



Caruso Unveils Swarthmore Plans

By SUE PASCOE
Editor

An eight-foot construction fence has gone up on North Swarthmore, as developer Rick Caruso's Palisades Village project gets underway. Building demolition is scheduled to begin January 2, and buildings from Monument to the former à la Tarte will be razed over 10 days.

Unveiling his long-awaited plans on December 4 before a packed audience in Mercer Hall on the Palisades High campus (with a second location in Gilbert Hall to hold the overflow crowd), Caruso said: "If the community is behind this project, we will get it through the city faster." The current estimated completion date is fall 2017.

At the meeting, Caruso announced how he will re-develop both sides of Swarthmore, from Sunset to Monument (excepting the property he does not own: U.S. Bank, the two-story Bowinkle building and the clothing store P2); his Sunset frontage property down to Denton Jewelers and the large open-air parking lot between Swarthmore and Monument.

When residents were given a chance to comment on the project, one person after another went to a microphone to offer praise and positive feedback.

The next day, a writer for Curbed LA wrote: "Rick Caruso, the man behind The Grove and the Americana at Brand, has just revealed his plans for the huge makeover of Palisades Village, a large section of downtown Pacific Palisades along Swarthmore Avenue, and he's pulling a reverse-Pinocchio, taking a real (drab) street and turning it into a fakey, Grovey wonderland."

L.A. Times reporter Martha Groves commented in her December 7 story: "The makeover envisions demolishing the existing mid-century buildings and replacing them with a mix of eclectic storefronts—Cape Cod, Georgian, contemporary—that would evoke the Hamptons and other swank locales."

The next major step after the demolition of the buildings is soil remediation (to solve contamination caused by the old Emerson-



A construction fence has gone up around the buildings on the north side of Swarthmore before demolition begins. Photo: Bart Bartholomew

LaMay Cleaners). This will take about six months, including hauling away the toxic soil and bringing hundreds of truckloads of new dirt onto the site.

But first, after the buildings are torn down, the Swarthmore storm drain must be relocated, requiring about six weeks of work.

"The storm drain runs diagonally through our site and right in the middle of the remediation work," said Liz Jaeger, a spokeswoman for Caruso Affiliated.

Jaeger added, "We have been working with the Pacific Palisades Community Council on the haul route" for trucks dur-

ing the remediation. That discussion will be led by the city, but no firm date has been set. "We are hoping for a date in January," Jaeger said.

Caruso's announced plans showcased a complete makeover for his property on
(Continued on Page 14)

Next Chamber Event Thursday

The Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce brought Santa Claus to town for the Holiday Ho!Ho!Ho! on December 5. The next Chamber event will be a December 18 mixer hosted by Gibson International, at the company's offices at 15270 Sunset Blvd., Suite A (corner of Monument in the Clock Tower Building).

The business networking mixer will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Admission is

free for members, though each is asked to bring a \$10 donation or a new unwrapped toy appropriate for an infant through 18-

year-old that will be given to the Ocean Park Community Center. Admission for non-members is \$25. Call (310) 459-7963.



Hayley Hansen meets Santa Claus at Holiday Ho!Ho!Ho!

Photo: Shelby Pascoe

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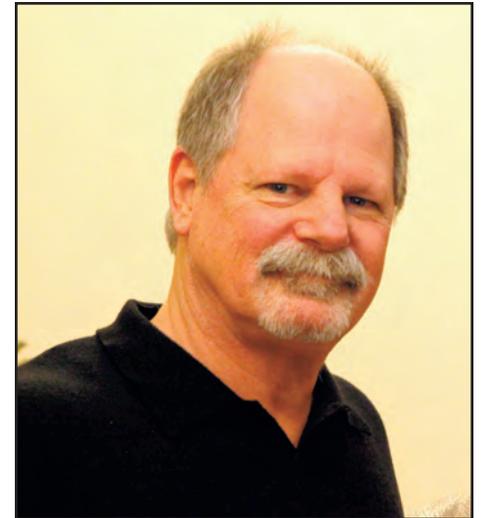
Exemplary PPCC Members Honored

By SUE PASCOE
Editor

Four past members of Pacific Palisades Community Council—Jim Rea, Jack Allen, Harry Sondheim and (posthumously) John Glasgow—were honored by PPCC members and former members at the annual holiday meeting held at the Temescal Gateway Park dining hall on December 11.

Highlands Representative Paul Glasgall remembered Glasgow, an architect, as someone who knew the Los Angeles City Department of Planning inside and out. “He had recently completed a remodel for Jennifer Aniston’s home,” Glasgall said, noting his friend and colleague, who died in May, was a former Marine, who served two years in Vietnam. Jim Rea added, “Glasgow was my alternate [Area 3] and he was involved in everything I was involved in. He left us way too soon.”

George Wolfberg spoke about Jack Allen [Area 5] and his contributions. “He has been a Pacific Palisades resident for more than 70 years. In 1993, he was named a Golden Sparkplug and in 2001 won the Community Service Award,” Wolfberg said. “He has attended countless meetings on coastal issues, zoning and grading and was never reticent in fighting for the community. He worked on the specific plan and also fought against the stop-sign cameras in this park.”



Left to right: Jack Allen, Harry Sondheim and Jim Rea were honored by the Community Council for their service. Photos: Bart Bartholomew

Randy Young lauded Allen, a 26-year member of the PPCC. “It’s a black art to deal with City Hall stuff, but Jack is a master practitioner,” Young said, remembering the City was about to allow a developer to construct a 40-story building at Wilshire and Barrington, but it was a restriction in the 1997 specific plan that Allen had written that prevented the development.

Gil Dembo and Shirley Haggstrom praised 19-year PPCC member Harry Sondheim [Area 4]. “He was second in charge of the L.A.’s District Attorney Office for more than 30 years,” Dembo said. “He was tapped to write the California Bar Associations Code of Ethics.

“He was a collaborative leader and took a low-key approach to achieve consensus,” Dembo said. “He had mastery of PPCC’s bylaws.”

Haggstrom added, “Harry was our rock at a time the Council had no money, was faced with sticky issues and were working on bylaw reform.”

Steve Boyers spoke about what makes a leader when referring to four-year member Jim Rea.

“An organization goes through stressful times and although Jim could have been an alternate on this council, he declined,” said Boyers, who praised Rea’s contributions, specifically helping organize the Citizen

of the Year dinner for the Council, when the *Palisadian-Post* no longer wanted to host it. “His demonstration of character allowed our organization to heal more quickly,” Boyers said.

Council Forms Palisades Village Ad Hoc Committee

At the December Pacific Palisades Community Council meeting, President Chris Spitz announced that a Palisades Village ad hoc land use committee has been formed that will work with the Caruso Affiliated team. The ad hoc committee will review, vet and analyze relevant documents, plans and applications.

“This is not meant to supplement the Design Review Board (DRB) or the PPCC board,” Spitz said. “This committee will update the PPCC board and make recommendations.”

Members of the board are David Kaplan (chair), Sue Kohl, Rick Mills, Cathy Russell, Greg Sinaiko and George Wolfberg. Spitz said that in selecting the board, she could not include council members who are DRB members because those residents are appointed by the City of Los Angeles and review details of proposed development in this area. Meetings will be open to the public.

Pacific Palisades Rain Report

Pacific Palisades received 1.41 inches of rain December 11 and 12, for a season total of 3.60 inches, according to local rainmeister Carol Leacock, who has the official Los Angeles County rain gauge located in her backyard on Bienvenida Avenue.

Normal to date is 3.32 inches. “It is looking good and more is coming, they say,” said Leacock’s husband, Ted Mackie.

Watson Honored by Community

By SUE PASCOE
Editor

Judi Watson, a long-time lower Castellammare resident, received the Pacific Palisades Community Council’s (PPCC) Service Award at its holiday meeting on December 11 in the Temescal Gateway Park dining hall.

The award, which began in 1996, is given annually to honor long-term and continuing outstanding volunteer service by an individual, neighborhood or community at large.

“For many years Judi has worked to keep residents aware of issues and problems, and serves as a ‘Paul Revere’ for the neighborhood,” PPCC President Spitz said, noting Watson works as a volunteer liaison with

public officials on matters of community concern because lower Castellammare no longer has a formal homeowners association or organized residents’ group. “One of her latest achievements was replacing the unattractive chain-link fence north of Gladstone’s along PCH. This is an improvement enjoyed by thousands who drive daily on PCH.

“She is one of our unsung heroes,” Spitz said. “We owe a debt of gratitude to her.”

Watson in accepting the award said, “Thank you for honoring me in this way. I also want to thank all who serve on the council: you enrich the whole community.”

Daniel Tamm, who presented an award on behalf of Mayor Eric Garcetti, said “Judi is the kind of person who looks around and sees something that needs to be dealt with and asks why someone doesn’t do it—and then goes out and does it. She is the salt of the earth.”

Councilman Mike Bonin’s Senior Counsel Norman Kulla added: “I attended the quarterly meeting of County’s Beaches and Harbor and Judi really did have an impact on the redo of the fence. She truly is an unsung community hero.”

Tim Harter, on behalf of Assembly member Richard Bloom, and Barbara Kohn on behalf of Congressman-elect Ted Lieu, also presented awards of recognition.



Judi Watson received the Community Service award and was congratulated by (left) Daniel Tamm from Mayor Eric Garcetti’s office and Norman Kulla from Councilman Mike Bonin’s office.

Photo: Bart Bartholomew

The Literary Odyssey Of Josh Greenfeld

By BOB VICKREY
Special to the Palisades News

My friend Josh Greenfeld is a veteran screenwriter, novelist, memoirist and playwright. One of his movie scripts, *Harry and Tonto*, was nominated for an Academy Award, for which Art Carney won Best Actor in 1974. His highly regarded novel, *The Return of Mr. Hollywood*, was selected as one of the “100 Best Books” written about Hollywood by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

His 1972 book about his youngest son, *A Child Called Noah*, received widespread praise and became a pioneering classic in the field of autism. His heartrending memoir of the family’s struggle to deal with Noah’s condition was one of the first books to address a little-understood illness.

Josh has been suffering from several health issues in recent months, but during a recent visit I noticed that he had not lost his trademark sense of humor. When I asked him what he had been working on, he replied glibly, “Longer afternoon naps.” When the subject turned to college football, he summed up his team’s running back by saying, “He may be small, but he’s decep-

tively slow.”

My Palisadian friend is smart, quick-witted, feisty—and, at heart, a staunch non-conformist. He once met the iconoclastic Dorothy Parker, and I’ve often imagined the two of them sitting across from one another at the Algonquin Round Table in a colossal battle of wits.

Greenfeld has a slight build with wisps of thinning gray hair underneath his signature white captain’s hat that appears old enough to have been originally worn by the Captain on *Gilligan’s Island*. His daily wardrobe varies during the seasons, but on a sunny summer day, he sometimes wears a weathered red bandana underneath the hat—giving the appearance of a poor man’s version of Lawrence of Arabia.

Born in Malden, Massachusetts and raised in Brooklyn, Josh attended Brooklyn College and received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan. He later completed his master of dramatic arts degree at Columbia University.

In 1960, he met Foumiko Kometani in Peterborough, New Hampshire, at the MacDowell Colony, the oldest artists’ colony in the United States, where they were both enjoying their separate “fellowships.” (His was a Guggenheim.) They married later that



Screenwriter, novelist, memoirist and playwright Josh Greenfeld.

Photo: Patricia Williams

same year, and moved to Japan in 1962, where they had their first son, Karl.

After discovering their second child Noah had autism, the couple decided to

move to Southern California so they could place him in the UCLA Behavioral Mod-

ification Center. The move prompted
(Continued on Page 5)

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Greenfeld

(Continued from Page 4)

Greenfeld to trade his magazine journalism career for one in screenwriting.

His wife is a lauded Japanese writer who was once awarded the Akutagawa Prize, Japan's most prestigious literary award. Fumi, as she is known by her friends, also wrote about the couple's developmentally disabled son. Her latest novel, entitled *Wasabi for Breakfast*, was published in 2013.

Karl, who now also lives here with his wife and two daughters, wrote his own book about the experience, entitled *Boy Alone: A Brother's Memoir*, published in 2009. He has written seven other books, including the novel *The Subprimes*, set in Pacific Palisades, to be published by Harper in May. He has also been a writer and editor for *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, *GQ* and *Harper's*.

Over the years, Greenfeld developed a close circle of literary friends that represented a veritable "Who's Who" of celebrated writers: Philip Roth, Herb Gold,

Joan Didion, John Gregory Dunne, Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller, Mario Puzo, James Baldwin and Joseph Heller. He admitted recently to me that one of the downsides of living a long life is the pain of losing your best friends along the way.

When I was in the book publishing business, I had the opportunity of having lunch with one of those longtime friends—Phillip Roth, who regaled me with stories about the two of them in their younger days. He also praised Josh as a fine writer and as a steadfast friend.

The respect engendered among Greenfeld's peers is certainly well deserved. They must have also treasured that wicked sense of humor he possesses. Thus it certainly came as no surprise when he was hired to write George Burns' lines in the 1980 *Oh, God!* sequel. He had movie audiences laughing back then and Josh is still keeping us entertained.

Bob Vickrey is a longtime Palisadian whose columns appear in the Houston Chronicle and Waco Tribune-Herald. He is also a regular contributor to the Boryana Books website.



Children tend the garden at Marquez Charter School.

Marquez Garden Wins \$1,500

Marquez Charter Elementary was one of 18 schools in Los Angeles County to receive a \$1,500 grant from the Western Growers Foundation (WGF). Master gardener Marie Steckmest (a former LAUSD teacher, and founder of the nonprofit Palisades Cares, which encourages community service), works with students twice a week.

"Funds will be used to expand the edible garden program with additional planting beds," Steckmest said, explaining that students grow lettuces, kale, beets, broccoli, cabbage, radish, carrots, onions,

garlic, Brussel sprouts, sugar snap peas and chives during the cool season.

"After we grow them, we eat them," Steckmest said. "This fall Gelson's made a donation that funded cooking, and students made salsa, succotash and kale smoothies."

WGF partners with the California Department of Education (CDE) to award 100 K-12 schools \$1,500 each. This program is administered through the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Visit: marquezschoolediblegarden.blogspot.com.

Free Tai Chi at Woman's Club

Tai chi is a noncompetitive ancient Chinese tradition that involves a series of movements performed in a slow, focused manner, accompanied by deep breathing. Class will be held from 10 to 11:30 a.m. tomorrow, December 18, at the Woman's Club, 901 Haverford Ave. Pacific Palisades Woman's Club member Mary Dean is the instructor. She recommends wearing loose, comfortable clothing and shoes. The class is free.



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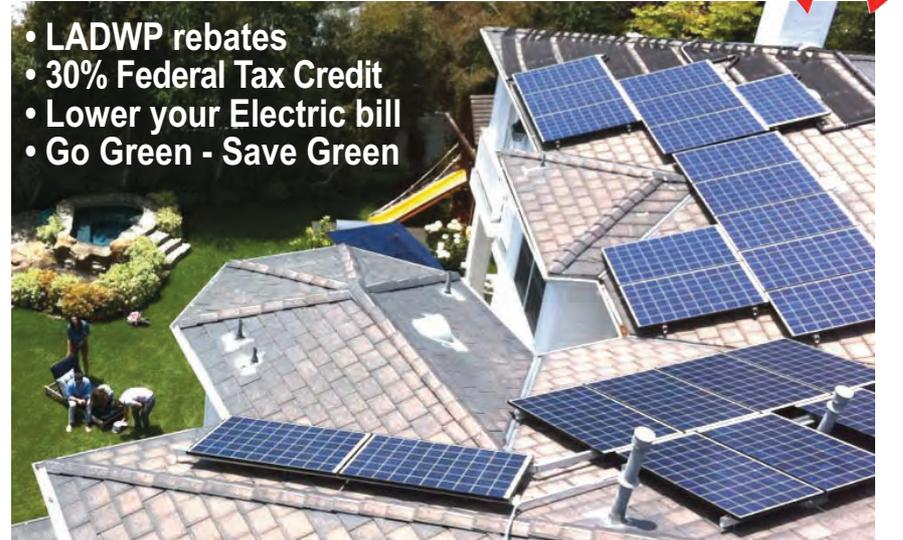
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Heard About Town

Help Local Businesses

Even though Caruso is coming to town, he's not here, yet. Swarthmore stores are still open and need customers over the holiday season. Please come support them.

Village Green Confusion

I attended Caruso's presentation on December 4 and I heard him explain that the area above the proposed parking lot would be developed into a Village Green, a small park where families could gather and kids could play. We already have a Village Green at Swarthmore and Sunset! It has a fountain, and kids and other people already gather there. At one time it was the site of a gas station and it is maintained through private funds. Maybe Caruso could name the new one Chautauqua Green, a nod to the town's history.

Punching Is Not Civility

You wrote in your editorial about kindness ["Civility, Not Shouting and Emotional Outbursts," Dec. 3]. On Saturday afternoon at Café Vida, a guy punched another guy in an argument over a dog. The man that got punched fell to the ground and was unconscious. Paramedics took him to the hospital in an ambulance. What's happening to our little town?

'The' Pacific Palisades

I wish people would stop referring to this town as "the Pacific Palisades." Its name is simply Pacific Palisades, or the Palisades. Nobody says "the Beverly Hills" and "the Palos Verdes."

Chautauqua Problem

When will the City repave Chautauqua just before PCH? The road at the final bend keeps deteriorating and is a bumpy mess. If we get too much rain, the surface will become even more treacherous.

Homeless Camp Fire

Firefighters from Stations 69, 23 and 19 all rushed to the Via las Olas bluffs because you could see smoke. Turns out it was coming from a homeless cooking fire. There are signs posted that say "No Camping." Why can't Recreation and Parks police their land before we end up with a brush fire on that hillside? No camping should mean no camping.

Zero Tolerance

Someone asked Rick Caruso about the homeless problem that seems to be invading Pacific Palisades and he said that his company has hired a security guard for Swarthmore and that they have zero tolerance for homeless. I like the idea of zero tolerance. We should do the same thing for other areas, such as by the library and down by Gladstone's.

If you'd like to share something you've "heard about town," please email it to spascoe@palisadesnews.com

ANN CLEAVES



VIEWPOINT

The Young Side of Old

By MARCI CRESTANI
Special to the Palisades News

It's just beginning to happen to me. Every so often I catch the barest whiff of it, and I'm either irritated or amused, but frequently I feel both emotions simultaneously. Young people occasionally treat me as if I am much older and less capable than I think I am. My typical quirky behavior is misconstrued as a consequence of my age rather than my personality, leading them to sometimes speak to me in a friendly but unmistakably on-the-very-edge-of-condescending tone of voice—as if I was unknowingly wearing my bra on top of my turtleneck instead of underneath it.

This becomes most evident at the grocery store. It has always taken me forever to straighten out my wallet and keys situation after the cashier and bagger have completed their part of the transaction. Back when I was certifiably young, people used to laugh openly at me, and I laughed along with them as I tried to pull it together to leave the store. Ha, ha, ha!

Then, when I was in my forties and pawed crazily through my purse to find my car keys, I was forgiven because, hey, I was probably a very busy career person with a lot of important things on my mind. But now if it takes me more than a few seconds to put my credit card back in my wallet and to fish my keys out of my purse, it's as if I'm deemed non compos mentis.

You would think I was writing a check—and worse, waiting for the cashier to announce the amount before I even started looking for the checkbook in my purse. Remember how

some old people used to do that back when we were young? And then that person would make you wait even longer while they thumbed through their overstuffed wallet to find their driver's license. Now that was annoying. But I know if I tried explaining this to today's young people who are feeling persecuted by how comparatively un-long it takes me to find my keys, they'd look at me and ask, "What's a checkbook?"

On rare occasions, though, being perceived as old can lend you an almost cool status . . . for a very brief moment, that is. My niece Jana invited my husband and me to celebrate her thirtieth birthday in a wine bar with her friends. The young people treated us like rock stars! It was as if two old-fashioned telephone booths had shown up at the party: we were an out-of-place novelty.

Our allure quickly faded with them, though, and I do understand why. Both my husband and I have lost our hearing-in-a-crowded-bar ears. After we leaned into their faces and yelled "WHAT?" every time they spoke to us, they eventually decided we were just too much work to talk to, even if we were potentially interesting.

What's the worst it can get? When people I think of as really old start treating me as if I'm one of theirs.

Marci Crestani lives in Pacific Palisades and is a former columnist for the Los Angeles Times. This essay is adapted from her book *Halfway to Dead: After 50, You Just Have to Laugh*, available on Amazon.com.

Thought to Ponder

"Real courage is when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what."

— Harper Lee,

To Kill a Mockingbird

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EDITORIAL

Let's All Dream Together

Richard Nash's play *The Rainmaker*, written in the early 1950s, started on Broadway and later provided a starring vehicle for Burt Lancaster and Katherine Hepburn in the 1956 film of the same name.

The story revolves around a man called Bill Starbuck, who comes to a drought-stricken town and offers to find water/rain for the farmers who are losing cattle and whose crops are devastated.

The play is probably most remembered because it speaks of dreams. There's Starbuck, to whom dreaming comes naturally, and Lizzie Curry, who in her heart wants to dream, but is caught in reality and won't take the risk. She tells Starbuck, "You're all dreams. And it's no good to live in your dreams."

Starbuck replies, "It's no good to live outside [your dreams] either."

"Somewhere between the two," Lizzie replies.

Pacific Palisades has been in a business drought of sorts. Those who have lived here for decades remember when they really didn't need to leave town. There were pet stores, hobby stores, a paint store, a Five-and-Dime store and even a movie theater. Slowly, many of the stores went by the wayside, and starting in 2007 various businesses on Swarthmore began closing because of economic and landlord issues.

The resulting blight of empty storefronts on North Swarthmore and along Sunset made it hard for adjoin-

ing stores to gather customers. "Shop Local" became a rallying cry for some people in the community, but as the variety of stores diminished, it became harder and harder to stay local.

But now there's hope for our business district. We like that developer Rick Caruso has a grand plan, a Starbuck's type dream. Speaking with people in the community and following blogs, we've noticed that everyone is excited about the prospect of increased parking. That has been on a Palisades wish-list for decades. There is a need for employee parking and Caruso said he will accommodate workers. That could empty the Alphabet Streets of employee parking as well as the Palisades Recreation Center parking lot. The Park Advisory Board has worked extensively on ways to take employee parking out of the park in order to free up those spaces for park patrons.

Most Palisadians also seem excited about a movie theater on Swarthmore. The option of not having to drive to Santa Monica or the Westside Pavillion is appealing. Naysayers are predicting it won't succeed because too many residents are increasingly satisfied with their large-screen televisions and Netflix subscriptions. Let's dream and say it will work. It will give local preteens and teens a place to go without parents having to drive on PCH or Sunset.

A number of residents have objected to the towering Bay Theatre sign on Swarthmore—let the Design Review Board work that out with Caruso Affiliated. What's

important is to once again have a movie theater in Pacific Palisades.

We would urge Caruso to work with architects that eschew the look that Martha Groves in the *L.A. Times* describes as a Cape Cod, Georgian, contemporary line, and develop something in keeping with an historic Palisades look. The 1924 Business Block building, kitty-corner to the Mobil gas station, is a perfect starting point for ideas.

We applaud Caruso for remediating the tetrachloroethylene (PCE) contamination on the north side of Swarthmore, where the buildings will be torn down in early January. Toxic cleanups are expensive, but the developer has stepped forward to take care of the land.

There are those who don't want chain stores—unless it's chain stores they want, such as Trader Joe's or Whole Foods. In this case, we feel there are ample grocery options with Ralphs, Gelson's, Vons and the Farmers Market. We would rather see other retail options in that proposed space from the alley to Sunset, east of the Mobil station.

There are a myriad of details to work out between Rick Caruso and his opponents, but in the end, what's important is that Caruso has allowed a community to dream.

As this project goes forward, we, like Lizzie, urge the community to work with Caruso to make this a dream "somewhere between the two." And just like in the play, where rain comes, ending the drought, we hope the local business community is revitalized. Let's all dream together.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Master Carver Voices Thanks

Thank you for publishing Judy Silk's article about my wood-carving efforts ("An Artist in Our Midst," December 3). The article was great and the first-ever for me in forty years. I may start selling my pieces. Somebody in Cypress asked me carve a stick for them and I am considering it. Thank you again for devoting space in the *Palisades News*.

Michael Wade

Additional Potrero Comments

(Before publishing our December 3 story "Potrero Park Opening Pushed Back," the News had sent additional questions to Potrero Canyon Project Manager Mary Nemick including why the grading plans needed to be redesigned. Her response came after the story was printed.)

There are several areas where grading plans required redesign. The most significant was the fill slopes below existing residences. The proposed grading was to extend onto private property to support the entire slope. Grading on private property requires permission of the property owner. After a long period of negotiation with City personnel and the property owner, an agreement to allow the City to perform work on private property could not be reached.

There is a 30-inch diameter waterline that supplies water to the City of Malibu located along the old alignment of Pacific Coast Highway, below the canyon.

Prior to work on the design of the project, the location of the waterline was unknown. Subsequent field exploration located the pipe. Several design alternatives for avoiding the waterline were considered. The Los Angeles County Water Department is currently working on a realignment of the pipe. However, currently the fill will be placed over the old waterline with Los Angeles County approval.

Upgrades to an existing footpath that connects Potrero Canyon to the beach and Temescal Canyon are under consideration. The footpath will be primarily within the old Pacific Coast Highway alignment that is currently under Caltrans jurisdiction. The footpath would be part of a trail that would provide a 3.5-mile long loop that extends from the Palisades Recreation Center through Potrero Canyon, along the footpath, and up through Temescal Canyon to return to the Recreation Center.

Mary Nemick
Potrero Canyon Project Manager

Missing Classes at Rustic Canyon

I enjoyed your article about Rustic Canyon Park until I came to the "meager offerings" about classes. I have been teaching jewelry classes (silver fabrication) for 25 years and Del Mar has been teaching pottery for 20 years or more so I was shocked to see the omission of my two jewelry classes (10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday)

and Del Mar's multiple classes in pottery. I would so appreciate any future correction or information in your publication that you might feel is appropriate. Please come visit our very vibrant class anytime!

Mrs. David (Penny) Perez
(Mrs. Perez was asked why those classes weren't listed in the current Rustic Canyon catalogue and she said she'd meet with Tracie Field, the new park director, to find out about the oversight.)

Appreciated Gould's Viewpoint

I think what you wrote ["Healing Through Writing," December 3] is lovely and touching. All of us need to practice random acts of kindness and you certainly do.

I didn't know all the specifics of what you went through although I knew you were very seriously ill and there was discussion as to whether or not you would make it.

Most people who experience near-death experiences seem to develop a heightened appreciation for what really matters and they cherish each day.

It would be great if the rest of us could develop the same outlook without waiting for a near-death experience.

It is great that you were published in the *Palisades News* because you will reach so many people who can learn from your example. I'm so glad you are looking well and feeling well!

Amy Greenwood

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letter to Rick Caruso
With Additional Thoughts

(The following letter was sent to Rick Caruso Affiliated and the author shared it with Palisades News.)

As a homeowner in Pacific Palisades, I was impressed by the comprehensive nature and thoughtfulness of the work you have put into this project. On the other hand, I was not impressed by the architecture. I believe if you go forward with the present design you have lost a great and special opportunity to give the Palisades an award-winning identity. Your present design could be anywhere. The wonderful exception to this blandness is your fabulous Bay Theatre sign and entry which is a good beginning. This has a direct connection to the Palisades and its history.

This historic nature could be the jumping off place for a contemporary interpretation and a distinct, award-winning design. The fifties mid-century mixture on Swarthmore of flat roofs, angled elements, pitched walls and cut-outs, speaks to our community image and growth from a special post-war time in the development of not only Los Angeles but of the Palisades. I agree we do not have to keep any existing facades. We need to have a unique and creative undertaking that makes the Palisades distinctive and special. This is your opportunity to do just that. Do not let it go.

Another thought about the project concept is the lack of senior housing. The six living units above the corner retail [at Swarthmore and Sunset] are a minimal start. I suspect that there are arguments against including housing, but the inclusion of 20 or 40 new senior housing units would bring so much life and connectivity to not only your open spaces but to the success of the retail uses as well. People of all ages who would be mixing and loving where they live, is a powerful small-town planning concept. There are so many of us in the Palisades nearing retirement. People who want to stay here forever and be a part of it all. Can you make this work for us: a more vibrant and real place?

Rick Leslie, AIA, LEED AP

VIEWPOINT

The Good, Bad and the Ugly
About the Caruso 'Proposal'

By TED WEITZ
Special to the Palisades News

The Good: The Proposal provides welcome use of the parking lot while preserving open space. It offers much needed subterranean parking, albeit on a fee basis. According to Caruso they will require employee parking in the lot, not on residential streets.

The Bad: Six apartments on Sunset? This is not going to provide street life. We don't need to replicate an urban feel; this is what many people escaped to live here.

On the north side of Swarthmore, the theatre and community rooms pose out-of-scale, second-story massing adjacent to single-family houses. Both features would better be placed at the lowest elevation of the property off the southernmost alley near the "Green" or on Sunset, where they can be incorporated into community life and not interfere with sightlines or even ocean views for Village residents.

In the face of falling movie-house attendance, and in a community where almost everyone owns a big-screen TV, a Netflix account and a pay television subscription, does a five-screen theater make sense? The real concern is the bulky building's permanence after the theater fails. If

theaters merely require "non-windowed walls," why not put it underground below a single-story lobby. The marquee edifice clearly violates the height, pole-sign, sign size and illumination requirements of the Palisades Specific Plan.

The Ugly: Overall, the Proposal is an uninspiring combination of one- and two-story elements in an unchallenging, indistinctive architecture. We deserve a better design.

On numerous occasions on December 4, Mr. Caruso hinted at needing community support for his Proposal to "sail" through the City, which is necessary because the Proposal incorporates public streets, walkways and alleyways for his commercial center. It seeks to reroute traffic flow which may impact the surrounding neighborhood. Elements exceed parking, height and signage requirements of the Pacific Palisades Specific Plan. Some may not like the Specific Plan, but it is what we have now, and it protects our community from losing its unique character to over-development.

The Proposal should be viewed as a starting point. The process is not solely up to Caruso, but requires public comment and participation. Get involved! Remember, this is OUR Village!

(Editor's note: The Palisades News welcomes all viewpoints, but they do not necessarily reflect the views of the paper.)

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Clock Tower Building Plans Discussed at DRB

By SUE PASCOE
Editor

Ronald Simms purchased the Clock Tower Building at the corner of Sunset and Monument this fall from the Chabad of Pacific Palisades.

He has hired Oakes Architects to look at possible upgrades or a facelift for the building, which currently houses Panda Express and Gibson International. Studio K is slated to move into the upstairs space. A bank may go in the downstairs space, formerly occupied by the post office, but a tenant has not been confirmed by the owner.

At the Design Review Board (DRB) meeting in November, Oakes co-founders and principal architects Lee and Julie Oakes presented a rendering of a white building without the clock tower, but said they welcomed suggestions from board members.

Chair Barbara Kohn said, "The building commands the corner and any proposed changes would need to address it."

Vice-chair David Hibbert suggested that instead of a major remodel, the owner upgrade the building by replastering, replacing the windows, awnings, railings, lights and paving. "Upgrade the quality of everything," he said.

"Ultimately, there will be an entrance at the corner of the building," Julie Oakes



The Clock Tower Building has a new owner, who may make upgrades. Photo: Shelby Pascoe

said, but noted that no changes will be made while Panda is occupying the space, for at least two or three more years.

Oakes said she had driven by the building at night. "The lighting is horrible, perhaps we could uplight it," she said.

"Maybe a subtle wash of light," Kohn agreed.

The building was a center of controversy in 1988, when residents and Councilman Marvin Braude realized that the clock tower on the building exceeded the 30-ft.

height limit mandated by the Commercial Village Specific Plan. Braude argued that the building not be certified for occupancy until a special permit had been issued.

The DRB maintained that it had approved developer Sina Akhtarzad's plans in 1986 and that they were aware of the height. The group further said that the City Planning Department had approved the structure based on its recommendation. With the exception of the tower, the rest of the building is 28 ft. high.

Akhtarzad felt caught between City and DRB officials, and offered to remove the tower.

Local architect Rich Wilken, who sat on the DRB at that time, expressed the views of the board, and said members felt that it was better to have a building with contrast than a flat uninteresting one and that the tower should stay.

An editorial in March 1988 in a local paper summed up the situation: "A public hearing has been set for April 11 to review the developer's request for a variance which would allow the tower to remain in place, although it exceeds the height limit for village buildings by three feet.

"What! All this fuss about three feet? Yes, there's a principle involved and an important lesson to be learned. . . . The community has made a strong stand on the height-limit issue and this is all to the good. Would-be developers must understand that we are prepared to make a fuss, even over a meager three feet."

The editorial noted that even Braude said he liked the clock tower, that it gave distinction to the corner. The editorial was in favor of the variance.

After the DRB meeting, the Oakes architects said they would take suggestions back to the owner, and at this point, since the building appeared to be rented, would not recommend any immediate major changes.

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We're here for You!

Jenkins to Speak at Garden Club

Hank Jenkins, a landscape designer and stylist, will speak at the Pacific Palisades Garden Club's monthly meeting at 7:30 p.m., on Monday, January 5, at the Woman's Club, 901 Haverford Ave.

Jenkins, who has been a featured guest on *The Dirt On, Sunset* and *This Old House*, is the author of *Sunset Outdoor Design & Build: Container Gardening: Fresh Ideas for Outdoor Living*. He will speak on container gardening techniques. Admission is free.

A Michigan native, Jenkins was a former member of the creative merchandising team at Flora Grubb Gardens in San Francisco. He moved to Los Angeles in 2013

and runs his website The Plant Provocateur. He is regarded as an expert in the olfactory power of botanical materials. Visit: plantprovocateur.com

The Pacific Palisades Garden Club, founded in 1944, is a nonprofit organization and funds generated by memberships, plant sales and the annual Garden Tour, are used to pay speakers, make grants to local public school horticulture programs, plant trees in the Santa Monica Mountains and support community beautification projects in the Pacific Palisades.

E-mail pacpalgardenclub@yahoo.com.

Volunteers Sought for Village Green Work Saturday

The monthly Village Green "spruce up" will be held from 9 to 11 a.m. on Saturday, December 20, at the triangular park located between Sunset Boulevard, Swarthmore Avenue and Antioch Street.

Residents who have never volunteered before are welcome to join the "regular" Village Green crew. Those participating are asked to bring clippers and gloves. High School students can receive community service hours.

Temescal Garden Cleanup Dec. 27

The Pacific Palisades Garden Club and Palisades Beautiful co-sponsor the beautification efforts at the N/E/X/T/Garden in the northeast corner of Temescal Canyon Park. This new acronym for the long-established garden area spells: Native/Environmental/Xeriscape/Temescal.

Hands-on help is needed with various gardening tasks on Saturday, December 27 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. People can come any time and volunteer as long or short as they want. Street parking next to the site (just south of Bowdoin) is available on Saturdays.

Contact: ppgardenclub@verizon.net or call Barbara Marinacci (310) 459-0190.

Naughty or Nice? NICE!



Liam and Charlotte Kamday were among the more than 300 children that visited Santa Claus on December 5 on Swarthmore Avenue during the Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce's annual Holiday Ho!Ho!Ho! Many children arrived with lists, yet others had "stage fright" when meeting Santa for the first time—and were suddenly speechless—and couldn't remember what they wanted.

Photo: Shelby Pascoe



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\$6,195,000... This picturesque, brand new construction, Cape Cod beach house resides in Castellammare: Italian meaning "Castle by the Sea". Four view-laden floors, massive ocean views, and stoic curb appeal make this property live up to its name. This property has 5 bedrooms, 5.5 baths, elevator, full wine display, four balconies, turf backyard area, jaw-dropping 180 degree ocean views throughout the property.



725 NAPOLI DRIVE

PACIFIC PALISADES - OPEN SUNDAY 1-4 PM

\$9,495,000... Stately New England White Brick Traditional, this brand-new exemplary estate is set on one of the most sought-after streets in the Riviera. Sleek design, minimalist elegance, and Mad Men disposition are the inherent qualities of this masterpiece. 8,200 sqft extremely spacious 7 bed, 7 full baths and 3 half baths, and much more...



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Grossman to Open Kumon Center

By SUE PASCOE
Editor

Palisadian Tricia Grossman is opening a Kumon Center in the Atrium Building at 860 Via de la Paz.

Grossman said she first learned about the math and reading enrichment program when her daughter was in second grade. “Her teacher suggested she try Kumon because she was struggling in math. I had never heard of it, but I took her and was so glad I did. While I volunteered in my kids’ math classes at Marquez Elementary, I started to see that there was a difference in the performance of kids taking Kumon versus those that didn’t.”

Founded in Japan in 1958, Kumon’s learning method uses an individualized approach that helps children develop a solid command of math and reading skills through daily practice and mastery of materials. Kumon has 26,000 centers in 48 countries and regions.

Grossman grew up in Buffalo and obtained her teaching degree from SUNY Geneseo before moving to Los Angeles in 1997 with her husband, who attended UCLA Law School. She taught fifth grade in Rowland Heights and Burbank and was a math teacher at a private Hebrew day school in Beverly Hills.

“We moved Pacific Palisades a little over 10 years ago,” said Grossman, who has served as a president of the Woman’s Club. “It was the best move we ever made.”

Grossman explained that Kumon teaches both math and reading, from beginning letter and number formation all the way through calculus and critical reading of works such as Shakespeare and T.S. Eliot.

“Kids can start as early as 3 years old to learn letter sounds and how to count,” Grossman said. “The early-education component is one of the aspects I’m most excited about and the beauty of the program is that every child works at their own pace and the end goal is mastery of each level.



Tricia Grossman is opening a Kumon Center in February.

Photo: Shelby Pascoe

“I think it’s the perfect supplement to school,” Grossman said. “It’s not a substitute for school and isn’t the solution to all

of a child’s educational needs, but the kids who enter the Kumon world exit it a stronger person . . . not just from the academic skills they learn, but also from the confidence and independence it instills.”

Grossman saw the impact the program had on her daughter, now a sixth grader at New West, which inspired her to open her own franchise. She also has a second grader at Marquez.

“Being a Kumon instructor in town means I get to do what I love,” she said. “I’ll work with children and stay connected to the people in this community.”

There will be free placement testing and preregistration during January. Sessions begin on February 2.

Class hours are Mondays from 3 to 7 p.m. and Thursdays from 2 to 6 p.m. Students study for about a half-hour per subject at the Center, and then are given short assignments to complete at home. To schedule a free placement test, email: patricia.grossman@kumon.com.

Seasonal Success with Home Sales Caruso Effect on Real Estate

By BETTY-JO TILLEY
Special to the Palisades News

As winter months bring shorter days to the Palisades, images of cozying up with family and preparing for holidays usually come to mind. Rarely do people’s thoughts turn to seasonal home buying and selling strategies during this time. However, that festive and happy spirit leading up to the holidays and carrying into the New Year may be just the thing to make your real estate experience something to celebrate.

It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year—When Your Home is Perfectly Staged

Almost any home, despite its condition, benefits from smart staging. Decorated with lovely Christmas décor including a tree in place, stockings hanging from the mantel and candles aglow, the home can be sold incredibly quickly because of its family-friendly ambiance. In fact, what buyers want most is the sense of warmth and happiness a home provides.

Later On, We’ll Conspire—To Renovate

Even if sellers had made upgrades to the property, these might not have been worth the effort. Often, buyers look for properties that allow room for customization. While new carpeting, paint or other elements usually freshen a home, those touches may actually be doomed to a new owner’s remodel. If winter months pose challenges to con-

struction and repair projects, think about whether or not those jobs are vital to the sale of the property. Your agent will be the best-informed person to ask about renovations.

Words of Good Cheer—For Buyers and Sellers Alike

Perceptions of low inventory in winter months can be misleading. The research company Redfin found that more properties sell, and for higher prices over a shorter length of time—in the winter. If shoppers are busy filling stockings instead of patrolling for new listings, committed buyers will have the advantage.

Fast Away the Old Year Passes—With Acceptance Letters for the New Year in the Mail

Families looking for a new school district to accommodate a growing family may already be searching for a home far before September, and professionals relocating could make quick housing decisions based on an online listing profile. Home is where the heart is—until it’s time to buy or sell—so toss the beloved clutter out with 2014. Envision that sewing nook as an office space or that Lego room as an additional bedroom and show off the home’s sleek potential to prospective buyers.

Betty-Jo Tilley is a luxury property specialist at Berkshire Hathaway Home Services in Pacific Palisades and can be reached at (310) 429-9833 and bettyjo@bettyjotilley.com.

By MICHAEL EDLEN
Special to the Palisades News

In the short term, change is never easy, even when in the long run it produces positive benefits for growth and enjoyment. For those of us who have witnessed the steady decline and gradual disintegration of a once-vibrant area of our town center, the prospect of Rick Caruso’s project for renewal is encouraging and exciting.

At the presentation of plans on December 4, it was made abundantly clear that a great deal of investigation of the culture and village community feel was considered in Caruso’s Palisades Village plan. He addressed most of the concerns and desires expressed by the community with sensitivity and creativity.

While there are still areas and questions to be sorted out, in general the Caruso plan appears to honor his commitment to keeping our unique village intact.

From a residential real estate point of view, there is a significant long-term upside to this development. It is true that many areas immediately proximate to the site will be negatively affected during the construction period and there will be a general inconvenience with traffic patterns. However, nearby properties will likely see a significant increase in value by appealing to those buyers who desire to be within easy walking distance to the new town center.

Given the new shops, restaurants, meeting places, green spaces, a movie theater

and, of course, an ice cream store, owning a home in the Palisades will have even a greater appeal. Most activities and needs will be able to be met without venturing out of our local community. As the traffic patterns have become significantly more congested, leaving the Palisades has presented an increasing challenge, and staying local has become more valued.

As the overall appeal of living here grows, so will the property values—in all areas of the Palisades. Local demographics indicate that homes available for purchase will not increase enough to meet the steady and increasing demand.

Having provided dozens of market evaluations to long-time residents in the last year, I believe that fewer than 10 percent of them will likely feel the need to move in the near future. They, too, will continue to see nowhere else to live as desirable as in the Palisades, even with the changes over the years. And, as there is a shortage of available land on which to build more homes, the basic law of supply and demand will most likely result in significant long-term appreciation of property values. In conclusion, the Caruso redevelopment will have created a beneficial long-term effect on all property values.

Michael Edlen has been the leading agent in the Palisades since 1994, representing more than 1,300 people in selling, buying or leasing homes here. He can be reached at (310) 230-7373 or Michael@michaeledlen.com.

Caruso

(Continued from Page 1)

Swarthmore and Sunset that will bring a completely new look to the business district, if he gains necessary City approvals.

- A two-story parking structure with 384 stalls will be built below the current parking lot, and a “village green” will be created on top of the structure with space for kids to play and adults to mingle. Restaurants and patios will open onto the “green.”

- A movie theater, that resurrects the town’s former Bay Theatre, will be built in the former Mort’s Deli and Oak Room location on Swarthmore. “We listened to what you wanted,” Caruso told his audience, “and we figured out how to bring back the Bay Theatre.” The new building will be the same size as its predecessor (10,000 square feet), but divided into five small theaters.

- Caruso would like to turn Swarthmore into a one-way street with angled parking, which could open up an additional 28 parking spaces, resulting in 52 on-street spaces. Former Mort’s Deli owner Bobbie Farberow said, “We tried to get Swarthmore a one-way street many years ago, but didn’t achieve it. Good luck.”

- Once Caruso closes escrow on the Mobil gas station in mid-2016, he plans to put a two-story building on that site, with six apartments on the second floor. “We want to bring life to that corner,” he said. When the rendering of the proposed build-



Mercer and Gilbert Halls were packed as residents gathered to hear Rick Caruso tell his plans for Swarthmore.

Photo: Bart Bartholomew

ing was displayed, someone in the audience said, “That looks so much nicer.” A second person urged Caruso to consider turning the apartments into a boutique hotel, because “we really need a local place for out-of-town guests to stay.”

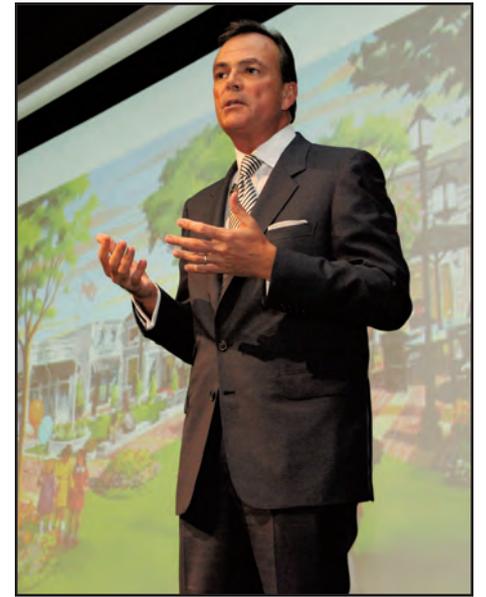
- The empty storefronts on the north side of Swarthmore at Monument will become a two-story building, with the top floor dedicated as a community room. Former longtime Community Council member Harry Sondheim asked, “Will there be an elevator and a senior citizen center?” He was told yes to both questions.

- Caruso promised a specialty grocery

store in the space occupied by the former U.S. Bank building, the medical building and The Office Supplier (now Carly K). The audience was torn between a Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s, but one Ralphs employee in the audience was overheard to say the town already has enough grocery stores.

During the presentation, there was no mention about specific retailers or restaurants joining the development, nor the number of eventual establishments Caruso has in mind for the 2.77-acre site.

Spokeswoman Jaeger told the *Palisades News* on December 8: “The exact number of stores and restaurants has not been de-



Rick Caruso answered questions from the crowd.

Photo: Bart Bartholomew

termined at this time, as we are still in conceptual design. Things will evolve and we will have a better idea by the middle of next year.”

Caruso promised to work with current tenants on Swarthmore and Sunset in hopes of keeping them in the Village (most of the leases are up in 2016). During the remediation process, he said, he will cut rents in half, and when he’s working on new construction, he will not charge rent.

(The *Palisades News* welcomes ongoing opinions and letters about Caruso’s Palisades Village plans. Please send them to spascoe@palisadesnews.com.)

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PaliHi Holds Meeting to Hear Neighbors

By SUE PASCOE
Editor

A special Palisades High School Board meeting was held in the school library on December 4 to hear additional neighbor concerns regarding noise and light abatement issues. The board wanted to address any additional concerns that it had not heard at its previous meeting in late November.

The first neighbor to speak was Stuart Muller, who recalled the history of the canyon and showed photos of the canyon before the high school was built in 1961. "You should act like neighbors. There should be no banners, no signs," Muller said. "Who invited you to be the PRIDE of the Palisades?" (He referenced banners on light poles on Temescal Canyon Road, across from the high school.)

Lisa Richardson said, "I live within earshot of the school and I feel like PaliHi has gone above and beyond in trying to placate neighbors. It's the community who has been harassing the children, by following them on the field [during a band practice]. That behavior is reprehensible and I feel like they [some neighbors] threaten the safety of our children."

Resident Robert Speiser said, "We're the family that lives closest to PaliHi. It is an honor to live close to a school that is ranked

23rd in the state of California. I understand neighbors' complaints, but I don't agree. The neighbors should look at what the school has done to accommodate them. Now it's time for the neighbors to accommodate the school's needs."

His son Max also spoke. "I love hearing the band, even if they play off-key and play a song over and over," he said. "Water polo is scary because this big guy [neighbor across the street] screams at us and screams names."

One parent questioned, "Why is it so few can try to take over something that does good for so many?" She referenced the fact that several neighbors went to LAUSD on November 18 to urge that board not to renew the charter. (Go to http://lausd.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?clip_id=241 and click on Palisades High in the left hand column. Despite neighbors' complaints, the board voted 7-0 to grant PaliHi a five-year renewal of its charter, which was originally approved in 1993.)

Yet another parent wondered why the neighbors were not satisfied with what the school had already done toward appeasing neighbors. (Starting in 2010, PaliHi has taken more than 44 steps to work on noise and lights complaints.)

Neighbor Andrea Bell said, "If you decide to smoke and it fills your home, then it's your problem. But when you smoke and it fills up my home, then it's your problem."

"On Thanksgiving morning, the broadcast was so loud and clear, I could hear it in my living room. That is being unfair," Bell said. "Please be respectful of your neighbors."

(PaliHi Operations Manager David Riccardi explained that it was the second annual Turkey Trot and the only amplified sound was the singing of the National Anthem and the start of the race. "I didn't think anyone would object to the National Anthem on Thanksgiving," he said.)

Neighbor Sid Greenwald said, "I live on Radcliffe. Do I see the lights? Yes. Do I hear the band? Yes. I think those kids work so hard and many will receive scholarships. Those kids work harder than any other sport. If this school would be run by LAUSD, they wouldn't care [to take the steps PaliHi has]."

Parent Nicole Howard reminded the 30 people in the audience that "PaliHi is always the first to step up to host nonprofit fundraisers."

After listening to comments, Riccardi was asked to speak. "We turn down about 80 percent of requests to rent the facility," he said, noting that "lost income amounts to \$75,000 and \$100,000 annually."

Riccardi said that anyone renting the facility has to sign a usage agreement; if it is violated, they are asked to leave the premises.

"I work on this every single day," he said. "I can't imagine any administration bending over backwards like we've done."

He also pointed out that the school hosts 7,000 people on the Fourth of July, but he doesn't hear any complaints about that event from neighbors.

Next, aquatics director Brook King was asked to speak about pool noise and light. "If a person violates a rule at a pool, a lifeguard will blow a whistle," King said. "Here the lifeguard uses body language. I believe we're the only pool in the city that doesn't use whistles."

"We've also cut the pool lights use in half," said King, who explained they can't turn them down any lower for safety reasons, including lifeguards not being able to see the bottom of the pool, or people not being able to see the deck. Pool hours have been cut back to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 7 p.m. on Friday and 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Board members were asked for questions or comments. School Vice President Monica Iannessa said, "When I hear we're cutting back on charity events and block an MS fundraiser because a person posts a complaint, I wonder if we're showing due diligence? I am also having concerns about residents coming onto school campus and threatening students."

Board member Leslie Woolley said, "I agree with Ms. Iannessa. I hope we're not compromising students, whether it is band
(Continued on Page 16)



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Pacific View Rights Center



The Pacific View Rights Center is a collaboration and exchange of information regarding view and related property rights between property owners and developers, real estate brokers, attorneys and architects. It is hosted by Pacific Palisades residents Don Erik Franzen (310-785-1710) and Keith Turner (310-454-6190)

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PaliHi

(Continued from Page 15)

practice or water polo. I don't want students affected because of a small number of people who disagree."

Board president Allison Holdorff Polhill asked Principal Dr. Pam Magee and Riccardi how much time they spent dealing with neighbors' concerns.

"Every single day, a portion of my day is given to sound remediation," Riccardi said, estimating that as much 40 percent of his day is dealing with neighbors or their concerns.

"We've worked hard to develop relationships," Magee said, adding finding additional revenue for the high school is hard and turning down many rentals, cuts into school revenue. "I'm in an area where there isn't a Boeing or another large company to partner with."

Magee admitted that she feels guilty about the time spent talking with neighbors and Riccardi. "It keeps me out of the classroom and I have less time to work with teachers," she said.

Board member Mark Epstein asked if the administration had met with neighbors in the past. Magee and Riccardi responded they had. "The community has had some good ideas," Riccardi said. He noted that since he came aboard, Sunday stadium hours had been cut from 10 to 9 p.m. and now 6 p.m.

Student and board member Ben Safvati once again returned to the safety issue for students when neighbors harass students. He was assured by the school administration and Riccardi that after a neighbor followed band students on the field, the school has now hired a permit liaison to be on the field with students.

Donations Sought For Medical Team

Palisadian Navid Brian Noori is seeking donations for an upcoming medical mission, leaving December 25, for orphanages and monastic primary schools in Myanmar through SAVE (Student Action Volunteer Effort).

"We would like small toys, soccer jerseys for kids (AYSO), reading/sunglasses for adults, travel/hotel-sized shampoo or soap and toothbrushes/toothpaste," said Noori, who is also seeking small earrings. "Many girls have their ears pierced at a young age, but do not have real earrings to put in place, so they use a piece of wood to keep the piercing open."

Collection boxes are located at the Chamber of Commerce office, 15330 Antioch.

Visit: studentactionvolunteereffort.org.

Volunteers Sought for Homeless Count

The Pacific Palisades Homeless Task Force (PPHTF) is seeking 100 volunteers to help count the increasing number of homeless in the Village and surrounding hillsides and canyons on January 29 at 6 a.m. The count will conclude at 10 a.m., with wrap-up by noon. Volunteers will receive training.

The PPHTF will participate in the 2015 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count to determine the number of homeless, their demographic characteristics and the locations where they reside.

Visit: pp90272.org/Homeless.pdf or contact pacpalihft@gmail.com

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Palisadian Will Advance to Yugioh Nationals

By SUE PASCOE
Editor

Paul Revere sixth grader Gabi Benartzi has turned a game into a passion. On November 22, he took fourth place at the Yugioh Championships Series regional tournament in Anaheim competing against 1,600 players. The 11-year-old Palisadian was one of the top eight players qualifying for Nationals, which will be held in the Midwest in June.

Yugioh Trading Cards, manufactured by Konamni, is a Japanese game that requires strategy, statistical analysis, math and concentration. Two players duel each other using a variety of monster, spell and trap cards to defeat their opponent's monsters and be the first to drop their opponent's life points to zero.

Benartzi, with help from Palisades librarians, started a Yugioh club at the Palisades Branch Library last year. Beginning players, as well as the "experienced" Benartzi, meet in the community room every other Wednesday from 3:30 to 4:45 to duel.

Juan Carlos Sarinana, who works at MTG Dealers in San Gabriel and is a Konamni representative, comes to the Palisades library to act as teacher, mentor and judge. The card game, which has colorful and imaginative figures, is complicated.



Gabi Benartzi finished fourth out of 1,600 Yugioh players, which qualified him for the national tournament in June. Juan Carlos Sarinana, a judge and mentor, shares the moment.

Each player has his or her own deck that ranges from 40 to 60 cards. Additionally, each has a side deck of up to 15 cards, and an extra deck, also up to 15 cards. After a die throw, the winning dueler decides whether he/she wants to go first or second. Starting with 8,000 life points, each player tries to maintain them, while seeing which

card will "take" another card.

"It's complex—there's a lot of strategy," said Sarinana, a Culver City resident. "It's a lot like poker."

Beginning players buy premade decks, which Sarinana has on hand in case a new player wants to try the game.

But Benartzi is now at the point in his

playing where "I buy specific cards."

He explained: "Every deck has a different strategy. Some are about one turn kills (OTK). Some are about getting high attack (ATK) monsters and some are about making strong plays over and over, while some prevent moves.

"My current and best strategy is the lock-down," Benartzi said. "Using a deck called tribute stun, you summon powerful high ATK monsters that stop most strategies. You then summon a specific monster, and you keep it safe, and if you do, you win."

Sarinana said that individual cards and decks can be expensive. The cards first appeared on the market in 2002. "They are valuable," Sarinana said. "But, many parents, once their kids are no longer interested, just throw them out."

Tamar Springer, Gabi's mom, said that her son had just sold a deck for \$150.

Sarinana, who is committed to the library club, has seen attendance ebb and flow. On this rainy day there were two youths dueling, but lots of siblings observing.

The popcorn and juice for players was supplied by the library. "The librarians have been enthusiastic and supportive," Springer said.

Visit: yugioh-card.com/en/dragonduel/index.html.

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PPBA Deadline Nears

The 2015 PPBA Spring baseball season is nearing the start of yet another year for boys and girls, ages 7 to 14, with the sign-up deadline December 31 fast approaching. For more information, interested parents can visit ppba.net or send an email to ppba@earthlink.net.

Evaluation days will take place on Saturday, January 10 and Sunday, January 11 (specific times still be posted at a later date), with the annual opening day Pancake Breakfast set for March 14.

"I'm always very excited for another season, and there's nothing better than seeing kids on the Field of Dreams," longtime PPBA commissioner Bob Benton said. "It's the only place you can come on a weekly basis and meet kids from other schools, private and public. It's phenomenal—Americana at its best. And it's been incredible to keep it going."

"The coaches we have are people who understand the game, and care about a community-based program, from the bottom up," Benton continued, "that's been my philosophy. Because at the end of the year, it's the kids that grow and get better that help you win. We keep our coaching board based on guys who respect that, and do their best to make it happen."

Benton also mentioned the growing number of year-round club teams in youth



Participating in the 2014 Fourth of July parade were PPBA World Series champs—the Pinto Yankees, Mustang Red Socks and Bronco Tigers—who surround long-time umpire Dirk Robinson.

Photo: Bart Bartholomew

sports as a difficult issue the league faces, though it only sounded to increase his commitment to the importance of the PPBA.

"The major challenge in youth sports right now is overspecialization and injuries; it's a big topic," Benton said. "All the research says specialization, throwing a baseball 12 months a year at a young age, isn't good. So all of that really makes me feel

that what we do is really important. And we want everyone to be involved.

Benton added, "We regularly send four to six teams into PONY all-star tournaments. Last season was our first-ever where we sent two 10-year-old teams. Both did very well, with one reaching heights we've never reached before. So getting to see that was really special."

Williams Takes Second at Meet

Palisades High senior Marissa Williams finished second overall in Division I at the CIF State Cross Country Championships on November 29 at Woodward Park in Fresno.

The UC Berkeley-bound Williams' time of 17:02 was bested only by Fiona O'Keefe of Davis and her winning mark of 16:57.

On November 22, Williams finished first in the City with a time of 16:33.11, more than two minutes faster than the second place finisher. Williams broke her record of 16:37, which she set as a sophomore, and helped propel the PaliHi girls to the overall Division I crown.

Then, on December 6, Williams placed 13th (in a field of 199) at the Nike Cross Nationals in Portland, Oregon in 17:45, only five seconds removed from a top-five finish. Senior Allie Ostrander of Kenai, Alaska took first in 17:19.

Ice Skating Returns to Westside

ICE, an ice rink located at the corner of 5th Street and Arizona in Santa Monica, will be open through January 19. Hours are 2-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 2 p.m.-midnight on Friday; 11 a.m.-midnight on Saturday and 11 a.m.-10 p.m. on Sunday. (In the event of rain, ICE will close until skies clear.) Admission with skate rental is \$25. Visit: downtownsm.com/ice or call (310) 260-1199.

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A Fresh Culture for PaliHi Girls Soccer

By JACK ROSS
Sports Editor

If the dedication and experiences of this season's new coaching staff is any indication, the Palisades girls soccer team looks poised to do great things in the years ahead.

Following last season's 17-4 campaign (12-0 in league) that ended in a 0-0 penalty shootout loss to Granada Hills in the City Section Division I final, the Dolphins brought in head coach Christian Chambers this offseason, a former coach for both the Brentwood Middle School girls team and the boys team at Paul Revere with a wealth of experience coaching for FC Los Angeles, where he compiled a 116-60-25 record.

In addition, Chambers brings a fresh philosophy and commitment to the entire girls' program, starting with his coaching staff.

One such contributor is Palisades assistant coach Gary Truman, who has been involved in the game of soccer as both a coach and player for more than 30 years. Before moving the United States, Truman served on trial with Liverpool FC, eventually signing for Tranmere Rovers FC of England's third division, where he played for two years.

In July 1987, Truman moved to Los Angeles and within a month, was playing for Exiles FC out of Manhattan Beach, one of the nation's top semi-pro clubs during that time (coming after the North American Soccer League folded and years below Major League Soccer was founded). There, he played with some of the brightest U.S. men's players, including Joe Max Moore, Chris Henderson and Cobi Jones, all of whom would go on to the play in the 1990 World Cup.

"We were the old grumpy British guys, and they were the young lads taking our place," Truman said of his time with Exiles, noting that many of the players were on UCLA's 1989 National Championship team, as well. "Many people thought since I came from England, and (the English) invented the game, you would expect I would be quite advanced. But I came here and thought, 'My gosh, how have they not won a World Cup yet?'"

"In England, it was like the Stone Age. We had real muddy fields, so you could always hit the ball long, run for it, and knew the ball would stop," Truman said. "As a center forward, my practices were running from box-to-box, there was never a ball. Then, you went into scrimmage, and that was about it. Here, there was real technical savvy, drills, and the fitness was so much more advanced. And the level has only



Palisades sophomore midfielder Isabella Viana races past the Venice defense at the Stadium by the Sea on December 10. Photo: Jennifer Wilkes

gotten higher and higher."

By 1994, Truman took a break from soccer after the birth of his first daughter, Alexandra, but by 2002, returned to the sidelines. In 2010, he earned his AYSO National Coaching Badge to go with his So Cal Soccer License. And as a coach today, he's been able to combined his past experiences and perspective to pass down to the players he works with.

"I really try to bring old-school sportsmanship: when you walk on the field, you give 100 percent for you, your team and your family name," Truman said. "I like to tell kids that they're entertainers, not robots. The goal is go out there to be creative,

to do the best you can within yourself, whatever that is, and recognize you did something well. It should always be fun.

"And Christian's been brilliant, because he doesn't talk about wins and losses. Rather, it's about how we bring our best, from start to finish. You're always going to make mistakes, it's how you move past them, and figure out how you can change your next move."

The new, program-centered philosophy brought in by Chambers seems to be paying early dividends, evidenced by the more than 80 girls that came out to the preseason tryouts.

The Dolphins return a number of key

contributors from last year's side as well, including starting senior goalkeeper Annika Lundeberg, and defenders in sophomore Melissa Bell and senior Sydra Gianassi. Offensively, top scorer and assists leader junior forward Kaitlyn Parcell and attacking midfielder junior Erin Ross return to lead the attack.

Even in spite of a tough opening 6-0 loss at El Camino Real on December 8, where Pali experimented with a number of different rotations, Truman made it clear just how thrilled the entire staff is about the opportunity they have at Pali.

"It's a wonderful situation, between the school and facilities, and we're lucky enough to have such high-quality players, five days a week," Truman said. "Our philosophy has really been to incorporate all the girls, of every team, to feel like they're a part of something, together. Nothing is isolated, down to our JV coach, Jamie Duffy. It's all one team, one program. And each and every player we have is humble enough to buy into that.

"We've been emphasizing speed of thought, passing, being fluid and not just kick and rush," Truman said. "We really want to show that we can diversify and change our style, to get around any obstacle. We have some tremendous talent, so we're just scratching the surface. If we can get them to continue to buy into everything, I believe we'll go very far, and hopefully, deep into the spring, and beyond."

The Dolphins play an alumni game at 11 a.m. this Saturday (December 20), before hosting Santa Monica on January 8 at 2:30 p.m. Their first home league game is on January 16 at 5:30 p.m. against University.



Coaches Jamie Duffy, Christian Chambers and Gary Truman are all smiles at a preseason practice at Palisades High.

Photo: Kim Holland

Troop 223 Honors 25 Eagle Scouts

By RUTH KAHN WELLS
Special to the Palisades News

Twenty-five members of Boy Scout Troop 223 were awarded the rank of Eagle Scout on November 25 at a Court of Honor dinner and ceremony at Sprague Center at Saint Matthew's School.

Bradley Hubsch, Eagle Scout (2012), convened the Court of Honor. Fourth-year Scouts and senior patrol leaders presented the colors and flag salute (Kevin Iacopino) and led the invocation (Colum Yeh).

Congratulatory citations from the White House, the House of Representatives, Senator Dianne Feinstein and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti were read by first-year Scouts Spencer Flippen, Cole Hillyer, Lukas Richards and Nathan Russell.

The guest speaker was Hugh Travis, also an Eagle Scout, and incoming Scout executive for the Western Los Angeles County Council. Travis was instrumental in negotiating with Boy Scout Councils and the Catalina Island Company to build Camp Emerald Bay.

During his speech, Travis described the Boy Scouts of America as a "grand organization." He recognized Troop 223 as a flagship troop, saying "there is none better in the entire country than 223," and applauded long-time Scoutmaster Michael Lanning



The newest Eagle Scouts of Troop 223 flank Scoutmaster Michael Lanning.

Photo: Richard Klein

for creating such a wonderful legacy.

The young men started working towards their Eagle Scout rank in fifth grade. Each Scout must earn a minimum of 21 badges, attend weekly meetings and monthly campouts, serve at least six months in a leadership position within the troop, and participate in week-long summer programs

at Emerald Bay and two high-adventure backpacking trips.

Additionally, Scouts must plan and execute a 100-hour service project that benefits an outside community organization. The young men, who are mostly sophomores and juniors in high school, must also demonstrate Scout spirit by living the

Scout Oath and Law.

Each new Eagle Scout was then introduced with a presentation written and delivered by an older Eagle Scout.

The projects performed this past year included a variety of activities that benefitted 15 different community organizations.

(Continued on Page 21)

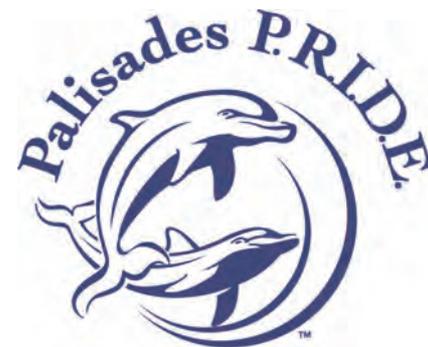
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Scouts

(Continued from Page 20)

The VA in West Los Angeles was the beneficiary of two projects: Christopher Castaneda worked on the renovation of the Japanese Gardens and Jason Simon rebuilt and refinished benches at the Heroes Golf Course.

Local schools benefited from the work done by Scouts. At the Palisades Jewish Early Childhood Center, Harrison Aronoff sanded and sealed six new cedar picnic tables for pre-school children to use for lunch and activities.

At Marquez Elementary, James Dameris built railings for additional storage above cabinets in classrooms to comply with Fire Marshal guidelines for safety, and Nicholas Frey constructed a removable bed cover for the school's garden to keep out garden pests. Michael Stokdyk built a gated entrance to the STAR building, which includes two movable wooden planters.

Jack Holt built an irrigation system for the horticulture center at Paul Revere Charter Middle School.

At St. Matthew's School, Mitchell Algett rebuilt a decaying staircase and Maxwell Goldman installed a water-efficient sprinkler system. James Kanoff restored the prayer garden and Kenton Sheridan created a library bookshelf system for St. George's Room and catalogued all the books in the

Parish Library. Jack Strome designed and constructed an outdoor learning center commemorating the spiritual teachings from Jerusalem, and Jackson Wong built 12 new-rolling wooden storage bins at St. Matthew's Thrift Shop.

Scott Feldsted constructed a bridge, storm-water catchment dam and trails for an outdoor classroom at Calvary Christian School.

Collin Ferrara's project benefitted the Vista Del Mar School, where he cleared out a pre-existing garden shack and built a new garden facility, dug out and installed a new gravel base, and built a 15-ft. potting bench.

Charles Trout improved Corpus Christi Church and School's Emergency Preparedness Project by inventorying and replenishing all rescue supplies, painting walkways and sanitizing and replenishing emergency preparedness water barrels.

Anthony Bouza built a portable composting and recycling system as a trial for St. Anne School to determine the feasibility of large-scale composting on campus. Bradley Hall designed and built wood cabinets for students and teachers to store musical instruments, including 58 violins and 20 violas.

Nonprofits also benefitted from Eagle Scout projects.

Jai Bailey built a large, wooden community table for use in the lobby of the Palisades YMCA. Spencer Hylen built wagons to transport pumpkins at the YMCA's annual Pumpkin Patch and Joseph Waxtein

built shelves to increase the storage area at Simon Meadow.

Jack Cortese created 40 feet of new shelving for the warehouse at the Westside Food Bank. Kenta Kagan, through the the American Red Cross, distributed 500 emergency preparedness fliers and presented information at a Pacific Palisades farmers market booth.

Andrew Steel built enclosures and perches for rescued birds of prey at the California Wildlife Center.

Meanwhile, William Lewis built shelving and cleaned out and organized four storage rooms at Kehillat Israel. This was the first Eagle project to ever be completed at this synagogue.

Scoutmaster Lanning, who has guided

Troop 223 for more than 60 years, closed the ceremony by discussing the new expectations and responsibilities bestowed on an Eagle Scout.

Lanning emphasized three things: "First, remember to be thankful, it will empower you and help you set aside the small stuff. Second, be opportunistic—the world is full of opportunities and it is fun to be a leader. And third, remember, when the going gets tough, there is an indefatigable force within you that will take you anywhere you want to go."

Mr. Lanning has now advanced over 700 Eagle Scouts, more than any other Scoutmaster in the country. Troop 223 has about 130 Scouts and 75 Assistant Scoutmasters. Visit: troop-223.org.

Fonda Tries Electric Bike

Pacific Palisades resident Peter Fonda tried the LiveWire, a prototype electric superbike from Harley-Davidson, in November in a parking lot along the ocean.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported his reaction in "Peter Fonda goes electric on a Harley-Davidson LiveWire."

"This is a blast—I don't want to drop it! This is so smooth," Fonda told the *Times*. "It's an electrical Harley!"

Fonda rode a powerful, battery-powered street motorcycle, capable of accelerating from zero to 60 mph in less than four seconds. The bicycle is vibration-free

and almost entirely silent; but is not yet in production. It will be featured in the upcoming movie *Avengers: Age of Ultron*.

Fonda was a star and co-writer of the 1969 movie classic *Easy Rider*, which featured two bikers (played by Fonda and Dennis Hopper) traveling through the Southwest and South. It explored the issues of the United States during that time, including individual rights, the hippie movement, drug use and communes.

The *Times* asked Fonda if he would buy an electric bike. "I want one," he said. "I want four. I loved it."

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— T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

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Three Palisadians Debut at Coronet Ball

Continuing a 65-year tradition, the Coronet Debutante Ball invited several local young women to become Coronet Debutantes.

Rachel Beaver, Ida Lindholm and Whitney Jones were presented at the gala affair in the International Ballroom of the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

Rachel is the daughter of Candy and John Beaver; her sister Lauren was presented in 2012. Whitney is the daughter of Erin and Penn Jones; her sister Hayley was presented in 2011.

The Dwight-Lindholm family has a more than 40-year-history with the ball. Ida is the daughter of Corinne and Douglas Dwight Lindholm; her older sister was presented in 2010. Six other Lindholm women made their debut at the Coronet Ball.

While debutantes were dressing in white ball gowns, family and friends attended a cocktail party hosted by the Ball Board.

As each young woman was announced by Philip Alford, she stepped through a large flower-covered Coronet into the spotlight. She bowed and then took her father's arm and went to the dance floor. After all were introduced, the girls waltzed with their fathers on the dance floor.

Guests enjoyed a five-course dinner. Longtime Palisadian Janet Walther, accompanied by her husband Henry, was the ball director. The Coronet Debutante board



Coronet Debutante Ball Director Janet Walther, husband Henry, debutante Rachel Beaver and Coronet Debutante Ball member Fran Aponte enjoyed the November festivities.

president is Mary Montalbo, who was accompanied by her husband Victor.

Girls are selected on the basis of their work as outstanding community service volunteers. Proceeds from the ball go to the Los Angeles Founder Chapter of the National Charity League (NCL).

The NCL is a mother-daughter membership nonprofit organization that is committed to community service, leadership development and cultural experi-

ences. NCL mother and daughter members from coast to coast volunteered a cumulative total of 1,325,272 hands-on hours directly with not-for-profit philanthropic organizations in their communities in 2013-2014.

NCL is a sponsorship organization, and a mother hoping to join an NCL chapter should secure a sponsor and apply to the Chapter in the fall of her daughter's sixth-grade year.

Calif. Coastal Commission Holds Contest

The California Coastal Commission is holding an art and poetry contest for students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Winners will be selected in each of five grade-level categories (K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 7-9 and 10-12) in both art and poetry to receive a \$100 gift certificate to an art supply or bookstore. Each winner's teacher will receive a \$50 gift certificate for educational materials. Winners and honorable mentions will receive tickets to Aquarium of the Pacific.

Entries must have a California coastal or marine theme to be eligible and must be postmarked by January 31. Winners and honorable mentions will be part of a traveling exhibit throughout California during 2015.

Pick up entry forms and guidelines at the Palisades Branch Library or visit: coast4you.org. or coast4u@coastal.ca.gov.

Lost & Found

I accidentally left my daughter's pink, three-wheeled, micro-mini scooter on the sidewalk on the 700 block of Via de la Paz on Monday, December 1. If anyone may have picked it up, please contact me at (310) 463-6026.

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Teach Your Children Well Author Asks Parents to Reduce the Pressure

By LAURA ABRUSCATO
Staff Writer

Helping their children create a life of meaning—the kind of life they would want their child to have in 30 years—can give parents perspective on worries about grades and test scores, said psychologist and author Madeline Levine, PhD. to about 500 parents on November 18th at The Willows Community School in Culver City.

As one father in the audience pointed out, Levine's message to parents can be boiled down to "lighten up."

The author of *Teach Your Children Well* and *The Price of Privilege*, whose practice is in Marin County, also spoke elsewhere in Southern California, including Crossroads School and the National Association of Episcopal Schools' biennial conference in Anaheim, attended by Stuart Work, head of St. Matthew's School. "She talked about the fact that there is no straight line, check off the boxes, path to success and parents should not expect their children to follow one . . . that childhood should be about internal growth and development, not ex-

ternal achievements" says Work, who feels her message is important for parents.

Levine, who is a co-founder of Challenge Success, a project at Stanford's Graduate School of Education, encourages parents to focus on a child's engagement with learning rather than performance. She talked about when kids come home from school and parents ask "how was your test?" What parents ask about first is what the children believe is the most important to them she said, adding parents would likely want the message to be "I love you and I'm happy to see you."

Based on her research, Levine pointed out other pitfalls parents fall into and ways to lessen the stress that many children experience, starting in seventh grade, where they can begin to feel depression and anxiety or struggle with perfectionism. While encouraging parents to back off in certain ways, Levine emphasized she was not advocating lowering the bar, but rather accepting individual children for their own strengths and knowing that each child is smart in different ways. "Encourage strengths, don't remediate weakness," said Levine.



Madeline Levine

Photo: Michael Schwartz

She told the story of her three grown sons who she and her physician husband raised in Marin County—one of their children is analytical, one is creative, and the third is good with his hands and empathetic. Levine said jokingly of her middle son, a theater director, "We love to support

the arts . . . we just don't want our kid to become an artist." Each attended different colleges and she feels a successful college match is when children "find their tribe."

Levine warns against overparenting, which she defines as doing what a child can do, what a child can almost do and confusing parents' needs with children's needs. Kids can have what she calls a successful failure where they can learn from the consequences of a mistake they made, such as forgetting to bring a project to school.

Citing a homework study by Harris Cooper, Levine suggested homework beyond 90 minutes nightly is not beneficial in middle school nor is it beneficial in high school beyond 2½ hours nightly. She recommended protecting children's sleep, so kids and teens get the amount of sleep they need.

Too much judgment on kids' achievements can affect their mental health, physical health and character development. It's okay to be average, says Levine, who admitted to laughter that although she normally attracts a large crowd at her lectures no one came to a talk she held on "Your Average Child."

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Remember When? The Betts Family

By JANET BETTS DEAN
Special to the Palisades News

Edward Gardner and Donna Breckenridge Betts moved to Asilomar with their three children, Thomas, Donald "Breck" and Janet, shortly before Halloween in 1955. Two years later they moved to Enchanted Way and in 1960, the family moved to Las Lomas, where Ed and Donna lived until they passed away.

Monkey Tales

My father purchased a spider monkey for \$67.95 at Palisades Pet Town in 1960 (the store was located in the parking lot of Mayfair Market, now Gelson's). Her name was Betsy, and the two boys would dress her in doll clothes, stuff her in their sweat shirts and then go into Woodbury's 5 & 10 on Sunset. The monkey had a long prehensile tail and as the boys walked up and down the aisle, the tail would snake out of the shirt, looking like a snake and scaring customers.

One day, my mother had a station-wagon full of Cub Scouts and with all of the commotion, missed a "STOP" sign. She was pulled over by a cop, and when she rolled her window down, Betsy the Spider Monkey swung out, hanging onto my mom's neck with her tail and then kissed the cop on his nose. The policeman started laughing so hard, he let my mom go without a ticket.

Thomas and Breck wondered what would happen if they gave Betsy a Fizzy (an effervescent tablet that turned water into a bubbling, flavored soda). She swallowed the root beer Fizzy whole and then proceeded to demonstrate how many orifices a spider monkey has. Our parents were not at home during this science experiment (they usually weren't when Tom and Breck came up with their brilliant ideas), so they of course

rushed Betsy to MY bathroom. There was monkey spew, pee and poop everywhere as she was busy effervescing. Until about two years ago, there was still evidence of the epic Fizzy incident in my old bathroom (the family still owns the home). Only I knew what it was—sort of a treasured keepsake, as it were, until a silly plumber knocked it off from under a cabinet.

When my brother Tom sold our old black and white television to an Army guy in 1973, the man asked about the stain on the back of the grill. "What is this—monkey piss?" and Tom responded truthfully, "Why, yes it is!"

Bicycle Race

In August 1957, shortly after moving into the dead-end circle of lower Enchanted Way, and after a number of martinis, my father challenged a neighbor (Dave Mason) to a bicycle race down the steep street.

Dad used my mother's bicycle, and was unaware that the brakes were not working. I remember my brother running into our house yelling, "Mom, mom, get out the Band-Aids!"

Dad and Dave both walked back up the street. Dad had plowed into either a rock garden or a fence, he didn't remember, but he needed another martini before my mother took him to the ER. That trip cost him \$52.94.

Dave's daughter Barbara remembered that I printed up tickets and charged the neighborhood kids 25 cents to come in and look at my dad.

Backyard Barbeques

When we lived at 633 Enchanted Way, we could see the entire Los Angeles and Santa Monica basin. Jacon Way was directly below us.

My father had built a picnic table for our



Ed Betts gives Betsy the Spider Monkey a bath.

Photo: Courtesy of Janet Betts Dean



Family friend "Ben" undertakes a little investigative work—while barbequing.

Photo: Courtesy of Janet Betts Dean

small backyard, where we always ate when he grilled chicken on the small rotisserie attached to the barbeque. During one dinner, he suddenly flung his arm wildly and yelled loudly "Look at the view!" as he flung his chicken bones down the hill onto the yard of the Jacon Way neighbors below. My poor, sweet mother was beside herself, and of course my brothers and I were in fits of giggles. My TWA pilot father did this every time we ate chicken in the backyard.

Not very long after acquiring Betsy, former neighbors came for a visit at the same time my grandparents from Missouri were visiting. In order to provide sleeping accommodations, my brothers and I gave up our beds to our out-of-town guests. The three of us slept in the backyard in sleeping bags in the family camping tent, a World War II-era relic.

That same day, my father visited the pet store and brought home two more exotic animals: an ocelot, which we quickly named Ozzie, and a three foot-long green Iguana, which my father named Irene.

That night Dad, my grandfather and our guest Ben decided to cook chicken on the rotisserie grill in the backyard, manly style. This included many martinis, barbecue sauce (beer), and a single binocular to peer across the canyon into neighbor's windows.

Every so often the rotisserie fell into the coals; the three drunken chefs, of course, weren't paying much attention, until the wives said something and the rotisserie was placed back on track. Five hours later, dinner was served—chicken, crispy, covered in charcoal, with some extra added beer for flavor on the outside, but raw on the inside, and side dishes that had been sitting for hours.

The women were seething; the chefs were "three sheets to the wind" and didn't remember a thing the next day.

Since Ozzie was still a baby, she would latch onto our arms, going thru nursing motions, leaving giant hickies on us. I think eight years old was rather young to learn the true meaning of the word hickey, but it couldn't be helped. The ocelot also had diarrhea. She spent the night in the tent with me and my brothers. The end result was not pretty.

Irene the Iguana was a no-go from the get-go. Besides being green, and a giant lizard, my dad named her Irene after his mother-in-law. Neither my mother nor grandmother was amused. Both creatures went back to the pet store the next day.

(All three Betts children attended Marquez Elementary, Paul Revere and Palisades High School. Tom is a retired Air Force Lt. Col. and lives with his wife in Highland; Breck is retired from Scripps Institute of Oceanography, where he worked as a draftsman/designer, and lives in the San Diego area with his wife. Janet, the mother of five, lives in Manhattan, Kansas and has retired from work as a state certified mediator.)



Ed Betts recovers after a bicycle race accident.

Photo: Courtesy of Janet Betts Dean

Palisadian's Movie *Big Eyes* To Open

By LAUREL BUSBY
Staff Writer

Scott Alexander's newest movie may be the first Hollywood film to emerge from the *The Encyclopedia of Bad Taste*.

The Palisadian screenwriter was thumbing through his wife Debbie's copy of the book, which catalogues American low-brow culture, when he stumbled upon an article about Margaret and Walter Keane. In the 1950s and '60s, the two were famous for selling paintings of sad, big-eyed children purchased by buyers such as Natalie Wood, Kim Novak and Jerry Lewis. One painting was even commissioned for the 1964 World's Fair. Walter took credit for making the paintings, yet Margaret was the one actually creating them.

The Keanes' story excited Alexander, co-writer of *Ed Wood*, *Man on the Moon*, and *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, and he and his partner Larry Karaszewski turned it into the script *Big Eyes*, which was directed by Tim Burton and will be released on Christmas Day.

"On the surface, it's about this crazy art con—the husband taking the credit, a fast-talking showman who went on *The Tonight Show*," said Alexander, who has co-written more than a dozen movies with Karaszewski. "The actual themes of the movie are about Margaret as a metaphor for early feminism. We wanted to frame her as a woman coming out of '50s suburbia, and she feels she has no choice but to let her man speak for her. But by the end, she speaks for herself."

A second theme concerns high art vs. low art—the "value judgment on whether a piece of art is good or not."

Alexander and Karaszewski began researching the movie 11 years ago and had originally planned to direct it themselves. By 2006, the script was complete, but af-

terward, they repeatedly found financing only to have the deal fall through. Every 18 months, they re-obtained the rights to Margaret Keane's life, but they really wanted Margaret, now 87, to get to see the movie made. When Christoph Waltz expressed interest in playing Walter last year, the screenwriters asked Burton to direct. He agreed. Amy Adams signed on as Margaret, and suddenly, the movie was a go.

Margaret had a chance to watch the film in July. "She was very touched," Alexander said. "It was as long-awaited for her as it was for us. It was a very emotional experience ... to see her own life depicted in a movie."

Biopics have been one of the mainstays of Alexander and Karaszewski's filmmaking collaboration, which began at USC film school in 1981. The two met on the first day of orientation while waiting in line to get their meal-plan cards.

They discussed 1970s horror movies, another common interest, and it turned out that through a mistake USC had assigned Alexander to a double room with two other guys, while Karaszewski's double room, had only himself as the inhabitant. Alexander quickly switched rooms, and by senior year, the two had decided to write a screenplay together, a high-concept comedy with Albert Brooks and Morris Day (from the band The Time) in mind as the leads.

At the time, it was "completely unheard of for college students to write a script," Alexander noted. From the beginning, Karaszewski would hang out on the couch while Alexander was at the keyboard. They would toss around ideas, decide how



Margaret Keane's paintings of sad, big-eyed children were popular in the 1950s and 1960s.

they wanted the scene to go, and then Alexander would write it up.

When their first script was done, the two broke into the USC night school copy room, printed up 50 copies and gave them out to
(Continued on Page 27)



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Big Eyes

(Continued from Page 26)

all of their friends. One friend happened to get a job in the ICM mailroom and recommended the script to one of the agents.

“Two weeks after we graduated [in 1986] it sold for a lot of money to 20th Century Fox,” said Alexander, who has lived in the Riviera since 1997. My script for *Home-wreckers* did not get made, but it started us on our careers.”

Problem Child, starring John Ritter, was their first produced Hollywood script, but Alexander’s favorite project has been *Ed Wood*, also directed by Burton. Since *Ed Wood*, the duo has been steadily employed writing films, although not all have been produced, and the script “was the most unusual and most personal one—a variation on stuff that happened to me.”

Alexander grew up in Mandeville Canyon, where his parents, Marsha and Jim, still live, and attended PaliHi with some other notable alumni, including actor/director Forest Whitaker, who was two years ahead of him, director Adam Shankman, who was a year behind him, and actresses Jennifer Jason Leigh and Penelope Ann Miller. Writer/director JJ Abrams was younger, but they knew each other on the Super 8 circuit as both created their own movies that were shown at film events around town.



Scott Alexander and Margaret Keane, about whom the Palisadian made a movie, which opens December 25.

Photo: Courtesy of Scott Alexander

Retired PaliHi drama teacher Vicky Francis was an inspiration to Alexander. “She was really great and really encouraged me,” he said. She helped him use the school facilities on weekends, cast him as a lead in the senior musical, and obtained access to Mercer Hall to showcase his movies.

“She was always a real advocate. I came out of Pali with the confidence that I could do this when I grew up.”

Alexander, who with his wife has three kids, Casey, 20, Jeremy, 18, and Lily, 14, also enjoyed PaliHi teacher Rose Gilbert’s literature class, and at his 20-year reunion in 2001, Gilbert, a 63-year teaching veteran who died last year at 95, popped by unannounced at the reunion picnic.

She wandered around and began stating an attendee’s name and the title of that student’s book report—i.e., “Scott Alexander, *Cannery Row*”—before spotting another former student and spouting another name and book report.

Alexander began doing the math in his head.

For the previous 20 years, Gilbert had taught perhaps 30 students in six classes a semester—180 students a year. By multiplying that by 20 years, she would have educated at least 3,600 students during that time period. It seemed impossible that she could remember each one’s name and book report 20 years later.

He surmised that Gilbert must have looked up the 1981 class records and memorized that group to do this “parlor trick,” but then his younger sister, Cara, stopped by, and Gilbert promptly said, “Cara Alexander, *The Sun Also Rises*.”

There was “no way that Mama G had any way of knowing that Cara Alexander would be at this picnic . . . It was just madness.”

Culinary Historian Richard Foss Will Speak December 20

Culinary historian Richard Foss will speak on “When Luxury Floated Through the Skies” at 2 p.m. on Saturday, December 20 in the Palisades Branch Library community room, 861 Alma Real Dr. The public is invited.

Zeppelins, the earliest form of aerial transportation, competed with ocean liners for comfort, but were far faster. To travel from Germany to Brazil was a mere four days and from Germany to the United States three days. Passengers dined on gourmet meals, enjoyed fabulous views and listened to the world’s only aluminum piano at night.

Foss, the author of *Food in Air and Space: The Surprising History of Food and Drink in the Skies*, will discuss the brief but doomed era of the giant airships.

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Library Bookstore ‘Flash’ Boutique Open

A great selection of nearly new art books, coffee-table books, cookbooks and more will be available through December 23 at the Palisades Branch Library. All books are in “giftable” condition. This boutique is in addition to the Library Bookstore and is located on the large patio of the library, 861 Alma Real Dr. The “Flash” Boutique is open from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday.

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THEATER REVIEW

It's a Wonderful Life 'On the Air'

By SUE PASCOE
Editor

Hoping to start a Pacific Palisades tradition, The Theatre Palisades Actors Troupe staged *It's a Wonderful Life*, a radio play by Joe Landry, on December 3 at Pierson Playhouse.

Frank Capra's 1946 movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, is regularly shown at Christmas time. The film starts James Stewart as George Bailey, a man who gave up his dreams, always putting others first. After a day of disasters, he decides to commit suicide on Christmas Eve. He is stopped by a guardian angel, Clarence Odbody (played by Henry Travers), who shows him how his life has made a difference to everyone in Bedford Falls.

The classic film was one of Capra's favorites and it was said that he screened it for his family during every Christmas season. The film was based on a short story, "The Greatest Gift," written by Philip Van Doren Stern and published privately in 1945.

The radio play, which follows the same plot line as the movie, made for a totally enjoyable evening at the Pierson. One hopes the Troupe will make this an annual



Holly Sidell, Alan Curelop and Valerie Ruel perform their parts in *It's a Wonderful Life* as Nick Thompson and Margott Rifembark await their turns. Photo: Charmaine Glennon

tradition—and that many more residents will be able to enjoy the performance.

Unlike the 135-minute movie, this 45-minute radio play was just perfect in length. Thirteen actors, all costumed in 1940s clothing, played the voice of 35 characters.

the two women manufacture the sounds as the actors easily transformed between the different characters they played.

The staged reading was directed by Sherman Wayne and produced by Martha Hunter, Maria O'Connor and Charmaine Glennon.

It was a delightful evening with a cast of gifted actors: Phil Bartolf, Sherry Coon, Alan Curelop, Bob Grochau, Susan Hardie, Manfred Hofer, Rosie Mandel, Holly Sidell, Bronte Sorotsky, Wendy Taubin, Nick Thompson, Margott Rifembark and Valerie Ruel.

The event was free and holiday refreshments were served before and after the reading.

Holiday Library Hours

The Palisades Branch Library will be open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Christmas Eve, and closed Christmas Day. On New Year's Eve, the library will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and closed New Year's Day.

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The Reel Inn is just a couple of miles north of the Pacific Palisades border across from Topanga Beach. This self-serve restaurant has a charming rustic ambiance along with tasty food.

When you first enter, there is a large menu to scan and a case of fresh seafood, of which there is a great variety. After deciding, proceed to the order window, where you can also request a glass of wine, a beer, soft drink or plain water. Customers then select a table, either inside or on the outdoor patio.

Inside was our choice on a chilly night, although we noticed heaters on the large patio and customers enjoying their selections. The décor is relaxing with red and white checkered tablecloths, pots of plants/flowers throughout and Christmas garlands both inside and outside in keeping with the season. Little candles also adorn the tables, along with a tin of condiments: salt and pepper, hot sauce, malt vinegar and ketchup.

While relaxing with your drink and waiting for your name to be called when your food is hot and ready, look around and enjoy the setting. The rustic feeling is enhanced by the ceiling from which hang all

kinds of surfboards and a variety of model fish. There is also an aquarium with live fish and television.

My friend George ordered a bowl of the hearty New England clam chowder, which was very tasty and made a fine beginning to dinner. From the appetizer menu we had ordered fried zucchini. It was light, crisp and delicious, especially when dipped into its accompanying ranch dressing. The chowder is \$5 and the fried zucchini \$5.95.

George was enticed by the grilled red snapper (\$15.95). Fish may be sautéed, grilled or prepared with a spicy Cajun style, which is \$1 more. A variety of side dishes are served with meals, and customers select between mashed potatoes, French fries, home-style potatoes, steamed vegetables, coleslaw, green salad and Cajun rice. The mashed potatoes and steamed carrots, broccoli and cauliflower went beautifully with the excellent grilled fish.

The crab cakes caught my eye, and I expected two. When my dinner came and there were three, I knew I would have leftovers for lunch the next day. These tasty crab cakes came with zesty Cajun rice and excellent coleslaw (for \$14.95).

Of course, we had to share a dessert: a



Grace Hiney has been reviewing the local restaurant scene for more than 42 years.

slice of scrumptious carrot cake topped with a crisp white chocolate topping, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Also special at the Reel Inn is its relaxing, family-friendly environment. A few weeks ago, several adults and three of my grandchildren enjoyed dinner there. Our large group easily sat at one of the long tables. Everyone had a great time and loved the food, especially the young ones who all love fish. In addition to the dinner offerings there are fish tacos and more. There is something for every appetite!

The Reel Inn is open every day from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. However, they take a holiday Christmas. I would say they deserve it!

Janet Turner Appointed Lieu's District Rep

Pacific Palisades resident Janet Turner has been appointed by Congressman-elect Ted Lieu to be his District Representative. Turner, who served as a Pacific Palisades Community Council president from 2010 to 2012, made the announcement at the PPCC holiday meeting. She will attend Lieu's swearing-in on January 6, before returning to the Los Angeles office, located at 5505 Wilshire Blvd.

Democrat Lieu, a resident of Torrance, is a former California State Assemblyman who represented District 53 from 2005 to 2010. In 2011, he was elected to fill the seat of deceased Senator Jenny Oropeza and served as a California State Senator for the 28th District, representing Pacific Palisades. After Henry Waxman announced his retirement in 2014, Lieu ran against Republican Elan Carr for the 33rd Congressional District, and won.

Lieu was born in Taiwan and grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. He attended Stanford University and received his bachelor's degree in computer science in 1991. He attended Georgetown University Law Center, graduating magna cum laude in 1994, and was the editor of the *Georgetown Law Journal*.



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Left: Members of the club celebrating the annual party include (left to right) Terri Lyman, Haldi Toppel, Susan Sullivan, Eleni Camboulis-Benedikt, Susan Evans, Nichelle Toomire, Stephanie Smith, Patricia Grossman and Kristin Sibson. Center: Phyllis Genovese, 99, honored at the Woman's Club party. Right: Dayna Daniele curtsies after entertaining at the Woman's Club. Photos: Shelby Pascoe

Woman's Club Celebrates Holiday, Birthday

The Pacific Palisades Woman's Club started a new tradition this year by combining holiday parties. In prior years, the Woman's Club had a luncheon and the Junior Women's Club had an evening party.

After the two clubs merged in 2012, "It didn't make sense to have two parties," said current President Terri Lyman. "We moved the lunch to dessert and our wine to the afternoon."

The holiday party on December 6 also served as an early birthday party for longtime member Phyllis Genovese, who will turn 100 in January. She blew out the candles on a white/strawberry cake.

"Many in the community want to celebrate her birthday," Lyman said, noting that different groups were planning parties for her, which is why the Woman's Club celebrated early. Genovese won't be around for the end of this month because she's going to Las Vegas

to visit her sister, who is six years younger.

Genovese didn't drive to the party because the state took away her driving license in June. "I guess they know what they're doing," she said. "But the license was good for three more years."

Maison Giraud provided chocolate mousse, Viktor Benès supplied an "alligator" pastry, Taste donated macaroons and Café Vida supplied oatmeal and chocolate-chip cookies. Red and white wine and

champagne punch flowed freely and the hall was festively decorated.

The 50 guests were treated to caroling by The Adderley School students, including a humorous variation of "Jingle Bells." The choir, consisting of 9- to 11-year-olds, also sang "Silent Night" and "Jingle Bell Rock." Performers included Katyana Hall, Dayna Daniele, Maddie Boudov, Savannah Scott, Frankie Nieman, Anna Duboe-Higdon, Evie Kissener, Sara Mendelshon and Cory Porter.

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