fees should be charged to cover the operational costs of the facility, most of the would-be purchasers would purchase a family pass and non-residents should be charged a higher fee than residents to use the facility."

However, approximately 90 respondents expressed the need for expansion and upgrades at the La Cienega and Roxbury parks in the comments section for Question #13, "If the Center is built, what improvements would you also want to see at Roxbury and La Cienega Parks?"

Town Hall meetings open to the community are planned to take place in spring of 2006 upon completion of the consultant's designs. Funds have been appropriated so that the consultant can conduct an expanded needs assessment survey focusing on the specific features of a recreation facility.

More recently, the City Council approved an agreement between the city and Willdan for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) of the former Industrial Area east of Foothill Drive between Alden Drive and Third Street. The contract was approved for \$250,000.

**TENTATIVE JPA INCREASE REACHED  
BHUSD to receive an additional \$2.3 million.  
Issue #297, June 9-15, 2005**

A tentative agreement was made at a JPA liaison meeting between school district and city officials. The district will receive about a \$1.3 million increase for 2005-'06.

The city currently gives the school district about \$6.6 million annually in exchange for use of its facilities.

City Manager Rod Wood, Superintendent Jeff Hubbard, Vice Mayor Steve Webb, Mayor Linda Briskman, Board of Education President Alissa Roston and board member Myra Lurie convened reaching a decision on recommendations to make to their respective boards.

Wood announced that the district would receive an \$825,000 increase from the base JPA of \$6.6 million plus an additional \$500,000, for a total JPA increase of approximately \$1.3 million for next year. For 2005-2006, the district will receive a total of about \$7.9 million.

Wood added that the city will also provide for the annual consumer price index increase of about 3 percent, which would equal about an additional \$1 million over the four-year contractual agreement for a total increase at the end of four years of \$2.3 million.

Part of the agreement also includes increasing access to school facilities for the city's use by making recreational opportunities available to the community. The district and city are also looking into granting the fire department access to school facilities for training purposes.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION CANCELED  
Demeter is automatically re-elected; Meshkaty to become the first Iranian-American board member.  
Issue #307, August 18-24, 2005**



After the filing period for the Board of Education election ended Aug. 12, with only Myra Demeter and Nooshin Meshkaty running for two vacant seats, the Nov. 8 election has been canceled.

According to section codes 5328 and 10105 of the Candidate Handbook on the Los Angeles County Registrar's website, if there is no election and the number of candidates corresponds to the number of vacant seats, then the qualified person or persons nominated will be seated at the organizational

meeting of the board.

This is not the first time a Board of Education election has been cancelled. In 1989, the election was cancelled, leading to Fred Stern's and Dana Tomarken's re-election. More recently, for the first time in city history, the 1999 City Council election was canceled and Councilmembers Les Bronte and MeraLee Goldman were also automatically re-elected.

Meshkaty is the first Iranian-American to be appointed to the board. She is a 1979 Beverly High and USC graduate, who currently serves as El Rodeo PTA president, Beverly High PTSA Vice President, BHUSD Multi-Cultural Committee President and Beverly Hills Education Foundation board member. Meshkaty is also a Senior Network Manager at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena.

Incumbent Demeter was first elected to the board in 2001 and completed her first four-year term this fall. She worked as a math professor prior to being elected.

**Update:** Both Meshkaty and Demeter were sworn in Dec. 6.

**ROBINSONS-MAY BEVERLY HILLS STORE TO CLOSE BY SPRING 2006  
Owners will make a presentation to the City Council by January for possible new mixed-use development plans.  
Issue #320, November 17-23, 2005**



Federated Department Stores, Inc. agreed to terminate its lease on the freestanding Robinsons-May Beverly Hills store in Los Angeles with its current landlord, New Pacific Realty, announced last month.

A going-out-of-business sale is scheduled to begin January 29, 2006. The store, located at 9900 Wilshire Boulevard, will close in spring 2006 at a date yet to be determined. The Robinsons-May Beverly Hills store, with 240,000 square feet, was opened in 1952, and is one of the largest employers in Beverly Hills. The company expects to offer employment in nearby stores to management personnel in good standing and to the vast majority of associates.

**Update:** A detailed proposal to redevelop the property at 9900 Wilshire Boulevard was presented to a packed house at a joint study session with the City Council and Planning Commission this month.

According to the proposal, the existing site would be redeveloped as a mixed-use development, including residential, retail and restaurant uses, and a landscaped public garden.

Last month, a week after Federated Department Stores, Inc. announced it would terminate its lease by spring 2006 on the Robinsons-May Beverly Hills store property, The Beverly Hilton, the property adjacent to the site on 9900 Wilshire, also announced plans to redevelop for possible additional hotel rooms and residential units in a letter to the community and is now in the process of completing the plans to be presented next month. Oasis West Realty, owners of The Beverly Hilton, hired architect Gwathmey Siegel & Associates of New York to design new condominiums on the hotel's property.

If approved, the Robinsons-May site would include four luxury residential buildings totaling 252 units including 30 lofts and residences ranging from one to four bedroom units and penthouses, a 15,656-square foot retail unit and a 4,800-square foot restaurant unit both at the Santa Monica Boulevard frontage and a parking garage with 966 available parking spaces.

The proposed project will generate approximately \$1.62 million in new revenue to the city, about \$65 million over the next 30 years. A commercial alternative would only generate a new net revenue of \$867,000 annually. In upfront permit fees the BHUSD would also receive about \$2 million and \$5 million for Rec and Parks.

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briefs cont. from page 9

Beverly Hills Farmers' Market. The fourth Sunday of every month features Pets 90210 Adopt a Pet Today. The Pet Care Foundation will be at the Beverly Hills Farmers' Market with more than a dozen dogs and cats avail-

### Ranger-Led Tours Inside Greystone Mansion In January

Starting in January 2006, Park Rangers from the Beverly Hills Community Services Department, Art and Cultural Events Division will begin leading guided walking tours of



The League of California Cities presented the City of Beverly Hills with the Helen Putnam Award for Excellence at the Dec. 20 City Council meeting. The award was given in recognition of the Information Technology Department's Online Business Center (OBC), a web portal and software application that shows all activity requiring a permit at any location in the city. The award was announced at the League's conference in October. Pictured (L-R) are Mayor Linda Briskman, Director of Information Technology Keone Kali, City of Rolling Hills Estates City Councilmember and member of the League Board of Directors Judith Mitchell and League of California Cities Regional Representative Ann Marie Wallace.

able to go home with new owners.

On Jan. 29 celebrate the Chinese New Year featuring a Showcase of Superior Chinese Herbs & Tonics from local vendor, the Tea Garden & Herbal Emporium.

For more information on the Beverly Hills Farmers' Market, call the City of Beverly Hills Community Services Department at (310) 550-4796 or log on to [www.beverlyhills.org](http://www.beverlyhills.org).

Greystone Mansion and Estate Gardens.

Tours will take place the first Saturday of every month beginning Saturday, Jan. 7 and cost \$10 per person. Future tours will be held Feb. 4, March 4 and April 1 and begin promptly at 11 a.m. Tours last approximately one and a half hours and will cover the history, the gardens and the architecture of the Mansion. Comfortable walking shoes are encouraged and tours occur rain or shine so bring an umbrella if needed. There is limited disabled access at Greystone Estate.

Tours are limited to 20 participants and



The City of Beverly Hills Recreation and Parks Department is teaming up with Total Golf Adventures (TGA) to offer a Youth Golf after-school program that will be at all four Beverly Hills elementary schools beginning Jan. 17. Pictured above are kindergarteners and first graders at the Hawthorne School playground preview of the new program with instructor Tarra Bercegeay. For more information on the City of Beverly Hills Recreation and Parks Department's TGA Youth Golf Program, call (310) 550-4625 and log on to [www.beverlyhills.org](http://www.beverlyhills.org).

advanced registration is required. To register, call (310) 550-4753 and visit [www.beverlyhills.org](http://www.beverlyhills.org) for further information.

-- Compiled by Andrea Simpson and Michelle Zenarosa

people and pictures cont. from page 5

Historical Society, myself and Jill Collins, spoke in front of the Planning Commission at least a couple years ago to get them to incorporate the design of the onion-domed theatre; to keep the iconic look. They listened to us politely, but of course they weren't prepared to do anything. Unfortunately, several lawsuits were instituted at the last minute to try to stop or delay the project and I testified again recently during deposition about the historical importance of the building and its history. That failed and it was demolished over a month ago. It hurts me a lot and it's featured in the book, a shot of it is there under the "Motion Picture History of Beverly Hills."

#### Why did you want to get involved?

It's a real simple answer, and normally I'm just a historian, not a preservation advocate. But people have asked me on occasion over the years and said, "We just lost Pickfair. What did you do about it, or did the [Historical] Society do anything about it?" And to answer them by saying, "No, we didn't do anything," was quite embarrassing, even though we did try to do

something. So at least for the Beverly Theatre I spoke in front of the Planning Commission and it's on the record that the Historical Society spoke about it and put our two-cents in. That is the reason I did it.

#### How did you decide to focus your new book?

I start from chapter one to 10. The first is "The Post-Rancho Period," which is the early development and why it was named Beverly Hills and its original rancho name, The Gathering of the Waters or El Rodeo de las Aguas. This whole area has artisan wells and rivers and streams running underneath the foothills. Then we have "Burton Green and City Founders" and "The Beverly Hills Hotel", which was an extremely important issue because this is how they were trying to sell the city. I invited Robert Anderson to write that chapter with his pictures because he is the grandson of the founders of the Beverly Hills Hotel. Then I get into the estates because Beverly Hills is known for its estates. And then of course, Greystone--our most important estate in Beverly Hills. Then to "The Garden City" in chapter six and that's important because Beverly Hills was always known for being one of the most beautiful cities in Los Angeles with its

trees, curved streets, gardens and parks. The "Real Estate Boom" in chapter seven is important because it's how it all started; real estate speculation. Number eight is "Home of the Stars", because of what Beverly Hills is known for. If it wasn't for the stars, it may have not developed so quickly. The last one is "Landmarks and Infrastructure" and how it took a long time for the city to grow into what it is today.

#### It sounds like you have more of an affinity with Beverly Hills than other parts of L.A.

I do. I have a kinship with Beverly Hills because my mother tried to get me into the Beverly Hills schools when I was a young child and of course when they found out [we lived in the BHPO area] and we couldn't do that. But it didn't stop us from shopping and doing everything else more or less in Beverly Hills and West Hollywood.

It's a special place for me; it was a place to grow up in where you have these giant mansions and it was like a community in search of a community. It's an unusual place to live in of course and a very famous place. It's hard to make the distinction unless you step backwards and look at it from a different perspective, then you can see what it is. When you live there you don't notice as

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much.

#### When can we look forward to your next book?

The next book will be from 1940 on. I would say next year. I'm going to make sure Harold Lloyd is featured in it as well as other estates that came up later in the 1930s and 1940s. For example, there's pictures taken in the 1930s of San Vicente Boulevard, which is a big center median and that's where all the tracks ran for Pacific Electric which ran straight into Beverly Hills. And many other sites and places built after 1940s-- drive-ins and restaurants and buildings.

#### Where can people buy the book?

Arcadia Books are located in almost every chain bookstore and specialty book shops. Dutton's will have it and I will probably be doing a book signing there.

-- Interview by Andrea Simpson

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