



Take a
Bolsa Chica
tour

See Page 8



Electric
car show
blows

See Page 12



How
Green is
your coffee?

See Page 11



Costa Mesa's
wisecracking
grannie

See Page 6

INSIDE:

Restaurant Guide
Calendar Section
Business & Service Directory

THE ORANGE COAST VOICE

Vol. 2 No. 16

Huntington Beach, Costa Mesa & Fountain Valley

Jan. 2008

Mello-Ruse?

Funding facts hidden, say Senior Center opponents

By **JOHN EARL**
OC Voice Editor

Opponents of a senior center planned for Huntington Beach Central Park say that voters were deceived into approving it in a Nov., 2006 vote by inaccurate and inadequate information about how the \$23 million facility would be funded.

The 45,000 square foot building will be built on 5 acres of open space just across from Central Library on Goldenwest Street.

The ballot proposal, known as Measure T, passed as an advisory with just 51 percent of the vote after a heated campaign punctuated by personal attacks in public debates and comments.

An environmental impact report (EIR) and conditional use permit (CUP) for the project were recently approved by the HB Planning Commission, but the project has been appealed to the city council by Mayor Debbie Cook.

Chief among the opponents' concerns is a plan to create a special "Community Facilities District" (CFD) that will tax 515 future homeowners in Pacific City, a downtown mixed use subdivision currently under construction by Makar Properties, which requested formation of the CFD by the city council.

Mello-Roos and Quimby
The city can create a CFD under the Mello-Roos Act of 1982, which



PHOTO BY MARK BIXBY

EVICTED: This raptor will have to leave Central Park to make room for a senior center.

was intended to help make up for funding shortfalls for public facilities and services caused by Proposition 13, which capped property tax increases by local agencies.

Another state law, the Quimby Act, allows cities to require developers to set aside park land or collect an "in-lieu" fee that will be used to buy new

park land or build recreation facilities that "bears a reasonable relationship" to the subdivision's residents, according to the Act.

Similarly, Mello-Roos taxes have to be used on specific projects that benefit the residents of the taxed subdivision.

If the city council grants Makar's

request as expected, the taxes paid by future residents of Pacific City will allow the developer to meet its \$23 million Quimby obligation without of paying for it out of pocket.

But HB community activist Kristen Stilton, HB planning commissioner Joe Shaw and others say that prior to the Measure T vote city planners and senior center proponents withheld that information after assuring the public that the senior center would be paid for by developer fees, not taxes.

"From moment one," Shaw writes in the current edition of his monthly column published in the Voice, "this contentious project has been clouded willfully with misconceptions by some of our present and past elected officials..."

The ballot argument in favor of Measure T exalted the proposed senior center as a tax free proposition: "Good news! Your yes vote on Measure T will not cost you one cent. Although funding is not a part of the ballot measure, it is anticipated that financing will come from developer fees owed to the City, not taxes."

Full Disclosure

Cook says that full disclosure could have changed the vote outcome. "They didn't mention how it was going to be paid for... The public didn't know that this was going to cost the public \$1 million a year to operate and maintain (a city staff report says \$738,000). That would have pushed people into

See **SENIOR CENTER**, Page 4

Pro-Business or Anti-Consumer?

Local press tells one side of the story

By **YASMIN MADADI**
OC Voice Staff Writer

The California Chamber of Commerce recently ranked Sen. Tom Harman as one of the state's most pro-business legislators based on his 2007 voting record in the state senate.

That accolade earned Harman favorable press coverage in the local news media, which did not report that—on the other hand—the Consumer Federation of California (CFC) gave the Republican from Huntington Beach and Costa Mesa a dismal "0" percent rating for consistently voting against the interests of California's consumers.

Harman told the Voice that he tries to balance the freedom of consumers and businesses equally. But the CFC's October report lists Harman as one of two state senators who voted "No"

100 percent of the time on bills favored by the organization, which advocates health care reform, customer privacy and food safety from a consumer's point of view.

Legislators who received low scores are "taking the side of giant corporate interests and not the side of everyday California consumers," according to CFC Executive Director, Richard Holober.

CFC sponsored legislation, included SB 831, which would have brought back cell phone contract regulations, which were revoked by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's appointees to the Public Utilities Commission in 2006. The bill would have curbed early termination

fees and mandatory contract lengths imposed by cell phone companies. The bill died just one vote short on the senate floor.



Tom Harman

Sen. Harman told the Voice that he voted against the legislation on free market principles. "If you're a business man you write a contract for terms that you think are fair," he said, adding that customers "don't have to take the contract" since they have a variety of providers to choose from. Ironically, when asked

about corporate consolidation, which limits those consumer choices, Harman answered that "I don't have a particular opinion on that."

But cell phone networks like Cingular and Verizon received the highest number of complaints to the state's Better Business Bureau, according to Holober. "It's a very anti-competitive practice" he said, because long term contracts inhibit customers from changing their provider. "They don't want to pay contract fees," he explained.

Harman also voted against SB 220, which would have required water bottling companies to disclose the source of their water on bottle labels. Bottling companies like Coca Cola and Pepsi sell "purified" water that actually comes from a municipal tap, Holober explains. "That's perfectly fine, but people should know... that's what they do," he adds.

The bill would have also required safety inspection standards for purified water dispensing machines typically seen in front of supermarkets. "Those

See **SENATOR HARMAN**, Page 5

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Deregulation Brings Higher Electricity Bills

According to a recent study

By ADAM SABY
OC Voice Staff Writer

A recent report challenges the popular notion that deregulation lowers electricity costs and provides better service for rate payers.

The study, released last November by the Power in the Public Interest (PPI), claims that consumers in deregulated states like California paid about \$337 billion more for their electrical power over the past 7 years than consumers in states where energy production is regulated by the government.

PPI is made up of utilities and utility related organizations that promote "reliable, cost effective, and publicly accountable" power systems, according to the group's web site.

The study analyzed power generating systems in certain states where electricity prices are market driven and produced significant increases in prices as compared with price-regulated power systems in other states.

Using U.S. Energy Information Agency data, the study found that electricity prices in deregulated states rose 22 percent to 33 percent above the national average since 1999, while prices dropped in regulated states from 10 percent to 15 percent below the national average.

During the same period, deregulated electricity rates soared at a rate of 36-56 percent higher than they rose in regulated states, the report found. "The comparative economic disadvantage to consumers in the deregulated states is enormous," the report's authors concluded.

In an e-mail interview with the *Voice*, Marilyn Showalter, Executive Director of PPI, said that industrial customers in deregulated states face greater economic disadvantages than their counterparts in regulated states as electricity prices continue to rise. "Deregulation is not responsible for the entire gap, but the so-called competitive electricity markets aren't [in fact] good for competitiveness," Showalter said.

When it comes to California, consumer rights activist Ralph Nader has argued that the wholesale price spikes seen during California's energy crisis of 2000 and 2001 can be attributed to the lack of effective market rules and regulations. Nader says, "California could have

avoided the situation with effective regulation," Nader wrote, adding, "... they could have pursued a more systemic policy for energy efficiency or renewables using the public-power systems in Sacramento or Los Angeles as models."

Carl Wood, former member of California's Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and the current president of the Utility Reform Network (a nongovernmental utility watchdog), shares Nader's sentiments about public-utility systems.

"These cities [Los Angeles and Sacramento] have their own governing boards that are usually established by city council," he told the *Voice*. "The boards then make the determinations as to what rates will be, which is self-correcting because if there's a big surplus of money then there will be a push from the citizenry to have it returned back to them in some way or another."



AES Power Plant

AES Power Plant

The AES Huntington Beach Generating Station in Huntington Beach is not regulated, Wood notes, so the PUC cannot intrude on their commercial privacy to determine what the actual costs are to produce their power.

If AES was a regulated utility, however, the terms of how AES sells its power would be publicly disclosed. Also, if AES was receiving a return that was significantly higher than the cost incurred, their rate of return would be lowered by the PUC in a regulated market.

But of what happened in California was the result of only "partial deregulation," as many free market advocates say, wouldn't the system work if everything was fully deregulated?

Huntington Beach mayor Debbie Cook disagrees. "I'm not a big fan of deregulation in the energy sector because it's such a critical resource for the public," she told the *Voice*. "There's a profit in there and someone's vying to get that profit. I'd rather have the public get the lowest price for those essential services, like water and electricity."

Poseidon Inc.
HB councilmember Don Hansen declined to comment on deregulation, stating that none of his constituents have brought it to his attention.

But many HB residents may be concerned about how skyrocketing fossil fuel and electric-

See **BILLS**, Page 7

LETTERS

The *Orange Coast Voice* encourages letters to the editor and will attempt to print all those received. However, due to space constraints, letters are subject to editing. All letters must include the author's name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Letters can be electronically sent to letters@ocvoice.com, or mailed directly to: *Orange Coast Voice*, 419 Main Street, #209, Huntington Beach, California, 92648.

Keep Skateboard Park at TeWinkle

I am writing in response to your "Keep Skateboard Park at TeWinkle" article in the November 2007 issue. Though I was not able to attend the Costa Mesa City Council meeting on November 6, 2007 as suggested by the author, I was able to view it online. The subject of putting a new skate park up in either Fairview Park or Lion's Park was brought up in that Council meeting. All but one or two people agreed with the fact that we need to keep Fairview Park the way it is - open space for all to enjoy. I have grown up in Costa Mesa and "The Bluffs", as we would call it, was the only really natural part of Costa Mesa I ever knew. I would ride bikes in the park, walk

my dog, track down lizards and frogs, and just enjoy being a kid in the small amount of nature in my home town.

As for Lion's Park, I think that would not be a good place for a skateboard park either. If there were one, I could see maybe taking out the picnic bench area and having a small skateboard park there, but then where would we have the cooking and food stands for the annual Fish Fry which has been a Costa Mesa tradition for decades? The other option in Lion's Park would be to put it where the playground is now, but that would be devastating to the children of Costa Mesa. So many kids in Costa Mesa love the "Airplane Park." When I was a little kid in daycare going to Child's Pace, which is located right behind the park, I looked forward to climbing the wings of the plane and playing with marbles in the sand everyday. I can't imagine how hurt the kids of the daycare would be if the Airplane Park were taken away from them by a skateboard park that they would not be able to use while in daycare.

I think the most logical solution to this problem is to put the skate park right off Harbor Boulevard where the Ice Chalet and bowling alley used to be. This would be a good location because it's a big enough area with plenty of parking and it would give the Segerstrom's, the owners of the land and of South Coast Plaza, another opportunity to give to the youth of Costa Mesa.

Wes LeClay
Costa Mesa, CA

'Wall of Death'

Brightwater: Not for the birds

By **YASMIN MADADI**
OC Voice Staff Writer

Red-tailed hawks, meadowlarks, hummingbirds and other native and migratory birds living in and around the Bolsa Chica ecological reserve, are dying because of a glass wall that encloses the backyards of the Brightwater residential development, located on the upper bench of Bolsa Chica Mesa. The development is comprised of some 350 homes.

The wall showed up in reports years ago, but was not treated as an environmental hazard at the time.

For the past decade, area conservationists have battled big developers over building new houses in the area because, they say, it is destroying the area's unique ecosystem.

Hundreds of millions of birds die each year from flying into unseal glass barriers such as house windows, according to ornithologists.

Brightwater's glass wall exceeds 4,100 feet in length and is 6 feet in height—a standard which the Hearthsides Homes Company and California Coastal Commission agreed to in April, 2005.

The structure is rapidly killing and injuring avians that pass through the area, according to biologist and former Huntington Beach mayor, Connie Boardman. "In an hour I found four dead birds and two stunned birds sitting next to the wall," she told the Voice.

Boardman, who says she holds a permit from Fish & Wildlife Services, knows of at least 12 birds which died because of the fence, five of which she found herself.

The spokesperson for Hearthsides Homes did not respond to repeated calls from the Voice for comment on the issue. According to California Coastal Commission staff, the barriers function as a backyard fence separating the developments which border the habitat buffer area, from the area's native animals.

There is debate about whether the wall is made of glass or plexiglas, but both materials are equally deadly,



PHOTO BY CONNIE BOARDMAN

BAD IDEA: Brightwater's glass wall exceeds 4,100 feet in length. One of the wall's victims can be seen on the right.

according to Scott Thomas, Orange County Conservation Director for Sea and Sage Audubon, a nationally recognized bird conservation group. "It's either invisible or... so close to clear that they [the birds] don't recognize it as a barrier."

Residents suspect that Hearthsides Homes made the wall transparent so that future occupants would have an improved view from their backyard. Unlike windows, Thomas said, the wall is a human luxury and it is causing important birds to suffer from trauma, brain injury, and death.

Thomas said the wall is built in a "totally inappropriate" location, at the edge of a highly important wildlife preserve and bird sanctuary. Flossie Hogan, director of the Bolsa Chica Land Trust, which aims to save as much of the Bolsa Chica wetlands from development as possible, notes that the area is one of the most ecologically diverse spots in Orange County, par-

ticularly because of its bird population. Bolsa Chica is a key stopover site for migratory birds coming from South America and Alaska, she explained. "It is a very historically important habitat," Hogan said.

Thomas says that Northern harriers, two of which he said have since died because of the Brightwater fence, are a hawk species already "under great a great deal of pressure and declining in numbers in Southern California."

Hearthsides Homes, a division of Signal Landmark, acquired a permit in 2005 from the county to build the Brightwater Development with special conditions. After approval from the county, the project was approved by the Coastal Commission.

One overriding question is how the housing project passed through various regulatory agencies without more scrutiny given to the wall.

South Coast District manager, Theresa Henry, says that, like the county,

her commission did discuss the wall during the multiple hearings which took place in 2004 and 2005, before the Hearthsides Homes project was accepted, but that it wasn't treated as an important issue. "There were much larger issues before Coastal Commission, including preservation of the entire lower mesa, buffer, [and] how much of a buffer was necessary for the environmentally sensitive habitat," she said.

Due to the Brightwater bird debacle, Henry added, her commission has become "sensitive to this issue [of the wall killing birds]." They now require builders to add decals, or some kind of coloring, to clear structures. "You only fix the problem if you are required to do so and that's the strategy the property owner is taking," she said.

Henry said that Hearthsides Homes was working with the Department of Fish and Game to remedy the problem by adding decals to the glass wall. The company began applying the decals last month.

But Boardman believes that the decals won't be sufficient because the packaging requires only one decal for every three square feet. "By putting them on the wall, Hearthsides can claim it is doing something even if it is ineffective," she noted in her Internet blog.

Hearthsides also erected a chain link fence covered with green canvas along much of the wall, but a reflection of clouds and sky that might give birds a false sense of security is obvious to the human eye.

Boardman stated that she believes that the Hearthsides Company has hired a biologist to patrol the area and pick up dead birds before they can be turned in to the Fish and Wildlife Services. She noted that it was particularly "odd," that birds were not being found next to the wall since November.

Hogan also reports she has seen a biologist patrolling the site since November, and suspects the employee was hired by the Hearthsides Homes. "It raises lots of questions," she said.

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One Million B.C.

Local lawmakers stall on gay rights

By **SARA ELLIS**
OC Voice Staff Writer

For California's gay, lesbian, and transgender population, 2007 has been a good year indeed. Governor Schwarzenegger may have vetoed legal gay marriage a second time, but the year came to a close with him signing six (out of eight) gay-friendly bills into law.

As of Jan. 1, 2008, same-sex domestic partners, along with men in heterosexual couples, will be able to take their partner's name. Registrants will also be able to file joint state income tax returns, while legislation is also retroactively protecting the bereaved or separated partners from discriminatory tax increases will also go into effect. Meanwhile, in state schools, the "Safe Place to Learn Act" and a "Students Bill of Rights" will provide much needed protection from anti-gay/lesbian harassment.

More important, however, 2007 was also a year in which the majority of the state's elected officials voted in



STONE AGE: California State Assemblymen Van Tran and Jim Silva hold down the anti-gay vote.

favor of the rights of the GLBT community, with 61 out of 120 lawmakers receiving a "perfect score" on Equality California's 2007 scorecard.

Equality, an organization promoting equal rights for GLBT citizens, boasts that their 2007 scorecard

shows the "lowest number of legislators voting against LGBT rights in history." It's too bad then that this trend seems to have drowned in the moat surrounding Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach, where Sen. Tom Harman, and Assembly members Jim

Silva and Van Tran, are still clinging to the Middle Ages.

Tran started off in March opposing measure AB 102, which allows both same-sex domestic partners, as well as heterosexual men, to take their partner's last name, Tran responded, "Name change is a big, symbolic, important step for marrying a man and a woman... It's one of the longest held traditions for the woman to take the name of her husband's family... I just don't see any hard, compelling reason to change that." Maybe Tran has never heard of Japan, where depending on who owns the family business, men have been known to "traditionally" take their wives' names—or maybe he's just worked up over that trailer for the B-flick, "1,000,000 B.C."

Things weren't any better for Sen. Tom Harman and Assembly member Jim Silva, who both matched Tran's dismal Equality score of 10. While they didn't quite hit Tran's low with regard to women, both managed to dust off stunningly backward, not to

See **GAY RIGHTS**, Page 7

Senior Center: Quimby Act hard to follow

Continued from Page 1

the no category very easily," she told the *Voice*.

Councilmember Keith Bohr says that the purpose of the ballot issue was not to discuss contractual details of the proposed senior center, but to say yes or no to its proposed location. "I think those issues can and will be debated more appropriately at the city council level now that we have the specifics to look at."

Cook believes that those specifics should have been presented before the Measure T vote and that there should be another vote in accordance Measure C, passed in 1990, which she says intends "that the public would have the same information as the city council when they are voting."

Stanley Smalewitz, HB's Director of Economic Development, who helped craft the Mello Roos proposal, bristles at the notion that the city tried to hide information from the public. "Frankly, I know the way we do things around here and stealth is not the way you accomplish things."

Smalewitz says that the senior center is only one item that the CFD will finance. Mello-Roos money will also pay for the Pacific City storm drain project, he pointed out, although he also said that the city will be paying Makar back for that over the next 25 years, per a previous agreement.

Park Fees

Stilton says that Makar hopes to pass its Quimby fee obligations on to the Mello-Roos taxpayers in its Pacific City development instead of adding the cost to the sale of its condos. To finance the project up front, the city would sell



PHOTO BY JOHN EARL

bonds. "Makar is [then] done with its obligation and the city has to manage this whole financial vehicle," Stilton says.

Mayor Cook says it doesn't matter how the fees are collected because either way "the developer will pass that cost on to the homeowners who buy the property." But those homeowners will not benefit from the senior center, she says. "Unless they're seniors and they like to go to senior centers, they're not going to benefit from this incredible tax."

Cook would rather see park fees go toward

providing services that seniors really need, like food assistance. "I would rather increase our subsidy for Meals on Wheels than increase our recreational activities that only seniors can take advantage of," she said.

The OPA puts Makar in charge of building the new senior center, a situation which Stilton says creates a conflict of interest that could lead to cost overruns and less money for the city's parks.

According to the city's agreement with Makar, the Mello-Roos tax applied to the senior center will cap at \$19 million (Makar will also receive a

\$2.8 million credit).

"If the senior center comes in for less than [Makar's] Quimby obligation," Stilton claims, "they're going to have to come up with cash out of their pocket... If it comes in for more, no big deal. They are given no incentive by the city to come in under budget," thus no money left over for other parks.

Smalewitz says that the senior center is only one aspect of what Makar's park fees will pay for. He anticipates that the total fees collected will be far greater than the cost of the senior center. "If there's \$25 or \$26 million in fees, those spill over back to the park funds to be allocated toward other projects in the city."

But those fees are based on an appraisal of the value of Makar's Pacific City property, which Makar and the city currently dispute. Makar claims a fair market value of \$44,000,000 for property that would have otherwise become park land (about 5 acres) but the city claims more than twice that amount. City code requires the dispute to go to binding arbitration.

Cook agrees with Makar that it is being assessed too much toward the Quimby fee. "Makar is being assessed for property in a coastal zone when, in fact, they are not providing parks in a coastal zone," Cook explained. "They should be assessed the value of the land 2 miles inland because that's where they are providing the recreational opportunities."

Cook says that Makar is not making that argument, but should be. "I don't think the city's ordinances would be sustained if the developer wanted to make a legal challenge," she says, "but they're under a time restraint and they need to get this moving."

Senior Center Proponents & Opponents Differ on Park Funds

By JOHN EARL
OC Voice Editor

In the mid 1990s, Huntington Beach resident John Erskine knew how to fight city hall. He was also a family man and lived with his wife and small children in the Estates at Seaciff, one of the city's affluent neighborhoods. All that he and his neighbors lacked was a park for their children to play in.

"Everybody in the neighborhood was complaining that the kids didn't have a place to play," Erskine recalled in an October, 2006 interview with the *Voice*. "...[T]here should have been something outside the gates, we thought, to serve the subdivision."

One solution was the Quimby Act, a state law that allows cities to require new park land or collect an "in-lieu" fee (or "Quimby" fee) from developers of new subdivisions. The money goes toward acquiring new park land or recreational facilities that serve the residents of the subdivision.

The location of the land and the expenditure of the Quimby money must "bear a reasonable relationship to the use of the park and recreational facilities by the future inhabitants of the subdivision," according to the Act.

Erskine and his neighbors felt that their children's recreational needs weren't being met and decided to press the city for an active park. One resident, David Porter, decided to sue the city. "I told him that I didn't want to be part of it," Erskine said, "but I told him what I knew



PHOTO BY JOHN EARL

about the Quimby Act and he filed a lawsuit on his own."

Porter says that he filed the lawsuit because "The city had done nothing to build park facilities." The county and city settled by agreeing to construct the 4 acre tot park that the community wanted, just off Seapoint Drive, south of Garfield. The park is not directly inside of the subdivision, but just a quick walk across the street from it.

Porter says that the Quimby Act requires the developer in-lieu fees to be spent on park land or facilities within a reasonable distance from the subdivision. "In other words, [it] would not permit the city to collect a bunch of in-lieu fees from all the developers in the Huntington Seaciff area and then build a park in northeast Huntington Beach with those monies."

Erskine said that it was public pressure, not the lawsuit that got the park built. "I said the only thing that's going to matter is if you get down there in numbers, big numbers," he recalled.

Following his advice, between 80-100 residents packed several city council meetings and forced the council to make a "political decision," according to Erskine.

The lawsuit may have been a precursor to the current controversy over the city's proposed funding of a new 45,000 square foot senior center to be located in Central Park, across from the library, at the corner of Talbert and Goldenwest streets.

The city plans to use fees assessed Makar Properties, the developer of Pacific City, a 515 home residential tract now under construction in downtown Huntington Beach, to build the senior center. Erskine, who has worked as an attorney for Makar for the past 7 years, is currently representing the company on matters related to Pacific City and the senior center.

Some opponents say that the senior center's distance from Pacific City—about 4 miles—and specialized purpose as a "senior" center, make it ineligible for Quimby funds.

Mark Allen, who represents the "Parks Legal Defense Fund," a group of HB residents dedicated to preserving the city's open park space, says that the project does not meet Quimby's "reasonable relationship" standard. "I don't think that you can say that we're going to spend this city wide on people who mostly don't live in the subdivision and say that's reasonably related to the subdivision," he told the *Voice*.

But proponents of the senior center say that location doesn't matter as long as it serves the future residents of Pacific City, who will get old like everyone else. "If we're lucky, everybody will be a senior," according to Jim Engle, who is in charge of the city's recreational and park programs. "The bottom line is this is the one type of recreation that actually serves everybody, if we're lucky."

That interpretation is absurd, in Allen's view. "By that logic, we could build cemeteries...we could build bedrooms [because] everybody is going to need to go to sleep." Besides, he says, "There's no reason to think that subdivision is going to be filled with people who are all seniors."

Engle says that the city didn't consider the Porter lawsuit because the tot park provided to Estates at Seaciff residents is outside of the subdivision and, therefore, wasn't a successful legal challenge.

Settled before trial, the Porter lawsuit leaves conflicting legal interpretations unresolved—there are no other known court cases relevant to the city's use of the Quimby Act. Until there is one, or until a political solution is worked out, both sides will probably stick to their current interpretations.

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LA Times OC Correspondent

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HB Votes to Acquire School Properties

By **YASMIN MADADI**
OC Voice Staff Writer

On Dec. 3 the Huntington Beach City Council unanimously approved the future purchase of up to 30 percent of any properties declared surplus by the HB City School District (HBCSD) at one quarter of the market value under the state sanctioned Naylor Act.

HBCSD declared former Gisler and Burke elementary schools surplus properties and has since leased them to a private school entity which runs Huntington Beach Christian School and Brethren Christian Junior High—both located off of Brookhurst and Atlanta Streets. The School District may consider making surplus at least two other closed school properties: Kettler Elementary, located near the Edison Community Park, and formerly LeBard elementary, currently used as HBCSD office facilities.

Under the Naylor Act, the school district must give the city preference in purchasing school sites at a base price of no less than 25 percent of value once they are up for sale, but the city is required to pass a purchasing plan first.

HBCSD has received long term leasing offers for all four properties from the operator of the two private schools utilizing the Gisler and Burke facilities. The school district also received proposals from big builders, including Capital Pacific Homes and John Laing Homes—to turn the areas into housing developments.

By purchasing the properties the city could acquire more highly sought after and increasingly scarce park land. An analysis by city staff recommended the city acquire approximately 32 acres to meet open space and youth recreational needs for residents living in different areas of the city. The report noted that communities living closest to Burke and LeBard elementary schools had the least open space and, of those two school sites, recommended the city purchase 5.38 acres and 8.04 acres, respectively.

If the city council follows the staff recommendations, the city would also purchase about 20 acres from HBCSD at market value, independent of the Naylor Act. During public comments, Huntington Beach Tomorrow president Crystal Kerins urged the council to follow staff's recommendation.

Brian Rechsteiner, HBCSD president, told the council that the city might not be able to purchase land from more than one school site at the discounted price. "There is an opinion that the city is only entitled to take thirty percent of (one) site offered for sale and not... all sites that are surplus," he commented.

But HB City Community Services Director, Jim Engle, maintained that the 30 percent rule gives the city the right to purchase all four properties.

The council approved plan requires the city to purchase the properties at a date to be determined. "That is a separate action that happens after a school decides to surplus or offer the schools," Engle said.

Senator Harman

Continued from Page 1

water vending machines are more commonly used by immigrant populations," said Holober, adding that machine operators currently do not have to follow specific maintenance guidelines.

Harman, in contrast, worries about "costly" rules, which he says creates corporate flight. "If we adopt [an] unfriendly, hostile, over regulatory approach to all businesses in state, they're going to pack up and go to Texas where they have no rules and regulations," he said.

On health care, Harman voted against legislation last September which prevents insurance companies like Aetna and Blue Cross from taking away authorization of a medical procedure after they had previously approved it and after it had been performed. The bill, AB 1324, was passed with overwhelmingly majorities of both democrats and republicans in both houses of the legislature, putting Harman on the right-wing fringe of his own party.

The highest score a Republican Senator or Assemblyperson received from the CFC was 22 percent. Assemblymen Van Tran for Costa Mesa and Jim Silva for Huntington Beach, acquired 10 and 11 percent scores, respectively.

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Museum of Arts

Cutting-edge modern multimedia

By **DAVID L. M. PRESTON**
OC Voice Staff Writer

While romping, or trudging, through the crass commercialism of Costa Mesa's mega-mall of South Coast Plaza one might find an unexpected avant-garde digital art oasis up on the third level of western section. Near the Sports Chalet, on Bear Street, is the Orange County's Museum of Arts Satellite Gallery, featuring cutting-edge modern multimedia art for the mall-weary shopper.

The gallery consists of a back room (often with a video/sound presentation installed) gallery, and a front gallery with interactive computer installations, sound installations and some visual. There are seats, headphones, and even a "couch" of sorts to relax on as part of an artwork.

This isn't your stuffy, quiet art gallery with Old Master's quietly hanging on the wall; this is modern multimedia-based art where viewers are meant to be viscerally engaged (with video and sound). It can be challenging to some, but it is that much more impressive for all that. Here are works that wouldn't be out-of-place in New York's or San Francisco's Museums of Modern Art, found in a Costa Mesa mall! A brilliant, and somewhat culturally subversive, development of local art exhibition the "Orange Lounge" as the satellite gallery is referred to, is unique in being one of the very few new-media art galleries located in a mall setting in the U.S.

Started in 2004 by the principal art museum of Orange County, the Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA), located in Newport Beach (a quick jog south, for those who'd like a gander at additional exhibitions such as "Art Since the



PHOTO BY DAVID L. M. PRESTON

MULTIMEDIA ART: This isn't your stuffy, quiet art gallery with Old Masters quietly hanging on the wall.

1960s: California Experiments" and the soon to close "Birth of the Cool: California Art, Design, and Culture at Midcentury"), the gallery also as a partnership with the University of California, Irvine's Beall Center for the Art and Technology. Student art-technology projects are

often featured.

Presently the Orange Lounge gallery is finishing (closing on Jan. 6) displaying works by artist Joseph Grigely, exploring sound-and-meaning relationships through the perceptions of a deaf person. Work titles include, "Remem-

bering Is a Difficult Job, But Somebody Has To Do It, 2005", an installation that is touching and oddly engaging as the artists discusses the music he remembers prior to being deafened as a child; "You", which explores pronunciation of an unfamiliar name (more interesting than it at first sounds); and a work title "Something Say".

A newly opening interactive exhibit, titled "The Imaginary 20th Century" (featuring media artist Andreas Kratky, cultural critic Norman Klein and curator Margo Bistis) will begin on Jan. 17 and run until April 27.

There is also a gift store and additional information on the exhibitions, local art, and the OCMA at gallery. Its open hours are: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays; and from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Sundays. So while you are returning your unwanted gifts, escape the retail-frenzy for a few moments and challenge or artistic horizons with a nice museum sit-down. You can also explore many of the Lounge's exhibits on-line at www.ocma.net/orangelounge/.

Orange Lounge Satellite Gallery
South Coast Plaza
3333 Bear Street, Suite 303
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
(949) 759-1122, ext. 272
www.ocma.net/orangelounge/

Orange County Museum of Art
850 San Clemente Drive
Newport Beach, California 92660
(949) 759-1122
www.ocma.net



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WHO'S ON STAGE?

Grandma Jean

With her funny plumber

By **ERIKKA INNES**
OC Voice Staff Writer

Costa Mesa offers one of the oldest acts in showbiz – 86 year old Jean Ellen Tewiliger (who normally goes by Grandma Jean) and her son, 66 year old Terry Johnston. Together the two perform as the duo known as "The Funny Plumber and Mom," a comedy act featuring a back and forth dialogue of rapid-fire, often off-color one liners.

The act starts with Terry Johnston onstage, doing a bit of material. Then, his mother shuffles up onstage with her cane, nicely dressed, looking the part of a very sweet old lady. That's when the fun starts. Johnston asks his mother about how her latest date went. "He tried to take advantage of me," Grandma Jean tells him. "The trouble is I had to help him."

Johnston says the humor in the duo's act comes from "this premise of a person in an 86 year old body with an 18 year old mind."

The two have been performing for about five years. It all started when Terry Johnston brought his mom to a show with him where he was performing. According to Johnston "She came to a show one time and was heckling me, and getting more laughs than I was. The manager of the Improv at that time, Jeff Jenna, said why don't you have your mother come up onstage?" That is exactly what Terry Johnston decided to do, and the rest is history.

Soon Terry was taking his mom out to do comedy every week, and the act started to grow.

Grandma Jean was writing new jokes for the act every day. Johnston credits the regular performances with making his mother more youthful. "It probably made her 20 years younger when we started doing comedy together. And once I saw that I said hey, let's do this gig."

Grandma Jean is very popular on the local comedy scene. She is not able to do comedy right now because she is currently in the hospital recovering from knee surgery complications, but Johnston says "I get an email a week asking how she's doing and could she perform at such and such a date."

Johnston's mom says the comedy scene has been very welcoming to her. Of her act with her son she says "People really like it, I can't believe how much they accepted me they thought I was really funny!" She enjoys doing comedy so much that she says she plans to get back onstage as soon as she recovers. "I'll do my very best to get there because people need to laugh. There is too much sadness in this life and when you have somebody to help you by making you laugh that's great."

If you want to find out more about Grandma Jean, you can check out "The Funny Plumber and Mom" act at her son's website www.funnyplumber.com. She has also made an appearance in Eric Schwartz's hilarious youtube song and music video entitled "Chocolate Coins." Definitely work a look.

Erikka Innes is a standup comedian, freelance journalist and humor writer. Her web-site is www.erikkainnes.com.



RESTAURANT GUIDE

RESTAURANT REVIEW



Have a Fiesta Grill

Extremely impressive

By DAVID L. M. PRESTON
OC Voice Staff Writer

To the naïve visitor to Huntington Beach the Fiesta Grill's large "Fish Tacos" sign, blazoning as it is in an unassuming strip mall on 17th Street, may not attract much attention other than a passing dismissal of a hole-in-the-wall spot to skip. To those in the know—the nearby laundromat and liquor store providing a nice coarser ambience not unfamiliar to big city folk—the grill is THE place to get inexpensive, wonderful Mexican food, and often the line reaching outside the door proves this claim.

Most Mexican food, despite the cross-fertilization of all cuisines that take place over time, is strongly based on Aztec staples with some Mayan influences. After the arrival of the Spanish a strong southern European-style influx in the diet was effected. Genocidal results of the conquistadores aside, the gastronomy of Mexican food would not be what it is today without those historical events.

The Fiesta Grill is not at all the Southwestern U.S. "Tex-Mex" style, but grows more directly from Mexico proper. I gladly tried their horchata, a milky drink, best served with ice in my opinion, with a touch of vanilla and cinnamon, and found it lighter and more refreshing than others I've had in the past. A nice balance with the cinnamon (oftentimes I've had horchatas with either too little or too much) made it a nice complement to the meal. Though they also offered a jamaica, and your run-of-the-mill sodas; and though I was hoping for a tamarindo I didn't notice any.

While fish tacos, as by their signage, is a specialty, a wide range of other dishes are offered. Tacos, burritos, tamales, chimichangas (a personal favorite... though its origins are claimed to be in Arizona, rather than Mexico proper, so an exception to the rule), plates of green-chilled pork or chicken.

The tortilla chips were served with a wonderful, resonant salsa verde, flavorful without a too general bite to the chilies, which rumor has it many regulars swear by as some of the best salsa ever.

The order was delivered quickly and was hot, clearly

freshly made, which is always a joy in this world of fast-food restaurants. On the docket was: a green chili pork plate, with sides of beans, avocado, rice, and warm flour tortillas; a chicken tamale, smothered in red sauce and cheese; and a chicken chimichanga, with sour cream and lettuce.

Favoring chili pork I was very happy with its tenderness, and the green sauce was flavorful without overpowering the ambience of the meat. The tortillas were excellent and the refried beans went well the plate's whole. The serving size was hefty, and reasonably priced.

The chicken tamale, I have to say, was a touch dry. The sauce and cheese were excellent, so maybe it was a fluke in the general batch. The shredded chicken wasn't as moist as its chimichanga cousin's, and the corn tortilla wrapping tasted nice but needed a bit more horchata to moisten up. As for taste, wonderful. If you're a tamale fan, prove me wrong, as this was my first sample at Fiesta.

But when it comes to the chicken chimichanga, I was extremely impressed. The chimichanga is generally deep fried, with a rich, thick, crispy outside. This work of art was fried, but light and flaky, almost like a tortilla pastry, and the shredded chicken was perfect. Thinking I was going to enjoy the chili pork the most I was surprised that this dish won out as my all-time favorite of my samplings. Highly recommended. Definitely add a touch of avocado to heighten the experience.

Fiesta Grill, which also caters, is one of the hidden surprises for outsiders of Huntington Beach. The food is inexpensive, good and worth the visit. Definitely say "Hi" to Carlos, the owner, when you stop in. All pasta dinners include garlic bread and either a soup or salad. Most sandwiches come with coleslaw or a pasta salad. Dessert options include a New York Cheese Cake, for \$3.50; and an, as yet untried, delicious sounding Double Chocolate Mousse for \$4.25.

Fiesta Grill

418 17th St, Huntington Beach, CA

(714) 969-7689

Frank's Philadelphia Sandwiches

Frank's hoagies are piled high with steak, cheese, mushrooms, peppers, onions, pizza sauce, you name it. An 8-inch goes for \$6, a 10-inch goes for \$7.50 and the foot-long is \$9. Try the Works, a regular cheese steak with peppers and mushrooms. Awesome. (ML) 2244 Fairview Road, Costa Mesa (949) 722-8725

Gallagher's Pub

Irish fare with a Californian flair. Grab a pint of Guinness and order up the excellent fish'n'chips, a thicker piece of Icelandic cod is a rare find. A hip spot on the coast to raise a bit of Irish and snack on an oldie country victual or two. (DP) 300 Pacific Coast Highway #113, Downtown Huntington Beach. Located on Walnut between Main & 3rd (714) 536-2422

Good Mood Cafe
Health food with outstanding taste; even to a non-vegetarian's

palate. Wide range of teas, coffee and all natural food. Nothing microwave and no meat to be seen. Fine dishes include the Green Power Soup (\$4.50), conventionally served cold; the amazing "Ursula's Nutburger" (\$6.90) that had a thick, rich patty made out of almond cheese, nuts and vegetables, created by the restaurant's chef-creator Ursula herself. (DP) 5930 Warner Ave., Huntington Beach (714) 377-2028

Hashigo Korean Kitchen

A classier nouveau fusion approach to Korean cuisine, featuring the standard kimchi pickled cabbage, Bi Bin Bam, tofu stew and amazingly tender barbequed meat of choice. Remember the fried banana dessert with red-bean ice cream! (DP) 3033 Bristol St., Suite M, Costa Mesa (714) 557-4911

Kura Sushi
Sushi as fresh as can be. Prices vary

by plate color, with five different colors, priced from \$1.25-\$3.25. There are entrees such as chicken teriyaki also offered. The candy tuna roll, salmon skin hand roll and crunchy rolls are good. Definitely sit close to where the belt is loaded. (ML) 212 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa (949) 631-3200

La Fiesta Grill

Rich, hearty, and delicious home style Mexican food for almost 20 years. Favorites include the Chimichangas Delux, Chile Relleno and vegetarian burritos; the whole menu is great and reasonably priced. Eat in or take out. (JE) 418 17th St., Huntington Beach (714) 969-7689

MitAsie

After the untimely corporate expulsion of "What the Pho" from downtown Huntington Beach, there was a Vietnamese restaurant gap in Surf City that needed to be filled. Considered that task completed with MitAsie, located conveniently across from HB's other downtown, Bella Terra, on Edinger Ave. This is the perfect restaurant either for Vietnamese food novices or more experienced dabblers in Southeast Asian cuisine. Try the Chicken Clay Pot or the delicious spring rolls - buy 2 of anything get 1 free side of rolls - with a refreshing smoothie. Prices are as good as the food, from about \$5-\$7 for most a la carte meals. They cater. (JE) 7636 Edinger Ave., Huntington Beach (714) 847-5262 www.mitaside.com

Pupuseria y Restaurant San Sivar

Sustenance with a true Salvadoran touch. Authentic Central American food that brings in the expats from way down south. Soft cream-sauce baked chicken, a tamarind drink to write home about, and fried yucca root and bananas in addition to the ubiquitous pupusas. (DP) 1940 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa (949) 650-2952

Sugar Shock

This HB hotspot has been around for more than 30 years. Specializing in breakfast and home cooked classics like meatloaf and turkey dinners. The hash browns are excellent; and the Wednesday Turkey Dinner special is worth the trip. The friendly service and great food is complimented by reasonable prices. (ML) 213 Main St., Huntington Beach (714) 536-0355

Thai Wave Restaurant

Sample the Thai taste with the Thai Wave Combination platter: egg rolls, ribs, wontons and "naked" shrimp. Tom Yum soups and coconut-milk soaked curries also tease the senses at this local haunt for Southeast Asian tastes. Remember the Pad Thai and expect to feel that the tip is well deserved. (DP) 522 Main St., Huntington Beach (714) 960-0219, (714) 960-0349.

Anjin
Anjin's Japanese BBQ may be pricey, but well worth the investment. A grill-it-yourself place that offers prime cuts of beef. Order the marbled rib eye, short rib or tenderloin. The service is very attentive Teriyaki and sesame ginger sauces are available. Expect to pay around \$20 per person. (ML) 3033 Bristol St., Costa Mesa (714) 979-6700

Beachberries

The real thing: Frozen yogurt that tastes like yogurt. The best toppings are available: fresh berries, mango, pineapple, coconut. Take home containers for \$4.95. Beachberries is a local take-off on the wildly successful Pinkberries Frozen Yogurt in West Hollywood. Beachberries is located on PCH in the Pierside Pavilion. (JS) 300 Pacific Coast Highway #107-B, Huntington Beach (714) 960-7988

Bodhi Tree Vegetarian Cafe

All food at this Vietnamese/Chinese style vegetarian café is made without any animal products. Enjoy a huge assortment of creative seafood, meat and poultry dishes, sandwiches, soups and delicious appetizers made from soy bean, bean curd and assorted vegetables, and don't forget the best fresh fruit smoothies ever. (JE) 501 Main St., Huntington Beach (714) 969-9500

Coach's Mediterranean Grill

This Mediterranean restaurant is a jewel in downtown HB. Probably one of the top five Mediterranean restaurants in Orange County, this restaurant is a must-try for Mediterranean first-timers. You'll find big portions, great taste and friendly service. Try a Gyro Bowl, the Dinner for Two, or a Kebab plate. The ambience is laid-back and cozy. (ML) 200 Main St., #105, Huntington Beach (714) 969-2233

De Simone Bakery and Delicatessen

Great sandwiches. Definitely try the Cuban, Meatball, Pastrami and Italian. The bread and other ingredients are all fresh. The macaroni salad is incredible and the service is great. Most sandwiches come in 4-, 8- and 16-inch sizes. The 8-inch versions are \$5. Bit bang for your buck. (ML) 6850 Edinger Ave., Huntington Beach (714) 847-0922

Dorias Haus of Pizza

Family-style Italian restaurant, with the German name. A Costa Mesa institution their pizza pie is has a thick crust, and crisp yet hearty, generous and fresh toppings. Pasta dinners ranging from lasagna to ravioli, and sandwiches also. Friendly, and locally owned. (DP) 1500 Adams Ave, Costa Mesa (714) 751-8777

El Chinaco

Skip the two-bit fast food chain and hop on down to El Chinaco on 11th Street in Costa Mesa, and for the same cost relish fresh Mexican and El Salvadoran food, from tacos and tamales to pupusas stuffed with the meat and vegetables of your choice. (JE) 560 W 19th St #D, Costa Mesa (949) 722-8632

Gay Rights

Continued from Page 3

mention dully predictable, peacans to so-called traditional marriage. "For thousands of years and across countless cultures," wrote Silva in a newsletter to his constituents, "marriage has been defined as a union between one man and one woman."

Harman followed suit by misleadingly calling AB102, "another attempt to subvert the will of the people and dismantle the traditional institution of marriage."

With the exception of AJR 29, a resolution pressing Congress to strengthen the federal

hate crime law protecting those targeted due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, all three men voted solidly against the remainder of the pro-GLBT bills, with Harman even managing to flummox the Log Cabin Republicans, who'd referred to him in a letter of protest over his opposition to SB 559 as, "the most pro-gay Republican in the state." Harman voted against SB 559, which reversed discriminatory tax increases for domestic partners who had lost or separated from a partner prior to the 2006 law that now protects them. And in this case, Log Cabin chose to reprimand Harman not for bigotry, but his veering away from the traditional republican promise to lower taxes. "It seems," noted James Vaughn, Director of California's Log Cabin Republicans, "our job has expanded to include educating Republicans about core Republican beliefs as well as gay and lesbian issues."

Vaughn was a little kinder during a phone

interview with the Voice. "There's no Republican remotely ready for gay marriage," he said. "I wouldn't call (Harman) the most courageous on issues, but he's actually come through on some." Vaughn refers to the Log Cabin's own scorecard, which gives the senator points for voting in favor of resolutions against domestic and teen-dating violence, including same-sex couples, as well as his support for an AIDS wall memorial. Harman was number four on the list; Silva and Tran fared far worse.

While Vaughn doesn't believe that any of these men are closet boosters of gay marriage, he is optimistic that at least some members of California's Republican Party are coming around.

"I think most Republicans are afraid to vote in favor of these things. That's even changing. We don't lack for support in the party. We lack for leadership," Vaughn claims.

To encourage that leadership, the Log Cabin

site keeps a tally of GLBT constituents for each district, titled, "How Gay is Your California GOP Assembly District," in the hopes that politicians like Silva and Tran will wake up and smell the higher than average number of non "traditional" voters in their communities. Yet, Vaughn is confident that gay marriage will soon become a reality in the state.

"In California, other than marriage, there isn't much more that can be done. It's reached that point of real mop-up. Marriage is the last hurdle," Said Vaughn. When that happens, he looks forward to working on core Republican issues, such as taxes; issues that men like Harman seem ironically willing to toss aside for their anti-gay supporters.

WWW.OCVOICE.COM

JANUARY CALENDAR

ART

The ARtery. Scott Broberg exhibits at The ARtery Walkthrough Gallery Jan. 20 - February 5th Opening reception Saturday, Jan. 20 from 7pm - 11pm. The LAB, 2930 Bristol St., Costa Mesa. 714-966-6600; www.sobeca.net

15 Minutes of Fame. Artists, poets, musicians, dancers and the like will have 15 minutes on stage to do their thing in the living room every first Wednesday of the month. To sign up, email info@thelab.com; www.sobeca.net

Fine Arts Gallery. Golden West College, 15744 Golden West St., Huntington Beach. Call for current program. 714-895-8358 or 714-892-7711, ext. 51032; www.gwcfineartsgallery.com

The Huntington Beach Art Center. 538 Main St., Huntington Beach. Call for current program. 714-374-1650.

Windows Gallery. A broad spectrum of artistic vision is represented in the works of both amateur and professional artists at this gallery on the Huntington Beach Central Library's first floor. Open during library hours. 7111 Talbert Ave., Huntington Beach. 714-842-4481; www.hnpl.org

CLUBS

Beachfront 301. Sports in HD all week long and DJ spin music Fri. and Sat., 9 p.m. 301 Main St., Huntington Beach. 714-374-3399; www.beachfront301.com

Blue Café. Sun.: Mike Malone and the Soul Collectors, 2-6 p.m. each Sun. 17208 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach. 562-592-1302; www.thebluecafe.com

Chain Reaction. The self-titled "Cool-est All Ages Club in Orange County" showcases OC favorites and emerging bands in a no-alcohol setting. Shows start at 7:30 p.m. Cost: \$8-\$20. 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim. 714-635-6067; www.allages.com

Chat Noir. This restaurant's Moulin Rouge bar offers live jazz in an elegant setting. Tues.: 6 p.m.; Wed.: 7 p.m.; Thurs.-Sat.: 8 p.m. 655 Anton Blvd., Costa Mesa. 714-557-6647.

Chronic Cantina. Thurs.: Girls Night Out, with DJs spinning music girls love, 9 p.m. Free champagne and appetizers for ladies from 8-10 p.m. 1870 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa. 949-646-0227; www.chroniccantina.com

Club Vegas. Live DJs spin the following: Super Estrella Thursdays: Spanish Rock, Latin House, Reggaeton, English Pop, 9 p.m. Fri: House/Hip Hop/Trance, 9 p.m. Sat: 80s/Hip Hop/Rock, 9 p.m., with stage shows following at 11 p.m. 1901 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa. 949-548-9500; www.clubvegas.us

Detroit Bar. Resident Live Music Mondays: Support live music every Mon. No cover. Fri: Dance Music, 9 p.m. Cost: \$10. 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. 949-642-0600; www.detroitbar.com

Huntington Beach Beer Co. Brewskies and sports events

in HD all week long, plus DJ-spun dance music Thurs.-Sun., 9:30 p.m. 201 Main St., Huntington Beach. 714-960-5343; www.hibbeercos.com

Hogue Barmichaels. This longstanding music venue features an all-ages show the first show every Sat. night. 3950 Campus Dr., Newport Beach. 949-261-6270; www.hoguebarmichaels.com

Johnny's Saloon. Mon: Industry Night, 9 p.m. White Trash Wednesdays, 9 p.m. Rock & Roll every Thurs. 9 p.m. 17428 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach. 714-848-0676.

Kitsch Bar. Sun.: DJ group Your Mom, 9 p.m. Mon.: Christopher Hall, Scott Weaver, 9 p.m. Tues.: DJs Eyd and Tim Single Speed, 9 p.m. Wed.: DJ Josh, 9 p.m. Thurs. and Fri.: DJ ADejive, 9 p.m. Sat.: DJs Edwin and John, 9 p.m. No cover. 891 Baker St., Costa Mesa. 714-546-8580; www.kitschbar.com

La Cave. Jazz joint in romantic underground setting. Live entertainment Mon.-Sat.: performance times vary. 1695 Irvine Ave., Costa Mesa. 949-646-7944; www.lacaverestaurant.com

Lions Den. This club includes the gay-friendly Butterfly Lounge, featuring karaoke on Wed. and DJ-spun dance tunes on Sat., both at 9 p.m. 719 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. 949-645-3830 or 949-642-2243; www.butterflylounge.com

Martini Blues Supper Club. Three rooms of music ranging from acoustic to blues to rock offer something for everyone 21+. Dec. 8: Sugah Daddy, 9 p.m. Cost: \$10. 5874 Edinger Ave., Huntington Beach. 714-840-2129; www.martiniblues.com

Memphis Soul Café. Wed.: Definitely Maybe, with DJs mixing indie British pop, 10 p.m. Thurs: Souled Out, with DJs mixing soul, 10 p.m. 2920 Bristol St., Costa Mesa. 714-432-7685.

Perqs Nite Club. Relax at the oldest downtown bar in Surf City. Thurs.: Open Jam Nights, 8:30 p.m. Fri. and Sat.: Live rock and blues, 9 p.m.-2 a.m. 117 Main St., Huntington Beach. 714-960-9996; www.perqs.com

Pete Mallory's Sunset Grille. Colorful restaurant with live rock and blues for Sun. brunch as well as on Fri. and Sat. nights. Hyatt Regency Resort & Spa, 21500 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach. 714-845-4775; huntingtonbeach.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/entertainment/live/index.jsp

Pierce Street Annex. Known for its singles scene and fair drink prices, this popular bar offers music and dancing nightly. 330 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa. 949-646-8500; piercestreetonline.com

Shark Club. Two dance floors blasted with liquid nitrogen offer double the fun. Thurs.: Friction, a gay-friendly dance night, 9 p.m. Fri.: Liminalight, with DJs Johnny O, Chuey, and Alpha. 8 p.m. Sat.: The Scene, with DJs, live bands, fashion shows, and other events. Dec. 8: Women in Red and Men in Black Party. Cover varies per event. 841 Baker St., Costa Mesa. 714-751-6428 or 714-751-4405; www.sharkclub.com



BOLSA CHICA WETLANDS TOURS

This magnificent bird is a small white heron and can be found throughout Canada, the United States and South America. It is typically found near rivers, marshes and other wetland habitats. This bird usually measures a body length of about 24 inches with a wingspan of about 41 inches. During breeding season the egret's appearance changes. Plumage in front of its eyes turns from yellow to red and its back feathers start to curl upward. If you happen to see it out of the water you may notice its feet of brilliant yellow. At mating time it builds a nest constructed from sticks and twigs. Three to four eggs are laid and incubated by the male and female. After about three weeks the young will leave the nest for good. You can see this and many other types of wildlife at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. Bring your binoculars, spotting scopes and cameras and consider one of the great tours offered below.

— Rudy Ramos

Amigos de Bolsa Chica Tours. Walking tours are stationed on the footbridge and cover 5 areas of interest: history, birds, endangered species, ecology, and restoration. Cost: free. Meet at the south lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve in Huntington Beach, across the street from the main entrance to Bolsa Chica State Beach. Also available: The Mesa Hiking Tour and the Footbridge/Loop Trail Tour; contact Amigos de Bolsa Chica for schedule info. 714-840-1575; www.amigosdebolsachica.org.

Bolsa Chica Conservancy. This non-profit organization promotes the restoration and preservation of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. The reserve, which extends along the east side of Pacific Coast Hwy. from Warner to Seapoint Aves., is a birder's paradise. Open to the public from sunrise to sunset daily. No bikes or pets are permitted on the trails. Cost: free. The Interpretive Center is open Tues.-Fri., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m.-noon; and Sun., 12:30-3:30 p.m. 3842 Warner Ave. (SE corner of Warner Ave. and Pacific Coast Hwy.), Huntington Beach. 714-846-1114; www.bolsachica.org.

The Bolsa Chica Land Trust Wetlands and Mesas Tour. On the third Sun. of each month enjoy a guided walking tour presented by the Bolsa Chica Land Trust. 10 a.m. tour lasts 2 hours. Cost: free. Tour departs from the south parking lot (off Pacific Coast Hwy.) of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve in Huntington Beach. 714-964-8170 or 714-846-1001; www.bolsachicalandtrust.org.

Surf City Saloon. Free pool every day. Live rock show Fri. and Sat., 8 p.m. Cost: \$5 cover. 18528 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach. 714-963-7744.

Tumbleweeds Bar & Grill. Live rock and blues nightly after 8 p.m. Food served until midnight for those late-night munchies. 21094 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach. 714-960-2776; www.tumbleweedshb.com.

COMEDY

Gallagher's Pub & Grill. VAN HALEN TRIBUTE 10 p.m. Jan. 5; Comedy Night every Thurs. at 9 p.m. 21+. Cost: \$3 cover. 300 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach. 714-536-2422; gallagherspub.com.

Detroit Bar. Tuesdays: We Know Funny comedy showcase, 9 p.m. Cost: \$5 cover. Special appearance by Doug Stanhope, Dec. 4. Cost: \$15. All shows 21+. 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. 949-642-0600; www.detroitbar.com.

DANCE

Monthly Ballroom Dance. Adults of

all ages are invited to cut a rug the third Fri. of each month at a dance thrown by the Huntington Beach Council on Aging. The event welcomes both singles and couples and features live music, snacks, and beverages. From 7:30-10:30 p.m. Cost: \$5. Rodgers Seniors' Center, 1706 Orange Ave., Huntington Beach. 714-536-9387.

FARMER'S MARKET/SWAP MEET

Farmer's Market. Weekly market sponsored by the Orange County Farm Bureau. Every Thurs., 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at Lot A at the Orange County Fair & Exposition Center, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa. 714-573-0374; orange.ctfb.com or www.ocfair.com.

Farmer's Market and Art-A-Faire. You'll find fresh flowers, fruits and vegetables grown right here under the Golden State sun at this weekly open-air market. The accompanying art and craft features over 50 vendors selling one-of-a-kind items, from handcrafted jewelry to rugs shaped like surfboards. Every Fri., noon-7 p.m. (except during special events such as the U.S. Open of Surfing and Beach

Games), at Pier Plaza next to the Huntington Beach Pier. 714-573-0374; orange.ctfb.com or www.hbartfaire.com

Golden West College Swap Meet. New and used items abound. Although the collectibles may be antique, the produce and flowers are always fresh. Every Sat. and Sun., 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Cost: free admission. Golden West College parking lot, 15744 Golden West St., Huntington Beach. 714-898-7927; www.goldenwestswapmeet.com

Old World Village Antique Faire. Shop for vintage treasures along the cobblestone streets of Old World Village the third Sat. of each month (this month on Dec. 15). 7561 Center Avenue, Huntington Beach. 714-893-1518.

Orange County Marketplace. Full of unique items and great bargains, this swap meet is held every Sat. and Sun., 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Cost: \$2 admission; kids under 12 free. Orange County Fair & Exposition Center, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa. 949-723-6616; www.ocmarketplace.com.

Phil's Flea Market. Monthly outdoor antiques market held the third Sat. of each month 7 a.m.-3 p.m., in the Gothard St. parking lot at Ocean View High School. A portion of the proceeds goes towards the high school's sports programs. Cost: free admission. 17071 Gothard St. (at Warner Ave.), Huntington Beach. 714-893-1518.

Surf City Nights Downtown Street Fair. Main Street is blocked off from cars for this weekly event that features a farmer's market, food booths, sidewalk sales, kids' activities, and live entertainment. The nearby Main Promenade parking garage offers 2 hours of free parking for this event. Every Tues. from 5-9 p.m. on Main St. between Pacific Coast Hwy. and Orange Ave., Huntington Beach. 714-536-5542; www.surfcity-hb.org/announcements/surfcity_nights_information.cfm.

HEALTH

Depression & Bipolar Support. Every Saturday 10 a.m. to 12 noon (patients and family), Huntington Beach Medical Center Hospital, 1772 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach. (Between Slater and Talbert) Basement Cafeteria Conference Room.

Depression & Bipolar Support. Family Support Group. Meets monthly first Saturday of the month. 1 to 3 p.m. (Family only) Huntington Beach Medical Center Hospital, 1772 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach. (Between Slater and Talbert) Basement Cafeteria Conference Room.

MISCELLANEOUS

Elks Bingo Wednesday Matinee. It's your turn to yell "Bingo" over at the Elks Lodge, where the doors open every Wed. at 10 a.m. and early birds begin playing at 11 a.m. at BPOE Lodge No. 1959. Cost: \$15 minimum buy-in. Free coffee, tea and popcorn are served, and food and soft drinks are available for purchase. 7711 Talbert Ave., Huntington Beach. 714-848-9440; www.hbelks.com/index.html

Saturday Sunrise Car Cruisers. Join "The Donut Derelicts" and check out hot rods, woodies, imports, and various restored vehicles. Every Sat. from 8-30 a.m. Cost: free. Adams and Magnolia Aves., Huntington Beach. Parking available in the Ace, Adams Avenue Donut Shop, and Drug Emporium parking lots. www.donutderelicts.com.

Weekly Meditation. Every Monday night at 7 p.m. Transform your life. Cost: free, but donations accepted. Tree of Life Wellness Center, 714 E. Adams Ave., #205, Huntington Beach. For more info, call (714) 374-1988 or see www.TheTreeOfLifeCenter.com.

MUSEUMS

Costa Mesa Historical Society Annual Dinner. Celebrate and learn about Orange County history from Ada Bosniak with dinner on Jan. 16 at Captian's Table Restaurant on the campus of Orange Coast College located at the corner of Adams and Fairview. Reservations \$15. Call 949-631-5918.

Diego Sepulveda Adobe Estancia. A tiny portion remains of the original adobe that missionaries built circa 1820 as a way-station for herding tending vaqueros. Later the home of Don Diego Sepulveda, this California historical landmark is maintained by the Costa Mesa Historical Society. Open on the first and third Sat. of each month, noon-4 p.m., or by appointment, 1900 Adams Ave., Costa Mesa. 949-631-5918; www.costamesahistory.org.

Newland House Museum. Maintained by the Huntington Beach Historical Society, this charming landmark, built in 1898, is the oldest surviving residence in the city of Huntington Beach. Open Sat. and Sun. (except on holidays and rainy days), noon-4 p.m. Cost: \$2 for adults, \$1 for kids. 19820 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach. 714-962-5777; www.hbnewsurfingmuseum.html

International Surfing Museum. Immerse yourself in the music, movies, boards, and memorabilia of an endless summer. Open Thurs.-Mon., 12-5 p.m. 411 Olive Ave., Huntington Beach. 714-960-3483; www.surfingmuseum.org.

MUSIC

Rod Gilfry, Baritone. Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2008 at 8:00 p.m. Experience an evening of music as baritone Rod Gilfry serenades us with his keen vocal and dramatic abilities. Irvine Barclay Theater, 4242 Campus Dr. Irvine, (UCI campus) 949-553-2422; www.philharmonicociety.org.

Nicola Benedetti, Violin. Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008 at 8:00 p.m. Hear the future today as violin sensation and BBC's 2004 Young Musician of the Year Nicola Benedetti delights Orange County audiences. Irvine Barclay Theater, 4242 Campus Dr. Irvine, (UCI campus) 949-553-2422; www.philharmonicociety.org.

The Divine Duke: Turtle Island String Quartet. Saturday, Jan. 19, 2008 at 8:00 p.m. Sit back, relax and indulge your senses with the perfect recipe of jazz, classical and gospel as Duke Edlington comes to life through his musical brilliance. Laguna Beach Artists Theater, 625 Park Ave. Laguna Beach. 949-553-2422; www.philharmonicociety.org.

Royal Philharmonic. Saturday, Jan. 26, 2008 at 8:00 p.m. Optimism reigns supreme in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Though it was written at a time of his declining health and growing deafness. Renee & Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, 615 Town Center Dr. Costa Mesa. 949-553-2422; www.philharmonicociety.org.

NATURE

Amigos de Bolsa Chica Tours. Walking tours are stationed on the footbridge and cover 5 areas of interest: history, birds, endangered species, ecology, and restoration. Cost: free. Meet at the south lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve in Huntington Beach, across the street from the main entrance to Bolsa Chica State Beach. Also available: The Mesa Hiking Tour and the Footbridge/Loop Trail Tour; contact Amigos de Bolsa Chica for schedule info. 714-840-1575; www.amigosdebolsachica.org.

Bolsa Chica Conservancy. This non-profit organization promotes the restoration and preservation

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Coffee

Continued from Page 11

install solar roofing.

At K'ean Coffee, a similar philosophy is expressed throughout the store. The owner Martin Diedrich (founder & previous owner of Diedrich Coffee Co.) grew up on a family-owned coffee farm in Central America and has nothing less than an encyclopedic knowledge of how to run a sustainable business, from soil to cup. Depending on the season, 40 to 70 percent of his coffees are Certified Organic and Fair Trade. A few carry Bird Friendly certification, and he's particularly excited to offer a couple that are Rainforest Alliance certified since he was involved in that organization's genesis. Twelve of his 17 teas are Certified Organic and one is Fair Trade. Organic milk is available, but does cost extra.

Diedrich is proud to sell his coffee in biodegradable paper bags (lined with a corn-based resin), something of a store exclusive and a reflection that the beans are literally roasted on site daily. Similarly, all cold drinks are served in corn-based cups. The woodwork at K'ean is made

from recycled teak. Diedrich personally drives truckloads of used plastic milk jugs, cardboard boxes and newspapers to be recycled three times a week. A particularly homey touch intended to reduce use of throwaway hot cups—regulars who bring in a personal mug from home will find it washed and ready at their next visit!

You might expect that the added costs of such super green practices are passed on to customers. Not so. For a 12-oz brew, compare the \$1.55 charged at The Lost Bean and \$1.60 at K'ean to the \$1.60 at Starbucks and Peet's and \$1.70 at The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf.

The coffee store ritual is for many one of life's purest, even essential pleasures. But if your concerns extend beyond taste to also lightening your eco footprint, the next time you pop in for a "fix" bring your own mug, digest a few coffee bag labels, and don't be shy about telling the manager you want your roast as green as possible.

Sarah S. Mosko is a member of the Earth Resource Foundation, which is based in Costa Mesa. She has a Ph.D. in Psychology/Neuroscience with a background in research. She is now a practicing clinical psychologist. For more information, please visit www.earthresource.org or call (949) 645-5163.

Bills

Continued from Page 2

ity prices in the current deregulated market will affect the cost of drinking water to be produced by a desalination plant that Hansen voted to approve several years ago.

The plant, to be built by Poseidon Inc., and privately operated, would take the salt out of 100 million gallons of public sea water sucked in daily through the AES power plant's cooling system and sell it back to the public.

Electricity purchases would account for about 60 percent of the operating costs for the desalination plant, which would produce drinking water that costs far more per acre foot than publicly owned water, even with government subsidies.

Massive Blackouts and Solutions

Wood warns that the danger of unrestricted deregulation with the limited number of gen-

erating plants in Southern California is "massive blackouts" if only a couple of those plants withhold services. "Even if the plants withhold a little bit, you experience rolling blackouts. When companies say, 'we shouldn't be forced to be accountable and to sell into the system if we don't want to,'—all that means is that they can charge whatever they want."

Full deregulation would also reduce or eliminate renewable and more environmentally friendly power sources that have higher market prices than fossil fuel, Wood claims. Currently operating renewable energy sources exist only where there is a regulatory obligation to include them as a power source, such as in California, he says.

"What's important is reestablishing a regulatory system to protect consumers from higher prices, so that the prices electric companies pay reflect the cost of running the generating plants rather than whatever the market will bear," says Wood.

And as a simple solution to rising electric prices, Cook says, "We also have to use less."

CALENDAR

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

POLITICS

Democratic Club of West Orange County presents Dana Parsons of the Los Angeles Times on Jan 23rd, 6:30 pm. The meeting will be at the Fountain Valley Senior Center, 17957 Bushard, Fountain Valley. No charge for admission. For more information: 714-661-8476, or check www.dcvoc.org.

Orange County Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State will be showing the film "God and Government" on Jan 19th, 2:00 pm at the Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine. Check www.au-oc.org for details or call 714-299-4551. No charge for admission.

Standing Up for Justice and Peace. Nonviolent protesters gather weekly to ask the community to give peace a chance. Bring signs and help stop George Bush's corporate jihad. Held every Fri. at 5 p.m. outside South Coast Plaza at the intersection of Bristol St. and Anton Blvd., Costa Mesa.

THEATER

A Feminine Ending: Written by Sarah Tread and directed by Timothy Douglas. Jan. 6 - 27. Julianne Argyros Stage, South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa. 714-708-5555; www.scr.org.

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas. Book by Larry King & Paul Masterson, Music & Lyrics by Carol Hall. Jan. 11 - 27. This happy-go-lucky view of small-town vice and statewide political side-stepping recounts the good times and the demise of the Chicken Ranch, known since the 1850's as one of the better pleasure palaces in all of Texas. Local dignitaries frequent the bordello until the puritan Watchdog steps in with righteous indignation focusing on closing the institution. Huntington Beach Playhouse, 7111 Talbert Ave., Huntington Beach. 714-375-0696; www.hbph.com.

of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. The reserve, which extends along the east side of Pacific Coast Hwy. from Warner to Seapoint Aves., is a birdler's paradise. Open to the public from sunrise to sunset daily. No bikes or pets are permitted on the trails. Cost: free. The Interpretive Center is open Tues.-Fri., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m.-noon; and Sun., 12:30-3:30 p.m. 3842 Warner Ave. (SE corner of Warner Ave. and Pacific Coast Hwy.), Huntington Beach. 714-846-1114; www.bolsachica.org.

The Bolsa Chica Land Trust Wetlands and Meets Tour. On the third Sun. of each month (this month on Dec. 16), enjoy a guided walking tour presented by the Bolsa Chica Land Trust. 10 a.m. tour lasts 2 hours. Cost: free. Tour departs from the south parking lot (off Pacific Coast Hwy.) of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve in Huntington Beach. 714-964-8170 or 714-846-1001; www.bolsachicalandtrust.org.

Shipley Nature Center. Situated within Huntington Central Park, this 18-acre natural area is a sanctuary for local wildlife and a haven for nature-friendly humans. The center is open Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 17829 Golden West St., Huntington Beach. 714-842-4772 or 714-960-8895; www.shiplynature.org.

POETRY

Breaking the Silence: A Spoken Word Series. Don't just write poetry - read it. Share poems, essays, short fiction, etc., the third Thurs. of each month (this month on Jan. 17), 6-8 p.m. Also 15 Minutes of Fame, where poets, dancers, musicians and artists have a quarter of an hour on stage to unleash their creative genius. Starts at 7 p.m. the first Wed. of each month (this month on Jan. 2). The Living Room, the LAB, 2930 Bristol St., Costa Mesa. 714-966-6660; www.sobeca.net.

SPORTS

Disc Frisbee Golf. Amateur League is held every Wed. afternoon; handicap assigned. Two-round tournaments are held the first Sat. of each month at 10 a.m., all divisions invited. Cost: \$1-\$2.50; kids under 16 play free. Huntington Beach Disc Golf Course, Huntington Central Park lot off Golden West St. between Talbert and Ellis Aves., Huntington Beach. 714-425-9931; www.huntington-beachevents.com/frisbee.html.

VOLUNTEERING

Bolsa Chica Service Day. Help raise public awareness about the importance of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands to our community by rolling up your sleeves and helping the staff remove trash and non-native plant species. Meet on the last Sat. of each month, 9 a.m.-noon, at 3842 Warner Ave., North Parking Lot, Huntington Beach. 714-846-1114; www.bolsachica.org.

Huntington Beach Public Library. Plentiful opportunities exist for volunteers at the central library and its 4 branches. These include Friends of the Children's Library, Friends of the Library and Gift Shop, the Genealogy Society, the HB Art League, the HB Playhouse, and Literacy Volunteers. For more info, visit the central library at 7111 Talbert Ave., Huntington Beach, or one of its neighborhood branches. 714-842-4481; www.hbpl.org.

Orange County Public Library/Costa Mesa. Volunteers are needed to help with daily branch operations and with Friends of the Library and Bookstore. All 3 Costa Mesa branches seek volunteers. 949-646-8845; www.ocpl.org.

Restoration Days. Join community volunteers to help maintain the unspoiled beauty of the Shipley Nature Center. Meet on the first Sat. of each month at 17829 Golden West St., Huntington Beach. 714-842-4772 or 714-960-8895; www.shiplynature.org.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Retirement Rollover:

Make it Profitable

By SAM F. WIDA

In my last column I discussed why it is necessary and how to rollover your retirement funds once you have separated from your company. Now we will focus on how to make this transition profitable.

A rollover to a self-directed IRA presents you with the opportunity to make a fresh start with your investments. However, whatever your particular ambition or need you must understand that the profitability of your investments will largely be determined by two things: controlling cost and taking advantage of opportunities.

The less money you devote to costs the more of it you have left for productive assets. Remember these things when you plan your rollover and when you consider investments:

1. Look to reduce all your costs. Any IRA account will come with many regular and special costs - basic custodial services, costs associated with transfers, providing extra statements, withdrawals, holding fees, etc.

Costs among mutual funds companies, brokerages, banks and insurance companies vary widely. Before you actually open your IRA you should receive a brochure that lists all costs and fees the custodian will charge just for the basic administration of the IRA. Be sure to read it! I am constantly encountering clients who have accounts at other institutions who are ignorant of the fees they are charged and are shocked at how much money it costs them. If you can, look for an institution that charges little or nothing just to hold your IRA and whose other fees are reasonable for the kind of investing you wish to do.

2. Avoid high costs investments. Some investments, by their nature, are very expensive. Annuities, limited partnerships and proprietary mutual funds (in-house mutual funds of brokerage companies) almost always have expen-

sities that are significantly above those of other investments. And these expenses may not even be connected to the actual investments but to the costs attached to administration.

Annuities, in particular, are expensive. Few people realize that when they buy an annuity they are actually buying an insurance product. You have two separate things, an investment and an insurance policy. Both of these have expenses. If it is a variable annuity, which allows holders to invest in mutual fund-like pools, investors must pay for the management of the funds and, separately, for the administration part of the insurance. A good, low cost mutual fund may charge only 0.25 percent to administer a fund, while an insurance company annuity may cost you 1.5 percent to 2.5 percent or more.

While this difference may seem small, it will be felt over time. Losing 1 or 2 percent every year for 10, 20, or 30 years becomes a huge amount of money. Those dollars will not be paid to you nor will they be reinvested back into a productive investment to take advantage of compound growth.

In your old company retirement plan you probably had little or no control over the fees that were charged to you. In fact, you may not even have had a clear idea of what or how much those expenses were. But in your own IRA you can get this information and invest to reduce your cost.

3. Take advantage of all your choices. Most peoples' investment horizons, in fact their basic understanding of what investments are, were shaped by what was available to them in their old company retirement plans. But remember what I wrote in my last column: companies want to hold down costs by restricting the investment options available to their employees. As a result, when the employees leave they bring with them the same restricted understanding of investments and investment options.

A key principal to making money, year after year, over many years, is to match investments to your individual personal needs as closely as possible. This allows you to understand your investments, know what to expect from them and to be comfortable holding them through good and bad times. But few people know enough about investments to make this match. This is unfortunate because America offers more types of investments than any other country in the world. Whoever you are and whatever you want to accomplish there is an investment out there that will work for you. And it is probably available to you in your IRA.

Do you need income from your rollover account? Perhaps, in addition to income-mutual funds, you would profit from preferred stock or a good unit investment trust. Are you interested in a particular industry or business? Maybe a limited partnership or master limited partnership is right for you? Do you know that foreign companies offer a greater chance for growth than American ones? You can use American Depository Receipts to directly invest in hundreds of foreign firms. Perhaps you just want to keep up with the stock market as a whole. In that case, a low cost exchange traded fund is probably a good idea. And the number of mutual funds you can access in a Self Directed rollover runs to the thousands. All of these and many more are established and well regulated types of investments. And each has its own level of risk and reward that allows you to decide what is best for you.

4. Diversify, intelligently. Most people understand that diversification spreads out risk and creates the opportunity for appreciation of wealth over the long term. However, many people hurt themselves by spreading their investment dollars too widely, taking on extra costs while adding little safety. I often see this in clients who want to buy three, four or even six mutual funds in the rollover IRA. They mistake-

only believe that more investments necessarily equal more protection.

Spreading your dollars over a number of different types of investments will provide you with as much real diversification as buying shares in ten different mutual fund companies, and at a lot lower cost.

Most people are comfortable and familiar with mutual funds, and buying shares in a large fund family that has many different kinds of funds (stocks, bonds, domestic, international and specialty funds) will provide the diversification they need. With my clients I also recommend that they add some individual stocks or other investments so that they can strike a balance between being safe and making money.

For experienced clients, who wish to be actively involved in directing their IRA investments, I sometimes recommend that they diversify primarily through the purchase of individual stocks or bonds. When balanced properly a collection of 10 to 15 different investments, large and small company stocks, bonds, trusts, exchange traded funds etc., can provide you with real effective diversification. Moreover, unlike mutual funds which always have a management fee, there is no cost to simply hold these investments in your IRA. More choices and fewer costs!

The rollover IRA is an opportunity to make a fresh start with your investments in ways that you never had back at the old company. Controlling costs and taking advantage of your opportunities can help you finance your retirement—even if you intend to make it a long one.

Sam E Wida, a local financial and tax advisor, specializes in retirement rollover, financial planning and personal and small business income taxes. Initial consultations are free. Phone: 714-375-0028. Office: 16152 Beach Blvd #271 Huntington Beach.

Senior Center

No free lunch

By **JOE SHAW**
OC Voice Columnist

Harry S Truman said, "If you can't convince them, confuse them." That pretty much sums up the shenanigans surrounding the proposed Huntington Beach senior center. As this project nears final approval, it's time to take another look at it.

From moment one, this contentious project has been clouded willfully with misconceptions by some of our present and past elected officials in a manner designed to avoid a frank, open discussion of the legitimate policy issues that the senior center raises.

Like snake oil salesmen, some of our elected officials through omission and through obfuscation, sold the people of Huntington Beach a bottle of Dr. Feelgood. Had the public been presented with all the relevant information in a straightforward way, most likely they would have defeated the misleading verbiage of Measure T.

In June, before the 2006 election, the Senior Center proposal was brought forth as part of a deal with the developer of the Pacific City Project.

An owner participation agreement (OPA) was negotiated with Makallon Atlanta Huntington Beach, LLC (Makar Properties), developer of Pacific City, which called for Makar to build the project as part of their Quimby obligation. Quimby, a 1975 state law, requires developers to provide park space for the residents of their new developments or pay the city to provide park space for them.

But the agreement between Makar and the city also contains language that will allow the Quimby obligation for the senior center to be paid for by taxing future residents of Pacific City via a Mell-Roos tax. Mello-Roos is a state law that was meant to sidestep Proposition 13 and allows cities and developers to place a tax on new homes to pay for infrastructure improvements.

One can hardly blame Makar for wanting to pass on these costs; they are a business, after all. But here's where the campaign of bamboozlement by center proponents began.

In a classic bait and switch, backers of this project denied that taxes would be used to fund this project, claiming the center was going to be funded by the one-time Quimby fees. However, a Mello-Roos tax appears to be the intended source of funding all along, even though, not surprisingly, the words "Mello-Roos" and "tax" never appear in the OPA.

In fact, on the ballot statement asking voters to approve a new senior center, the "Yes on T" faction proclaimed, "Good News! Your yes vote on Measure T will not cost you one cent" and "Although funding is not a part of the ballot measure, it is anticipated that financing will come from developer fees owed to the City, not taxes."

Disingenuous at best, and definitely misleading. But there's more.

Because the project was to take away as much as 5 acres in open space in Central Park, by city law, it required a vote of the residents of Huntington Beach. When the



city council debated the actual wording of the measure to be placed before voters, they voted to give no details about the costs, the funding, or the long-term operating expenses. Very little was revealed at all.

As so often happens in Huntington Beach, we sacrificed careful scrutiny of a large project, with promises of a free lunch from our city council. Some on the council who preached the most about transparent and open government were the first to abandon their principles for this project.

Law enforcement officials provide tips for avoiding fraud and con artists.

1. Remember to carefully read contracts and purchasing agreements before signing.

2. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

3. Scam warning sign: "You must act 'now' or the offer won't be good."

4. Scam warning sign: "You can't afford to miss this 'high-profit, no-risk' offer."

All these tips should have been on our ballot measure!

Even worse is the disgraceful way the "Yes on T" people characterized the opponents as not caring about the plight of seniors in this community. Such a campaign of disinformation was meant to distract voters from the real policy issues.

How does a senior center provide park space for the residents of Pacific City, as Quimby and our city code requires?

How will we pay for what some critics say could be several hundred-thousand dollars more than the current \$800,000 operating costs?

What's worse, if the economy continues to decline and if energy prices continue to climb, the prohibitive costs of operating a new building so much larger than the senior center we have now could substantially affect our ability to pay for critical senior services that we already provide.

Will this project lead to cuts in the essential transportation and meals-on-wheels programs the city funds, services that help our most vulnerable seniors?

Too bad the public wasn't included in that debate.

Joe Shaw authors his own blog, "Greetings from Downtown Huntington Beach" at <http://hbdowntown.typepad.com/> and currently serves on the HB City Planning Commission.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Bolsa Chica

Wetlands restoration advances

By **CONNIE BOARDMAN**
OC Voice Guest Columnist

The lower bench of the Bolsa Chica Mesa is green right now from the recent rains, and if the Bolsa Chica Land Trust and their restoration team, the Bolsa Chica Stewards have their way, the mesa will soon take on the colors of oak woodlands, native grasslands, and riparian areas among other habitats.

For the past 10 years the Bolsa Chica Stewards have been working on the 12 acres of State land on the Bolsa Chica Mesa which has been accessible to the public. During their monthly workdays the Stewards have converted a weedy non-native grassland area into a coastal sage scrub community by planting more than 15,000 one gallon native plants and sowing countless wildflower seeds.

This metamorphosis has been made possible by the volunteer efforts of many in our community. Volunteers have come from throughout the greater LA region to participate in the transformation of the Bolsa Chica Mesa. Students from local and distant schools and colleges, boy and girl scouts, church groups, businesses, and community service groups, -over 80 different groups in the last five years have all contributed to the blossoming of the restored acreage.

In 2005 the State purchased 118 acres of the lower bench, which is largely an area of non native grassland along with the eucalyptus grove, which is an environmentally sensitive habitat area. The grasslands on the lower bench of the mesa provide important foraging habitat for the birds of prey, which roost in the eucalyptus trees.

The lower bench now needs restoration, but at the same time the foraging habitat required for hawks, owls and falcons must be maintained. The Stewards estimate the restoration will take 10-15 years at a cost of 3 to 5 million dollars. The community has been highly supportive in the past by both funding the purchase of plants for the restoration and providing the needed labor. The Land Trust has been successful in obtaining grants, but now will be looking for much larger grants to fund the restoration process.

Earlier this year the Bolsa Chica Land Trust contracted with the Dudek Engineering and Environmental firm to develop an interim management plan and restoration plan for the entire lower bench of the Bolsa Chica Mesa.

The comprehensive restoration plan proposes to rehabilitate the land with at least eight different types of habitat. One of the key habitat types planned is native grassland. However, according to Kim Kolpin the coordinator of the Bolsa Chica Stewards, native grassland is one of the hardest types of plant communities to restore.

To gauge their chances for success the Stewards are currently working with test plots on the lower bench to determine which grass species will be successful. Over the next two years the Stewards will be watching as grasses sown from seed, and those planted in one gallon containers grow and thrive, or fail to do so. These kinds of experiments are needed to determine what kind of grasses the damaged soils on the Bolsa Chica Mesa can support.

The restoration of 118 acres will require different methods than the hand planting the Stewards have used on the currently restored land. For example, once the most successful species of grasses are determined, The Stewards plan to use a process called seed imprinting on at least part of the mesa. In this process a large hollow drum roller with grooves and ridges filled with the seed mix is rolled across the soil pushing seeds into the soil as it rolls.

The Stewards also plan areas of vernal pools, a critically endangered habitat type in California. These pools are ephemeral, or seasonal, filling with rain in the winter and drying sometimes several times in a season. Unique plants and animals, which can withstand this kind of stress, inhabit these pools. More than 90% of the vernal pools that once existed in California have been destroyed or degraded. The Upper Bench of the Bolsa Chica Mesa already supports such a pool so the prospects may be good for establishment of additional pools on the lower bench.

The Bolsa Chica Land Trust hopes to present the interim management plan to the Department of Fish and Game in late January of 2008. If you would like to be part of the transformation of the Bolsa Chica Mesa, please join the Bolsa Chica Stewards on their workdays. The Stewards meet the third Saturday of the month at 9 AM in the Warner Avenue parking lot at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve.

For more information you can call the Bolsa Chica Land Trust at 714-846-1001 or visit their website at www.bolsachicalandtrust.org

Army Chaplain Appreciates Gift from CM Seniors

By **ANNE HOGAN-SHERESHEVSKY**
OC Voice Columnist

From Chaplain (Major) Lou DeTlifo stationed at COB Speicher, Tikrit, Iraq, our seniors received a wonderful thank you note, that the well-packed box has been received intact, just in time for Christmas.

This project was executed by many seniors, coordinated by Mary Anne Bane, and has given us the pleasure of sending useful items to our soldiers most rewarding task.

As the Deputy Division Chaplain, DeTlifo performed ministry and coordinated religious support for over 30,000 soldiers, sailors, marines and civilians in Iraq.

He writes to tell us that one small light in the darkness provides a beacon for everyone to see. On a recent trip to FOB Warrior, he learned that they were working on building the largest display of lights in Iraq. He didn't know how many that would be, but the last count was over 10,000 lights all strung together. Something like that is not easily hidden! In this Season of Lights, try singing, "This little light of mine..."

To quote the Chaplain's own words, "Dear Friends, thank you for the package and your kind words." He included an inspiring article

for us to read.

A second recipient, Cpl. Markus Hartman, wrote to say that he will be returning soon. His family said they would encourage him to come to the Center to meet the senior volunteers. "Hope rings eternal!"

I would like to thank everyone for reading my articles. At present I will discontinue writing these articles for personal reasons. (One is I've been bugged to write my own life story of "Graduating from the Nunnery." !!!)

P.S. Message to young skate boarders. Remember, Lion's Park is quite sacred ground with its 5 plus buildings there, airplane and Fish Fry picnic area. Use your creativity to find other venues in Costa Mesa for your skate park!!

Editor's note: I would like to thank Anne for writing for the OC Voice for the past year. Her columns have helped to shine a needed light on Costa Mesa issues important to seniors and others. We are sure that all of our readers share in their appreciation of her tireless efforts as a community activist to improve life in Costa Mesa. We look forward to reading her autobiography!



Is Your Coffee Green?

How to find your eco-responsible coffee shop

By SARAH S. MOSKO
Special to the OC Voice

It takes 12 coffee trees to support a 2-cup-a-day coffee habit, according to the Sightline Institute, a non-profit research center in Seattle. And not all coffee is created equal from an environmental standpoint.

People who frequent specialty coffee stores seek a perfect brew served up in a connoisseur's ambiance. If you're one of them, but also care how eco-friendly your cup of java is, you might want to know how different establishments stack up environmentally. A little background on how coffee is grown and labeled is essential.

Coffee Talk

The dizzying selection that entices the gourmet coffee drinker is every bit linked to the varying conditions under which coffee is cultivated. Most varieties come from more tropical areas of Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia; some are grown in hot, moist conditions and others at cooler elevations which generally produce the finest beans.

Traditionally, coffee has been grown under the shade of a multilayered, native forest of fruit and hardwood trees whose canopies provide a rich habitat for multitudes of bird and other animal and insect species. Because the complexity of this natural habitat is virtually self-sustaining when the ecosystem is healthy, shade-coffee inherently preserves biodiversity.

To make way for higher-yield, full-sun-grown varieties of beans, introduced in the 1970s, many coffee farmers sawed down their local shade trees, decimating bird and other wildlife populations along with native forests. The unintended consequences have been soil depletion plus the proliferation of insect pests previously kept in check by birds and other insect eaters. Growers have resorted to liberal application of synthetic fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides and fungicides, all which can kill off friendly insects and cause real pests to flourish. Human health can be more directly affected by synthetic fertilizers, which can contaminate groundwater used for drinking.

As there is no set standard for what merits the label "shade-grown" coffee, there is potential for abuse; e.g. a grower might make the claim based on a few token trees. In practice, it signifies that someone in the chain of grower, importer and roaster (i.e. not an independent party) has made the determination.

A "Certified Organic" label means adherence to strict growing standards: at least 95 percent of the coffee must be grown in soil free of synthetic chemicals for at least three years; and crop rotation and other sustainable growing practices must be followed. If it's 100 percent organic, the label will say so. Inspection is carried out independently, by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) or the



NOT THE WINNER: Starbucks does not report percentage of coffee grown without synthetic chemicals.

Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA). According to World Bank estimates, less than 1 percent of coffee today is Certified Organic.

However, not all coffee that meets organic standards is labeled as such, generally because smaller farms can't afford the inspection fee. As a consumer, it's helpful to know that most coffee grown without synthetic chemicals is also shade-grown since it's generally harder to control pests naturally when coffee is grown in the sun.

A "Bird Friendly" label is nearly synonymous with organic and shade-grown. It is the stamp of approval of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, which requires farming without synthetic chemicals and under a variety of native shade trees. Their biologists identified over 90 percent fewer bird species (both native and migrating types) in sun versus shade coffee plantations in Mexico and Columbia.

Coffee farmers can earn the "Rainforest Alliance" certification seal if they meet a host of strictly enforced standards "for protecting wildlife, wild lands, workers' rights and local

communities." How much forest canopy must be preserved is spelled out in detail, so coffee drinkers looking for shade-grown can be confident they're getting the real deal. Crops are not necessarily organic, although agrochemical use is strictly limited and well-monitored.

A "UTZ Certified" coffee comes with the guarantee from an independent foundation confirms that the producer has maintained transparency and traceability in the application of any agrochemicals and that substances banned in the U.S. or EU have not been used.

Orange County's Big Three

In Orange County, the biggest specialty chains are Starbucks, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and Peet's Coffee & Tea.

At Starbucks, the standard menu lists two shade-grown and two Certified Organic coffees. One in-store tea is Certified Organic.

Starbucks relies largely on its own guidelines to ensure that the environment is protected. Under the company's so-called Coffee and Farmer

Equity (C.A.F.E.E.) Practices, some agrochemical use is permitted, although the most toxic sprays (dubbed "dirty dozen") are not allowed. In 2006, Starbucks purchased 53 percent of its coffees from C.A.F.E.E.-approved suppliers. Starbucks does not report, however, on the percentage of their coffees that are grown without synthetic chemicals or under a shade canopy, per company spokesperson Elise Chisholm.

Peet's generally carries one variety each of a coffee and tea that is Certified Organic. An additional coffee is UTZ Certified. No coffee variety is specifically Rainforest Alliance, although beans with this certification do contribute to some of the blends. And, according to spokesperson Erica Hess, "Peet's coffee as a general rule is shade-grown."

Unlike Starbucks and Peet's, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf is privately-owned. Its stores stock a single 100 percent Certified Organic coffee but no Certified Organic tea. However, company spokesperson Michele LaMont claims that all the coffees are grown "free of synthetic chemicals" and "most are grown with the help of shade." The Coffee Bean sets and monitors its social and environmental policies internally.

And the Eco Crown Goes to...

None of the above. Instead, it's shared by two independently-owned establishments, The Lost Bean Organic Coffee & Tea on Newport Boulevard in Tustin and K'ean Coffee on Westcliff Drive in Newport Beach. These two have gone the extra mile to do right by the environment.

As the name implies, all the coffees and teas at The Lost Bean are Certified Organic, as is the milk and some of the pastries. Over 90 percent of the coffee beans are shade-grown, and 7 percent are Rainforest Alliance certified.

Though more expensive, the plastic cups for cold beverages (and clamshells used for carry-out foods) are made from a corn-based resin (polylactic acid) and are certified compostable (the major chains still use cheaper, petroleum-based cold cups).

The cutlery is biodegradable, made from 100 percent potato starch rather than non-biodegradable polystyrene. Low energy, compact fluorescent bulbs provide lighting. Trash gets sorted by hand on site so that everything possible, even paper towels, is recycled. Furthermore, 100 percent of the store's electricity use is offset by the purchase of renewable energy credits.

The Lost Beans' owners Zeke Covarrubias and Bodie Berg are guided by the philosophy that "you don't sell coffee at the expense of fragile ecosystems or the health of people who grow or drink it." And their plans for their second store are to go even further—use counter-tops made from compressed paper, introduce zero electricity light fixtures that use rerouted sunlight, and

See **COFFEE**, Page 9

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Electric Car Politics

Faint promises from hard-boiled oil companies

By **DOUG KORTHOFF**
Special to the OC Voice

The Electric Vehicle Symposium (EVS) has been held since 1969. It's financed mostly by big auto and oil companies, traditional enemies of Electric vehicles.

If your company would pop \$750, you too could have presented a talk on Electric cars. In this year of green envy, EVS23 was held in Anaheim, too close to ignore even for cynics.

The first thing visible in the Exhibition Hall was the giant GM pavilion showcasing their "green SUV", the two-mode hybrid that can't plug in. It gets all its energy, ultimately, from the gas pump. Yet the California Air Resources Board ("CARB") is proposing to donate Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) credits to this oil-fired Tahoe, the "green car of the year".

Big exhibitors included ExxonMobil as well as Toyota, but the GM logo seemed everywhere. GM sponsored the "ride and drive", mainly college teams tasked with making a GM SUV into a hybrid that can't plug in.

With Electric cars, promises are called "vaporware". If the big companies are forced to make an EV, they don't announce it. The late Roger B. Smith, then GM CEO, announced the EV1 in Jan. 1990; by August, he was ousted. GM fought desperately against fulfilling that promise. It looked really bad for GM when a new battery, Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH), powered a Solectria EV more than 200 miles. Recovering, GM bought up the NiMH patent rights in 1994. The EV1 came out in late 1996 with failure-prone GM Lead batteries, arguing to CARB that no one wanted the EV1.

Toyota, without fanfare, just produced the RAV4-EV in 1997, proving that NiMH not only worked, but lasted longer than the life



PHOTO BY DOUG KORTHOFF

of the car. Adding to GM's nightmare, Honda brought out the similar HondaEV. Both went over 120 miles on a charge at up to 80 mph. In response, GM was forced to "upgrade" the EV1 GM Lead batteries to Panasonic Lead, which never failed and gave over 110 miles range.

CARB finally forced GM to release the NiMH version of the EV1, with up to 160 miles range, in Dec. 1999.

The next year, GM sold the NiMH patent rights to Chevron, which then funded a lawsuit against Toyota, which then killed the RAV4-EV, putting an end to the only production Electric car ever offered for sale.

In 2003, GM succeeded in getting CARB to kill the Electric car; in 2005, GM arrested would-be purchasers of the last remaining 1999 EV1. Now, barely two years later, GM is posing as the Green Car champion.

GM's new Electric car runs just like an EV

with a 40-mile battery pack. This is not difficult, either with Lead or NiMH batteries.

This "series hybrid" concept, the VOLT, uses only the electric motor to turn the wheels, a concept GM first proposed in a 1969 Olds. The range-extending small engine-generator produces electric to run the EV after the battery is empty. It could conceivably be run by natural gas, diesel, ethanol or even a fuel cell.

The new "Green GM" seems just a reaction to the public relations fiasco of the movie "Who Killed the Electric car?" GM is once again ignoring batteries that work, NiMH or Lead, claiming that it needs Lithium batteries to achieve 40 miles all-electric range. GM thus passes over the still-running RAV4-EV as well as its own EV1, which had 100 to 160 miles range. Lithium batteries are unproven in EVs, while NiMH has been tested in millions of EV miles.

The GM "green makeover" thus boils down

to whether anyone believes their EV announcements. This time.

Behind the GM pavilion was the A123 Lithium display, and Bill Dube, an Electric motorcycle racer, whose Killacycle does 0 to 60 in .97 seconds using A123 batteries. But the same pack is not available for use in an EV. It requires manual charging, can only be partially discharged, and Bill's old pack had to be replaced recently. A123 engineers assured me that their batteries were ready for running an Electric car. Vaporware?

There were various 2- and 3-wheel motorcycles, mostly limited to 60 mph and 50 miles range, and scads of low-speed Neighborhood EVs (NEV), limited to 25 mph. Not very exciting, although the 3-wheel Aptera (not present at the show) promises to be a full-speed serial hybrid EV.

OC resident Linda Nicholes and her PlugInAmerica.com group purchased a pavilion right across from Toyota. Grumpy Toyota managers refused to answer questions about why they stopped making the RAV4-EV, or why they wouldn't sell a plug-in car.

Toyota displayed a Prius with a bigger plug-in NiMH battery, perhaps goaded by Poway startup PlugInConversions.com and its Plug-in Prius.

The entire show boiled down to a lot of faint promises from hard-boiled auto and oil companies. There were only two genuine Electric cars for sale, both with waiting lists: the EBOX from ACPropulsion.com, and the Tesla from TeslaMotors.com. Both use Lithium batteries about twice as expensive as NiMH and lasting half as long.

Link to Youtube video playlist at www.EV1.org

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