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Beverly Hills Weekly

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Issue 396 • May 3 - May 9, 2007



Is Open Access good for kids?

Some teachers fear the proposed AP and honors program may lower standards, grades

cover story • page 10



letters & email

“Neighbors say Hawthorne Mural has to go” [issue 395]

I don't see anything wrong with the Hawthorne School sign; it reminds me of the signage over a Laundromat I used to use.

*Richard Baker
Beverly Hills*

In "Neighbors Say Hawthorne Mural Has To Go" [issue 395], Betsy Myers advocates the removal of the school mural on the grounds that it is not consistent with the city's signage policies. While we doubt neither the veracity of her claim nor her knowledge of the signage policies, it appears to us that there are numerous other "eyesores" that the city and its residents could be challenging. For instance, Robert Graham's "Torso", a headless nude female sculpture that beckons tourists on Rodeo Drive, is far more offensive than a cheerfully colored sign that proudly proclaims the place of our children's education. We would suggest that Mrs. Myers and her supporters leave the BHUSD lawyers and administrators to focus their time on educating our children rather than getting bogged down with petty issues of signage.

*Michael Tanenbaum and Arleen
Tanenbaum
Beverly Hills*

I noted, with interest, the signage articles that appeared in the newspapers regarding Hawthorne School.

The signage seems to have been independently authorized by parties, that acted in violation of rules and regulations and established policies of the school, the City of Beverly Hills and the School Board.

The painted sign, as it exists today, is offensive, a nuisance, and unnecessarily calls attention to the facility, at a time when security interests mandate a low key, rather than a trumpeting, approach.

I fail to understand why or how this sign was formulated, however, none is required, as most students and their families are aware of the location and purpose of the facility.

Please act in support of the parties who rightfully object to this eyesore and urge its removal.

*Sanford Weinstein
Beverly Hills*

I attended our Board of Education's April 24 meeting during which I watched a community member criticize our Board over the alleged unsightliness of a Hawthorne mural. [In issue 395], the Weekly ran a front page story on this subject.

Did you know that, at the same meeting, a different community member criticized our Board over our school district's recent violation of state law? Education Code places a firm cap on the caseloads of Resource specialists who provide special education to those students who need it. The purpose of the cap is to make sure that the services the teacher provides are not spread too thin. Our district administration has allowed the case-

loads of at least three Resource specialists to exceed this cap.

Furthermore, in response to an information request by BHEA, we discovered that several of our Special Day classes have class sizes in the high teens while some of our middle school elective classes have class sizes in the single digits. Special Day classes serve the neediest of our special education students, the ones who need the most individualized attention. A year ago, our Board had the opportunity to apply more resources toward special education but instead spent those resources on general education elective programs. Now, our district finds itself out of compliance with state law and finds itself with some special education class sizes twice as large as some of our general education classes.

I do not agree with our Board's priorities. I believe that special education students deserve better.

*Christopher Bushee
President, Beverly Hills
Education Association*

letters cont. on page 5

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

You can write us at:
140 South Beverly Drive #201
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

You can fax us at:
310.887.0789

email us at:
editor@bhweekly.com



SNAPSHOT



BEAUTY AND THE MAYOR ENCINO

Miss Teen Beverly Hills, Candice Hakimfar, and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa at the Israel Independence Day celebration on April 29th.

Beverly Hills Weekly

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Publisher & CEO
Josh E. Gross

Reporter/Editor
Amanda Parsons

Sports Editor
Steven Herbert

Contributing Editor
Rudy Cole

Photographer
Judy Okun

General Managers
Eiman Matian
Amanda Ashouri

Advertising Representatives
Diana Pourmoradi
Soshi Azadian

Legal Advertising
Michael Saghian

140 South Beverly Drive #201
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
310.887.0788 phone
310.887.0789 fax
CNPA Member

editor@bhweekly.com
All staff can be reached at:
first name @bhweekly.com
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Restaurateurs fuming over proposed smoking ban

City council delays formal hearing two weeks to gather further research

By Amanda Parsons

Beverly Hills City Council's ad hoc committee presented its findings for the implementation of an outdoor dining smoking ordinance at Tuesday's council meeting, provoking a public address session where city residents and health committee spokespeople expressed either support or concerns on the issue.

The ordinance proposes a ban on smoking in open air dining areas adjacent to public sidewalks, including some private patios accessible to the general public, and would exempt hotels and restaurants with private patios accessible only to patrons of the restaurant.

As a prelude to the staff report, the public was given an opportunity to speak on the proposed ordinance. A total of 14 individuals addressed the Council.

A clear division was represented in the speakers. With half the addresses speaking on behalf of

such organizations as the American Medical Association, American Lung Association, American Cancer Society, Healthy Solutions and the American Heart Association, all of whom are in support of the proposed ban for the possible improvement in local health.

The other half consisted of the newly formed Beverly Hills Restaurant Association consisting of property owners, restaurateurs and city residents. BHRA expressed concern over the proposed ordinance because the ban may affect restaurant business and further claiming there have been no studies done to prove the effect of second hand smoke on outdoor diners.

Various health organizations offered up statistics proving the harmful effects of second hand smoke on outdoor dining, contradicting the BHRA's statement.

city and schools cont. on page 9



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT/
PLANNING DIVISION
455 N. Rexford Drive

Beverly Hills, CA 90210-4817
(310) 285-1123
FAX: (310) 858-5966

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: Thursday, May 10, 2007

TIME: 1:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard

LOCATION: Commission Meeting Room A
Beverly Hills City Hall
455 North Rexford Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90210

The Planning Commission of the City of Beverly Hills, at its regular meeting on Thursday, May 10, 2007, will hold a public hearing beginning at 1:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, to consider:

Tentative Tract Map No. 68857, through which further subdivision of the Montage Project at **219 North Canon Drive** is provided. Tentative Tract Map No. 68857 would further subdivide Lots 1 and 2 of the previously approved and recorded Tract Map No. 54376 into six lots. The six proposed lots would be put to the following previously approved uses:

- Lots 1 and 2 - Hotel Uses
- Lots 3 and 4 - Up to 25 Condominium Units
- Lots 5 and 6 - Roof Structure and Roof Top Uses

As previously approved by the City Council and by the City's voters, hotel rooms will be located on floors 1 through 4 and part of the 5th floor (proposed Lots 1 and 2 contain these uses), and up to 25 residential condominium units will be located on the remaining part of floor 5, and on floors 6 and 7 (proposed Lots 3 and 4 contain these uses).

Tentative Tract Map 68857 will only divide two lots owned by Beverly Hills Luxury Hotel LLC and will not affect the public parking garage or public garden owned by the Beverly Hills Parking Authority.

This project was previously 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. In 2004, the City Council certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Beverly Hills Gardens and Montage Hotel Project. The EIR considered the proposed tentative map as part of the larger project. The Beverly Hills Gardens and Montage Hotel Project was approved by the City Council in June 2004 and approved by the City's voters in March 2005, and the proposed Tentative Tract Map will not change the appearance of the project or the mix of uses previously approved.

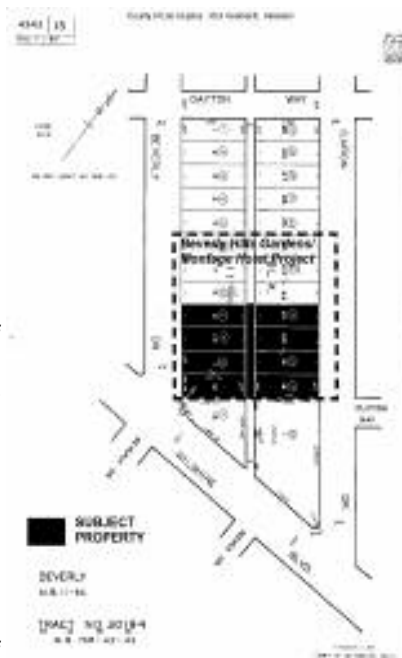
Any interested person may attend the meeting and be heard or present written comments to the Planning Commission. Comments on the proposed subdivision request may also be submitted in writing to the Community Development Department, Planning Division and written or oral comments will be accepted at the Planning Commission meeting at the date and time noted above.

If you challenge the Commission's action in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City, either at or prior to the public hearing.

If there are any questions regarding this notice, please contact the Community Development Department, Planning Division at 310.285.1122. The file, including the EIR prepared for the project, can be reviewed in the Community Development Department, Planning Division, by any interested person at 455 North Rexford Drive, Room G-40, Beverly Hills, CA, 90210.

For updates regarding the meeting, an information line provides a recorded message at 310.285.1165.

Rita Naziri
Senior Planner



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

CITY CLERK
BYRON POPE, CMC
455 N. Rexford Drive

Beverly Hills, CA 90210-4817
(310) 285-2400
FAX: (310) 385-0862

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Council of the City of Beverly Hills, at its regular meeting to be held on **Tuesday, May 15, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.**, in the Council Chambers of the City Hall, 455 N. Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, California, will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of:

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHEDULE OF USER FEES & SERVICE CHARGES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2007/2008.

The proposed resolution would increase certain of the City's user fees and service charges for Fiscal Year 2007/2008, based on fee and service charges adjustments analysis and recommendations completed by the Revenue and Cost Specialists, LLC consulting group (the Fee Study Report). Certain fees not covered in the Fee Study Report would be increased by a percentage that represents the difference between the CPI (Consumer Price Index) of November 2005 and November 2006. The new fees would become effective on July 15, 2007.

Copies of the proposed Resolution and the Fee Study Report are available for review or purchase in the Office of the City Clerk, Room 190, and the Finance Department, Room 250, 455 N. Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, California. Any interested person may attend the meeting and be heard. Written comments may also be submitted and should be addressed to the City Council, c/o City Clerk, 455 N. Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, California, 90210. The comments should be received prior to the hearing date.

Please note that if you challenge the Council's action in regard to this matter in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City, either at or prior to the public hearing.

PLEASE NOTE:

THE ABOVE PUBLIC HEARING WAS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, MAY 1, 2007

BYRON POPE
City Clerk

briefs

"America's Most Wanted" featured fugitive caught in Beverly Hills

Alleged con artist Anthony Quick was apprehended by the Beverly Hills Police Department Thursday.

Quick who is wanted in Florida for swindling elderly women out of thousands of dollars, was spotted in his white Cadillac Escalade at the 200 block of South Rexford Drive.

The vehicle was kept under observation until mid-day when Quick exited the residence with a female. He was then apprehended by Beverly Hills police and taken into custody.

Quick is currently being held on a "no bail" felony grand theft warrant from Manatee County Sheriff's Department in Florida. A second warrant was located charging Quick with Fraud, issued in Broward County. Quick will remain in custody pending extradition to Florida.

Quick was shown on television's "America's Most Wanted" on April 15.

March 2007 home prices up in 90210 and 90211

March sale prices for single-family residences in Beverly Hills increased in the 90210 and 90211. The prices for the single family homes increased by 46.2 percent for the 37 sold in 90210 and 73.3 percent for the 3 sold in 90211. Single family home prices decreased by 4.3 percent for the 8 homes sold in 90212, according to a report released by Data Quick Real Estate News (www.dqnews.com).

The median price for single family residences in the 90210 area is \$4.380 million, \$1.963 million in 90211 and \$1.980 million in 90212.

Condominium prices in the 90212 area



The Magbit Foundation's April 29 fundraiser was attended by Magbit Foundation President Bijan Nahai, Dinner Chair Pauran Nazarian, Endowment Fund Chairman Parviz Nazarian, Honoree Mahboubeh Gabay, Honoree Norman Nourallah Gabay, Lonnie Delshad, and Jimmy Delshad, Magbit Foundation Chairman and Beverly Hills Mayor.



Seventeen journalists from Ukraine visited Beverly Hills Weekly, the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce and city hall last week. Shown above is Weekly publisher Josh Gross addressing the group on Beverly Hills journalism. The delegation included editors, managers and reporters. The meetings were arranged by the Ukraine Consul General in San Francisco.

increased by 30 percent where prices for condos decreased in 90210 by 26.2 percent and in 90211 by 14.8 percent.

The median price for condominiums in 90210 is \$920,000 for the four sold, \$677,000 for the three sold in 90211 and \$772,000 for the three sold in 90210.

In Los Angeles County as a whole, sales of single family homes are up by 4.6 percent with a median price of \$565,000. Sales of condos are up 4.8 percent with a median price of \$406,000.

Trader Vic's restaurant relocated to Beverly Hilton poolside

Trader Vic's at the Beverly Hilton Hotel closed Monday after 52 years. The restaurant will be relocated to the Beverly Hilton pool area as the new Trader Vic's Lounge, which will open on May 3.

Trader Vic's Beverly Hills originally opened in 1955 in conjunction with the Beverly Hilton. The

previous location of the restaurant is being torn down for the construction of the new Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

The new Trader Vic's Lounge will be located next to the new Circa 55 restaurant and the Aqua Star pool area. The menu will feature Trader Vic's signature drinks including the world-famous Mai Tai, invented by Victor "Trader Vic" Bergeron.

Tash appointed new Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

At their meeting of April 24, the Board of Education of the Beverly Hills Unified School District announced the appointment of Brian Tash as the new Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment effective May 14. Tash succeeds Nancy Lynch, who left the district to accept a superintendent position in Placerville, CA.

Tash comes to Beverly Hills from the San Diego Unified School District where he served as a

Program Manager and Acting Director of Mathematics.

The appointment of Tash comes amidst efforts to improve student performance in mathematics.

Outgoing commissioners honored, Incoming commissioners announced

Beverly Hills Mayor Jimmy Delshad recognized outgoing Solicitations Advisory Commissioners Marcia Smith and Connie Brien at the April 26 City Council meeting. The Solicitations Advisory Commission reviews applications for charitable fundraising in the City of Beverly Hills.

Delshad presented a certificate of appointment to Cheri Yousem, the latest member of the Human Relations Commission. The commission is charged with encouraging activities and programs to promote positive human relations in Beverly Hills.

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Sunday, April 22, 2007

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thank you....thank you....thank you....thank you....thank you....thank you....thank you....thank you....

Beverly Hills City Council presented plaques in recognition of outgoing Fine Art Commissioners Judy Henning and Dr. Hector Ziperovich. The Fine Art Commission is responsible for enhancing the beauty of the City through the installation of public art.

Kindergarten pre-enrollment begins May 1

Children who will be eligible to enter kindergarten in the Beverly Hills Unified School District next fall may be pre-enrolled in the kindergarten at the school within their zone commencing May 1.

Parents pre-enrolling children in kindergarten must, at the time of registration, present proof that the child was born on or before December 2, 2002. Such evidence is specified by law as an original birth certificate or a passport.

Parents must also present proof that their Beverly Hills residence address is within the school district boundaries, which do not necessarily coincide with a Beverly Hills postal address.

For further information call Tyais Garrett at (310) 551-5100 ext. 2240.

Pre-Kindergarten orientation for new parents

Beverly Hills Unified School District has introduced Kindergarten orientation. The event will serve as an introduction for new students and a chance for both parents with children aged one to four to meet future teachers and view classrooms.

Each school has organized activities for children and parents including finger puppets, sorting treasures, question and answer segments, meet and greet sessions with former Kindergarten parents and refreshments.

The events will occur at different times and dates for each Kindergarten. Beverly Vista will meet May 31 at 1:30 p.m. Hawthorne on June 1 at 1:00 p.m., Horace Mann on June 5 at 1:30 p.m. and El Rodeo on June 7 at 1:00 p.m. For further information call (310) 551-5100 x. 2240.

community arts

The Platinum Players present **A Holiday Afternoon**, Directed by Loraine Shields. Showing May 5th and 6th at 2:00 p.m. in the Roxbury Park Auditorium. Come and enjoy an event with humor, music and fabulous talent. Admission is free.

Two Rodeo in Beverly Hills will house a **summer wine tasting** event every Friday to benefit the John Wayne Cancer Institute. The events will take place the first Friday of every month from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. from May 4 to September 7. A portion of proceeds will benefit "What a Pair!" and John Wayne Cancer Institute's breast cancer research. Costs are \$49 pre-sale ticket and \$59 general admission. For reservations log on to www.learn-aboutwine.com or call (310) 451-7600.

What A Pair! 5, a one-night performance, followed by a VIP party and silent auction with the cast, will take place at The Orpheum Theatre in Los Angeles on Sunday, June 3 at 7:30 p.m. The event, hosted by Jamie Lee Curtis, will benefit and support the research being done at the John Wayne Cancer Institute at Saint John's Health Center. Performers at What A Pair! 5 are: Jessica Biel, Loretta Devine, Joely Fisher, Deborah Gibson, Lauren Graham, Marg Helgenberger, Sharon Lawrence, Vicki Lewis, Valarie Pettiford, Amy Pietz, Marcia Strassman, Tierney Sutton, Jennifer Leigh Warren, and Deana Carter. Tickets for WHAT A PAIR! 5 range from \$75 to \$250 each. For more information visit www.jwci.org or call (310) 315-6111.

letters cont. from page 2

"Council proposes Smoking Ordinance" [issue 395]

I support the smoking ban in outdoor patio dining areas of our city's eating establishments. I would likely increase my patronage to these eateries if a smoking ban existed.

*Leslie Wachtel
Elaine Maltzman
Sherry Mobasseri
Beverly Hills*

Our whole family supports the smoking ban.

*Kasey and Brian and Devin Sixt
Beverly Hills*

I am in support of the proposed outdoor dining smoking ban. My husband is a business owner in our great city. I have the utmost respect for both our business and residential communities. We are all stakeholders in this city.

Health benefits are immeasurable and indisputable. Economically, though a select few smoking customers might be lost, many old customers who were previously chased away by the patio smoke will begin returning to their once-favorite eatery. New customers will be attracted away from the competitors in the neighboring city who still allow smoking in their patio dining areas. Nonsmokers who have avoided eating out because of the smoke problem will start venturing out. Patrons will be much happier, and they will dine out more leading to a rise in revenue.

Other economic benefits include increased employee productivity and patron turnover, lower cleaning and replacement costs, reduced liability for patrons, employees, and fire, thus lowering insurance premiums.

Is there a threat to tourism? Santa Monica area restaurants have not lost patio-dining customers to Brentwood eateries. Hawaiian tourism is growing, despite its strict outdoor ban.

As you can see the benefits to imposing this smoking ban far outweigh the risks. I hope you will join me in my unwavering support of this ban.

*Cathy Baker
Beverly Hills*

Council denies new oil wells

The City Council must be commended on their "Green" stand Tuesday night. By disallowing new slant drilling under Beverly Hills they have taken a step forward toward making it a safer and more environmentally conscientious community. Hopefully, other cities will follow their lead and display similar responsibility toward their residents in the future. Congratulations to Vice Mayor Barry Brucker for his diligent efforts and to Nancy Krasne, Frank Fenton and Mayor Jimmy Delshad for their bold leadership. They should be applauded and appreciated for this vote.

*Norma Zager
West Hollywood*

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from the hills of beverly



Hotels and Beverly Hills

Past, present and future
By Rudy Cole

The hotels of Beverly Hills have some stories to tell, some even fit for a family newspaper. Today we share some, but first some perspective:

Hotels are the most durable fixtures in most communities, including our own. Think about it: The Beverly Hills, the Beverly Wilshire and the Hilton, our three oldest, remain as symbols of our excellence and give us a sense of place. They are also one of our most important revenue sources, and we have visitors help pay for city services – a kind of taxation without representation.

Beverly Hills once was the home of major law firms, now only a few of the larger have offices here. Our commercial buildings were largely occupied by surgeons and physicians. Taking note of this, **Jack Benny** once quipped that with a population of 32,000, and one thousand lawyers and one thousand doctors, one for each of 32 residents, Beverly Hills has to be the sickest, most dishonest city in America.

We still have lawyers and doctors and medical office buildings, but not nearly as numerous. There are prestigious department stores on Wilshire Blvd, just not as many as there were in the 1960s and before. The numbers of banks and savings and loans have also shrunk as have car

dealerships.

But hotels not only remain, but multiply. The addition of the Peninsula, one of the world's great hotels, added to our luster. The soon to arrive Montage will offer a different kind of appeal to tourists. Even our so-called boutique hotels such as the Avalon, the Crescent and the Mosaic, have reinvented themselves into upscale operations. The Luxe on Rodeo, the only hotel actually on our fabled street, is a European style gem surviving the persistent rumors that **Jimmy Hoffa** is buried under the foundation. (The Teamsters provided the original loans for construction long before the current owners took possession.)

You want to solve the traffic problems of Beverly Hills? Demolish all the office buildings on Wilshire and build hotels, and traffic will immediately be reduced by 40 percent. Of course, we need banks and stock brokers and teeth whitening shops, but check the ITE, the bible on traffic studies.

Hotels are inexorably identified with their cities. When you think of San Francisco, doesn't the Fairmont come up? In San Diego the Del and Pasadena the Huntington? How about Bel Air?

Some hotel notes and legends: One of the great timing mistakes in the industry was when the Beverly Hills Hotel's new owners decided to close the hotel for remodeling just as the Peninsula, originally named the Belvedere, was to open, unlike the Hilton which remained in operation during the \$80 million renovation when **Beny Alagem** bought the property from **Merv Griffin**.

While the Beverly Hills was the first to become a center of the city's social life, the Hilton provided a whole new concept of entertainment. A marvelous fine dining restaurant on the roof L'Escoffier, a night club on Wilshire, a larger banquet facility than any hotel in the area and a Trader Vic's on the corner of Wilshire and Santa Monica, all made the Hilton an important magnet for tourists and civic life.

Changes came, some good, some a response to the explosion of hotels surrounding the city. The Century Plaza installed a larger Vegas style night club, and the Hilton club closed. The CP also had, for a time, a smaller club hosting great jazz such as **Nat King Cole's** trio.

The **Merv Griffin** ownership years were not bad, but Merv largely maintained a holding operation. He tried a brief "dance club" but his main success was the highly profitable banquet business. Keeping the Golden Globes at the Hilton has always been a great tourist promotion tool.

Now, under Alagem, the Hilton has reinvented itself again. Not only by upgrading rooms and creating a Penthouse Collection, but now proposing a very exciting possibility: A Waldorf Astoria as a separate operation on their western most por-

tion of the property. Yes, there are traffic issues to discuss.

The first impact of the change has been the closing of Trader Vic's, but not exactly. Although the historic dinner house is closed, the Hilton will turn their bar by the pool, adjacent to their also renovated dining room, Circa 55, into a Trader Vic's bar. The menu will be limited to their famous hors d'oeuvre's and Pacific cocktails, and much of the memorabilia of the original dining room will decorate the area.

The success of the Peninsula is also an amazing success story. When the Zarnegin family began their entitlement process, which took an incredible eight years to complete, the hotel did not receive the height it wanted or the public assembly areas they sought. They could easily have built one more floor with an increase in rooms and more space for banquets that would have brought even more revenue to the city with little or no impacts on traffic.

The Beverly Wilshire, ironically now operated by the Four Seasons which failed in an attempt to build a BW competitor at what is now Two Rodeo, has had even more dramatic turn around. With two fine dining operations, the BLVD and **Wolf Puck's** new Cut, the hotel has a unique offering – no hotel in our region has two as good as these. On the down side, the separate bar room's design is simply not comfortable for casual sipping.

The Beverly Hills too has made improvements in food and bar services, recovering from a devastating Los Angeles Times food critic review some 10 years ago. The caustic Irene quoted a visitor this way: "I can understand eating here once, but why would anyone come back?" The Polo Lounge is now very active, so people are returning. Service needs some tweaking – not yet comparable to the Peninsula or the Hilton.

The l'Hermitage has its own appeal, but its

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building brought changes in our zoning rules. For many years, there were no prohibitions on converting apartments to hotels. In fact, we had a number of these on residential streets such as Mc Carty and Roxbury. When the developers of the l' Hermitage discovered they could not create a hotel on Burton Way, they built a fine apartment structure and, of course, converted it legally into a hotel. The city responded by limiting hotel dining for guests only, and that restriction was only lifted in the past six years.

Too many hotel stories for one column, but a Beverly Wilshire happening that was traumatic and could have been dangerous, needs recounting. Although **Hernando Courtright's** vision changed the hotel from a pedestrian stop over for traveling salespeople to a world class operation, the actual day to day management was left to **George White** who began his career as a bell hop.

When excited, George returned to his heavy Austrian accent, and that happened every time he discovered something lacking in the hotel. On one of his frequent, meticulous tours, he found many examples of staff neglect – at least to his high standards. He immediately called a meeting of every hotel employee, keeping only skeleton people doing basics, such as check-in.

Assembled in the mezzanine meeting room, he completed his emotional lecture with the insistence that there would be no “lying down on the job.”

He repeated that mantra many times before dismissing his colleagues.

At the exact moment the dejected staff departed down the stairway, two robbers completed holding up a lobby jewelry store. They were ordering guests and others in the lobby to “lie down now” as the staff appeared. The bandits gave the same order to the dozens of staff people.

Now, White had no idea there was a robbery in progress, but when he too saw his entire team lying on the floor, just following his demand that there would be “no lying down on the job,” he came dangerously close to hysteria. Footnote: An alert doorman took down the license plate – the thieves had driven their own car, and our finest captured them in a few hours.

Final historic and relevant note: One of the least attractive structures in our city are parking buildings. None are remarkable in either design or function, including those built by the city. The plus side of the Hilton renovation will be the removal of their parking building.

Some years back, when the newer department stores were being built on Wilshire, they commissioned a study of customer views. They thought they learned that women shoppers did not want to go underground for their cars – so surface lots adjoined most of the stores. Not good for the city. A waste of land and an eye sore in the south.

Congratulations to the city for their excellent choices for Planning: **Lili Bosse** and **Nan Cole**.

Note to Beckwith Public Relations: Just because you sent me a magnificent basket of Mrs. Beasley's new Mother's Day Cup Cakes, the most delicious I have ever experienced, does not mean that I would be tempted to mention these delights in this column. We do have rules on ethics here. Now, two baskets would be different.

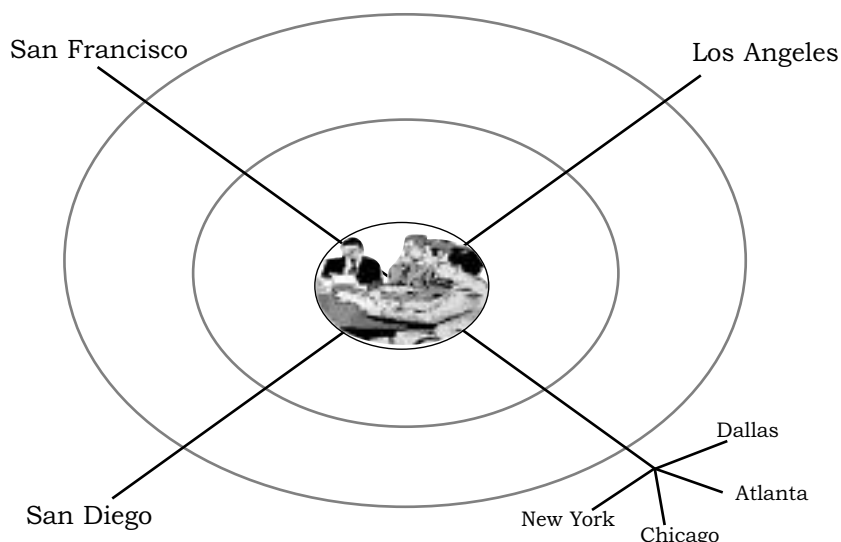
Rudy Cole served for eight years as a member and chair of the city's Recreation & Parks Commission. He was also President of the Greystone Foundation and served on three other city committees. Rudy can be reached at: Rudy@bhweekly.com.

Conference Calling

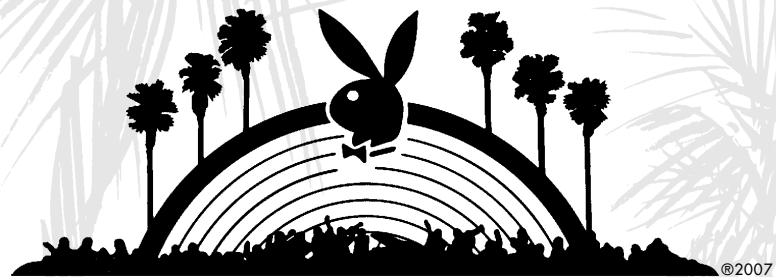
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sports & scores



After Near-Miss, Norman Tosses No-Hitter

NFL team signs BHHS alumnus.

By Steven Herbert

Two days after being one out away from a seven-inning no-hitter, senior right-hander Brianne Nemiroff pitched the third no-hitter of her Beverly High softball career April 26 in an 18-0 victory over Inglewood Morningside.

Nemiroff (11-3) struck out eight, walked two, back-to-back in the first inning, and retired 14 of the final 15 hitters she faced in an Ocean League game at Beverly Hills shortened to 4 1/2 innings because of the 10-run rule.

Nemiroff ended the first inning with back-to-back strikeouts, leaving Monarch runners on second and third base. Nemiroff's streak of 10 consecutive batters retired ended on an error by Sami Pop, the Norman second baseman, with two outs in the fourth. She got the next batter to ground out.

Nemiroff retired Morningside in order in the fifth, with two strikeouts, to end the game.

The Normans (14-4, 4-1 in league play) got all the runs they would prove to need in the first, even though none of their first nine batters got hits.

Beverly Hills combined four walks, a hit batter, two Monarch errors and two passed balls for their first four runs. Alexa Block was credited was the Normans' first run batted in on a bases loaded walk that forced in Morgan Harding, who reached first on an error by the Morningside third baseman.

Alex Pop, the 10th Beverly Hills batter of the inning, got its first hit, a single that drove in Sophie Payson, who reached on an error, and Block, increasing its lead to 6-0.

The Normans added eight runs in the second. After leadoff hitter Allison Galer popped out, each of their next six batters reached base safely.

Harding tripled in Nemiroff for the first run. Payson's two-run single brought in Harding and Bettina Shore, who walked and stole second. Block walked and scored

on Pop's sacrifice fly.

Rebecca Rosen singled in Sami Pop, who had singled. Rosen and Galer, who walked and stole second, scored when Nemiroff reached first on an error by the Monarch second baseman.

Shore doubled in Harding, who led off with a walk, for the lone Beverly Hills run in the third.

The Normans combined singles by Alex Pop, Harding and Shore, Nemiroff's double and two walks for three runs in the fourth.

Nemiroff's other no-hitters came on April 27, 2006 in a 10-0 victory over Inglewood in a game shortened to 5 innings because of the 10-run rule, and April 19, 2005 in a 12-0 victory over Hawthorne April 19, 2005 in a game shortened to 4 1/2 innings because of the 10-run rule.

Beverly Hills 7, Hawthorne 1

Nemiroff's bid for a no-hitter was spoiled by a triple with two outs in the seventh and final inning in an Ocean League game at Hawthorne April 24.

Nemiroff settled for a one-hitter with five strikeouts and four walks. She was also two-for-four at the plate.

The Normans scored three times in the first as Galer singled in Alex Pop, who led off with a single. Nemiroff singled in Rosen, who reached first on an error by the Cougar third baseman

Beverly Hills scored its other four runs in the third.

Payson was credited with an RBI when her fielder's choice drove in Nicole Winegrad, a courtesy runner for Nemiroff, who led off with a single. Harding reached base on an error by the Hawthorne first baseman and scored on a single by Sami Pop, the Normans' No. 9 hitter. Rosen, the eighth batter of the inning, singled in Shore and Payson.

The Cougars combined two walks and two ground outs in their half of the third for their run.

What's Next?

The Normans are scheduled to play at Inglewood today and Culver City Tuesday in Ocean League games beginning at 3:15 p.m. and play host to Playa Del Rey St. Bernard Friday in a nonleague doubleheader beginning at 3 p.m.

Professional Football

Sonny Shackelford, a 2003 Beverly High graduate, was signed as a free agent by the San Diego Chargers Monday after being bypassed in the National Football League draft and is expected to participate in the team's mini-camp Saturday and Sunday.

Shackelford was named as the winner of the University of Washington's Sports Radio 950 KRJ Most Outstanding Player Award for the offense for the 2006 season, after catching 50 passes for 666 yards and seven touchdowns, all team highs.

Baseball

Beverly Hills 7, Hawthorne 1

Matt Ross pitched a three-hitter, improving to a team-best 6-1, while Justin Schwartz and Jon Skura each had a single, double and triple in an Ocean League game at La Cienega Park April 24.

Erik Munzer doubled in Jason Kantor, who reached first on an error by Chris Weishaar, the Cougar shortstop, in the second inning for the Normans' first run.

Beverly Hills added a run in the when Schwartz led off with a single, stole second base, advanced to third on a throwing error by Jonathan Sepulveda, the Hawthorne catcher, and scored on Monty Zimmerman's ground out.

The Normans increased their lead to 5-0 with three runs in the fourth. Back-to-back doubles David Skura and Joey Axelrod generated the first run. Schwartz's triple drove in Axelrod and Charlie Bogart, who singled.

Kantor singled home Jon Skura in the fifth An inning later, Bogart, Beverly Hills' No. 9 hitter, singled and scored on Jon Skura's two-out triple.

Hawthorne's only run came in the seventh inning and was unearned. Artis Perry led off and reached second on an error by Zimmerman, the Norman right fielder, stole third and scored on Michael Gutierrez's ground out.

Ross struck out four and didn't walk a batter.

—Jordan Klein

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, by telephone at (310) 275-7943 or by fax at (310) 273-4519.

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Cathy Haymes Baker, Dan Furie, Rita Magidson, Debbie Briskin, Shelley Sinay Blumenfeld



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city and schools cont. from page 3

"There are four studies done by prominent universities that study the harmful effects of outdoor levels of second hand smoke," Robert Berger from Healthier Solutions said. "If [the BHRA] had done his research or contacted me [they] would have found those reports." Berger then went on to comment that the BHRA were originally formed by the Tobacco Industry in the 1980's.

The BHRA maintained that Big Tobacco had nothing to do with the restaurant committee.

Chamber of Commerce President Dan Walsh and various restaurateurs asked the council for a 90 day continuance to prepare data to confirm or deny that ordinances in other cities have impacted restaurant business. Similar bans are in place in the cities of Santa Monica, Burbank, Santa Barbara and Calabasas.

"This ban is wrong and prejudicial," Crustacean restaurant owner Elizabeth An said. "It is selective application. Smoking is a personal issue. It is not a restaurateur's responsibility to police their business. It should be a state issue an all inclusive ban would be more fair."

The BHRA also expressed concern over issues that may arise when smoking takes place in compliance areas. With the ordinance in place de facto designate smoking areas in front of businesses next door to restaurants would arise.

With the issue of smoking outside of restaurant property came the suggestion of Councilmember and ad hoc committee member Linda Briskman that a possible suspension of the smoking ban could be included, allowing for smoking in open air dining areas after a certain hour in the evening.

"This ban addresses three issues," Briskman

said. "Health concerns relating to second hand smoke...Social concerns...and economic concerns. 86 percent of the Beverly Hills community doesn't smoke and our main concern is serving the best interests of the community."

After closing public comment, members of the ad hoc committee provided a report inserting an additional recommendation for the two ordinances to be presented at the May 29 City Council meeting, two weeks later than previously scheduled. Because of the delay it will be necessary for a special meeting in early June where the City Council will hear the second reading of the ordinance. That date of that meeting has not been determined at this time.

The first ordinance is the originally proposed ordinance described above that will ban smoking in open air dining areas adjacent to public sidewalks which will include some private patios accessible to the general public. This ordinance would exempt hotels and restaurants with private patios accessible only to patrons of the restaurant. The second ordinance would eliminate the exemption to hotels and restaurants with private patios.

The council will also consider a recommendation to include a clause in its ordinances that would suspend the smoking ban after a certain hour at night in open air dining area.

The ad hoc committee will present the two ordinances to the City Council at its May 29 Formal meeting. If adopted, the ordinance will go into effect on July 16th.

The smoking ordinance was originally proposed by Vice Mayor Barry Brucker following an unpleasant experience his wife had while dining. Brucker heads the ad hoc committee along with Briskman.

coverstory

IS OPEN ACCESS GOOD FOR KIDS?

Some teachers fear the proposed AP and honors program may lower standards, grades

By Amanda Parsons

Beverly Hills Unified School District will begin researching the change to an Open Access format for the honors and advanced placement (AP) courses in its schools during the 2007-08 school year for possible implementation in the 2008-09 school year, but some faculty fear the change may have a detrimental effect on student learning.

Open Access formats allow for any student, regardless of past academic performance, who wishes to take an AP or honors course to simply apply for admittance. It is quickly becoming a national trend due to a widely held belief that AP classes are key to admittance into a good college.

Currently, the honors and AP courses at Beverly High require that students achieve a certain grade point average (GPA) and have teacher recommendations to enter into an honors or AP level course. AP level courses are available in nearly every core subject at Beverly High. One third of all 11th and 12th grade Beverly High students are enrolled in one or more AP courses.

"In general, good grades and teacher recommendations are a part of the process, but I would stress there is no one factor," said Beverly High guidance counselor Kevin Sweeney. "No one GPA or standard that applies to admittance into AP, honors and advanced level courses."

In March, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), one of six regional associations that accredit public and private schools, made a recommendation in its mandate from the accreditation team that BHUSD adopt an Open Access policy.

"The high expectations held for Honors and AP students should be a school-wide norm," the recommendation read. "To this end, it is essential that BHHS establish a formal written school-wide open access policy for all Honors and AP classes whereby any student is allowed to take an Honors or AP class. In conjunction with this, support structures must be provided for students who enter advanced classes needing assistance. Also, staff development must be provided for teachers to support these students."

Open Access programs are currently in place in schools across California. Santa

Monica High School employs the program as well as Peninsula High School in Palos Verdes.

"We are looking into similar programs at similar districts to develop our own," Assistant Superintendent Ilene Straus said. "We are looking at several districts with open access policies, working with leaders, teachers and the school to develop our own. But we can't tell what it is going to be yet,

it more difficult to build a master schedule because you have to build an anticipated drop down rate. We had to maintain our standards, and we did. The rest became administrative things, like building drop down rates for students who bite off more than they can chew."

As for AP test scores dropping, Johnson says the opposite effect has been seen.

"They went up," Johnson said. "The kids



because it isn't done yet."

Straus is a former principal of Santa Monica High.

The program at Peninsula High School essentially runs by having the student meet with a counselor, if the student is not recommended for the AP or honors class the counselor tells him/her that they don't meet the profile. If the student still wants to take the course they get their parents to sign a waiver stating that they understand the fit is not there but that they still wish to move forward. The student then has a short window (3-6 weeks) to get decent grades or the class gets dropped from their schedule.

A program like this can present some tough master schedule challenges and could possibly lower AP standards and scores, which worries some Beverly High faculty.

"The main concern [when Peninsula High implemented Open Access] was that standards would be lowered," Peninsula High Principal Kelly Johnson said. "And it makes

who have more difficulties in AP courses are the ones who take too many. The kids who were denied at first and wavered in actually bring up our scores."

Johnson attributes the key to Peninsula's success to a great deal of support. Extra classes offered for tutoring, teachers volunteering time to give additional help to students and parents offering to help out however they can.

Despite the program's successes at other institutions, some Beverly teachers express concerns that the program will allow students to sign up for classes that are not appropriate for their skill levels.

"I am not opposed to Open Access. I have reservations about it," said Beverly High mathematics teacher Jane Wortman. "I am opposed to kids being in classes that aren't appropriate for them. It has always been my belief that kids should be in their level, not tutored endlessly. I think that is an indication that the class is a bit too difficult for

them."

Sweeney also has reservations about the program and worries that it may create stress on the student, lower grades, lower GPA's, and disrupt schedules. However he notes that the project could be successful through proper coordination.

"[From] what I have heard discussed, I would agree and see a positive," Sweeney said. "If this could be coordinated in a way to reach those students not in Honors and AP courses now who are capable and willing, and would be appropriately placed in an AP or Honors course, and not only 'take' the class, but have a successful experience for 40 weeks, be successful, work to earn a good grade, and build on that."

The premise behind Open Access is the idea that students who are not challenged or stimulated may lose interest in learning. Some students may struggle with math and be highly skilled in English. This type of student would benefit from being in an AP English class to challenge their talent but may need to stay in a remediate math class which is more their skill level. Often

AP and honors admission is linked to a student's GPA so if a student has bad grades in one area they can be shut out from access to any AP or honors courses.

"We will be very thoughtful on the process," Straus said. "Paying particular attention to the number of students interested in taking advanced placement courses and judging the need for additional classes."

Another issue of concern with enlisting an open access policy is the waiver process. Currently students are able to waive the decision made by their middle school as to whether or not honors courses are a good fit for certain students, however they must wait until tenth grade to do so.

"We will also be looking into the waiver process," Straus said. "There are some students now who waver. I don't know how many. But

there is a problem between the 8th and 9th grade transfer. The middle school makes recommendation to the high school for placement in honors courses or not. In 10th grade students have the option to appeal the placement. It is a complex issue."

The BHUSD administration will research all aspects going into the proposed program over the 2007-08 school year.

The aspects of the program which need to be addressed are placement issues such as teacher recommendations, current grades, classroom behavior, parent and student requests and the appeals and waiver process. They will address scheduling issues such as class sections, class sizes, and transferring to regular course mid year.

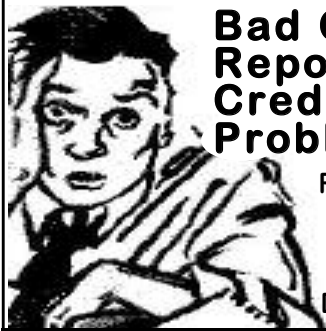
"Beverly Hills is a lot like Palos Verdes demographically," Johnson said. "It is a great school in a great district, with great kids and great teachers; if Beverly Hills attempts open access it will only be successful."

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